

# Defining Kundalini Yoga

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**K**undalini comes from the Sanskrit root word of “kundal” which means “the lock of hair from the beloved.” The uncoiling of this “hair,” is the awakening of the Kundalini, the unlimited potential that already exists in every human being.

Kundalini yoga is simple and uncomplicated. Yoga is the science of self and kundalini is the awakening of the self. The simplest way to understand kundalini is to acknowledge that there is a universal spirit, sometimes referred to as GOD or the source, or the creator. God uncoils Himself; this uncoiling process is known as kundalini. What is awakening is YOU, nothing more and nothing less. It is a normal capacity that most people have within them which are not being utilized. It reaches to one’s higher consciousness.

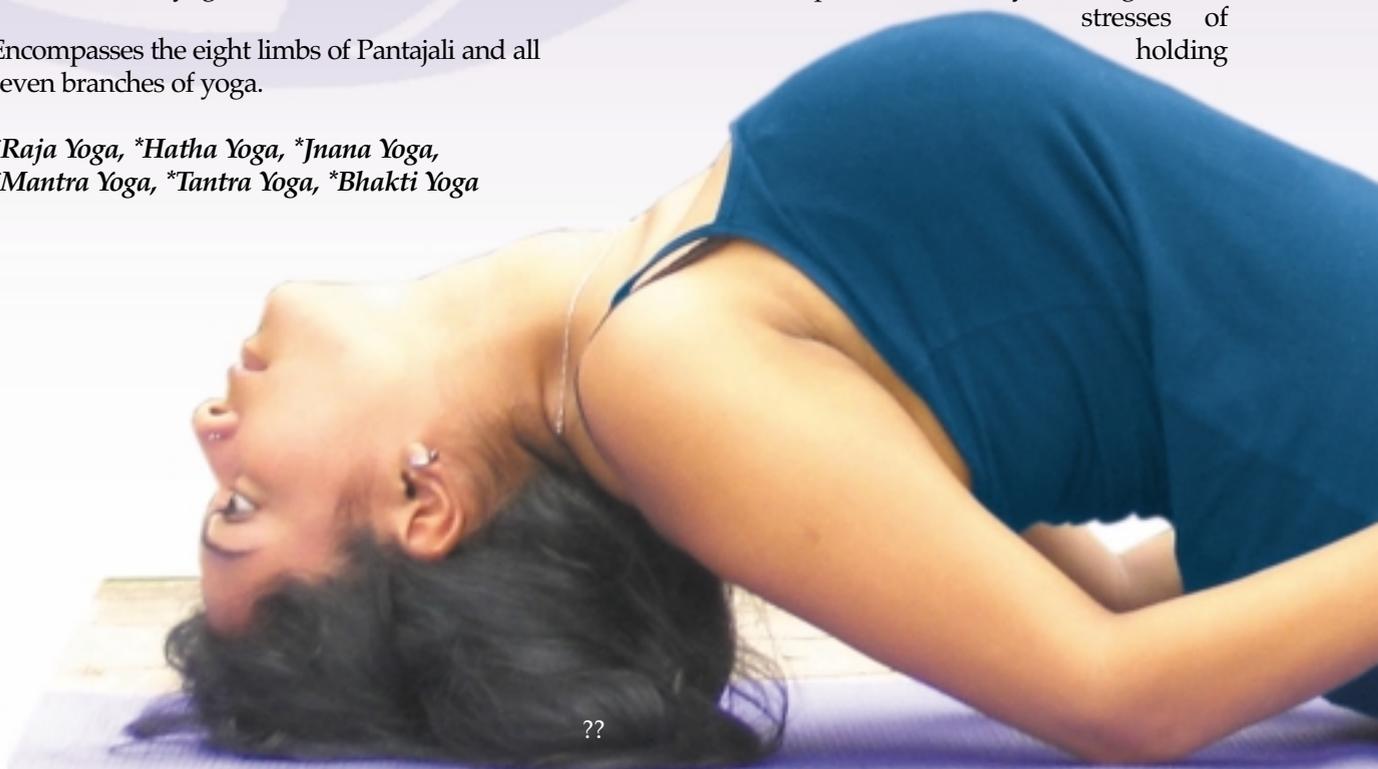
Some of the paths that Kundalini Yoga shares with other traditions of yoga are:

- Encompasses the eight limbs of Pantajali and all seven branches of yoga.

*\*Raja Yoga, \*Hatha Yoga, \*Jnana Yoga,  
\*Mantra Yoga, \*Tantra Yoga, \*Bhakti Yoga*

- An important element is Pranayama techniques using the Bhandas(locks);
- Links all movements with rhythmic breathing patterns;
- Has introspective quality of listening to the body, and releasing emotions, as well as drawing on inspiration such as holding a pose with fearlessness;
- Incorporates chanting and singing as yogic technology;
- Directly focuses on moving the energy through the chakra systems, stimulating energy into the lower centers and moving it to the higher centers.

Kundalini Yoga (as taught by Yogi Bhajan) is the Yoga of awareness or the “mother yoga,” it was taught in a simple form so that it could be easily applied to daily living, it is the yoga for the householders, for those who have to cope with the daily challenges and stresses of holding



jobs, raising families, managing businesses. It is an effective, comprehensive and “do-able” style of yoga for all ages, for anyone who wants to cope with challenges of living in this stressful day and age. It is a form that encompasses elements that are found in all other forms of yoga.

The practice of Kundalini Yoga balances the glandular system, strengthens the nervous system and enables us to harness the energy of the mind and the emotions, so *we* can be in control of ourselves, rather than be controlled *by* our thoughts and feelings.

### The Goal

Kundalini Yoga is designed to give you “hands on” experience of your highest consciousness. It teaches a method by which you can achieve the sacred purpose of your life. This can be described in many ways, such as:

- Experience your inner light of consciousness.
- Experience your own highest consciousness.
- Discover your real Identity.

The practices enable you to merge with or “yoke” with the universal Self. This merging of individual consciousness with universal consciousness creates a “divine union” called “YOGA.”

The practice that leads to this state of self-mastery is also called “yoga.” So the road and the destination have the same name, “yoga.” There are many different kinds or schools of yoga. Those who practice yoga are called “yogis” and those who master yoga are also called “yogis”.

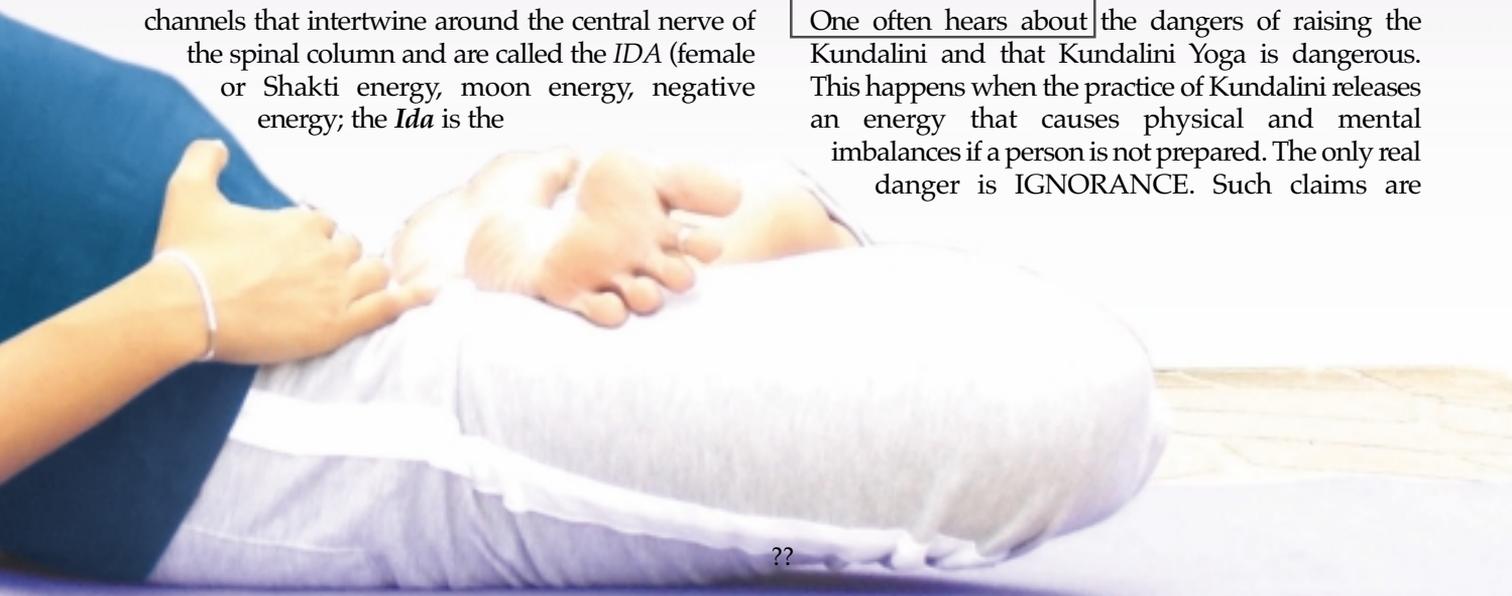
In our physical body the kundalini resides in the spine. These subtle life forces are experiences in the chakras and the *nadis*. The *nadis* are two nerve channels that intertwine around the central nerve of the spinal column and are called the *IDA* (female or Shakti energy, moon energy, negative energy; the *Ida* is the

left nerve channel, and carries the cooling, lunar receptive energy), the other is the *PINGALA* (male or Shiva energy, positive energy, sun energy; the *Pingala* is the right nerve channel and carries the warming, solar, projective energy). Both of these spiral upwards from the base of the spine making two and a half turns around the central column of the spine where the *Sushmana* (The *Sushmana* is the master nerve channel in the central column of the spine), lies thus, conducting the energy around the body. The *Sushmana* originates from the first chakra, at the premium and end of the crown. The *Ida* begins from the left side of the root chakra and spirals up the spine passing through each chakra in turn and ends at the left side of the third eye (the 6<sup>th</sup> chakra known as “*ajna*”); the *Pingala* begins from the right side of the first chakra and passes in an opposite direction of the *Ida* and also ends at the 6<sup>th</sup> chakra. It is the *Ida* and *Pingala* that act as the main conductors or the kundalini energy and feed the entire nervous system.

It is the aim to balance the flow of prana in the *Ida* and *Pingala Nadis*, the sun and the moon energy. Once this happens, the *sushmana* starts flowing and the kundalini awakens and rises through the chakras. Through Kundalini yoga, untapped energy is stimulated and rises up the spine to the top of the skull where it activates the pineal gland. In yogic science, the pineal gland is the key to both physical and spiritual life. One of the major functions of this gland is to vibrate and control the nucleus projection of every cell in the body. When the pineal gland is activated, a major change in consciousness is experienced. It may be subtle or it may be spectacular or it may be a gradual awakening; whichever way, change will happen.

### Myths of Kundalini

One often hears about the dangers of raising the Kundalini and that Kundalini Yoga is dangerous. This happens when the practice of Kundalini releases an energy that causes physical and mental imbalances if a person is not prepared. The only real danger is IGNORANCE. Such claims are



founded on misunderstandings and mispractice of the technology of yoga. This is why the practice of Kundalini yoga should be under the guidance of a qualified teacher who is taught by a master. Proper technique and preparation is all that is needed for the proper flow of the kundalini energy and of course as with all things, even martial arts, ALL YOGA should be practiced with proper understanding and respect for its inherent powers. Kundalini energy is raised within you, you don't need any touch from a "guru" it is your own God-given power you work with and only you can realize you have the ability to activate your energy in a natural way to higher consciousness.

### A Kundalini Practice

A Kundalini class always includes a centering mantra, pranayama and warm-ups, practicing a specific yoga set, deep relaxation and finishing with a meditation and ends with the "Sunshine Song" (a positive affirmation bringing blessings to all).

### Centering Mantra

Kundalini Yoga begins with a tune with the opening Mantra:

*ONG NAMO GURU DEV NAMO*, which is chanted three times, each time on deep inhalation. Translation: "I call on the infinite creative consciousness. I call on the divine teacher within and without".

### Pranayama and Warm-ups

Kundalini Yoga is synonymous with strong breathing and it uses deep breathing, strong rhythmic breathing and all pranayamas. The trade mark breath of Kundalini Yoga would be the powerful breath of fire – the kind of breath that is guaranteed to raise your energy levels, clear your lungs of old residue and get all the neurons in the brain humming. This breath increases the efficiency of blood circulation and pranic energy.

Warm ups consist of stretches and a range of spinal flexes to warm up the spine and loosen up and promote flexibility

Yoga sets or Kriyas, (Kriyas is Sanskrit for "action" and in Kundalini yoga it is considered to be a posture or a sequence of exercises that improves the well being of specific areas of the body, mind and spirit),

are a set of exercises that work towards a specific beneficial outcome. When practicing a kriya, physical and mental changes are initiated that affect the body, mind and spirit simultaneously. Each Kriya has a different effect. There are Kriyas for balancing the heart and mind, for the digestion, for the spine or for developing willpower, to name a few. Some are physically very challenging and others may be gentler. However all the actions are done for specific times, for example, 90 seconds, 3 minutes, 7 minutes and so on.

### Mantras

The word mantra translates to mean "mind projection;" it is a technique for regulating the mind and keep it uplifted; all mantras can be learnt and used by anyone. Mantras are used in Meditation and one is encouraged to keep the sound of the mantra on the inhalation and exhalation as one practices yoga.

A common mantra in Kundalini, is one of seed or *bij* mantras *Sat Nam*, translated as Truth is my name / identity. As one chants *Sat Nam*, one resonates with truth, truth to oneself to ones higher consciousness.

Meditation is highly individualized, not all meditations suit you, so try to stay open minded and settle with a form that fits in with your own belief system. The bottom line to meditation is the awareness and sensitivity to your inner environments. Often the heart chakra is a focal point for meditation. One can sing and chant and imagine the sound coming from the heart centre. Imagination is mental creativity, so mentally create what you want to experience.

Kundalini yoga is to be experienced, to be lived. It is a life changing experience which opens your higher consciousness; apart from that it can be physically challenging.

### Ending song of Blessing

*May the long time sun shine upon you  
All love surrounds you*

*And the pure light within you  
Guide your way on Sat Nam*