

# Yoga as creative activity

## Seven short yoga cycles with different characters and meanings

Thank you for choosing this yoga DVD set. I hope you will be able to work with it over a period of time to develop your understanding and practice of the yoga poses. The various exercises presented here share the physical and mental benefits of many other approaches to yoga. They help to strengthen many of the body's muscles, particularly in the abdomen and the back, they increase flexibility, mental calmness, focus and relaxation as well as giving many other health benefits. Beyond these well-known benefits of yoga, this particular approach also encourages something we could describe as "creative activity".

Each yoga pose is a gesture. It is like a work of art with its own specific form, character and meaning. Creative activity means that we are not simply following instructions, but are consciously creating specific forms with our bodies. This DVD gives clear and detailed demonstrations of each pose before you are asked to do it, so that you can form a mental picture. This mental picture guides you as you shape the physical form of each exercise with your body. Creative activity of this kind brings inner calmness and an ability to "give shape" in many other areas of life as well. It helps us to become masters of our lives.

The forms and meanings for the yoga poses used here are based on the inspired thoughts of the spiritual teacher Heinz Grill. More details of these can be found in his yoga books listed below.

### **How to work with the DVDs**

The first cycle includes an initial relaxation and is complete in itself. The remaining cycles can be mixed and matched so that you can design your own practice session. I recommend starting with a relaxation as this helps to take the mind away from the busy rush of daily life and prepare you for the mental focus needed for yoga. Then one of the sun-prayer tracks helps to warm up the body. After that you can choose one or more of the yoga cycles, which are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. For example you might choose to combine a gentle, calming cycle such as “Sense of self” with a more active one like “Expanding our horizons” or “Focused activity”. Or for a well balanced practice session you could follow “Flowing energy” with “Composure and alertness”. Finish off your practice with another relaxation, during which you can listen to a song if you wish.

Many of the yoga poses are introduced with detailed demonstrations which you can watch before then doing the exercise yourself. This will free you to concentrate fully on what you are doing, rather than having one eye on the screen. These DVDs are intended to help you develop your own independent practice in which you can concentrate on shaping each pose into its correct form. It is always helpful to work at

a pose repeatedly and you are encouraged to put the DVD on pause, or also to join on with the demonstrations once you know the poses well enough.

### **Content**

The cycles are arranged more or less in order of increasing difficulty.

#### **DVD 1**

##### **1. Gentle cycle to improve posture (34:47)**

This cycle is suitable for complete beginners and for the less fit. It helps to loosen and strengthen the back and teaches the principles of good posture.

Relaxation

Pelvic Rotation

The Locust

The Sunrise

The Standing Position

The Cosmic Prayer

Sensing the Space

The Lying Triangle

The Lying Twist

##### **2. Relaxation (4:54)**

##### **3. The Sun Prayer (slow) (11:17)**

##### **4. Developing a sense of self (21:01)**

This is a very calming and gentle cycle in which each position has its centre in the so-called heart centre or “anahata

chakra”<sup>1</sup>. It helps you to develop the feeling that you have your own centre and can remain independent in the face of outer influences.

The Circle of the Heart

The Tree

The St Andrew Cross

The Sunrise

The Pose of Cheerfulness

Relaxation with song “Om Shanti” (trad.)

## **5. Expanding our horizons** (26:38)

The positions in this very energising cycle draw your attention to the space around you. They encourage an ability to look beyond your limitations and increase your potential or the scope of your activities. The fiery energy of the so-called “manipura chakra” at the solar plexus is mobilised.

Sensing the Space

The Twisted Triangle

The Head–Knee Position

The Inclined Plane

Relaxation with song “O Virtus Sapientiae” by Hildegard of

Bingen (1098–1179)

---

<sup>1</sup> The seven so-called chakras are centres in the body in which energy of different qualities can be experienced.

## **6. Composure and Alertness** (25:21)

The poses in this cycle depict on the one hand a calm gathering at the “svadhithana chakra” at the sacrum and at the same time a freedom in the region of the forehead or “ajna chakra”. The cycle helps us to gather our scattered, dispersed energies to a calm, anchored centre. It also leads to clarity in the thinking with an ability for overview and guidance.

The Standing Head–Knee Position

The Cobra

The Sitting Twist

Relaxation with song “Michaelslied” by Heinz Grill (b.1960)

### DVD 2

**1. Relaxation** (5:00)

**2. The Sun Prayer (fast)** (10:18)

**3. Flowing energy** (25:17)

The movements in this cycle happen in natural, flowing, effortless way. Mental picturing is used to encourage a harmonious flow of the so-called “etheric” energy or life energy in the body.

The Plough

The Shoulderstand 1<sup>st</sup> preparation

The Shoulderstand 2<sup>nd</sup> preparation

The Shoulderstand

The Fish

Relaxation with song “Jay Ambe” (trad.)

#### **4. Focused activity**

(31:24)

An important theme in yoga practice is to learn to divide the body into distinct components. In doing this we learn to focus our activity where it is most needed whilst keeping other parts of the body relaxed.

The Balancing Head–Knee Position

The Side–Lying Triangle

The Bow

Yoga Mudra

Relaxation with song “Tvam Eva Mata” (Words trad. Melody Karen Patterson)

#### **5. Clear decisiveness**

(26:31)

This cycle contains two fairly challenging balancing positions which require great clarity and decisiveness in order to do them.

Wings

The Earth

The Standing Splits

Growing Long

The Scales

Relaxation with song “Caritas Abundat” by Hildegard of Bingen

#### **Recommended literature**

The following books, and others by Heinz Grill, are available from [www.lammers-koll-verlag.de](http://www.lammers-koll-verlag.de)

Most of the poses on these DVDs are described in their soul-meanings in the book:

#### **The Soul Dimension of Yoga**

Also of interest might be the books:

#### **Enriching the Life and Health of the Chest Area**

#### **The Spiritualising of the Body**

#### **Harmony in Breathing**

More information about them can be found on my website [www.yogainsomerset.co.uk](http://www.yogainsomerset.co.uk)

#### **Acknowledgments**

My huge thanks to Elly Horne who did the filming and editing of these DVDs.

Also many thanks to the students who so diligently participated in these classes!

Karen Patterson

May 2013