

Sun Salutations with Cobra Pose

Sun Salutations - *Surya Namaskar*



Sun Salutations, or *Surya Namaskar*, can be a complete practice in and of itself. Often considered the core of hatha yoga practice, sun salutations are a graceful series of 10 or 12 postures linked by a continuous flowing motion and accompanied by deep breathing. Sun salutations warm, tone and energize the body and are especially popular with those that desire a higher energy level in their days. *Namah* means to bow, to bow to the sun, the earth, your heart, our universe.

Hatha yoga teachers often say that if you do only one asana a day ... make it a Sun Salutation. Sun Salutations are often incorporated into a yoga practice to limbers up the whole body in preparation for other more difficult asanas. For people with limited time, Sun Salutations can be excellent because it stretches and strengthens all the major muscle groups in the body and exercises the respiratory system. Each position balances with the one before, stretching the body in a different way and alternately expanding and contracting the chest to regulate the breathing. Start by doing three rounds and gradually build up to twelve rounds. As always in yoga, do it slowly and consciously for the very best results and for maximum benefit.

Tadasana

To begin sun salutation, bring your mind and body to attention facing east. Mentally visualize the rising sun. Visualize the sun radiating throughout your body. Stand up straight with your feet together and your palms prayer-like in front of your chest. Feel awareness of the whole body. Relax and begin to inhale. Breath through your nose relaxing the hollow of your mouth

and the root of your tongue. Stand with your feet parallel, hip distance apart. Draw the energy up your legs. Firm your lower belly towards your spine without crushing your organs. Lengthen your spine using your side ribs and back muscles. Relax your shoulders, lengthen the back of your neck and relax your face muscles. Gaze forward softly, relaxing your jaw and tongue and breath evenly through your nose.

Uthihita Tadasana

Begin to inhale standing in *Tadasana*, extending your arms up to the sky using your back muscles keeping your shoulders soft. Palms facing each other if your shoulders are tight or in prayer pose.



Uttanasana

Begin to exhale folding forward hinging at the hips. Knees can either be bent or legs straight engaging the front of your thighs.



Ardha Uttanasana

Begin your inhale as you lift your torso half way up, spine parallel to the floor.



Uttanasana

Exhale folding forward.



Plank Pose

Begin to inhale stepping your right foot back, then your left foot so that you are in a push up position. Your ears, shoulders, hips and heels should be in a straight line. Firm the front of your body as you draw the crown of your head forward simultaneously pressing out through your heels. Lower yourself toward the floor like a plank resisting gravity, elbows in.



Bhujangasana

Begin inhaling as you press the tops of your feet in to the floor lifting your knees away from the floor and firming your thighs. Hands place under your shoulders, elbows in and move the skin of your shoulder blades down your back.

Draw your chest forward and move rib cage away from the floor.



Adho Mukha Svanasana

Begin your exhale as you curl your toes under and lift your hips towards the sky. Legs straight and parallel to each other. Continue to firm your thighs and press your quads towards your hamstrings, opening the back of your legs and drive your heels down towards the floor. Take five breathes here.

Uttanasana

Begin to exhale folding forward hinging at the hips. Knees can either be bent or legs straight engaging the front of your thighs.

Ardha Uttanasana

Begin to inhale lifting your torso half way up, spine parallel to the floor.



Uthitta Tadasana

Begin to inhale standing in *Tadasana*, extending your arms up to the sky using your back muscles keeping your shoulders soft. Palms facing each other if your shoulders are tight or in prayer pose.



Samasthiti

Begin your exhale as you guide your hands back to your heart in prayer pose. Gaze softly at your hands and listen inwardly.

Regular practice of **Sun** Salutations can help to develop strength and endurance, and can be a powerful tool for meditation in motion or even self transformation.



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The following is an excerpt from the book *Yoga Poems: Lines to Unfold* By Leza Lowitz; Published by Stone Bridge Press; Copyright © 2005 Leza Lowitz.

Surya Namascar / Sun Salutation

By Leza Lowitz

Everything she touches turns to gold.

They say that now.

They didn't know her then.

She spent the first twelve years of her life locked in a closet and the next twelve trying to break down the doors that were no longer there.

She learned that nothing changes, but the changed.

She has all the character that one gets from suffering.

She is tired of suffering.

She is tired of telling her story.

She's survived.

Now she just wants to live.

She knows that Midas died broken and weak.

She knows she can't live on gold.

All she wants to do is touch the sun.

Leza Lowitz, is a published author, yoga instructor and the co-owner of [Sun and Moon Yoga Studio](#) located in Meguro, Japan.