

What Type of Yoga, Thus Meditation, Works Best For You?

There many, many ways to practice yoga. Knowing the kind of yoga that is best for you will tell you what form of meditation will work better for you than others.

There are four primary types of yoga: **karma, bhakti, jnana, and raja.**

Karma [KAR-muh] yoga is the path of service through selfless action for the good of others.

For example, Mother Teresa's works to serve poor people as a way to connect the compassion of God with humanity. Unconditional service is a tradition in Hindu monasteries or ashrams [AAHSH-ruhms], and many yoga teacher training programs require candidates to practice karma yoga by cooking and cleaning or providing other voluntary service for others.



If you like to serve others above all else, like nurses, doctors, firefighters, and EMT's then you could be a Karmic Yogi.

The best form of meditation for Karmic Yogi's is Mindfulness Meditation — to give back, to dedicate your life and every action you make in your life as an offering to others as a form of meditation for yourself.

This beautiful description of Mindfulness is from the Thich Naht Hahn Foundation:

Be Mindful in Daily Life

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present, and at one with those around you and with what you are doing. We bring our body and mind into harmony while we wash the dishes, drive the car, or take our morning shower.

In our practice centers, we do most of the same things we do at home – walking, sitting, working, eating, etc. – except we learn to do them with mindfulness, with an awareness that we are doing them. We practice mindfulness throughout every moment of the day – not just in the meditation hall but also in the kitchen, the toilet, in our rooms, and on the path leading from one place to another.

In practicing together as a sangha, as a community, our practice of mindfulness becomes more joyful, relaxed, and steady. We are bells of mindfulness for each other, supporting and reminding each other along the path of practice. With the support of the community, we can practice to cultivate peace and joy within and around us, as a gift for all of those whom we love and care for. We can cultivate our solidity and freedom—solid in our deepest aspiration and free from our fears, misunderstandings, and our suffering.

Let us try to be intelligent and skillful in our practice, approaching every aspect of the practice with curiosity. Let us practice with understanding and not just with the form and appearance. Enjoy your practice with a relaxed and gentle attitude, with an open mind and receptive heart.

If you are attracted to the description by Thich Naht Hahn, then being mindful in everything you do is your meditation practice.

Bhakti [b-HUHK-tee] yoga cultivates the expression and love of the Divine through devotional rituals.

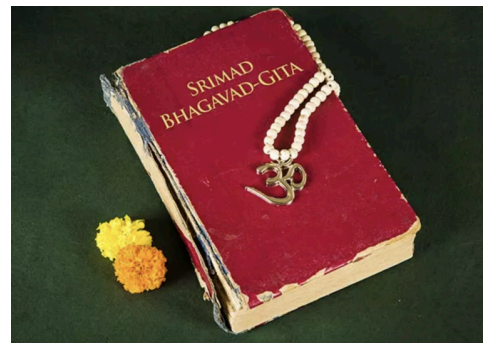


Forms of this path include regular prayer, chanting, singing, dancing, ceremony, and celebration. For example, Bhakti Yoga is practiced and shared in the uplifting music of renowned Kirtan (devotional chant) vocalist and spiritual leader Krishna Das.

Listen to this podcast by Krishna Das — <https://krishnadas.com/blog/hanging-in-the-heart-space-free-online-satsang-july-23-replay-2/> If you like to sing, chant, dance, you may be a Bhakti Yogi. You need to sing, dance and chant as your meditation practice.

Jnana [YAAH-nuh] yoga is the path of intellect and wisdom.

Its components include study of sacred texts, intellectual debates, philosophical discussion, and introspection. Socrates was a Jnana yogi, as are modern-day yoga scholars such as David Frawley and Ravi Ravindra.



***How To Practice Jnana Yoga Meditation* written by StyleCraze**

Jnana yoga is not based on a particular dogma that the gurus teach and that you have to learn. It is a way of discovering the truth and understanding it for yourself. Jnana yoga says that truth requires consistency. For something that appears then disappears cannot be

regarded as absolute. Consistency is what helps us differentiate between the truth and the illusions of Maya'.

It is true that the ever-changing appearances have some truth hidden within them too! But Jnana yoga aims to discover the absolute truth only. To fulfill this goal, it constantly makes you question yourself. It asks you to not look at your experiences that are ever-changing but to make note of your behavior that remains constant.

You have to observe what is essential to all your experiences. What is the one connection between all of them? Most importantly, it makes you ask yourself, 'Who am I?'

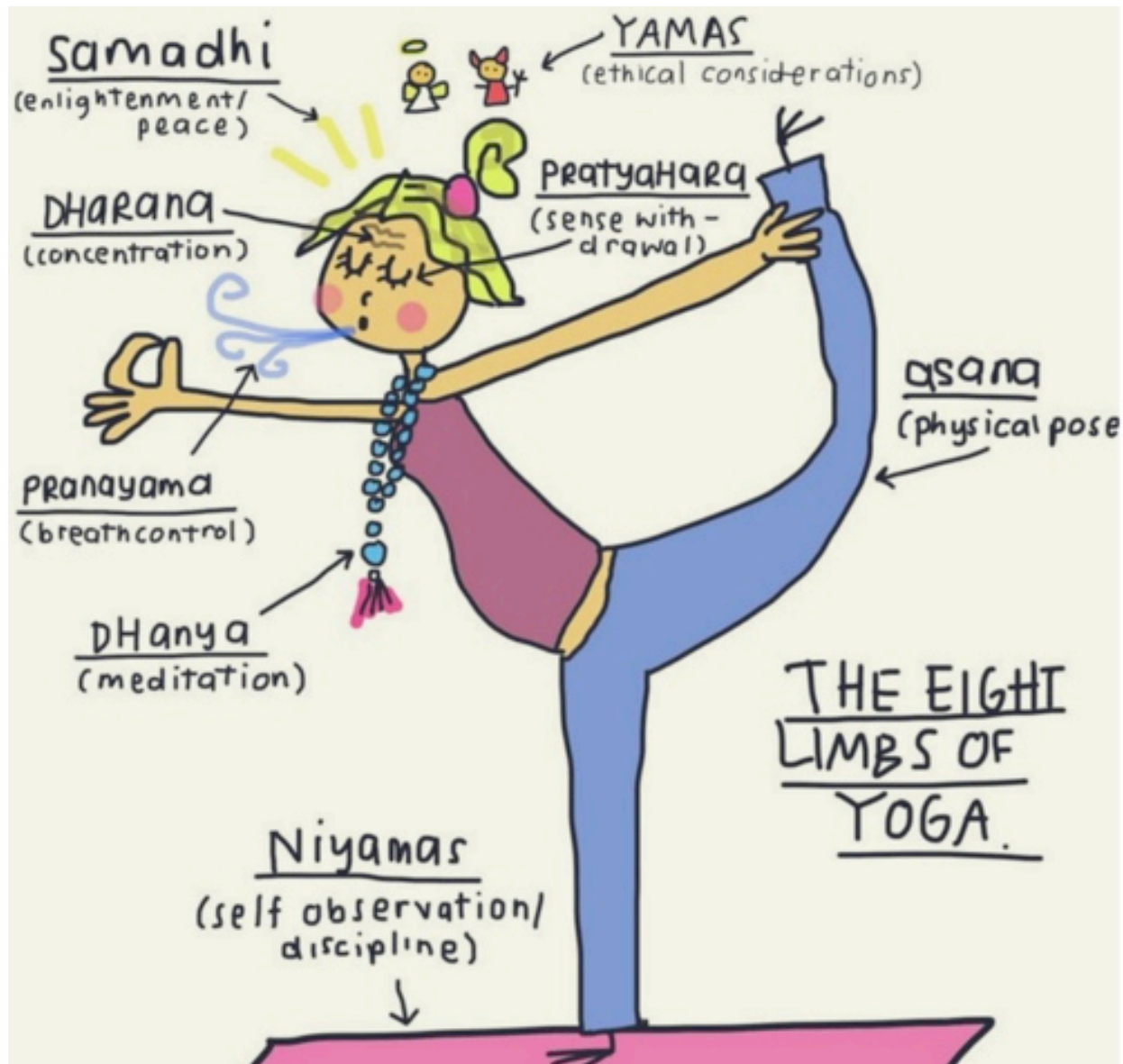
To prepare himself/herself to receive the teachings, the Jnana yoga disciple works to first acquire the four means of salvation or the 'Sadhana Chatushtaya'. These include 'Viveka' or the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, 'Vairagya' or indifference and detachment from all that is worldly, 'Shad sampat' or the six virtues of life and 'Mumukshutva' or a burning desire for liberation or moksha.

'Shad Sampat' or the six virtues of life includes peace of mind, control over the senses, renunciation of all activities for the sake of entertainment, endurance, faith and complete concentration or focus.

Once a student has acquired these four means, he/she is ready to embark on the journey of Jnana yoga. Unlike the traditional yoga, which involves physical exercises, Jnana Yoga requires you to be physically and psychologically liberated from the mundane aspects of the world. The time period required for attainment of this enlightenment is not fixed. While some accomplished minds require only a few days, others take years to complete the course of this path to knowledge. The ultimate goal of Jnana Yoga is to attain a point in life where you can be liberated from the illusion of self and are open to the perception of truth.

You've begun a sort of Jnana Path by participating in the Heal.thy Self Program. It requires deep self-realization. You are already on your way. If you like to dig deep into yourself, your relationship to the world and its many ancient truths, this is your form of meditation.

Raja [RAAH-juh] yoga, also known as the "royal path", Raja Yoga



Meditation - This Meditation is for you if you like to move!

The eight limbs of yoga (or to better translate, the eight aids to yoga) as set out by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras comprise a framework which can help us on the path to achieving the state of yoga, that state of fully present, fully aware bliss. We will now explore each of the limbs in a bit more detail. But first, it should be stressed that the eight limbs need not necessarily be followed rigidly in the order described as though they were a shopping list. In fact, it is hard to believe that anyone could approach them in this way. Rather, an individual can focus on any one of the eight limbs of yoga at any time or can work on them simultaneously.

Yamas (Universal Truths) First there are five yamas which describe our attitude towards things and people outside ourselves:

Ahimsa (non-violence): This means not doing harm to other sentient and non-sentient beings and ensuring that our thoughts, words and actions are acts of kindness and compassion to both ourselves and other beings. We often focus on this quality in Yoga Nature classes.

Satya (truthfulness): This means living a truthful life that does not harm others.

Asteya (non-stealing): Not taking anything that has not been freely given. This includes both the material and non-material. For example, not stealing people's ideas or sharing information that has been given to you in confidence.

Brahmacharya (sense control): Literally celibacy, but we can read this to mean more generally moderation of the senses, that is, avoiding over-stimulation and over-consumption of any kind.

Aparigraha (living a life free from greed): Taking only what is necessary, not being over possessive and not exploiting others. Living a simple life within our means.

Niyamas (Study of the Self) There are next five niyamas which describe our attitude and how we behave towards ourselves:

Sauca (cleanliness): Keeping both the body and one's environment clean. Through practicing yoga, pranayama and meditation, both the mind and the body are kept pure and clean.

Santosha (contentment): Being happy with what we have and our lifestyle even when things are difficult.

Tapas (austerity): Literally means to heat the body and therefore keep the body cleansed and fit. Forms of tapas include watching what we think, say, eat, breathing patterns and body posture.

Svadhyaya (self-study): getting to know yourself through a combination of study of scripture along with self-reflection or self-examination.

Isvarapranidhana (devotion): Surrender of the fruits of our practice to something higher than ourselves, however we may conceive that. 3

Asanas (Physical Postures) This limb is what many people today recognize yoga as being.

Traditionally meaning a 'steady and comfortable' posture, asanas today are comprised of a set of physical exercises which stretch the body leading to increased flexibility, strength and stamina in body, mind and spirit.

Asanas are of great benefit to us. They can enable a person to become attuned with the needs of the physical body, the mental & emotional mind and the needs of the spirit. With time the practice ends up being a meditation leading to self-reflection and an increased awareness which then begins to bring harmony to the individual, the family, the community and eventually the wider world.

Pranayama (Breath Control) This is the limb where we learn to control the breath through the use of specific yogic breathing techniques including retention techniques at the top and at the bottom of the breath.

Through linking the breath to the static, dynamic and flowing yoga postures and sequences we become aware of an increase of energy, a cleansing and strengthening of the central nervous system and the mind becoming calmer and more focused. Through these pranayama techniques we become increasingly aware of the flow of prana (energy) in and out through the body.

Pratyahara (Withdrawal of the Senses) Pratyahara means withdrawal of the senses from the attachment to external objects.

By practicing asana, pranayama and meditation, the practitioner becomes so inwardly focused that outside events and attachments are not a distraction anymore, leading to self-realization and internal peace.

Dharana (Concentration) Dharana means developing a single pointed mind, a mind which does not jump from one thought or activity to the next.

By practicing the steps described above a practitioner begins to develop dharana and thus a great peace begins to settle within and meditation can begin. Indeed by doing asana and pranayama, a practitioner's practice becomes a type of dharana where in certain moments it is possible to discover great stillness and concentration within an asana and breathing technique.

Dhyana (Meditation) Dhyana is the practice by which there is constant observation of the mind.

Observing whether the mind is processing the past, thinking about the future or, ideally, experiencing the present moment. Through the constant

observation of the mind, a practitioner begins to sharpen the mind and concentration leading to a greater understanding of the self and also experiencing the unity of the universe.

Samadhi (Enlightenment) *Finally, we have Samadhi. This is the ultimate aim of Patanjali's yoga. It is where a person is in complete harmony, where there is no more jumping from one thing to the next and the person is not attached to emotions or external objects.*

An individual flows with life and what it brings knowing that even the most challenging situation contains some sort of opportunity for development. The individual at this point resides in ananda, that state of pure bliss. Raja Yoga is the kind of yoga I practice and teach. Meditation is part of the practice. I like that I build up to meditating from my daily practice. I grow strong in body, mind and spirit allowing me to be in my meditation and to merge with source.

After reading all this information, what kind of meditation appeals to you?

If you are still confused, no worries, I'm going to give you a practice of the four types of yoga to further help you decide!