

Aṣṭāṅgayoga

The eight-limbed yoga as articulated in
Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra*

| Limb | English | Description | Function |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| <i>yama</i> | restraint | non-violence truth non-stealing continenence non-acquisitiveness | Cultivation of wholesome social relations and elimination of negative karmic actions and their disturbing consequences. |
| <i>niyama</i> | observance | purity contentment austerity personal study spiritual devotion | Cultivation of wholesome personal habits conducive to positive spiritual development. |
| <i>āsana</i> | posture | training in yogic postures | Cultivating of physical strength and flexibility; elimination of disease; preparation of the body for extended sitting practice. |
| <i>prāṇāyāma</i> | cultivation of breath | breathing techniques which regulate the pattern and quality of inhalation, exhalation, and retention | Cultivation of inner bio-psychic energies and preliminary mental control through the linking of mind, will, and breath. |
| <i>pratyahāra</i> | sense withdrawal | withdrawal of attention from the external objects of the five senses | Elimination of external distractions. |
| <i>dhāraṇā</i> | retention | the mind's locking onto a point | Initiation of mental concentration drawing the mind to a unitary focus. |
| <i>dhyaṇa</i> | meditation | sustained focal attentiveness of the mental faculty | Cultivation of sustained mental attention to the chosen object. |
| <i>samādhi</i> | integration | as if empty of own-nature, the radiance of only that very object | Achievement of radiant, integrated, non-dual awareness. |