



Ashtanga Yoga: The Eight Limbs of Yoga

The eight limbs of Yoga are described in the second chapter of *The Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali. *The Yoga Sutra* is recognized as one of the most thorough “road maps” of consciousness.

1. Yamas (universal ethical principles)

- ahimsa (non-violence)
- satya (truth)
- asteya (non-stealing)
- brahmacharya (moderation)
- aparigraha (non-coveting)

2. Niyamas (personal conduct)

- saucha (purity of body, speech, and mind)
- santosa (contentment)
- tapas (“burning” – desire for practice/burning through habit patterns)
- svadhyaya (self study)
- Isvara Pranidhana (dedication of practice to the benefit of all beings, to the Divine)

3. Asana (physical practices: postures, conscious nutrition, hygiene, exercise, rest... that bring steadiness, health, and lightness to the body)

4. Pranayama (directing and regulating breath/energy)

5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses; the gateway to the inner realms)

6. Dharana (focused concentration of the mind)

7. Dhyana (meditation)

8. Samadi (absorption in the Infinite)

Adapted from *Light on Yoga*, by B.K.S. Iyengar