

# STAND SURE

WEEK 1 NOTES: BREATH & VINYASA

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# ABOUT THIS COURSE

STAND SURE is a beginner's guide to the physical practice of yoga, breathwork and meditation, dedicated to helping you find confidence, clarity and balance in practice and day to day life.

DID YOU KNOW? That stand sure is actually the official motto for the Anderson family clan in Scotland. Personally, I feel I have been on a bit of a quest to live up to this motto. To be confident and trusting in my own thoughts, intuition and my own inner power. The practice of Yoga has however really helped me overcome these boundaries and helped me to see the world from a more bountiful perspective and I feel so passionate about sharing these tools with you.

YOUR PRACTICE IS A SAFE PLACE TO UNPACK OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND UNCONSCIOUS PATTERNS

"IN time, your whole practice might become a metaphor for day to day life. We recognise from a safe place where we act, react and interact; where we conflict or confidence arises; where or what we fear or feel fabulous about,"



## CLASS BREAK DOWN

Class will be broken down in to three sections

### BREATH



Fundamental for practice

### FLOW



The essence of a physical yoga practice is breath & body moving as one. So let's get moving!

### TECHNIQUE



This is where we get into the nitty-gritty of each pose and the concepts of each group or family or yoga asana





# GOALS FOR THE COURSE

For you to walk away from this course after the 6 weeks, with a solid knowledge and repertoire of foundational yoga postures.

For you to feel confident enough to take part in a public vinyasa class or to conduct your own personal vinyasa practice at home

To understand the connection of breath, body and mind in yoga

To understand different breath techniques to help you energise or calm the body and nervous system

to feel comfortable with being still in meditation

To have a grasp on the philosophy of Yoga

## GOALS FOR THE WEEK

To understand ujjayi breath //practising moving body to the flow of your breath

To understand what sun salutations are

To understand the main components of forward fold postures

To break down the main forward folding asanas (poses) in yoga

Learning how to sit the best way for your body



# QUICK REMINDERS

You are following the urge to BE WELL and that should be CELEBRATED!

THIS IS A LIFELONG PRACTICE.

Don't worry if things feel a little alien on the first day.

YOU ARE FREE to be confused, to move slowly, to be in the learning phase as long as you need to be.

How boring would it be to know everything, right?



ZOOMING IN + ZOOMING OUT // NOTICING THE LAYERS OF THE PRACTICE

Distribute the effort and distribute the attention. You'll notice the primary focus always being on the biggest sensation. Give it time. What else arrives for you?

Become aware of the whole picture and learn to study the detail.

FOR EXAMPLE: You don't realise you're staring at the Monda Lisa when your nose is touching the canvas, to really take in its beauty you need to see the whole painting, but from afar you won't be able to acknowledge the texture, the stroke of the brush, nor the cracks where it has aged.





# BREATH

"When the breath is unsteady,  
all is unsteady; when the breath  
is still; all is still. Control the  
breath carefully. Inhalation gives  
strength and a controlled body;  
retention gives steadiness of  
mind and longevity; exhalation  
purifies body and spirit."

- Goraksasathakam

# UJJAYI PRANAYAMA

## VICTORIOUS BREATH

The main breath technique used in a physical yoga practice to warm the body and to help keep focus and concentration throughout

Ujjayi also helps to keep the pace and flow of class/ practice.

Depending how vigorous the breath is done, you can use it as a tool to energise the body or to calm the nervous system.

### BREATHWORK EXERCISES

1. Close the eyes, feel the natural breath - hands to belly for two- four breath in and out, then to ribs and chest. Repeat as many times is comfortable.
2. Palm in front of mouth like your fogging up a mirror - focus on the sound that comes with the exhale
3. Repeat, creating the same sound on the inhale with mouth open. The breath should be felt in the throat rather than the nose.
4. Try without the hands
5. Try to create the same sensation in the throat and same sound with mouth closed
6. Repeat with movement!

### SOUNDS LIKE?

Ujjayi breath sounds like...

You're fogging a mirror just as before

Darth Vader for star wars fans

An ocean wave for those a little less into sci-fi!

I like to think of it like a whirlpool or vortex forming in the throat, the power of the breath guiding an infinite stream of possibilities!



# FLOW

## SUN SALUTATIONS

### SURYA (SUN) NAMASKAR (TO BOW OR TO ADORE)

Surya Namaskar or Sun salutation is seen as a spiritual way of celebrating the divine light and gift of the sun. For centuries humans across the world have revered the power of the sun and what it gives us. We have seen it as a guide to consciousness.

This repeated movement is seen as a meditation or mantra expressed through physical form.

Physically speaking we repeat sun salutations at the beginning of our practice to warm the body up, taking in physical postures within the salutation that will be repeated to a greater degree later on.

Sun salutations are a chain of postures from which we move from one to another, often within half a breath. There is a constant state of movement and flow to exert the body. Whilst there are traditional sun salutations, we can alter or change the positions within the salutation to fit what we personally need. The speed can change to fit what suits your needs too.

## THIS WEEK'S SUN SALUTATIONS

### 1/2 sun sal. (2x or 3x)

#### Modified Sun Salutation A

3x knees to ground

3x stepping straight forward

2x adding in low crescent lunge to down dog and to top of mat



(Diagrams can be seen in Sun salutation pdf)

Remember the aim of our practice is not to rush through each posture but rather to fill each cycle of breath with movement.

If you are counting to three on your inhale breath it will take you three counts to lift the arms of head, or three counts to arrive in to a half way lift from your forward fold.

If you are counting three counts on your exhale breath, it will take you three counts to fold in to utanasana, forward fold. Or 3 counts to step back in to downward dog. Each movement has a breath, Each breath has a movement.



# TECHNIQUE

## FORWARD FOLDS

The main focus of forward folds is the posterior chain  
(back body, from the heels to the head)

### MAIN TARGETS:

- Hamstrings, glutes, lower back

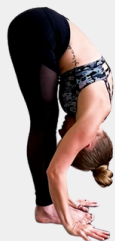
### AVOID GOING TOO DEEP IF:

- You have high or low blood pressure
- Disc herniations
- Hamstring tears

### VARIABLES THAT WILL CHANGE OVER TIME

- Feet distance: Start with feet hip-width apart to help with balance.
- Orientation of hips: Locate the boney parts of the front of the hips (ASIS - Anterior superior iliac spine) tilt the front of the hips over thighs to create length through spine
- Bending knees: Don't be a friend to bend the knees to keep length through the spine. In time you can play with straightening the legs.

### IN TIME STRENGTH OF THE CORE WILL GUIDE TORSO CLOSER TO LEGS



UTANASANA  
INTENSE STRETCH // STANDING FORWARD FOLD

Hands on waist, shins or hands firmly pressing to floor



PADANGUSHTASANA  
BIG TOE POSE

Loop index finger, middle finger and thumb around the big toe.  
Bend the knees to allow for the bind or grab the ankles instead  
Poke the elbow out wide and draw the shoulder blades  
towards each other



PADAHASTASANA  
FOOT TO HAND POSE

Similar to the above two poses, slide hand underneath the soles of feet.  
Great stretch for the wrists



'Imagine you are trying to pull the big toe away from the floor with the hands, but you are anchoring down through the feet so much they won't move. There is always life in the arms and hands in standing postures too.'





## ARDHA UTANASANA HALF STANDING FORWARD BEND

When starting out, keep shoulders in line with hips and think about drawing shoulders down the back towards the butt.  
Hands touch the shins or reach towards the floor, keeping fingers active.



## PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA (A) SPREAD FOOT INTENSE STRETCH // WIDE LEGGED FORWARD FOLD

Practice keeping the spine lengthened at a halfway point first, reaching down towards the floor.  
When the hands can press firmly into the mat, wrap the elbows inwards so they are roughly in line with the hands. Hands in line with arches of feet will be the optimum point, with crown of head facing downwards to floor.

## ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA DOWNWARD FACING DOG

Remember this shape will change over time or depending on your intention.

To find best starting shape, start from Cobra, lying flat on the belly hands by chest, come to tabletop then back to DWD  
Heels do not have to touch the ground, bend the knees or lift heels tighter to tilt hip bones further over thighs and butt bones to sky



Feet and hands hip-width apart is a good go-to base. If this feels too tight for shoulders widen the hands a little more to the edges of your mat.

Spin the eyes of the elbows (inner creases) to face the thumbs

Three settings of where the hands can be placed. : middle finger facing straight forward, index finger facing straight forward or fleshy part between thumb and index finger facing more forward (we'll break this down later)

## UTKATASANA CHAIR POSE

Like you are sitting in a chair bring the weight into the heels.  
placement of feet will be determined by what is comfortable for you. i.e hip width apart or toes touching heels slightly apart.

Knees tracing the same line as the toes i.e if feet are hip width apart watch that the knees don't drop in towards one another/ there will most likely be a slight gap between the knees

Arms can reach forward in line with shoulders or upwards to the ceiling  
Turning the pinky fingers in to face one another and lifting upwards helps us feel a little more through the upper back.



## DANDASANA STAFF POSE

Seated pose similar to Ardha utanasana - halfway lift/ half standing forward fold



Press out through the heels, toes pointing to sky like you were standing on the ground

Hands press firmly into floor beside the hips (If arms are long, there will be a slight bend at elbows but the energy and activation through the arms is still there)

Draw the shoulder blades towards each other to broaden out through the chest.

## PASCHIMOTTANASANA (A) WEST (BACK BODY) INTENSE STRETCH POSE

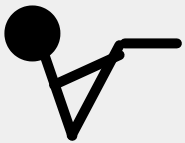
Seated pose similar to Padangushtasana // Big To Pose



Press out through the heels, toes pointing to sky like you were standing on the ground  
Just like big toe stretch, bind the fingers in a circle around the big toes and pin the elbows out wide. If struggling to reach, hold on to Ankles or keep reaching the arms long down by the side of the legs, palms pressing firmly into the floor.

If you struggle to get the tilt of the pelvis forward, sit on a sturdy block or a couple of firm pillows to project the hips forward.

## NAVASANA BOAT POSE



Great one to build strength in the core.

Build up to the balance with feet on floor first, keeping spine long  
hands to back of thighs for support if needed





# FINDING 'SUKASANA' / EASY SEAT

"It is said that we practice Yoga to get comfortable moving our bodies, so that we may be comfortable in stillness too,"



Sitting still for a long period of time can be rather tiring. Our muscle might tighten, our joints become sore and it becomes quite a big effort to do something natural.

A few tips for sitting comfortably:

- Sit with the knees below the hips, it will stop the thigh muscles tensing to hold the legs in place

You can do this by propping up on a Yoga block or a couple of sturdy pillows

- Note the spine is in a neutral setting (Not overarching or curling the spine - rock the pelvis back and forth a couple of times to find an optimum setting.

When the joints are stacked "correctly" the muscles can soften and we let go of the effort to hold a comfortable seat

- Some folk like to meditate with a mudra. This is a particular hand gesture that connects us to a certain essence, energy, planet or element. If you are not purposefully connecting to a mudra the hands and arms can be relaxed. If you have long arm bones the hands might be closer to the knees, shorter arms may be more relaxed by the hips, there is no right or wrong .

- At first, as we practice, our body might feel tender as muscles strengthen to keep you upright. With time and practice this will soon dissolve. If you are struggling to keep the back from hunching over prop yourself up against a wall.

- We all have a varying degree of internal and external rotation at the hip joint. This will play a part in how you comfortably you sit in certain positions. If you have a great degree of external rotation it will possibly be easier for you to sit with the knees out wider than the hips. Crossed legged or even in Lotus with the feet crossed over to the hip crease too. If - like me - you struggle with this do not worry and most importantly do not force!

- you might sit in what is called Virasana - kneeling pose. Prop up with blocks or pillows under your seat once again to avoid too much compression at the knee.

- It is always totally valid if you feel more comfortable sitting on a chair, with feet firmly planted on the ground

# A LITTLE HISTORY BEYOND THE PHYSICAL PRACTICE

Yogis and sages of old suggest that there are different paths to bring us to the same source; to peace; to enlightenment

The number of paths varies from source to source.

These paths create the wheel of Yoga. Many of which are still practised today. Eight main paths include:

1. **Raja Yoga** - Royal Yoga, based on the study of sacred texts known as Patanjali's Yoga sutras. These verses are used as a guide to wisdom and enlightenment and are seen as the basis of Yogic philosophy - especially the eight limbs of Yoga (discussed later in our course)
2. **Jnana Yoga** - Yoga of knowledge / better expressed as yoga of knowing. The practitioner drops away from all external attachment renouncing 'worldly life' and its distractions
3. **Bhakti Yoga** - Yoga of devotion, whereby the practitioner is openly celebrating their love and devotion towards a particular object, person or cause.
4. **Karma yoga** - Yoga of selfless action, whereby the need for reward or return dissolves and so does the ego, thus creating a spiritual act, a selfless work.
5. **Hatha yoga** - Yoga of forceful effort, is often seen as the most popular yoga of modern times. Taking in the performance of physical yoga postures, as well as the control of breath, sensory inhibition, concentration and meditation.
6. **Mantra Yoga** - Yoga of Repetition. Often thought of as Asanas for the mind. The use and repetition of a phrase, affirmation or a particular word helps focus the mind and develop sense withdrawal. A Mantra may be spoken, whispered or repeated mentally. It can be a personal mantra passed down from teacher to student to a universal mantra (ie. AUM)
7. **Tantra Yoga** - Yoga of technology, celebrating and harnessing the subtle body and our own energetic field(s) Central to Tantra Yoga is the practice of Kundalini. Awakening serpent energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine. Tantra views the world in a somewhat different way to other concepts and practices of Yoga, seeing the body and the world not as an illusion but a manifestation of ultimate reality, as such they both must be treated as sacred.





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Jai x