

BUILD MY SPIRIT



GUIDE TO LIVING
A HEALTHY,
HOLISTIC LIFE



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WELCOME



Since 2014, ASCENDtials (pronounced “Essentials”) has been committed to helping people develop problem-solving skills so that we can transform society. Societal issues result from a system that imposes an oppressor versus oppressed model and standard of living. We believe that a new way of thinking is needed to move away from this model based on opposites in dominance and competition to one that operates as nature does: opposing but harmonious, balanced in interaction. The place to begin is to know thyself through learning and integrating wisdom from our ancestors, particularly those from the ancient land of Kemet, located in modern-day Egypt.

After developing a deeper sense of self, Oneness, and community, we can sustain our growth by following natural laws, not laws created by humans. With this new approach, we can achieve balance, live optimally, and transform systems for the benefit of all.

ASCENDtials’ Build My Spirit program offers a holistic experience to teach these new ways of thinking and methods for solving problems. The curriculum can be customized for every age and experience level.

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As above, so below

This is an ancient phrase found on many temples, pyramids, and tombs throughout ancient Kemet and in literature. It simply means that we are a microcosm of the universe and we must follow the guidance provided by the omnipotent above us and not deviate from it.





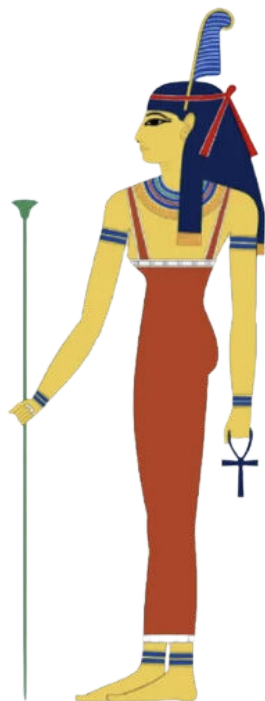
STARTING YOUR JOURNEY



The ASCENDtials Build My Spirit curriculum prepares you for a journey that will help you awaken and build a deeper connection with yourself, the people in your life, and the world around you. Centering your efforts on Kemetic Yoga will ensure that you are reinforcing practices built on natural laws, laws that protect and preserve humanity and our environment. In this short guide, we offer guidance to understand this deeper connection so that you can benefit from it every day.

Let's get started!





MAAT PRINCIPLES



We begin with the six principles of Maat (nature's way), derived from the philosophy of the people in the ancient land of Kemet. In Kemet cosmology, the Maat principles were designed to avert chaos and maintain order so that all humans could elevate to higher levels of consciousness. This knowledge came from constant observation of nature and the skies above. Our ancestors in Kemet had time to contemplate their existence without the endless distractions of today. They were in tune with our direction in space, the solar system, the sun and moon, the seasonal changes and stages, and the cycles of nature. They used the Maat principles to design a system of self-development.

The main Maat principles are truth, harmony, order, justice, balance, and reciprocity. These are powerful principles. Incorporating them into your life will give you a solid foundation from which to grow. Let's explore how we can use the Maat principles to guide your life.



KEMETIC YOGA



Kemetic Yoga is an ancient form of yoga that the people of Kemet practiced. This art form has a deep-rooted connection with the history and culture of Africa. The physical postures replicate the images of gods and goddesses found on the walls of Egyptian temples.

Kemetic Yoga is more than movement and breathing. It focuses on self-development and the rejuvenation of the body, mind, and spirit, and connecting all three to ascend to a higher level of consciousness. It is slower than most fitness-based and mainstream yoga classes and focuses more on meditation and energy centers. The postures align the spinal column and strengthen the musculoskeletal system. They energize the physical and spiritual bodies, improve consciousness, alter mood, relieve stress, and improve circulation.

Practicing Kemetic Yoga every day will prepare your mind and body for any challenges or obstacles you may face.

PRACTICE SESSION

CLEANSING BREATH

Start with a cleansing breath. This practice cleanses the lungs of old air and activates the respiratory system. Lie flat on your back. Use a weight or sandbag over your lower abdomen just below your navel. Expand your abdomen as you inhale. Exhale from the mouth, releasing all air. Breathe in through the nose and breathe out through the mouth.



MUMMY POSE

This is a state of total relaxation to balance the body, mind, and spirit. Place the right palm on the chest and place the left palm on top of the right, with your thumbs touching, allowing the energy to be transferred from left to right. Scan the body with the mind's eye and check for tension. Try to relax that tension through your breath.



FORWARD BENDING POSE

Start standing with your legs hip width apart and your pelvis slightly tucked. Fold your body forward, bending from the waist. Coordinate the forward motion of your body with your exhalation. Inhale as you slowly stand back up. Repeat three times.



PYRAMID FORWARD BENDING POSE

Sit with your legs outstretched in front of you. Bring your knees up and grab them from behind. While exhaling, pull your chest to your thighs and your chin to your knees. Inhale and hold. While exhaling, lower your knees. The objective is to bring your chest flat to your thighs, removing the curve in the spine. The legs don't need to be totally straight. Come out of the pose while inhaling and then, while exhaling, bring your palms to your knees.



COBRA POSE

Lie on your stomach with your hands under your chin. Breathe in slowly for a few seconds. Bring your arms and hands next to your shoulders, even with your chest. Inhale, pull forward slightly and lift your chest. Move slowly. While exhaling, raise your head and tilt it back. Feel the stretch in your arms, chest, and back muscles. Inhale. While exhaling, return your chest to the floor. Repeat three times.



SPIDER POSE

Lie flat on the floor with your arms resting at the side of your body, palms flat. Inhale as you bring your knees and thighs up to your chest. Grab your ankles and separate your feet and knees shoulder width apart. Tuck your spine so your back is on the floor. Inhale. Extend the pelvis up, exhale, and extend the rest of the way up onto your shoulders, so the weight of your body is balanced between your shoulders and the bottoms of your feet. Breathe in several times and release. Repeat this sequence several times.



SPINAL TWIST



Sit with your legs outstretched in front of you. Align your body in a straight position with your chest lifted, your spine straight, and your arms at your sides. As you inhale, raise your arms. Exhale and place your arms behind your back, fingers pointing forward. Let your arms straighten. Lift the spine, inhale, and raise your right knee. Exhale. Lay your chest on your thigh and bring your chin to your knee. Bring your left arm forward. Wrap your arm over the center part of your leg and grab your thigh with your fingers. Hug your thigh to your chest, and lift your chest. Then exhale and turn your shoulders, bringing them as even as possible. Slowly turn your head to the side, back, and front. Then turn your body to the front, lower your knee, and place your palms on your legs. Repeat on the other side.

CHILD POSE



Sit on your heels, with your toes bent underneath your feet. Rest your hands on your thighs. Touch your index fingers and your thumbs to create a triangle space between your hands. While exhaling, lean forward and place your head in the triangle space of your hands. As you inhale, sit up tall. As you exhale, bring your palms together.



TRIANGLE POSE



Start by standing. Widen your legs shoulder width apart with your toes angled slightly toward each other. Pivot on your right leg, letting your knee bend as you turn. Inhale and raise your left arm to the ceiling. Bend from the waist to the right, lowering your right hand to your knee or calf. Look up to your left palm. Inhale, then bring the body up as one piece. Repeat on the opposite side.

EASY POSE

Sit comfortably on the ground. Cross your legs and keep your spine straight. Join the thumb and index finger of each hand. Rest your wrists upon your knees, allowing the energy to rise up your spine to your head. To open up the joints, turn to one side. Bring your chest to your thigh and your chin over your knee. Repeat on the other side.



TREE POSE

Start standing. Inhale and exhale, then bring your hands together. Raise your arms as you inhale. While exhaling, settle your arms in front of your chest. Shift weight to your right foot. Inhale. Bend, raise, and turn your left leg so your foot touches your ankle, the area above the knee, or your thigh. Raise your arms above your head. Lower your foot and hands together, trying to flow the body into the position and out of it. Repeat with the opposite leg.



BENT POSE

The second variation is with the toes bent. This gives a great stretch to the toes and all the reflexology points that are in the feet. This deep stretch allows for more flexibility and releases blockages and massages every part of the body. Holding this position has great benefits the longer held.



THREAD THE NEEDLE POSE

1. Begin on your hands and knees. Place your wrists directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Point your fingertips to the top of your mat. Place your shins and knees hip-width apart. Center your head in a neutral position and soften your gaze downward. This is Table Pose.

2. On an exhalation, slide your right arm underneath your left arm with your palm facing up. Let your right shoulder come all the way down to the mat. Rest your right ear and cheek on the mat, then gaze toward your left.

3. Keep your left elbow lifting and your hips raised. Do not press your weight onto your head; instead, adjust your position so you do not strain your neck or shoulder.

4. Let your upper back broaden. Soften and relax your lower back. Allow all of the tension in your shoulders, arms, and neck to drain away.

5. Hold for up to one minute. To release, press through your left hand and gently slide your right hand out. Return to Table Pose. Then repeat the pose on the opposite side for the same length of time.



THE MUDRAS



Mudras are a symbolic gesture of the hand, eyes, or body. To heal the entire body, we must engage in practices that direct our attention to the five senses. We must keep those unblocked and clear of toxicity. Mudras are a great way to assist with purifying the energetic and physical body through the sense of sight. Here are some mudras that we think are the most helpful.

YOGA MUDRA SEQUENCE



1. Sit on the floor with your legs crossed. Clasp your hands behind your back, interlink your fingers, and stretch your arms back. Inhale and look up. Exhale and fold into a forward bend, taking your brow toward the ground. Take four full breaths. Then, inhaling, return to your starting position.

2. Place your hands on the floor behind you, fingers pointing forward. Lift your chest, arch your spine, and carefully drop your head back. Take four full breaths. While inhaling, return to your starting position.

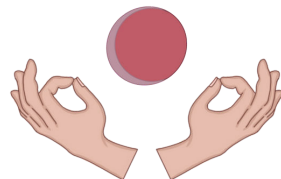
3. Place your left hand on your right knee and your right hand on the floor behind you. Then twist to the right and look over your right shoulder. Hold the position while you take four full breaths. Then return to the center.

4. Place your right hand on your left knee and left hand on the floor behind you. Then twist to the left. Hold the position for four full breaths. Return to the center.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE MUDRA



Sit cross-legged with your spine straight and your hands on your knees, palms upward. Stretch your fingers like starfish. Curl the index fingers in to touch the tips of your thumbs. Your index finger signifies your ego—the self that separates you from the universe—and your thumb the cosmic self. Imagine the small self melting into the greater self, absorbing its wise energy.



CUPPING THE VOID MUDRA

To make this contemplative gesture, sit upright and rest your palms in your lap, cupped one inside the other. Then bring your thumbs together so they barely touch. This hand position signifies emptiness, implying a state of total oneness with life's journey.

ENLIGHTENMENT MUDRA

Sit with your spine straight. Place your left hand on your left knee, fingers pointing downward. Place your right hand on your right knee, palm up like an open cup, signifying receptivity. You now embody the law of opposite forces and are ready for anything.



MUDRA FOR CLEAR VISION



This mudra is said to foster quiet clarity of mind and is best done at the end of the day. Sit upright. Place your tips of your thumbs, ring, and little fingers together, stretching out your index and middle fingers as one. Hold, breathing steadily, then exhale, and practice several breaths.

LOTUS MUDRA

This gesture creates the shape of a lotus flower in front of your heart chakra, which encourages communication from the heart. Place your hands in front of your heart with the heels of your hands, your thumbs, and your little fingers touching. Spread your other fingers like outstretched petals. Take four deep breaths, then close the flower into a bud by closing your fingers.



GESTURE OF UNSHAKABLE TRUST



In times of self-doubt, this gesture will help you to trust in your inner strength. Place your palms in front of your chest with your fingers and thumbs spread wide. Interweave your fingers to create a trellis effect, then open your palms and thumbs in front of your heart. Be still, observing your breathing, for several breaths. Then relax.

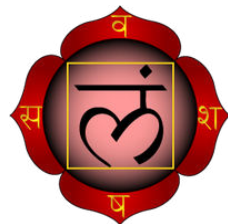


THE CHAKRAS

The art of practicing yoga purifies your energetic body by unblocking existing pathways so that your life force can flow unobstructed. Distractions inside and outside our bodies prevent us from flowing and moving forward. Our curriculum is designed to help you recognize these derailments so you can cleanse your energy centers, or chakras. Engage in the practice of cleansing your chakras and remain clear, undistracted, unblocked, and focused.

MOOLADHARA

Mooladhara, the first or base chakra, is situated around the perineum. Starting your yoga practice with cleansing breaths to send oxygen to the base chakra will begin to get you in tune with your earth energy and express your needs.



SWADHISTHANA

Swadhisthana, the second or sacral chakra, is situated around the tail bone. Water is the element associated with this chakra. Images of this chakra help you take on the qualities of water, which flows no matter what obstacles it meets. Imagine the same watery fluidity in your body's cells. When faced with difficult changes, meditate on this yantra, or symbol, for a few moments.



MANIPURA

Manipura, the third or solar plexus chakra, is situated around the navel. This chakra relates to your personal power, drive, and ambition. Focusing on its yantra helps feed this power center. Imagine being recharged with radiating energy.



ANAHATA ✦

Anahata, the fourth or heart chakra, is situated around the center of the chest. It is associated with the element of air. It is the seat of emotions and psychic sounds. Its yantra should remind you to live each moment with warmth and compassion.



✦ VISHUDDHI



Vishuddhi, the fifth or throat chakra, is situated around the throat. This area is associated with self-expression and purification. It is the element of ether, or space, and it becomes increasingly refined as you move up the chakra system.

AJNA ✦

Ajna, the sixth or third-eye chakra, is situated at the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. This is your psychic command center. This area governs both the physical and spiritual planes.



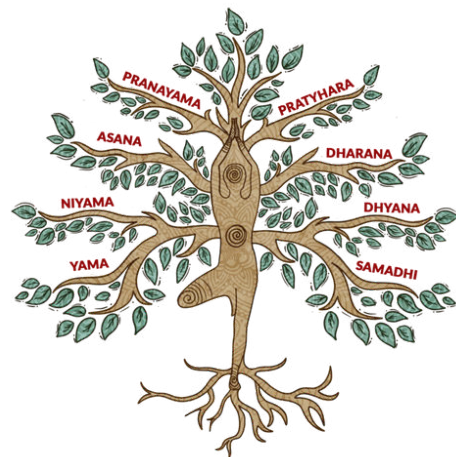
✦ SAHASRA



Sahasrara, the seventh or crown chakra, is situated at the crown of the head. This is the threshold to psychic and spiritual realms.

THE TREE OF LIFE ✦

The Kemetic concept of the Tree of Life as a symbolic system predates India's Pantajali or Hebrew usage. A tree represents a family of relationships. In ancient Kemetic culture, each limb of the tree is described as a characteristic that must be studied and exemplified in order to live truthfully. As you climb the Tree of Life, you dissolve the lower levels and reach more subtle levels on the return to Oneness.



YAMA

The first limb, called yama, recommends five practices or restraints that you can apply to your life, diet, and relationships.

- Ahimsa: not harming others or yourself
- Satya: truth, living according to truth
- Asteya: not stealing
- Brahmacharya: abstinence, containing sexual energy
- Aparigraha: not grasping or not coveting

NIYAMA

The second limb, niyama, is the observation of the self. You can follow these five self-observations through all sorts of exercises and meditations.

- Saucha: cleanliness, both internal and external
- Santosha: contentment or an acceptance of what life brings you
- Tapas: austerity or disciplined practice
- Swadhaya: self-study, the study of spiritual texts to promote understanding
- Surrender: acceptance of the systems and cycles in play and follow the dictum “as above, so below”

ASANA

Yoga movements and poses, asanas, is the third limb. The movements you make in yoga allows muscles and joints to move freely and fluidly, maintain elasticity, and remain limber, even when the body encounters obstacles and stresses. The physical yoga poses also prepare the body to sit in meditation.

PRANAYAMA

Meditation and breathing, pranayama, is the fourth limb. We must breathe enough and deeply if we are to have a healthy body. Our attention is focused on doing breathing practices that help regulate and extend energy flow through the body.

PRATYAHARA

The fifth limb, pratyahara, is focus: drawing the mind and senses away from the outside world. We are urged “to reverse,” or draw the mind and senses inward and toward calmness.

DHARANA

The sixth limb, dharana, urges you to concentrate until your mind becomes focused on one point. When we focus fully, we reap the benefits of our ideal state. Once you can concentrate, you will experience the fruit of this concentration, a state of continuous calm. You will have a balanced state of mind where you can see things with clarity.

DHYANA

Dhyana, the seventh limb, is the unbroken flow of consciousness. We must be able to meditate and stay focused in a state of continuous calm. This is vital for keeping a healthy and happy body.

SAMADHI

Lastly, the eighth limb, samadhi, brings you into a balanced mind state where you are aware of the truth and balance that exists when we are in this state of flow.

LIVING A HEALTHY, ✨ HOLISTIC LIFE

To truly lead an optimal life, we must acknowledge, understand, and embrace all the essential elements that are needed for a balanced, healthy lifestyle. This requires following laws found in nature, not laws created by humans, and living according to the Maat principles.

The physical body encounters blockages due to toxins that build up in the joints and slowly cut off the circulation and fluidity that should naturally occur. We must avoid conflict, blockages, and obstacles of all kinds if we want to function at our best. You can clear these blockages through Kemeti Yoga, focusing on the energetic body, and cleansing the chakras.

Going to church on Sundays or yoga on Tuesdays isn't enough. Applying the wisdom found in this guide, given to us by our ancestors, each and every day will bring you in alignment and keep you healthy, balanced, and at ease.