

## Kundalini Yoga Class

### What is Kundalini Yoga?

Kundalini Yoga is known as the yoga of awareness and the yoga of the householder. It consists of simple and effective yogic techniques that can be enjoyed by people of any age or physical ability.

Kundalini Yoga combines physical exercises, controlled breathing techniques, meditations and mantras resulting in an extremely powerful and transformational experience. Through the discipline of Kundalini Yoga you learn to balance mental, emotional and physical health through your own effort. Kundalini Yoga leads to a state of fullness. In practical terms it allows you to enjoy a happy, healthy and holy life.

### What happens in a Kundalini Yoga Class?

Much of Kundalini Yoga is done sitting in "Easy Pose", aka, sitting cross legged on a yoga mat. Some yoga teachers offer Chair Kundalini Yoga where you can sit on a chair instead of the mat.

It's important to mind yourself when you sit on the mat. Sometimes or maybe during every class, you'll need to sit on a cushion to raise you off the ground and take pressure off your upper legs and legs. Sometimes you may need to put a blanket under your ankles to take the pressure off them.

If you need to, regularly straighten your legs and give them a shake to relax them from easy pose. Do not force yourself to stay in easy pose all the time. Use a cushion if you need to. It's important to work with your body where it is, rather than trying to do what the teacher or other people in the class are doing.

A Kundalini Yoga class is very structured. No matter where you go in the world, a class follows this routine:

- **Tune In with the Adi Mantra "Ong Namoh Guru Dev Namoh"**

This is a mantra used to tune into a Kundalini Yoga class. It brings everyone into the energy of the class and helps leave the busyness of the day behind for now. The mantra helps us connect with our inner teacher, our intuition, our higher self. It also helps us energetically connect with other Kundalini yogi's worldwide and it helps us connect with the Golden Chain of yogi's and teachers who came before us.

Mantra's and sound help bring a balance of energy into the body. Not everyone is comfortable chanting at the start of joining a Kundalini Yoga class and that's ok. It's best to work at your own comfort level to enjoy the class and some day you may start joining in with the chants and love it!

- **Breathwork**

The second part of the Kundalini Yoga class is breathwork. I aim to teach a different breathwork in each class. There are many breathing techniques to consciously control the breath to help calm us down, energise us or to work through personal blocks and habits.

- **Warm-ups**

This is a period of the class where we do some individual yoga postures to help warm the body up for the yoga set. It may be the first time in the day some parts of our body have been moved or flexed and it's a good practice to do. Common warm-up's include butterfly pose (hip-opener), spinal flex, spinal twist, shoulder shrugs, and neck turns or rolls.

With any posture in Kundalini yoga, you work at your own pace and comfort level. Some postures require a faster pace than others. However, fast means different things to different people. It's important to listen to your body and work at your own speed.

Most of Kundalini Yoga is practiced with the eyes closed. Kundalini Yoga is the yoga of awareness and when our eyes are closed, we bring awareness inside our body and mind. When our eyes are open, we are looking around us or even comparing ourselves to others. When in a group class setting, it's best to work at your own level rather than comparing yourself to other people in the class.

After each posture, there is often a short 30-60 second rest where you sit with your eyes closed and allow your body to relax after the posture, allowing any changes brought about by the posture to integrate. This is important for everyone, whether flexible or less flexible. This is when you'll hear the phrase "close your eyes and go within".

- **Yoga Set known as a Kriya**

Every yoga class contains a yoga set known as a kriya. Some kriyas are very physical. Some are very relaxing. Some include dancing. Some are very meditative. Some work on releasing stress and working on balancing the mind and emotions to cope with stress. Others work on the physical body to strengthen it. Through exertion and relaxation, the body gets a chance to recover from our busy lives. All yoga sets offer the body and mind a chance to strengthen the nervous system to cope with our daily lives.

There are thousands of Kundalini Yoga kriyas, common ones include: Basic Spinal Energy Series, Surya Kriya, Kriya for Disease Resistance, Preparatory Exercises for the Lungs, Magnetic Field and Deep Relaxation, Kriya to Withstand the Pressure of Time, Movement Relaxation Series, Kriya for Emotional Balance, Kriya to Throw off Stress, Kriya to Master Your Domain.

- **Deep Relaxation**

Deep relaxation is a very important part of a Kundalini Yoga class. It's an opportunity to integrate the changes brought about by the yoga set. It's an opportunity to learn to relax. Some people fall asleep during deep relaxation and that's ok!

The usual and recommended posture for deep relaxation is lying flat on your back, with your feet falling to either side and your palms face up. Some people need to lie with their knees up due to back pain. Some also put a cushion under their lower back. For some people, it's too painful or worrying to get down on the floor and back up again, and so sitting on the chair for deep relaxation is ok.

There are two ways to get up from deep relaxation. It's important to get up in a way that suits your body and is comfortable. For experienced yogi's or flexible people, hug the knees into the chest and rock along your spine 2-3 times to sitting. For people with any soreness or discomfort with the first method, roll to your right side and use your left hand to push yourself up to sitting. Please be aware of your own body's needs and do not force it to do something that is uncomfortable for it.

- **Meditation**

Meditation is a very important part of Kundalini Yoga. Depending on available time in class, a meditation can be 3-11 minutes. Meditations can involve breathwork, or listening to a particular mantra, or chanting a specific mantra. Mudra's or hand postures are often used. Each meditation brings an energetic physical, mental and emotional balance into our body and mind.

Like kriyas, there are thousands of Kundalini Yoga meditations, common ones include: Kirtan Kriya, Tattva Balance for Stress and Duality, Prosperity Meditations, Meditation to Open the Heart, Meditation for Protection and Projection from the Heart, Antar Naad full moon meditation.

- **Tune Out with the Long Time Sun Song and three long Sat Nam's**

The Long Time Sun Song is a wish for ourselves, to be surrounded in love and light.

Sat Nam is a mantra that means "truth is my identity". When we chant Sat Nam, we are energetically connecting with our own personal truth or identity.

### **Wearing White**

Kundalini yoga teachers always wear white. Yogi Bhajan, who brought Kundalini Yoga to the west, encouraged his students to wear clothes that were modest, graceful, comfortable, and allowed freedom of movement. Wearing white expands your aura and creates a powerful interface between you and your environments. The spectrum of light energy that makes up the colour white contains the energies of all colours. By wearing white, all the colours are available to support and enhance the aura and the eight chakras.