

# Q&A

## Question:

What are the benefits of the Sun Salutation?

## Answer:



“Surya” means “Sun” and “Namaskar” means “to bow down.” The sun is the life or energy source for this planet and is an element in everything we eat, drink or breathe. The earth and the moon are significant in the way they affect life, but the sun is the source of all energy and when one is in tune with the cycles of the sun, physical health, well-being, vitality, and energy, are all yours.

There is no possibility of life in the absence of the Sun's rays. All life forms will cease to exist if the sun decides to disappear. Solar energy is fundamental even within your body. Your body is maintaining a certain temperature and all that generates heat upon this planet – whether in the form of life or in the form of inanimate material – all of it is solar energy, finding its expression in so many different ways.

Only through learning how to better “digest” the sun, internalize it, and make it a part of your system, do you truly benefit from this process. Surya Namaskar, also known as Sun Salutation in the West, is therefore a process to harness this solar energy to build a dimension within you where your physical cycles become in sync with the sun's cycles of twelve-and-a-quarter years. So it is by design that Sun Salutation has twelve postures or twelve asanas in it.

### Physical Benefits of Sun Salutation?

Sun Salutation comprises a sequence of 12 yoga postures, best done at sunrise. If done fast, it provides a good cardiovascular workout. If done at a slower pace, these postures help tone the muscles and can relax the system and meditative. Regular practice of Sun Salutation improves the functions of the heart, liver, intestine, stomach, chest, throat, and legs – basically, the whole body. The process purifies the blood and improves blood circulation throughout the system and ensures proper functioning of the stomach, bowel, and nerve centers. Practicing Sun Salutation daily helps balance the three constitutions – Vata, Pitta and Kapha – that the body is made up of, according to Ayurvedic science. Sun Salutation is also known to enhance the physical strength of a person. Though pretty much a complete set of asanas in itself, Sun Salutation also forms an excellent link as a warm-up before other yoga asanas.

## 34 Benefits of Sun Salutation

When done daily, systematically, correctly and faithfully

1. Strengthens the entire digestive system (including stomach, pancreas, intestines, liver, etc.) and cures, and prevents constipation.
2. Invigorates the nervous system (including the brain, spinal cord, lower plexus, and cures brain-fag, forgetfulness, worries and other forms of mental derangement).
3. Invigorates the heart and will cure and prevent blood pressure, palpitation.
4. Develops the lungs, gives you wind and prevents tuberculosis.
5. Improves the quality and circulation of the blood. Active circulation of the blood is the first law of health.
6. Stimulates glandular activity; gives a new vivacity to the glands. Owing to the stretching and compressing movements of the throat and neck the thyroid gland is stimulated and any tendency to goiter is obviated. Correct glandular functioning governs health and attractiveness.
7. Improves the color and function of the spleen by enabling it to eradicate toxic impurities through profuse perspiration and to absorb vital energy from the atmosphere. A clear skin glowing with ruddy health and vigor is a winning factor for men and women in business and social life.
8. Strengthens the neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, fingers, back, stomach, waist, abdomen, intestines, thighs, knees, calves and ankles. Strengthening the back is known to be a simple but efficient remedy for kidney troubles.

9. Improves and develops the chest, ie. keeps it hard, firm and elastic; restores it to normal loveliness.
10. Improves the uterus (womb) and ovaries, removes menstrual disorders such as dysmenorrhea and consequent pain and misery.
11. Child-bearing is less painful and more easy. All discomforts from menopause vanish.
12. Will rid women of morning sickness and perverted taste and appetite, peculiar to pregnant women and regarded as inevitable.
13. Increase the quantity and improves the quality of milk in nursing mothers.
14. Proven to halt falling out of hair, and its tendency to grayness and prevents baldness by increasing nutrition to the hair and scalp.
15. Eradicates sexual debility, and the special weakness of men and women.
16. Reduces redundant fat, especially the fat about the abdomen, hips, thighs, neck and chin.
17. Will remove kidney troubles. Strengthens the stomach, neck, back, and chest by the mere rolling of the stomach towards the spine, as in some of the positions of Surya Namaskar.
18. Reduces the abnormal prominence of the Adam's apple by the forward and backward bending of the neck.
19. Destroys the offensive odor of perspiration.
20. Reduces bow leggedness.
21. Improves knock-knees in walking.
22. Prevents and corrects neurasthenia due to rhythmical breathing.

23. Will increase the height of the body if the positions are correctly performed.

24. Will prevent and cure constipation.

25. Not merely gives you external form, shapeliness and muscle of the body, but improves and normalizes the function of most of the vital internal organs.

26. Makes you immune from disease by tremendously increasing your disease-resisting power. The practical test of health is that one should never have even ordinary cold or cough, which is regarded even by some medical men as inevitable or as a matter of course. A healthy person never feels that he has any organ or limb.

27. Takes you step by step quickly, easily, surely, from your present condition to the very height of physical perfection.

28. Is the quickest method for increasing and maintaining youthful buoyancy. The spirit of youth represents an invaluable asset. It is wonderful and satisfactory to know that you are fit and getting the most out of life.

29. Gives you poise, mental as well as physical.

30. Endows the performer with more mental and psychic power and instills a theistic attitude in her or him gradually. It increases the power of mental concentration, optimism and self-confidence.

31. Is the foundation of healthy and sane life and will be of incalculable benefit to you throughout your life. Long, systematic, continuous and daily practice of Surya Namaskars and right diet, will, in addition to vibrant health and radiant energy, invariably create in you a dislike for all stimulants and sedatives;

32. Will keep you away from sins, for it is the proud act of wellness and disease.

33. Will generate in you good thought, optimistic thoughts; will give a charitable and sanguine turn to your disposition and will imbue you with a spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of your community, your country and your king.

34. And will, in short, unlock the door to glorious Health, Strength, Efficiency and Longevity, which God intended for you. You will thus see that the Namaskars possess the unique feature of co-ordinated actions of all the vital organs, nerves, muscles and other parts of the system, which are stimulated, developed and strengthened simultaneously, a result not achieved by any other single exercise.