



Sun Salutation, or Surya Namaskara is a series of poses performed in a sequence to create a flow of movement. This mini flow helps to build heat in the body and are often used as warm up sequences for a yoga practice. It is a short practice to get your day off to a great start. Make it part of your morning or nightly routine. Do one to warm up the body, then repeat, and repeat... Here are some of the benefits.

- Assists with calming the mind (something we all need right now)
- Helps to stay focused
- Energize the body and raises endurance
- Increases muscle strength and flexibility
- Links your breath with your movements
- Gets your day off to a great start

Doesn't sound all that bad, right? Below is a step by step way to get your body moving and your mind calm.

1. INHALE- Hands to Prayer. Stand with your feet together, feel the ground beneath them, every toe should be planted on the floor. Shoulders back. Hands are in prayer position at the center of your chest, pressing your palms and fingers firmly together. EXHALE

2. INHALE- Upward Salute. While standing with your feet together, reach your prayer hands up towards the ceiling. Elongate through the top of your head, giving a slight bend in the lower back and looking towards your hands. Tighten the thighs and core area. Feel every fingertip firmly pressed together. EXHALE.

3. INHALE- Standing Forward Bend. "Swan dive" your arms forward to the floor, bending at the waist until your body is folded in half. If you can reach the floor with your hands, you can place them there or on your shins. If you would like to, both of your hands can grasp the opposite elbows. EXHALE. Hang out there, taking a few deep and slow breaths.

4. INHALE- Halfway Lift. From your forward bend, place your palms on the shins with fingers pointed downward. Straighten your arms and lift your chest away from your thighs. Lengthen your spine and engage your upper back muscles slightly. Look slightly forward, but don't strain your neck. EXHALE. Take several deep and slow breaths.

5. INHALE- Plank. Place both palms firmly on the ground. Bend your knees and walk one leg backward at a time until you are in a "pushup position". (If you're advanced- you may be able to hop your feet backwards). EXHALE. Make sure your arms are directly under your shoulders and your back is flat. Strengthen and engage your thighs and abdomen muscles. Hold this position and take some deep and slow breaths.

6. INHALE- Cobra. Gently lower your body face down to the floor, bending your elbows and keeping your palms firmly planted. Press the tops of your thighs and tops of your feet to the floor. EXHALE. INHALE slowly and begin to straighten your arms bringing just your upper body and chest off the floor. You should

feel a slight back bend in your lower back. Focus your eyes straight ahead and take some deep and slow breaths here.

7. INHALE- Downward Facing Dog. Curl your toes underneath so that they are planted on the floor, just like the plank position. Push your buttocks backwards, straighten your legs so that your body forms an inverted V. Let gravity pull your heels towards the ground, and leave your neck in a neutral position. EXHALE. Stay here and take a few deep and slow breaths. Start out with what feels comfortable. Remember this a practice.

8. INHALE- Lunge. Bend your right knee to your chest and place your right foot on the floor as close to your right palm as you can. Lay your torso on your front thigh and lengthen forward. EXHALE. Look your eyes forward focusing on your breath. In this pose take several deep and slow breaths.

9. INHALE- Standing Forward Bend. Slowly push off that left foot and bring it towards your left palm until you are in your Standing Forward Bend. Bending at the waist with slightly bent knees, grasp ahold of both of your elbows and let your head hang. EXHALE. Remain in this pose and take several deep and slow breaths.

10. INHALE- Upward Salute. Gently bend at the waste, raising your upper body up to standing. Raise both of your arms above your head, placing your palms firmly together with a slight bend in the back. EXHALE. Feel the body elongate and the spine feel long. Take several deep and slow breaths.

11. INHALE- Hands to Prayer. Slowly bring your prayer hands down to your chest, being conscious of pressing your palms together and feeling every fingertip touch each other. EXHALE. Close your eyes and take some slow and deep breaths focusing on nothing but the air going into your body and leaving the body. Gently open your eyes.

12. REPEAT!!