Suryanamaskara

Suryanamaskara means salutations to sun

Suryanamaskara combines Yogasanas and Pranayama. As such, it comes in between Sithilikarana Vyayama and Yogasanas and brings about the general flexibility of the body preparing it for further Asanas and Pranayama. This is ususally done both at sunrise and sunset, facing the Sun, after chanting the following verse:

Hiranmayena Patrena Satyasyapihitam Mukham,

Tat tvam Pusan Apavrnu Satya-dharmaya Drstaye ||

This means,

Like a lid to a vessel, O Sun, your Golden orb covers the entrance to Truth. Kindly open the entrance, to lead me to Truth.

There are mainly 2 modes of performing Suryanamaskara. In one, there are 12 steps or counts and in the other only 10 in each round. Each round of Suryanamaskara is done after the utterance of “Omkar” with the appropriate “Bija” Mantra, along with the corresponding name of Sun God in the following sequence:

1. Aum Hram Mitraya Namah
2. Aum Hrim Ravaye Namah
3. Aum Hrum Suryaya Namah
4. Aum Hraim Bhanave Namah
5. Aum Hroum Khagaya Namah
6. Arum Hrah Pusne Namah
7. Aum Hram Hiranyagarbhaya Namah
8. Aum Hrim Maricaye Namah
9. Aum Hrum Adityaya Namah
10. Aum Hraim Savitre Namah
11. Aum Hroum Arkaya Namah
12. Aum Hrah Bhaskaraya Namah

Each stage of Suryanamaskara is accompanied by regulation of breath. The 12 steps of the Suryanamaskara are as follows:

1. Stand erect with the legs together and palms together. Take the hands above the head and bend the trunk backwards. Here, inhale fully.
2. Bend the body to the front and touch the knees by the forehead. Keep the palms on the floow on either side of the legs. Exhale fully.
3. In this stage, kick the right leg back, take the left knee forward, look up and inhale. Press the buttock close to the heel.
4. In the next step, take the left leg also back, resting only on palms and toes; keep the body straight from head to toes inclined to the ground at about 30 degrees. Here exhale completely.
5. Now, bend at the knee and rest the knees on the floor without altering the positions of the palms and toes. Rest the forehead on the ground. In this position inhale while moving backwards and then exhale completely. Do not stretch the ankles.
6. Without moving the hands and toes, come forward on the chest and rest the forehead. In this position Sastanga Namaskara, forehead, chest, palms, knees and feet are the eight organs hat will be touching the ground. The buttocks will be raised up. Stay in ‘Breath-out’ condition (Bahyakumbhaka(.
7. Inhale, raise the head and trunk making the spine concave upwards without changing the position of the hands and feet. Keep the knees off the ground.
8. Exhale. Raise the buttocks, push the head down and have a complete arch with the heels touching the ground and palms on the floor.
9. Same as 5th step. Inhale and exhale.
10. Inhale and bring the right leg in between the two hands and in line with them. Arch the back concave upwards as in step 3.
11. Exhale and bring the left foot forward next to the right foot and touch the knees with forehead as in 2.
12. Inhale. Come up, stand erect with hands in Namaskar mudra and relax.

(In 10 stages – Suryanamaskara, the 5th and 9th stages are omitted.)

Meditation or contemplation with the prolonged pronunciation of “Omkar”, the Bija Aksara ‘Ha’ and the letter or the sound ‘R’ which comes in every Mantra influences and stimulates the nerve centres in the brain corresponding to the respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems, make them more active, efficient and healthy.

The different names of the un according to their meanings, instil in the person those qualities like friendship, devotion, energy, health, strength, lustre and vigour as he identifies with the Supreme and meditates on those qualities during the practive

I – Inhale

E- Exhale

K – Hold the Breath