

# Tapasya

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Many traditions have a practice of cleansing, which requires devotees to focus on actions that require self-effort and austerities. So it is with yoga, through tapasya. When we perform austerities and work with great self effort in order to purify ourselves, it is a sign of our growing spiritual maturity. It is the process of ripening our inner goodness to find the beauty and potential which lies within. Tapasya is derived from the word tapas, which means fire. It is said that in order to become fully realized, we need the fire to burn through our habits, rituals and beliefs that are no longer serving us. Some are naturally drawn to the "fire" that changes bring, but most of us require the teachings of others which we may receive from a formal teacher-student relationship, or more commonly, from our loved ones and members of our community to bring about the changes required for tapasya. Hatha yoga provides a way to begin the process of spiritual ripening -- to enable us to mature to realize the value of spiritual cleansing.

## Asanas



Prasarita Padottanasana



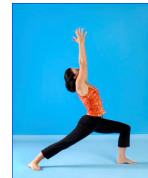
Virabhadrasana 2



Parsvakonasana



Trikonasana



Virabhadrasana 1



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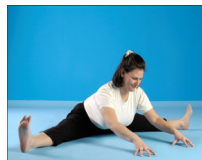
Urdhva Mukha Svanasana



Ustrasana



Eka Pada Raja Kapotasana



Upavista Konasana



Paschimottanasana

Application: So often I've heard expressions like "feel the burn" in western workouts and exercise programs. Even though that expression is not applied in the same way as tapasya in our practice, I have often applied it as an approach to taking the asana practice to a deeper level -- whether that means holding the pose longer, working with the breath, or even smaller, more subtle adjustments to the position to experience a deeper "fire" within. For other practice sheets, see [www.fulcrumblu.com](http://www.fulcrumblu.com).