



The Power of Ashtanga Yoga: Developing a Practice That Will Bring You Strength, Flexibility, and Inner Peace--Includes the complete Primary Series

Kino MacGregor

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Ashtanga Yoga is a graceful, athletic type of yoga that has become extremely popular in recent years. Here, Kino MacGregor, a disciple of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, the great modern guru who developed Ashtanga Yoga, gives a comprehensive view of the practice and shows how Ashtanga is fundamentally a path of spiritual transformation and personal development.

MacGregor delves into the history and tradition of Ashtanga Yoga and reveals how its philosophy manifests in contemporary lifestyle and dietary choices. She also explains the essential connection of breath, posture, and gaze that is the core of the practice. Her clear, step-by-step instruction of the Ashtanga Yoga Primary Series—including standing, seated, backbending, twisting, hip-opening, and closing postures—is a wonderful initiation for those who are new to the practice, and it will motivate experienced yogis toward perfection of the form. Throughout, MacGregor shares her own personal yoga journey and her devotion to yoga as a path of self-realization in a way that will inspire all practitioners.

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Orgadena says

Ashtanga

Spiritual Strength.

*Patience,
Spiritual patience.*

Firefly Pose.

The, Truth.

Ashtanga
Yoga, inner strength.

~

Johannes Bertus says

Kino is great. I would recommend this book to beginners though, not ashtangi's with experience of primary sequence. There wasn't really anything in this book I hadn't already picked up in Mysore class. Although I found the tables of breaths and counts at the back quite useful and will use it as a reference in future.

Nada says

Didn't expect it to be more like a dairy rather than technical information about the whole process

Crystal says

Loved reading about Kino's journey, as well as learning more about this wonderful practice. Very knowledgeable and humble.

Kate says

I discovered Kino on YouTube and was amazed by her flexibility and strength and also liked her clear way of describing yoga positions. The same clear style is used in this book. She talks about needing to make a commitment to yoga practice, and possibly starting out with a 3-day-per-week commitment... unfortunately I don't have time/money at the moment to really do that, but someday I hope to!

Most of the yoga poses in the book are between beginner to intermediate level of difficulty. Nothing too crazy! I wish she had made a yoga DVD... hopefully soon!

Robyn says

Kino is one of my favorite yogis. It's nice to know she started out just like me and now she's just amazing and devoted to this lifestyle. This book is much better written and edited than her other one; it's really well-done. It's a nice, big book with illustrations of the poses for the entire first series. Before the postures, she discusses many aspects of yoga in great detail. She also discusses the postures on the pages with their illustrations.

Tracy Speed says

Excellent opening of the benefits of the practice in the beginning. Also provides thorough descriptions of the postures throughout. I am working with a private ashtanga instructor 1 day a week, and this book provides a solid companion for the other 6 days or when I travel to remind me of the rigor required and intent of each posture.

Amanda says

Head to any bookstore, whether brick and mortar or online, and you will find a wide variety of yoga books. All will have different titles and claim to have the secrets to yoga and ground breaking practices that will literally change your life. Knowing this I am always just a little hesitant to take on another yoga book. Most of the time you can take a variety of books on yoga set them side by side and you will notice that they all say essentially the same thing. I was pleasantly surprised that *The Power of Ashtanga Yoga* by Kino MacGregor is not one of those books.

The foundation of the book is the same as you will get in any yoga manual. Part I is a collection of information about the history of yoga in general, the history of Ashtanga yoga as well as a description of how it differs from other forms of yoga (Ashtanga for instance is broken into six groups of poses that must be studied in order). Part I also has a wonderful section on our relationships to food and how yoga can help us to realize these relationships and come to terms with them.

Part II of the book is the instructional part of the book. This part of the book is very detailed (you can easily compare it to the instructions given by Iyengar in *The Light on Yoga*). It also contains many wonderful photographs that show exactly what was described in the descriptions of the asanas. The best section of Part

II is the section on Bandhas. I have read many yoga books that try to explain how to achieve a Bandhas but usually the language here becomes poetic and if you have not been introduced to the bandhas in a class the reader will more than likely finish the section having no idea how to achieve the bandha. MacGregor however lays out the bandha instructions clearly and concisely and it is for this conversation alone that I believe this book is great addition to any yoga book collection.

The Power of Ashtanga Yoga also contains a wonderful collection of Appendixes that outline the Sun Salutations and a Glossary that is impressively comprehensive.

As a resource the book is fantastic and would be a great addition to any library no matter what type of yoga you practice. Perhaps the most unique thing about this book though is the voice. It is not often that you can pick up an instruction manual and feel as if you are connecting with the person. From the introduction to the glossary MacGregor lays it out there for you and inserts her own experiences so you feel as if your time spent with the book is like time spent in the company of a knowledgeable yoga instructor.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in yoga. No matter what type of yoga you practice the advice and knowledge between the covers is universal and accessible. I personally cannot wait for the publication of this book in May of this year... it will be on my shelf right next to another classic *The Light on Yoga*.

NOTE: I was given this book by the publisher to read and review. In no way does that affect my opinion of the book or the content of this review.

Pat Loughery says

When I stumbled onto Kino MacGregor's YouTube channel, I watched a lot of her content. She's bright, communicates well and teaches clearly both simple and complex concepts and poses. I read more about her and found this book, and thought it would be helpful to me as a new yoga practitioner, even though I don't practice Ashtanga style. It has certainly been helpful.

The book contains two parts. The first is theory and story, and I was immediately impressed with how well it is written. From the history of yoga through Kino's personal discovery of it, discussion on diet and spirituality, her work is encouraging and respectful both of her reader and the tradition.

The second is practice, with photos and descriptions that illustrate the Primary Series of Ashtanga. It is certainly helpful to a beginner, and I believe it would be helpful to more advanced practitioners as well.

This book is by far the best on the subject on my small but growing yoga shelf.

D says

Useful compilation of poses and philosophy.

The journey of a spiritual seeker never ends... No matter how much support and help you have, the spiritual journey is a lonely quest that must be walked alone. You are directly accountable for each step you take in

any direction. It is your own strength that you discover along the way, and no one but you can truly find that.

As you train your mind to remain steadfast, you unravel cycles of misery and follow a path that leads toward true freedom. I hope that you take the gift of practice and allow it to transform your life, too.

Primary Series - starts with Surya Namaskara, aimed at steadyng the mind and warming the inner fire. Gateway poses test understanding of technique and asana. Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana, where you balance on one leg, is the gateway of the standing poses. The Primary Series builds to poses that test alignment, inner strength, and flexibility to be sure your asana practice is solid and stable before you move on.

The Second or Intermediate Series of Ashtanga is nerve cleansing (nadi shodhana).

Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana - Before beginning to move your leg, turn your head and find a new spot for your eyes to focus on.

Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana - Hardest part is finding your way safely into half-lotus position before folding forward. Many students rush into this and end up with an injury. Give it time and space to release and open into the pose.

Urdhva Danurasana - Create space and elongate. Be gentle with yourself.

Standing up: Shift weight onto your legs. Keep heels firmly planted on the ground. Shift weight forward onto your feet as you inhale, then backward onto your hands as you exhale. See if you can come to your fingertips with the heels planted. If not, simply work on the rocking motion, less as momentum and more as a subtle weight transfer forward into the solid foundation of the pelvis, legs and feet.

Don't turn feet outward. Rotate your thighs inward. Once your hands are floating in the air, there's a huge temptation to bring up your head. Avoid this at all costs. Your head is always the last thing to come up. Instead, let your head and hands hang back, send your hips forward until the weight of your torso is stacked over your hips. Once your chest moves forward over your hips, bring your hands into prayer position and your head into alignment over your feet. Inhale up - exhale down.

Halasana - Keep your weight supported on your shoulders and upper arms. Hold 8 breaths

Paschimattanasana - Do not rush the forward bend.

Sukhasana - This posture is Savasana in other styles of yoga, but 'corpse pose' is a challenging movement in the Fifth Series. Here, simply lie down and relax.

The spiritual power center inside the pelvis is referred to by some classical Hatha Yoga texts as the Kanda center - All 72,000 nadis (channels) are said to originate from this deep place inside the pelvic region. Only by drawing your life energy back to this power center can you actualize the full potential of Ashtanga. [nadis channel prana to every cell. Some are wide and rushing; others are a mere trickle. When this system flows freely, we are vital and healthy; when it becomes weak or congested, we struggle with poor mental and physical health]

Jump Through - 4 segments

1 Walk or jump your feet forward to a crossed position

- 2 Guide your feet through your hands - walk, wiggle, lift or slide w/ hands firmly on the ground
- 3 Stretch your legs so they are extended forward while your hips are above the ground and your shoulders strongly engaged
- 4 Complete the movement by lowering yourself to the seated position on the ground.

Keep spine flexed throughout the movement
Resist the urge to rush, lift your hands or just sit down.
Stay strong mentally and physically.

S?ryanamask?rah A (9 movements)
S?ryanamask?rah B (17 movements)

Ashtanga is the 8-limbed path of yoga by Patanjali, propagated by the late Sri K Pattabhi Jois. It combines Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the classical Hatha Yoga poses, and philosophy with the Bhagavad Gita into a total system of spiritual transformation.

Create a sattvic or peaceful attitude. Restore health and balance. Strong and flexible.

It takes a noble spirit to see hope where there is despair. And it takes limitless power to see love everywhere around you. Yoga gives you the power to be that force of healing in the world.

Yoga reveals our true nature. A warm, tender heart of compassion that beats strongly underneath.

Yoga asks you to tap into a place within yourself that has faith in results that are not immediately evident. The only way to rest in the difficulty of the present moment is to have full faith that your ultimate goal, the attainment of inner peace, is achievable.

Andrea says

This book had a lot of great information in it. I always prefer a yoga class being instructed in person, but books are helpful too.

Margaret says

This is a great resource for anyone beginning an ashtanga practice, teaching ashtanga, or just look for new ways to think about the components of the postures in the primary series. I've read Lino Miele and John Scott's books on primary, and while they are definitely worth a look, this is the book I would give/recommend to new students.

Kreeti Shakya says

One of the most comprehensive books on the philosophies and postures of asthanga yoga. Kino demonstrates each posture in detail along with their benefits. This is a book I'd like to have by my side so that i can reference the precise way of performing and holding each posture. Kino also shares her personal journey in

the path of yoga which is a motivation for a beginning practitioner. Her dedication to the practice is self-evident through her postures. Reading the book made me realize that she has also done a lot of study in the philosophical aspects of yoga. If I was living in Miami, I'd certainly have Kino as my yoga teacher.

Mander Pander says

What I really appreciate about this book is that Kino's humanity and presence as a lifelong student as well as a teacher comes through in the pages, and it makes Ashtanga that much more accessible. There is absolutely the highly precise, technically sound instruction that you would hope for, but what makes it that much better is that it's so clear it's coming from someone who has been on the journey, made the mistakes and had the frustrations, and learned how to overcome them.

Casey says

In general, it is difficult to write and photograph yoga in order for it to be an instructive material. The nature of yoga is movement, and a lot is learned through one's own experimentation and from others.

The Power of Ashtanga Yoga is thorough. The book is broken into two sections: theory and practice. Even if you have other books which describe and show poses, the theory section is worthwhile.

Kino goes into detail about the importance aspects of the practice, interspersing small facts about her own experiences. You get about 50 pages of theory. She has many recommendations and suggestions for practitioners. She details the yogic philosophy in an easy manner without getting too complicated.

I can't really say that this is an introductory book to yoga. That is not to say that ashtanga isn't for beginners, but it would be beneficial to go to a class or at least watch a video of ashtanga and then go through the book. However, I think this is more a limitation of a printed book as a medium for yoga instruction.

One helpful appendix is the sanskrit vinyasa count of all the poses, which lists inhalation and exhalation along with the count.

I think her descriptions of the poses are done well. She really goes into a lot of detail and while reading, everything made sense to me. I didn't find any portions where it seemed to skip a step.

There are modifications for beginners and advanced practitioners.

Kino has a really positive attitude, which comes through in this book. I have put this next to my yoga mat and have been referencing it every day since I have received it. Because it's a larger book, the book and the pages stay open by themselves - quite handy while practicing.
