

Where hatha yoga postures come from

How did ancient hatha yoga researchers know that specific postures could heal kidney weaknesses, back injuries, hormonal imbalances, mental agitation, circulation sluggishness, brain, thyroid, and digestion disorders, and so many other physical maladies? They had no books. They didn't learn it in school. They didn't have instruction manuals and videos to explain it to them.

The ancient hatha yoga sages discovered all these postures and exercises with their subtle intellect, through intuitive insight and divine inspiration.

Volumes can and have been written about all the exercises and theories behind hatha yoga. Some postures are called by the Sanskrit names of the animals they resemble, such as *koormaasana* (the tortoise pose), *matsyaasana* (the fish pose), or *bhekaasana* (the frog pose). Most are based on the idea that certain positions relieve tensions and allow your blood and energy to flow more freely in your body. Some stimulate your immune system; while others create or strengthen specific patterns of energy flow in your body.

Spirituality in Action

Being moved from within

Your inner Self is filled with intelligent wisdom. Here's a chance to tap into its healing guidance:

1. Sit or lie down quietly, and bring your focus inside.

Take a few moments to quiet your mind and soften your breath. Become aware of your body from head to toe.

2. Invoke the intelligent energy in your body and invite it to move through you.

3. Let your body gently begin to stretch.

See what feels good and relax into whatever postures come up. Allow yourself to be guided from within. Your body can go into so many different kinds of movements. Stretch gently or dance enthusiastically. Feel the intelligent energy of spirit moving through your body as it guides you on how to move your body.

Sometimes different postures are put together into a flowing sequence. One common series of poses is called *surya namaskar*, or “sun salutations.” This sequence takes you from a standing pose into various push-up type lunges and back bends that flow naturally into one another, and then back into a standing pose to begin the cycle again.

Many hatha yoga postures work on your spine — carefully stretching, opening, elongating, twisting, turning, and bending your spine this way and that. Popular postures for the spine include the cobra back arch, the forward bend, and various spinal twists. Your spine has a very special spiritual significance. It is not only the backbone of your physical body, but also of your energy body.



Be Careful

Hatha yoga postures are extremely powerful, and you should learn them in person from a teacher who can make sure that you are doing them correctly.