

# Rivers on Yoga

Tony Rivers

## Surya Namaskar – The Sun Salutation

The Sun Salutation is a cycle of postures that begin and end with Tadasana Namaskar. Once you have been through the complete cycle one time, you will notice that it is shaped somewhat like an upside down “U”. In other words, the postures work one side, then the other, with three different postures in the center of the cycle. The Sun Salutation can be repeated according to your strength and stamina. If you are not used to aerobic exercise, begin by repeating the sequence two or three times, and as your strength, stamina and flexibility improve, you can begin to increase the repetitions.

Surya Namsakar is a moving meditation. By incorporating it into your every day life you might keep in mind that as you move through life, it can be practiced as a moving meditation too. This mindfulness might possibly help you to find more flexibility, strength and stamina in your mind and spirit as well as your body. Set a time aside for your practice, and make the practice a part of your routine.

Benefits:

Builds strength and stamina

Increases flexibility

Centers the mind.

Caution: If you have a pre-existing medical condition or a recent injury, consult with your physician before you begin.

1. Begin in Tadasana Namaskar and move through to Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (upward facing dog). If you have not been practicing, refer to the previous three columns.
2. From upward facing dog posture, take a full complete inhalation and on the exhalation step your left foot forward, bringing your ankle directly under your knee. With the toes of your left foot turned under, extend



- your left leg. You will be familiar with this posture from earlier in the sequence. (In the previous Urdhva Mukha Svanasana we were extending the right leg.) Look up and back. Pull your shoulders back and down and lift your breastbone forward and up.
3. Take another full and complete inhalation and on the exhalation step your left foot forward, bringing your big toes and heels together. With your legs straight place your hand on the floor on either side of your feet. If you are unable to reach the floor with your legs straight place your hands on your knees or shins. You have now returned to Uttanasana. You were in this posture earlier in the sequence. Firm your thigh muscles. Let your neck soften. Allow the weight of your head to release and extend your neck.
  4. Take another full, complete inhalation and on the exhalation return to Tadasana Namaskar. Bring the palms of your hands together and with your thumbs pressed lightly against your breastbone, allow your breath to return to its normal rate and rhythm. Breathe through your nose. It should take between five and ten breaths for your breathing to return to its normal rate and rhythm.
  5. Now try the sequence starting in Tadasana Namaskar, proceeding to Uttanasana and then take your right leg back as you move into Urdhva Mukha Svanasana. When you arrive at the next Urdhva Mukha Svanasana go into it by stepping your left leg forward.
  6. As your strength and stamina improves increase the number of repetitions.