The Ashtanga Yoga method is built around the ‘Mysore Style’ class, so named because yoga was taught this way by Shri K. Pattabhi Jois, in Mysore, India, and continues to be taught this way in traditional Ashtanga Yoga schools around the world. In Mysore Class, the student is taught a sequence of postures through one-on-one instruction.

The correct movements, breathing, and other aspects of the practice are learned gradually, in a step-by-step process accessible to anyone. This method allows each student time to practice and memorize what they have learned before adding more.

Students are able to practice independently and at their own pace while surrounded by the energy and inspiration of other students in the room. The main teacher and assistants are able to work with each student individually. Initially, students may require more attention, but as they become proficient in their practice, they are allowed more independence, receiving adjustments and assistance only when required.

Observing a Mysore Class

When starting an Ashtanga Yoga practice, it is recommended that one commence in a Mysore Class from the very beginning. The best way to answer any questions about the Mysore practice and how it works is to come and observe a class for half an hour or so. Most questions are answered by observing the class, and then anything unanswered can be discussed with the teacher. All our teachers have learned Ashtanga Yoga using this method and we have great faith in the results gained from its proper practice.

Your First Mysore Practice

In your first class you will learn the basic techniques for breathing and movement – what we often call ‘vinyasa’ – and guided through the opening and closing sequences of the Ashtanga Yoga practice. Your first practice may only be 15 to 20 minutes long. It is important not to learn too much in the beginning as this method relies on memorization and becoming proficient in what has been taught before progressing further. This approach also allows you time to adjust to a new daily routine. In subsequent classes, new postures will be added to what was learned. Thus, over time, the length of your practice will gradually increase according to your ability.

Why Begin with Such a Short Practice?

In order to establish a stable foundation in both the body and the mind, the Ashtanga sequence should be learned gradually and increased slowly over time while paying close attention to breathing, posture, movement, and gazing. Learning gradually allows time to adjust as you develop more strength, flexibility, and familiarity with the practice. Doing too much too quickly brings the risk of injury and imbalance to the body, and in general is not sustainable as a daily practice. For that reason, students are taught little-by-little and at a rate appropriate for each person individually.

How Many Days a Week Should You Practice?

Ideally, practicing five to six days per week is recommended, even at the beginning, taking only one or two days off per week to allow the body to rest (traditionally, women rest for 3 days during menstruation). If possible, your practice should be at the same time every day. You will appreciate the routine and respond better to the practice. Although you may find that you are a little sore in the beginning, the regularity of a daily practice removes the soreness in the muscles and invigorates the body each day. If a daily commitment to the practice is not possible, many benefits can still be found. Please come to practice as you are able.