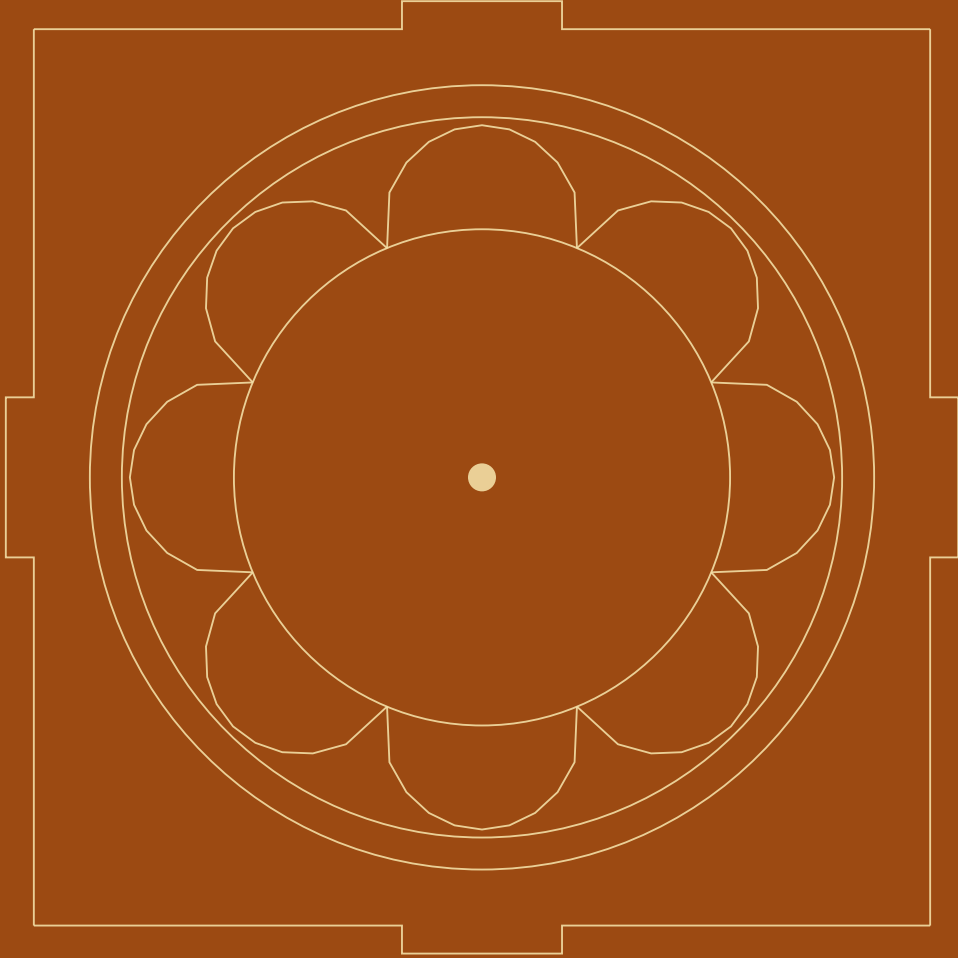


PRACTICE

The Asana Atlas: 84 Classical Poses with Sanskrit

84 printable pose cards in Devanāgarī and IAST, with the meaning of each name, steps, alignment, easier variations, precautions and the original verses of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and the Gheranda Samhita



आसन

āsana

YOGIDE

Free sample

For the personal use of the buyer; sharing or reselling is not allowed. This book informs and does not replace a qualified

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teacher or medical advice. Questions: administration@lacangel.fr

Before you begin

Sit on the steps of a ghat in Rishikesh early in the morning and you will see the whole history of yoga postures pass in front of you. An old sadhu sits motionless in a cross-legged seat that the Haṭhayogapradīpikā described five centuries ago. A little further on, a teacher-training group flows through standing poses that were codified in Mysore and Pune in the twentieth century. Both are yoga. Both have Sanskrit names. But they do not come from the same place, and a serious practitioner deserves to know which is which.

This atlas gives you 84 postures, one card each, with their name in Devanāgarī and in scholarly transliteration, the meaning of the name, numbered steps, the key points of alignment, an easier variation, the situations in which to avoid or adapt the pose, and, when it exists, the verse of the classical text that first describes it, in our own translation.

It rests on three commitments.

First, honesty about the number 84. Indian tradition says that Śiva taught 84 postures, or 8,400,000 of them, but no ancient text gives one official list of 84. Chapter 1 explains where the number comes from and how this atlas built its own list. Every card states its provenance: **HYP** (described in the Haṭhayogapradīpikā), **GS** (described in the Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā), or **Modern** (taught in the Indian schools of the twentieth century). Nothing is presented as older than it is.

Second, the texts are quoted accurately. The Sanskrit verses were checked against the digital editions of GRETIL (Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages). The translations of verses in this book are our own, written for Yogide. Where we mention an older English translation, it is one in the public domain, named with its edition and year.

Third, safety is part of every card. Each card ends with the situations in which the pose should be avoided or adapted. A book cannot see your body: if in doubt, learn the pose from a qualified teacher.

This book is not medical advice.

If you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, heart disease, glaucoma or a detached retina, osteoporosis, a neck or spinal injury, a recent operation, a hernia, or knee or hip problems, ask your doctor before practising, and avoid inversions and deep bends until you have their agreement. Stop any pose that causes sharp pain, tingling, numbness, dizziness, palpitations or a headache. Pain in the knee is never a sign of progress: come out of the pose.

A note on the texts and their numbering

- Haṭhayogapradīpikā (HYP), compiled by Svātmārāma, usually dated to the 15th century. Verse numbers follow the GRETIL digital text. For the asana chapter (chapter 1), these numbers coincide with the English translation by **Pancham Sinh (Panini Office, Allahabad, 1914, Sacred Books of the Hindus)**, which is in the public domain, except at the very end of the chapter, where Pancham Sinh

numbers the Bhadrāsana verses 55–57 instead of 55–56. Other editions sometimes shift a verse by one or two numbers.

- Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā (GS), a dialogue between the sage Gheraṇḍa and Caṇḍa Kāpāli, usually dated to the 17th or 18th century. Its second chapter (the text calls its chapters "lessons", upadeśa) describes 32 postures. Verse numbers follow the GRETIL digital text, which matches the translation by **Srisa Chandra Vasu (1914–1915, Sacred Books of the Hindus)** for every verse we checked. Vasu often groups verses (for example "9–10"); we give the full range.

How to use this book

- **As a reference.** Look up a pose by its chapter, by the poster table in Chapter 11, or by the Sanskrit index in Chapter 12.
- **As a study of the tradition.** Read Chapter 1, then the 33 cards marked HYP or GS in order: you will have read, verse by verse, everything the two great hatha manuals say about posture.
- **As a practice companion.** Each chapter opens with a short introduction to its family of poses and the order in which to approach them. Begin with the easier variations. A balanced session generally moves from standing poses to forward bends, backbends and twists, then inversions if you practise them, and always ends with Śavāsana.

How to pronounce what you read

Letter	Sounds roughly like	Example
a	the u in "but" (short)	hatha is "huh-tuh"
ā, ī, ū	long: "father", "see", "moon"	āsana = "aa-suh-nuh"
e, o	always long, as in "they", "go"	gomukha
c	ch as in "church"	candra = "chun-druh"
ś, ṣ	sh (two slightly different positions)	śava, vṛkṣa
ṛ	a short vowel ri	vṛkṣa = "vrik-shuh"
ṭ, ḍ, ṇ	retroflex: tip of the tongue curled back	garuḍa, koṇa
ṁ	nasalises the vowel before it	siṁha = "sing-huh"
kh, gh, th, dh, ph, bh	aspirated: consonant plus a puff of air (never English th)	dhanura, bhujaṅga

In names, āsana (आसन, "seat, posture") is joined to the word before it: vṛkṣa + āsana = vṛkṣāsana. This is why so many names end in "-āsana".

Chapter 1. Where the 84 asanas come from

What an āsana is

The word āsana (आसन) comes from the root ās, "to sit". Its first meaning is "seat": both the place where you sit (a mat of grass, a deerskin, a cushion) and the way you sit. In the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, the word appears only in this sense. Sutra 2.46, sthira-sukham āsanam, says that the posture should be steady and comfortable, and the sutras that follow speak of relaxing effort and of the mind resting in the infinite. Patañjali names no posture.

The Haṭhayogapradīpikā opens its chapter on posture with a different emphasis:

HYP 1.19

(our translation): "Because it is the first limb of hatha, posture is taught first. One should practise posture, which brings steadiness, health and lightness of the limbs."

The next verse states its sources: the postures "adopted by sages such as Vasiṣṭha and by yogis such as Matsyendra" (HYP 1.20). In other words, the hatha texts present their postures as an inheritance from two worlds, the ancient sages of the Vedic tradition and the yogis of the Nātha lineage. Between Patañjali and the hatha manuals, posture has grown from a seat for meditation into a practice in its own right.

"Śiva taught eighty-four"

Both great hatha manuals connect posture with the number 84 and with Śiva, the first teacher of yoga in this tradition.

HYP 1.35

(our translation): "Eighty-four postures were taught by Śiva. From among them I take four, the essential ones, and explain them."

The Haṭhayogapradīpikā names the four (siddha, padma, siṃha, bhādra), declares Siddhāsana the best of all (HYP 1.36), and later speaks again of "the eighty-four seats" (catuṣāṣīti-pīṭheṣu, HYP 1.41). But it never lists 84: in all, it describes fifteen postures.

The Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā is more expansive:

GS 2.1-2

(our translation): "There are as many postures as there are species of living beings: eighty-four hundred thousand were taught by Śiva in former times. Among them, eighty-four are distinguished; and among these, thirty-two are auspicious in the world of mortals."

In the original, the number of "distinguished" postures is given in a roundabout way, *ṣoḍaśonaṃ śatam*, "a hundred less sixteen", which is 84. Vasu's 1914–1915 translation renders the verse the same way: "eighty-four are the best; and among these eighty-four, thirty-two have been found useful for mankind in this world." The text then lists and describes its 32.

So the classical position is clear: the 84 (or the 8,400,000) belong to Śiva; the human texts teach a smaller number. The figure 84,00,000 also appears in Indian tradition as the number of species of living beings through which a soul may pass, which is why the *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā* links the two: there are as many postures as there are creatures. Scholars generally read 84 as a symbolic number of completeness rather than an inventory.

The first lists of 84 names

The first known texts that actually **name** 84 postures came later. The *Haṭharatnāvalī* (हठरत्नावली), attributed to Śrīnivāsa and usually dated to the 17th century, gives a list of 84 names (in its third chapter); it describes only part of them, and several names on the list are obscure. The *Jogapradīpikā*, a hatha text in Brajbhāṣā written by Jayatārāma in 1737, sets out 84 postures in verse; an illustrated manuscript of 1830 depicts its 84 asanas in as many paintings. The lists in these texts do not match each other, nor do they match the lists taught today. Some of their "asanas" are what we would call mudras or breathing practices.

The great expansion of posture practice came in the twentieth century. Teachers such as T. Krishnamacharya at the Mysore palace, Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh, B. K. S. Iyengar in Pune and the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger drew on the hatha texts, on older Indian physical culture and on their own experimentation to develop and name many standing poses, sequences and variations. Most of the standing postures you meet in a class today were codified in this period.

How this atlas chose its 84

There is no canonical list, so we built ours openly, in four layers:

1. **The fifteen postures of the HYP** (chapter 1, verses 21–56): Svastikāsana, Gomukhāsana, Virāsana, Kūrmāsana, Kukkuṭāsana, Uttāna Kūrmāsana, Dhanurāsana, Matsyendrāsana, Paścimatāna (Paścimottānāsana), Mayūrāsana, Śavāsana, Siddhāsana, Padmāsana, Siṃhāsana, Bhadrāsana.
2. **The thirty-two postures of the GS** (chapter 2), which include all fifteen of the HYP (the GS calls the corpse pose *mṛta*, "dead", as well as *śava*) and add seventeen more: Muktāsana, Vajrāsana, Guptāsana, Matsyāsana, Gorakṣāsana, Utkāṭāsana, Saṃkaṭāsana, Uttāna Maṇḍūkāsana, Vṛkṣāsana, Maṇḍūkāsana, Garuḍāsana, Vṛṣāsana, Śalabhāsana, Makarāsana, Uṣṭrāsana, Bhujaṅgāsana, Yogāsana.
3. **Viparīta Karaṇī**, which the HYP (3.78–82) and the GS (3.33–36) describe among the mudras, not the postures, but which is practised today as an inversion; we include it and mark it as such.
4. **Fifty-one postures of the modern Indian tradition**, chosen because they are taught across lineages (Krishnamacharya and his students, Sivananda, Iyengar, Bihar School) and because together with the classical ones they cover every family of movement: standing, forward bends, backbends, twists, inversions, arm balances and relaxation.

That gives 33 postures described by the classical texts and 51 modern ones: 84 in all. This is an **editorial selection**, not a rediscovered ancient list. If someone tells you that "the 84 classical asanas" are a fixed set,

you now know how to answer.

When the old name and the modern pose differ

A surprise awaits anyone who reads the texts: several classical names designate a posture different from the one taught under that name today. The Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā's Utkaṭāsana is a squat on the toes, not the modern "chair pose"; its Uṣṭrāsana is done lying on the belly, not kneeling; its Garuḍāsana rests on the shins; the HYP's Dhanurāsana pulls the big toes to the ears like an archer drawing a bow; the HYP's Vīrāsana is a cross-legged seat, not a kneeling one. On these cards, we describe **the classical form first**, exactly as the text gives it, then **the modern form** that bears the same name. Both are legitimate; they are simply not the same pose.

The classical descriptions are also short, sometimes only one line, and some can be read in more than one way. Where an interpretation is ours or is debated, the card says so.

What the texts promise

The hatha texts attribute remarkable powers to postures. Matsyendrāsana "awakens kuṇḍalinī"; Mayūrāsana "digests even the deadly poison"; Bhadrāsana "destroys all diseases". We quote these promises because they belong to the tradition and tell you how its authors understood the body. We do not present them as medical facts. Modern research on yoga postures is real but measures different, more modest things; this atlas does not make health claims.

Chapter 1 recap

- Āsana first means "seat". Patañjali names no posture; the hatha texts make posture the first limb of their method.
- HYP 1.35 and GS 2.1–2 attribute 84 (or 8,400,000) postures to Śiva; the HYP describes 15, the GS 32.
- The first lists of 84 names appear later (Haṭharatnāvalī, 17th century; Jogapradīpikā, 1737) and disagree with each other.
- Our 84 = 33 postures described by the HYP and GS (including Viparīta Karaṇī) + 51 modern postures. Every card states its provenance.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already help your practice, and that they show how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, texts quoted with their source, nothing invented.

The full book has 66 pages.

Get it here: <https://yogide.com/>

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