












Sun Salutations A: Moving Meditation

| Image | Pose | Description |
|---|---------------|---|
|  | Mountain | <p>Stand with feet hip-width apart. Tuck chin in. Legs slightly bent. Shoulders back and down.</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture and concentration. Strengthens legs. Engages core. Strengthens your thighs, knees, and ankles. Firms your abdomen and buttocks. Relieves sciatica. Reduces flat feet.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/nwiyZSmfpWY?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: A) Palms together in prayer mudra behind the back. B) Hands raised over your head. C) Eyes closed. D) Samashthiti (feet together). E) Feet hip-distance apart. F) Rock gently back and forth and side to side. G) Block between the thighs. H) Palms together in front of the chest in prayer mudra. I) Interlace fingers and extend arms straight in front of you (shoulder stretch).-</p> <p>Precautions : Avoid locking the knees out (allow your knees to soften).</p> |
|  | Upward Salute | <p>Inhale, turn palms out. Sweep overhead into a gentle backbend. Lift heart and expand chest. Feel yourself opening up to life. Gaze up. Keep forehead relaxed and face soft.</p> <p>Alternatives: Samashthiti (feet together).</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture. Strengthens legs. Engages core.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/nwiyZSmfpWY?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Hands in prayer behind back. Eyes closed.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnant.</p> |

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|  | <p>Forward Bend</p> | <p>Exhale and fold forward at hips. Let descent be an offering of gratitude. Keep spine straight as long as you can, then let it softly round into a full forward bend. At end of exhalation, draw chin in and gaze at legs.</p> <p>Alternatives: Tabletop. Gorilla.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretch back, hams. Improves posture.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/hrp6Q_QyDkc?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Bent knees. Loop fingers around big toes.</p> <p>Precautions : Back, knee, hamstring injuries.</p> |
|  | <p>Halfway Lift</p> | <p>Inhale and lift chin, chest, and gaze. Stay rooted through strong legs, reaching down through heels. Press hands into shins to help lift heart and straighten spine. Feel strong and grounded.</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture. Strengthens legs, abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/74Ucde7uV7M?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Bend knees (if back is stiff).</p> |
|  | <p>Four Limbed Staff</p> | <p>Exhale and step or jump back to Plank Pose. On same exhalation, shift weight slightly forward, bend at elbows, and lower body halfway to ground until upper arms are parallel to floor and close to side ribs. Don't sink hips or collapse core. Surrender your ego (full-body prostration to the earth).</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens arms, wrists. Tones abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/wljya7wWews?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Lower knees or whole body to the ground.</p> <p>Precautions : Carpal tunnel. Pregnancy.</p> |

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|  | Up Dog | <p>Inhale and press back through toes to come to tops of feet. Simultaneously, press down through hands and draw shoulders back to broaden chest, letting inhalation expand your heart. Activate feet and legs to float your kneecaps, thighs, and hips. Lift gaze past tip of nose.</p> <p>Alternatives: Cobra. Sphinx. Crocodile.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens spine, arms, wrists. Stretches shoulders.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/IVavcaTyQ-Y?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Cobra (Bhujangasana) keeping elbows bent and pelvis rooted to earth.</p> <p>Precautions : Back injury. CTS. Pregnancy.</p> |
|  | Down Dog | <p>Exhale, tuck toes under. Use strength of belly to pull hips up and back. Straight line from wrists through shoulders, spine, and hips. Relax back of neck. Stay for several breaths. If you need to rest, drop to knees and bow into Child Pose (Balasana).</p> <p>Alternatives: Dolphin.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches spine, hams, shoulders. Calms nervous system.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/ayRU3ecmPbl?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Bend knees. Take feet wider apart. Lift heels up.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnant. HBP. Headache.</p> |
|  | Halfway Lift | <p>At the end of the last exhalation, jump or step feet forward to your hands. Inhale and lift chin, chest, and gaze, straightening the spine.</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture. Strengthens legs, abs.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/74Ucde7uV7M?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Bend knees (if back is stiff).</p> |

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|  | <p>Forward Bend</p> | <p>Exhale and fold into a full forward bend. Keep back soft.</p> <p>Alternatives: Tabletop. Gorilla.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretch back, hams. Improves posture.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/hrp6Q_QyDkc?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Bent knees. Loop fingers around big toes.</p> <p>Precautions : Back, knee, hamstring injuries.</p> |
|  | <p>Upward Salute</p> | <p>Inhale, rise fully into a gentle backbend. Look up.</p> <p>Alternatives: Samashthiti (feet together).</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture. Strengthens legs. Engages core.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/nwiyZSmfpWY?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Hands in prayer behind back. Eyes closed.</p> <p>Precautions : Pregnant.</p> |
|  | <p>Mountain</p> | <p>Stand with feet hip-width apart. Tuck chin in. Legs slightly bent. Shoulders back and down.</p> <p>Benefits: Improves posture and concentration. Strengthens legs. Engages core. Strengthens your thighs, knees, and ankles. Firms your abdomen and buttocks. Relieves sciatica. Reduces flat feet.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/nwiyZSmfpWY?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: A) Palms together in prayer mudra behind the back. B) Hands raised over your head. C) Eyes closed. D) Samashthiti (feet together). E) Feet hip-distance apart. F) Rock gently back and forth and side to side. G) Block between the thighs. H) Palms together in front of the chest in prayer mudra. I) Interlace fingers and extend arms straight in front of you (shoulder stretch).-</p> <p>Precautions : Avoid locking the knees out (allow your knees to soften).</p> |

Lesson Plan Description:

The sanskrit for Sun Salutation is Surya Namaskara, which means "salute to the sun". It is the most common sequence of asanas. Its origins lie in India where its large Hindu population worships Surya, the Hindu solar deity. Symbolic Sun Meanings: *life, power, strength, energy, force, clarity, and self*. When practicing Sun Salutations, you are also "saluting yourself" because practicing it provides you with energy and clarity. Try practicing at different speeds: quickly as a fast flow sequence, normal pace, and slowly savouring each pose (Yin Yoga).

As a moving meditation, Surya Namaskar develops focus and peace of mind. Let the breath guide each movement, and extend the movement over the entire length of each inhalation or exhalation. Your gaze follows the direction of movement, linking your mental energy with your physical action.

Sun Salutation helps focus the mind and heart on gratitude for life.