

## ***Yoga for Busy People*** *by Pierre B elisle*

This article will look at some of the foundations behind the practice of yoga and examine how to make yoga part of our busy life.

### ***The Householder Path***

In the Indian tradition, you were either a householder having social or worldly obligations or you had renounced it all to live in a monastery or a cave. Householders needed to be on a path of social action (*Pravritti*) for many years before even thinking of embarking on the next step: the path of renunciation (*Nivritti*). Anything else would be considered “premature transcendence”. Each path had different yoga practices. Obviously, most of us are still householders.

As householders, our yoga practice must first focus on reclaiming our body to make it healthier so that we may derive pleasure from what we do (*Kama*). Then we can use this new vitality to create abundance in our life and cultivate the ability to powerfully bring change to our world (*Artha*). From these two qualities, we can connect to others with a sense of purpose and meaning, doing what is “right” as we contribute to the whole (*Dharma*). The objective of yoga for this path is to release physical and mental tensions, to weed out false concepts about ourselves and to build a strong sense of Self, a strong container (*Ahankara*).

### ***The 8 Limbs of Yoga***

Most people think of yoga as the practice of postures (***Asanas***) that stretch and tone our muscles and leave us feeling more at ease in our body. Many people also report that this physical practice helps them deal more effectively with the stresses of daily life. That happens because yoga postures also strengthen our nervous system and tune our endocrine system.

Yoga postures are actually the third limb of an eight-fold path described by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. The first two limbs are ethical principles to help us learn to contain and transcend our animal instincts (anger, fear, lust, ...). They are called the ***Yamas*** (abstention from harming others, from falsehood, from theft, from incontinence and from greed), and the ***Nyamas***. (Purity, Contentment, Discipline, Self-study and Devotion to God).

The householder path is mainly concerned with these first three limbs of yoga. The last 5 limbs of yoga are: Life Force control (***Pranayama***), Withdrawing inwards (***Pratyahara***), Concentration (***Dharana***), Meditation (***Dhyana***) and Cosmic union (***Samadhi***). They are the core of the path of renunciation that has liberation (*Moksha*) as its objective. This will be covered in a subsequent article.

## ***Integrating Yoga into our Life***

Since the *Yamas* and *Nyamas* are mostly practiced in every day life (e.g., “off the mat”), our goal, as householders, would be to make them part of our every waking moments. However, this does require a strong determination to remain conscious and observe those times when we are tempted to not be compassionate, truthful, moderate, detached, content, disciplined, generous, etc. and to adjust our behaviours accordingly. Easier said than done!

This is where the regular practice of yoga *asanas* “on the mat” is required to give us the strong awareness and wilfulness required to live more and more according the *Yamas* and *Nyamas* both “on and off the mat”.

However, with our busy lives, it may seem difficult to find even one time slot per week to attend a yoga class. After doing yoga for a while, we often wish that we could do it more often and on our own. However, setting time aside to do yoga every day seems almost impossible (*who has a spare 90 minutes per day?*).

And then, there is the question of what to do. Few people have enough experience to create their own yoga routine. Fortunately, there are quite a number of good yoga audio and video resources. Although most of them are full-length yoga sets, some do offer shorter routines that you can perform in the morning or evening.

### ***A Quick Powerful Daily Practice***

In 1994, I was introduced to a book by Christopher S. Kilham: “*The Five Tibetans, five dynamic exercises for health, energy and personal power*”. This practice, which has often been described a Fountain of Youth, can deliver a powerful yoga experience in less than 20 minutes per day. Performed regularly, these simple yoga exercises have gradually toned and strengthened my muscular, endocrine and nervous systems and energized my emotional body. The ***Five Tibetans*** are still my morning practice of choice on (many) days when I cannot attend a class or make time for a longer yoga set.

Over the years, I have shared this gift with others through short workshops. Many participants have told me that, over time, they had trouble remembering some of the details or finding the motivation to practice. They have asked me to create a video to give them the detailed instructions that they need and to accompany their regular practice. This has been a long time coming and the final DVD product is “The 5+ Tibetan Rites” (the + in the title reflects the fact that I have included a few of the things that I learned through 15 years of practicing and teaching yoga).

The detailed **Tutorial** section of the DVD shows you how to perform each of the exercises and to adapt them to your condition and level of fitness. The guided

**Full Sequence** section of the DVD can accompany your practice of the Five Tibetans with the sounds and sights of the Pacific Ocean in the background.

***Just do it!***

Whatever yoga practice you chose, make a commitment to do it regularly. When you start wavering in your commitment, just remember how good it feels afterwards. Over time you will notice the effects of that commitment on other areas of your life. That is the magic of yoga!

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*Pierre Bélisle has been teaching Kripalu yoga in the Ottawa area since 1992 and currently teaches at the Rama Lotus Yoga Centre. For more details about the Five Tibetans, to order the DVD and for information about the other services that Pierre offers, his yoga classes and his upcoming workshops, please visit [www.flyogi.com](http://www.flyogi.com).*