

THE BEGINNERS GUIDE TO



NEW DAY YOGI

# KUNDALINI YOGA





# WELCOME

Sat Nam, Thank you for being here. I'm Heather Elizabeth, a passionate and certified Kundalini yoga teacher.

In 2016, unknown to myself at the time, I was at the beginning of a deep inner journey. I accidentally bought a Kundalini yoga DVD.

I came away from that first Kundalini yoga experience saying "Well I'm never doing that again". I had no clue what I had just experienced and felt really out of my depth.

After that experience, I started to come across snippets on social media, like a breathwork practice here and a little meditation there, and I loved them and started to use them regularly throughout my day. I even had a notebook to write down everything I was learning. And, it was all Kundalini yoga! How crazy!

Needless to say, I decided to check this strange yoga practice out some more.

And here I am.

In my early days of practicing Kundalini yoga I was confused with some of the jargon used and why we did certain things and I wanted to know more.

That's why I've created this guide, to clear up any confusion you may have, so you know what's going on the next time you find yourself in a Kundalini yoga class. :)

I hope you find this helpful.

Sat Nam

*Heather. xox*



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## CHAPTER 1

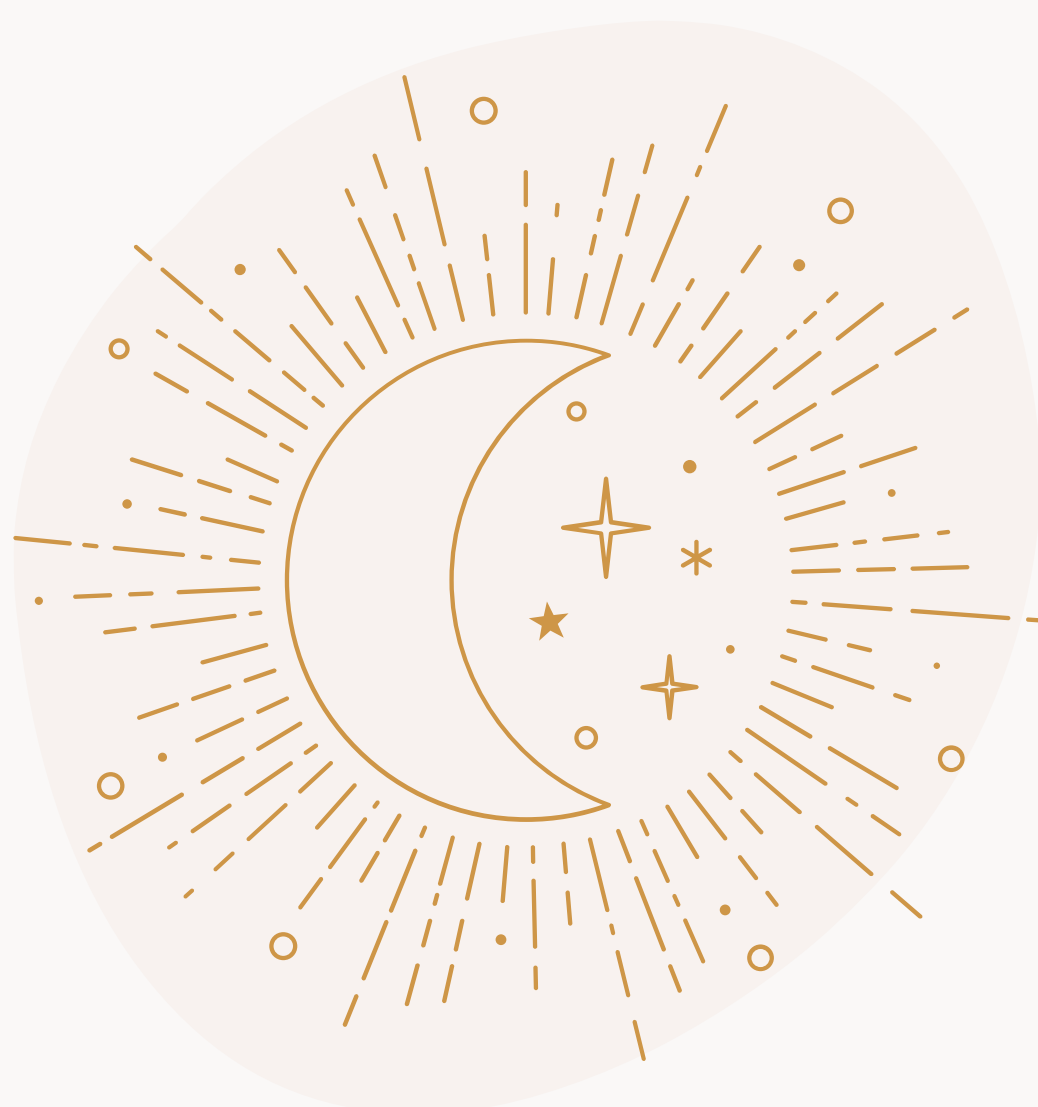
# WHERE DOES KUNDALINI YOGA COME FROM?

Kundalini yoga originates in India and is believed to date back to thousands of years ago.

The Udasi yogis, who were the ancient yogis 1000-2000 years ago, travelled from place to place, mainly in Northern India, sharing these yogic teachings that are today known as Kundalini yoga. Udasi is a Sanskrit word and means 'traveller' or 'wanderer'.

As time went on, these teachings were a kind of secret and were passed on by word of mouth from teacher to student amongst the wealthy.

Eventually Kundalini yoga was brought to the Western world and has become a much loved practice for many.



# WHAT IS KUNDALINI YOGA?

Kundalini yoga is a style of yoga that's very different to any other. I think that's why, when I first came across it, I couldn't get my head around what we were doing, it was a very different experience to a Hatha or Vinyasa class.

Kundalini yoga is known as the yoga of awareness. By that, this means that through the practice of Kundalini yoga we are awakening our consciousness and becoming more present and self aware. It wakes us up to a much deeper self-awareness. It is the yoga to self mastery, helping you to live your fullest life.

Sounds amazing, right?

Kundalini yoga is a spiritual practice. While we are doing physical things, it focuses on working with our energy body. Through specific movements and postures, breathwork, mudras and meditation, it activates and stimulates dormant energy that lives in the base of our spine and rises up through our chakra system. We're working with the nervous system, our three brains (head, heart, gut), our glands & organs, moving prana (energy), awakening and activating our whole being.

It might sound like a lot and it can be, it's a very powerful style of yoga.

## CHAPTER 1

# HOW IS KUNDALINI YOGA DIFFERENT TO HATHA?



While Hatha focuses mainly on the physical aspect of yoga, ie, the asanas, or postures, where there is a flow movement from asana to asana. Kundalini yoga is very different.

According to the 8 limbs of yoga, asana (postures) is one limb, or aspect, of what yoga is all about. Kundalini yoga focuses on more than the asana limb and even has 2 more limbs of its own.

Kundalini yoga combines all the limbs of yoga together, whereas Hatha focuses primarily on the asana limb of yoga, ie, the postures.

This simply means that in a kundalini yoga class there will be a mixture of: specific sequences of asanas (kriya) where you will experience breathwork (pranayama), mantra - chanting & sound (Shabd Guru), hand movements (Mudra) and specific eye gaze (Drishti) all while connecting with the spiritual limbs of meditation and working with the energy body.

This may be why Kundalini yoga works fast for people and is a powerful style of yoga.



## CHAPTER 1

# WHO CAN PRACTICE KUNDALINI YOGA?



It is often said that Kundalini yoga is the yoga for everybody but I think this is partially true. While modifications can be made and we can adapt things to work for every individual, there are some aspects of the practice that everyone must be mindful of when starting out.

Kundalini yoga is a beautiful, yet powerful, transformative practice that awakens and moves dormant prana (energy) within the body. This can be a lot for some practitioners who are new to energy work, breathwork or yoga and meditation.

As with every style of yoga or movement practice, there will be some risk to take into consideration with the physical aspect of asanas (postures) and the physical movement. Always speak with your healthcare practitioner if you have any medical issues or underlying health conditions before starting out with any new practice.



# WHO CAN PRACTICE KUNDALINI YOGA?

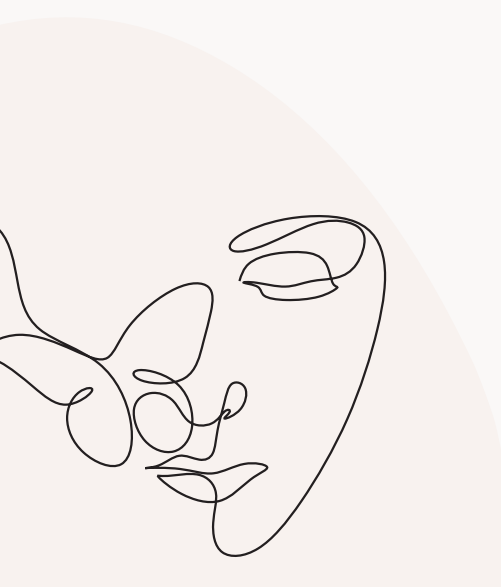


It is not uncommon, but perfectly normal, for practitioners of Kundalini yoga, to feel sensations from time to time, such as, light headedness with some breathwork exercises, as their body adjusts to getting more oxygenated. The clearing of toxins can sometimes bring a feeling of nausea. A tingling sensation in the body can sometimes be felt, as we move prana (energy) in the body. Emotional releases can also happen, as we move and tap into our body's prana (energy), this can release stored emotions in the body.

I say all this to make you aware of some of the things we can experience with this practice. Kundalini yoga is a deep modality and powerful style of yoga that can leave us feeling greater connection to ourselves, to source energy and to life itself. We are activating our energy centres and awakening parts of ourselves like never before. This brings us greater clarity in what we want in our life and helps us get into alignment with those desires. Sounds amazing.

Practicing Kundalini yoga regularly strengthens our intuition and makes us more present and self aware.

When starting out with Kundalini yoga (or any other modality), take it slow, be mindful of how your body is responding to the work you are doing.





## CHAPTER 2

# THE STRUCTURE OF A KUNDALINI YOGA CLASS



A traditional Kundalini yoga class is typically 90 mins long. There are different sections to a class that together make this a very unique experience.

You can also practice Kundalini yoga in shorter times, for example, 60, 30 and 20mins, there are no rules.

Here is my daily and weekly practice to show you an example. I have a daily non-negotiable practice that's about 20-30 mins long, on days when I can have a longer practice that 30mins will turn into 45-90mins.

That's just what I do and it's taken me some time to get to this point, but what I do is not what everyone else has to do. You can fit your yoga practice into your schedule however it suits you.

On the next page I've broken down a traditional Kundalini yoga class to show you the different sections of a class and give you an idea of what happens.





# THE STRUCTURE OF A KUNDALINI YOGA CLASS

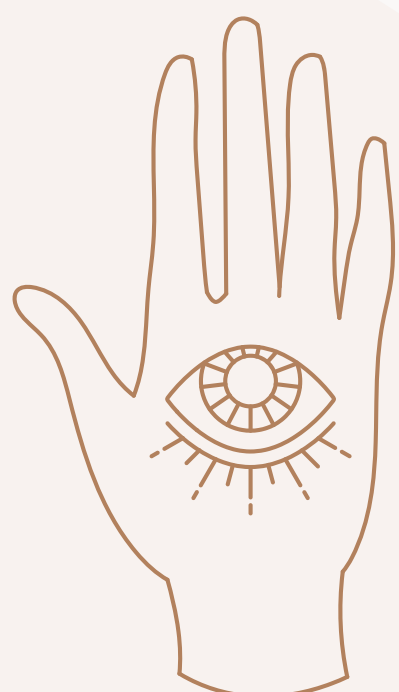
## Traditional Class Breakdown

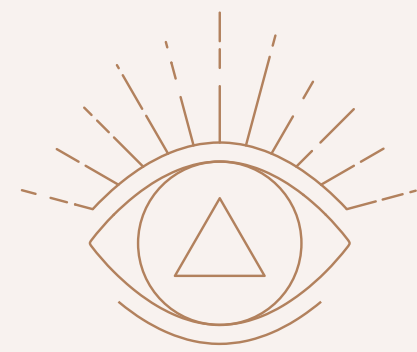
### Tuning In

- We begin a class by tuning in. We chant the Adi Mantra three times "Ong namo, Guru Dev Namo". This mantra is in Sanskrit and translates to "I bow to the divine wisdom within".
- Next we do warm up exercises. These exercises are to warm the spine and prepare the body for the kriya, or the movement part of the class. Typically there will be 3 or 4 warm up exercises each lasting anywhere from 1-3 minutes each, depending on the class.

### Movement

- Then we move into the Kriya. A kriya is a specific set of asanas, or postures, to achieve a particular outcome. A kriya makes up the largest portion of the class, lasts anywhere from 20-40 mins depending on the specific kriya. There are hundreds of kriyas to choose from. The kriya prepares the body for meditation.





# THE STRUCTURE OF A KUNDALINI YOGA CLASS

## Traditional Class Breakdown

### Rest & Integration

- After all that movement we follow with a Shavasana. Here we lie down, close our eyes and are guided to fully relax our body and enter a meditative state. Shavasana is very important as it allows for the integration of the energies we've been working with in the kriya. Typically Shavasana will last 10-15 minutes.

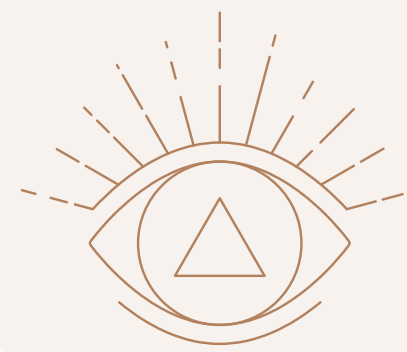
### Meditation

- Then meditation time. The meditation will be in tune with the class theme and kriya. There are also hundreds of meditations in Kundalini yoga. Kundalini meditations can involve mantra, breathwork and mudra and the idea is that we get into a meditative state while focusing on the breath, mudra and/or mantra. A meditation can last from 3 – 11 minutes.

### Tuning Out

- To end the class we tune out, similar to tuning in, here we chant "Sat Nam". Sat Nam is Sanskrit for 'Truth is my identity'. Traditionally we chant the mantra three times but chanting it once is perfectly fine too.
- An optional addition when tuning out, that you may come across, is singing "The Long Time Sun" before chanting Sat Nam. Here are the words to the Long Time Sun: 'May the Long Time Sun Shine upon you, May All Love surround you and the Pure Light Within you, Guide your way on.'





# THE MEANING OF 40 DAY SETS

## Why 40 days?

You might have come across 40 Day sets in Kundalini yoga. If not, it is something you will hear about.

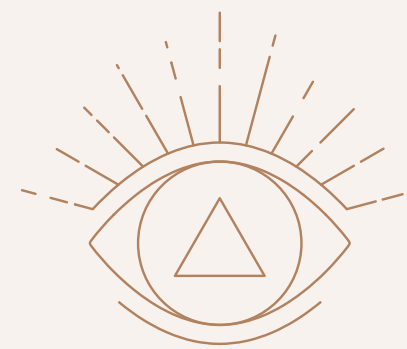
In Kundalini yoga it is a common practice to do a 40 day set. This means that we choose a kriya or meditation or both and commit to practice this same kriya or meditation set for 40 consecutive days.

40 days is a period of time for transformation. This transformation has to do with our blood. As our heart beats and our body produces new blood cells in every beat of the heart, the new cells have the ability to record your attitude. Our blood is changed every 112 - 120 days and 40 days is a period of time in which you've produced enough blood during your 40 day set that you're starting to make change.

Try a 40 day set and test it for yourself.

You can also practice for 90, 120 and 1000 days.





# INTRO TO THE BANDHAS (LOCKS)

Bandhas are a big part of kundalini yoga. The word Bandha means lock. There are 3 main body locks in Kundalini yoga, positioned at the root, the abdomen and the neck. The root moves prana (energy) up to the abdomen and then the abdomen moves prana up to the neck. We practice these locks as they allow energy to move and flow within us. **Remember, when we squeeze anything, we are doing so gently. A Gentle squeeze is all that's required.**

The root and neck locks are the most used and the ones you will start to learn. The diaphragm lock is an advanced practice but here is a brief run down of all 3 bandhas to give you an idea of what they are.

- Mula Bandha - Root Lock. (Moola)

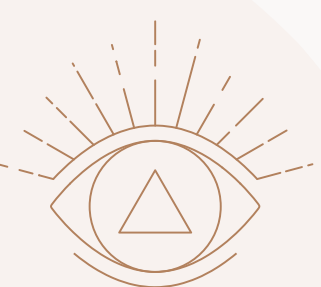
This lock is like a Kegel, where you squeeze your pelvic floor, like you're trying to stop mid pee. So if you hear the words "squeeze from the base of the spine", this is what they mean.

- Uddiyana Bandha - Abdomen. (Ou-di-ana)

We are lifting our adominal wall in and up while holding the breath out on the exhale, this creates a vacuum in our abdominal/diaphram area and it looks like this area is sucked in towards the spine.

- Jalandhara Bandha - Neck/Chin Lock (Jalan-dara)

Jalandhra bandha is practiced by straighting the spine, gently tucking the chin slightly down so the back of the neck is lengthened (like we're giving ourselves a double chin) and we slightly lift our chest up towards the chin.





# COMMON QUESTIONS

## WHY DO WE TUNE IN?

The ritual of tuning in is a self initiation. We are letting our body and mind know that it is time for our practice. Tuning ourselves in, using our own voice with the mantra is giving ourselves permission and self authorisation to be here and show up for our practice.

## DO I HAVE TO WEAR WHITE?

No. Wearing white is a choice and should always be. Traditionally white is worn because it is a neutral colour, a colour that represents peace, freedom and protection. It's believed that white can remove energetic blockages allowing the Kundalini energy to flow through our chakra system.

I believe in always wearing what is comfortable to you.

Choosing what colours to wear, even in our daily wardrobe, is a very personal choice. For me I've always worn dark colours in class as a student. When I was doing my teacher training and I was exploring with what to wear as a teacher, I discovered that I didn't feel comfortable in all white. A mix of colours make me feel more safe and protected in my nervous system.

You can mix it up, for example, wear dark pants and a light coloured top or the other way around. Or all white with a red scarf for a splash of colour. Do what is right for you.





# COMMON QUESTIONS

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A KRIYA AND A MEDITATION?

A kriya is a specific set of asanas, or postures, in a specific sequence that are set up like so to achieve a particular outcome, for example, 'Kriya for balancing the chakras.

The kriya that is chosen for a class will be in tune with the class theme, ie, the main focus of that class, eg: Class theme - to release stress, Kriya - 'To release stress and tension from the body'.

The kriya is the movement part of the class and can include: pranayama (breath), Mudra (hand placement), Mantra - chanting & sound (shabd guru) and Drishti (specific eye gaze).

A meditation will be practiced after the kriya with shavanasa (rest & integration) in between the two. This will also be in tune with the class theme. Meditations are typically practiced sitting and can include, Mudra (hand placement), mantra - chanting & sound (shabd guru), pranayama (breath) and Drishti (specific eye gaze).

So to recap, a kriya has a sequence of specific asanas, or postures, put together to form a set, ie, the movement part of a class, and a meditation is typically practiced sitting and will focus on a combination of mantra, mudra, pranayama or drishti.

There won't always be all of those components in one meditation, but more of a combination of a few of them.





# COMMON QUESTIONS

## WHY DO WE TUNE OUT?

We tune out at the end of a class by chanting the mantra “Sat Nam”. This tuning out mantra is called a long Sat Nam where the Sat is chanted for 6 beats and the Nam is chanted for 1 beat.

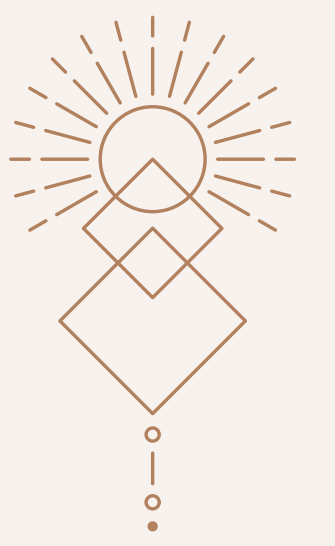
While tuning in prepares us for our practice ahead, tuning out closes our practice and acts as the ending to the work we have done. I see it as a circle, with tuning in, opening the circle and tuning out, closing it.

The mantra Sat Nam comes from the sound of the breath. Sat is the sound of the inhale through the nose, Nam is the sound of the exhale through the mouth. With this mantra, you are coordinating with what is already taking place, breathing. It's breathing that connects us to life.

By using Sat Nam you are acknowledging your aliveness, your breath, your life, your truth. You are bowing to your aliveness and the alignment we generally feel after a class, this is why Sat Nam is used for tuning out.







# GLOSSARY

## **ASANA**

Is an individual posture, such as, downward dog.

## **DRISHTI**

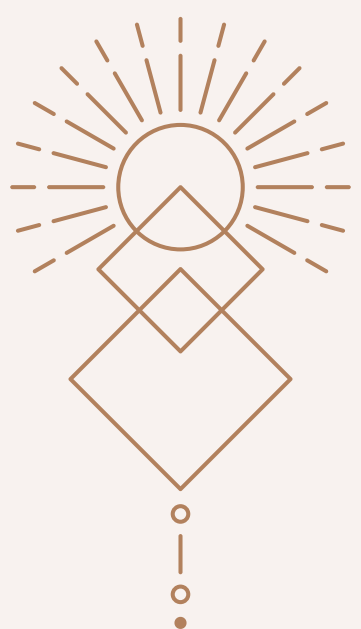
Is a specific eye gaze, such as, looking at the tip of your nose or at the third eye while in meditation or will be directed in a specific asana within a kriya.

## **KRIYA**

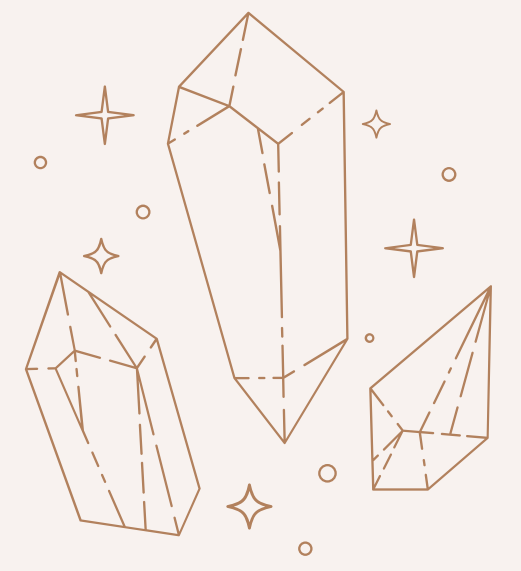
Is a specific sequence of asanas put together to achieve a specific result, eg, Kriya for healthy bowel movement. A kriya is a set of movements. There are hundreds of kriyas for pretty much about anything.

## **MANTRA - CHANTING & SOUND**

Mantras in Kundalini yoga are in Sanskrit. We use mantra with some meditations or with a specific asana within a kriya. Example mantras: The Adi Mantra that we tune in with or 'Sat Nam'. Sometimes we chant out loud or mentally repeat a mantra or simply listen to a mantra song. All the while, we are tuning into the energetic frequency of the mantra.



# GLOSSARY



## MUDRA

Our hands have areas that are linked to different parts of the body. Each area represents different emotions and behaviours. A Mudra Is a specific hand placement to stimulate specific energetic shifts, eg, Gyan Mudra - the tip of the thumb and the index finger touch, the remaining 3 fingers are out straight and touching each other. This Mudra stimulates intuition, wisdom & knowledge.

## PRANAYAMA

Pranayama is Breathwork and in class will refer to A specific breath exercise, for example, Breath of Fire or Sitali breath. A Specific breath can also be instructed during a meditation or an asana within a kriya.

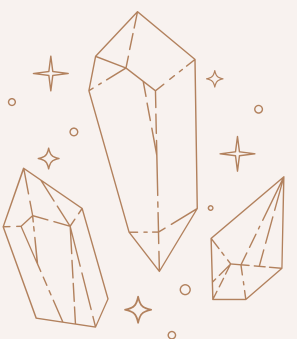
## PRANA

Is the Sanskrit word for 'Life Force' or 'Energy', also known as Chi in Chinese medicine. Prana is the energetic life force that we are all made up of and that's within us. We are moving and working with Prana in Kundalini yoga.

## SADHANA

Sadhana is a Sanskrit word which means, 'methodical discipline to attain desired knowledge or goal'.

Sadhana is a daily practice of something that is for your wellbeing. Sadhana is not about being rigid and full of rules but can be practicing anything that is contributing to your wellbeing, it could be, being creative, playing a musical instrument, or going for a walk in nature, even lying in Shavasana.



# GLOSSARY



## **SAT NAM**

This may be the most used mantra in Kundalini yoga. This mantra means "Truth is my identity" with Sat meaning 'True' and Nam meaning 'Name', but what does that actually mean?

Sat Nam originates from the sound of the breath. It's a truth that we are alive and we are alive because we breathe.

I love this mantra, it's maybe my favourite one. My take on it from over the years, it's a mantra that connects you to your truth, like connecting you to your soul, the essence of your being, your aliveness and from that connection you see/feel your truth. I see truth as pulling back the layers of society's rules, other peoples beliefs, etc and seeing what's true for you in any situation or life area.

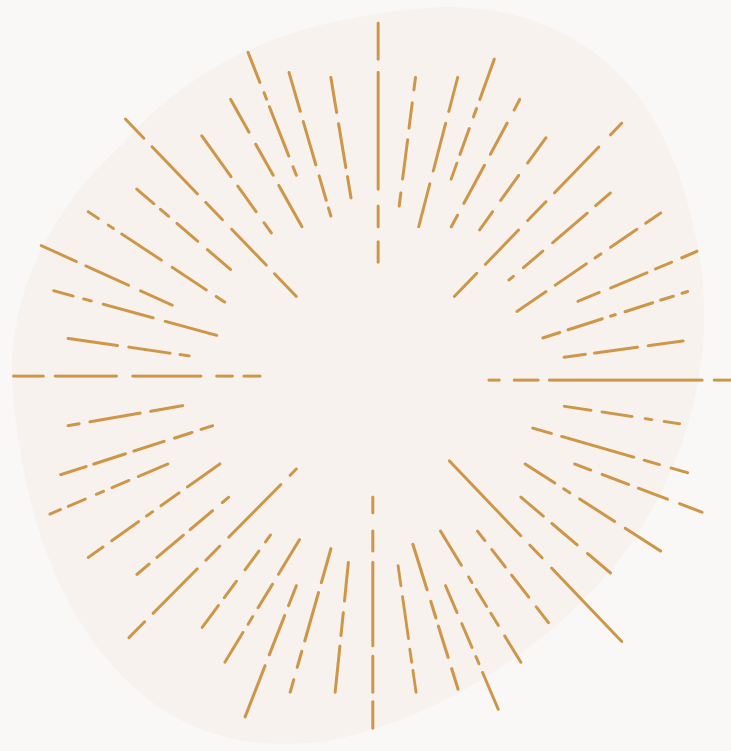
Sat Nam is also used, similar to Namaste, as "Hello" and "Goodbye".

## **SHAVASANA**

Shavasana is the relax & integrate section of a class. Typically you are guided to position yourself into 'Corpse pose'. This is where we lie down on our back, legs and arms out straight and we are guided to enter a deep relaxation or meditative state. Alternatively, you can lie or sit in any way that is safe, nourishing and available to you.

Shavasana is always after the physical movement (kriya) part of the class. Shavasana is very important as it's the time to integrate the energies that we have just worked with in the kriya.





# CONCLUSION

Kundalini yoga is a holistic practice that intertwines physical postures, breathwork, mudras, mantra and meditation to awaken the dormant divine energy that lies within us. Kundalini yoga is a beautiful practice of deep inner connection.

If you're looking for a dynamic and spiritually enriching practice you may find Kundalini yoga very beneficial.

Always listen to your intuition and tune into what your body needs in any class. The movements, the postures, the breath, etc, are all suggestions and can always be modified to make it work for you as and when you need to.

If you feel the call to do this deep work or you would like to give it a try, I invite you to head over to [NewDayYogi.com](https://NewDayYogi.com) where you will find all things Kundalini yoga.

Thank you for checking out this guide. I hope it has given you some clarity with what to expect in a kundalini yoga class. If you'd like to reach out, I am here at [hello@newdayyogi.com](mailto:hello@newdayyogi.com)

Sat Nam

*Heather xoX*

