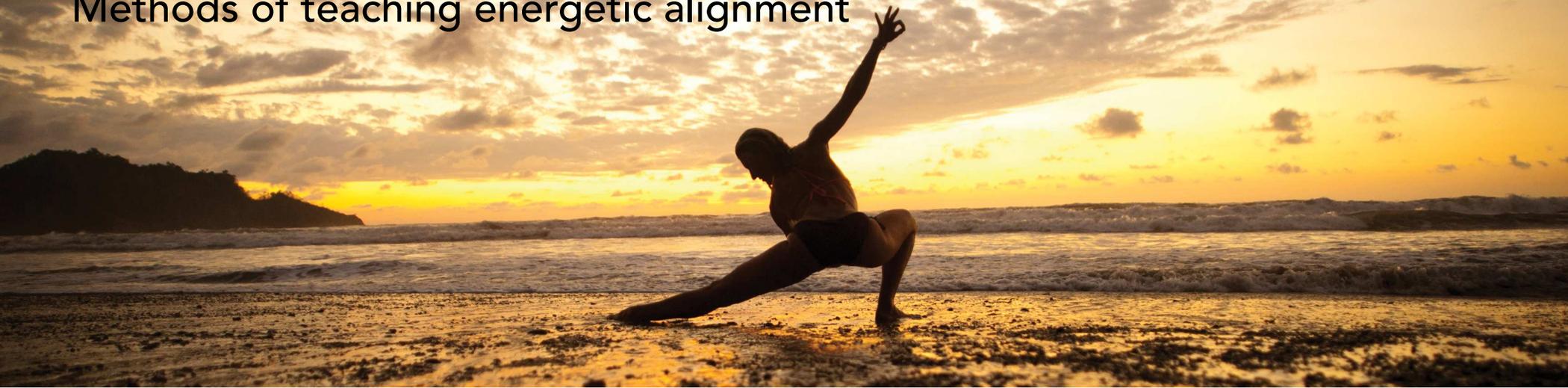


Prana Flow

Methods of teaching energetic alignment



Om Pranaya Namaha – I honor the life force

Om Prana Swaha – I honor the “in-drawing, rising energy” as the essential Self (Swaha)

Om Apana Swaha – I honor the “downward, rooting flow” as the essential Self

Om Samana Swaha – I honor the energy that “contracts to the core” as the essential Self

Om Vyana Swaha – I honor the energy that “expands omnidirectionally from the core” as the essential Self

Om Udana Swaha – I honor the energy that “rises and moves outward” as the essential Self

Embodying Prana Vinyasa Flow

Prana – Life force

Vinyasa – Evolution, wave, cycle

Flow – the state of unified consciousness”

Prana Vinyasa Flow is an energetic, creative, full spectrum approach to embody the flow of yoga. Based upon the movements of prana first written down in the early Vedas, Tantras, Hatha Yoga texts and Ayurveda, my intention in the evolution of Prana Vinyasa is to offer a method to embody the flow of prana through vinyasa to awaken our inner intelligence in connection with the great Source.

In Prana Vinyasa this is our devotion, our focus, our river, tide, and current, which draws us into the experience of embodying the flow. As we come to embody these movements of prana, we will experience Prana Flow – Three Part Vinyasa as a way in all asanas to feel this underlying flow, presence, and intelligence.

As the one Prana, we can also embody the unique movements:

prana – the “inódrawing, rising energy”

apana – “downward, rooting flow”

samana – “contracts to the core”

vyana – “expands omniódirectionally from the core”

udana – “rises and moves outward”

The five movements of Prana form the vinyasa of movement and form. These movements of prana underlie every movement we see around us and within us. The way you sit and move through the world is a reflection of these movements of Prana. The way a tree grows, a car moves, the planets swirl, and our heart beats are all by these movements of Prana. And every aspect of yoga practice: asana, pranayama, bandha, mudra, chanting is created by these movements of Prana. There is not one asana that is not formed by these movements of Prana.

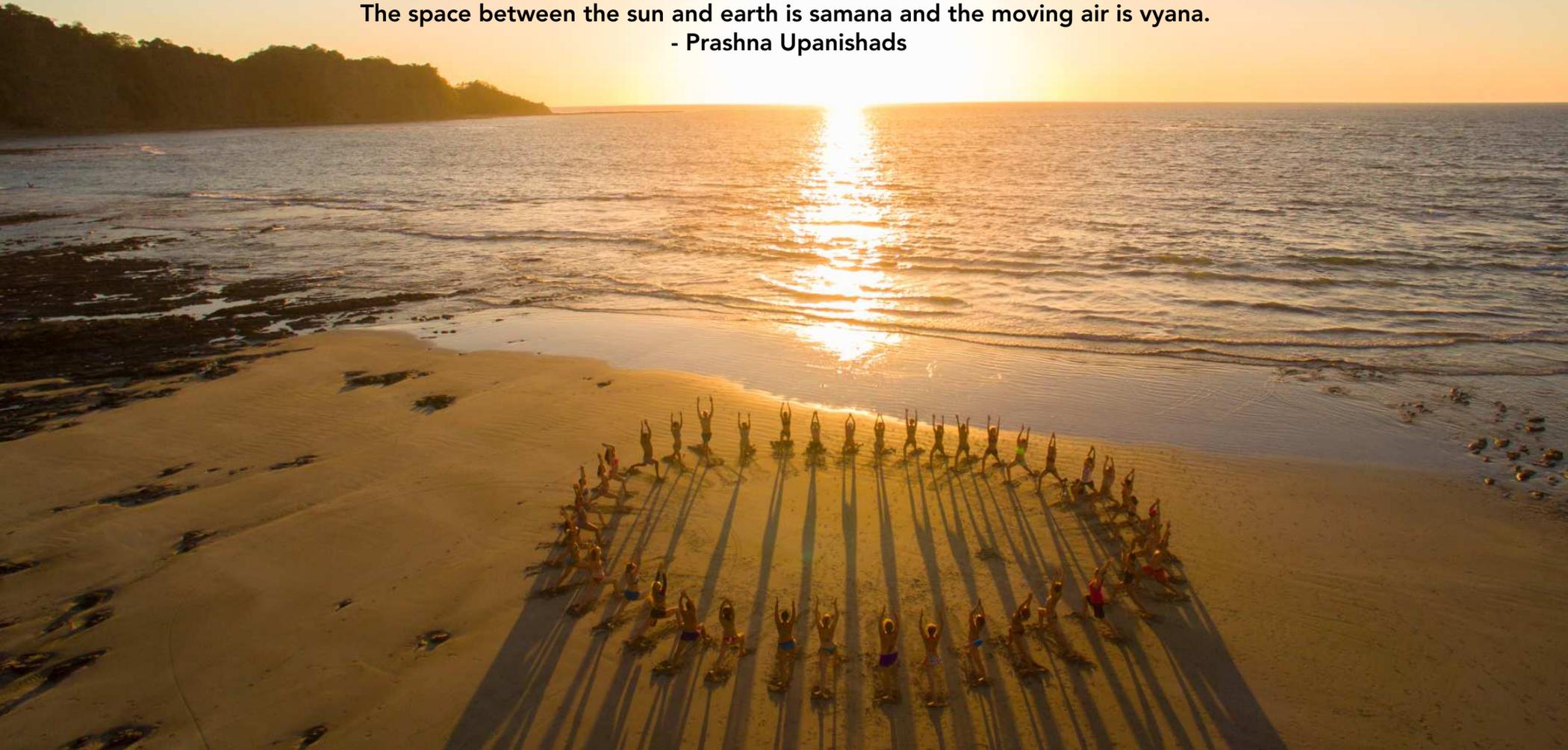
The most important guide to the way in which we teach vinyasa flow is to connect with these movements of prana, which are as ceaseless as our breath. The movement of the pairs of prana: samana and vyana, prana and apana or udana form the breath-wave and the other vinyasas in the body that follow.



PULSE OF LIFE

Prana and Pancha Vayus

The sun is the prana of the universe and it rises to bring light into our eyes.
The earth draws the lower fire of apana;
The space between the sun and earth is samana and the moving air is vyana.
- Prashna Upanishads



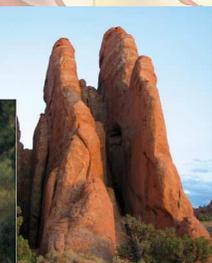
A close-up photograph of a sand dune, showing the intricate, wavy patterns of the sand. The colors range from a deep, dark brown on the left to a bright, golden yellow in the center, and then to a lighter, almost white sand on the right. The word "APANA" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

APANA

Embodying Apana

Apana is the air that moves away, specifically down and out. It is responsible for elimination of waste products (urine, feces), and the expulsion of reproductive processes (semen, menstrual fluid, birth). At the level of the mind it is our ability to release emotions and sensory stimuli. Apana's relationship to the earth element affords us stability and grounding forces that establish our foundation and base. Harmonizing apana within the body offers us the integrity and support and we need to function from a stable place. Without apana vayu - the rooting force - we cannot rise.

In Vinyasa, Apana is the energetic force of grounding within asana. Through the hands the force of apana allows us to establish a deeper connection to the earth through Hasta Bandha and through our feet, Pada Bandha awakens the connection between the four corners of the feet and the floor underneath. Apana sets up the foundation in the body from which to build and express. Pulsation vinyasa helps establish the rooting effect while maintaining buoyancy in the body.



LOCATION/ELEMENT Pelvis, Earth

FUNCTIONS/ACTIONS air that moves away, down and out, part of exhalation, all aspects of elimination and releasing, reproduction, rooting

BHAVA/FEELING grounding and stabilizing

GUNAS/ATTRIBUTES heavy, slow, gross, static

TALA/RHYTHM slow, steady, down beats

ASANAS Standing asanas, floor-work, both opening and stabilizing the lower body specifically such as hip openers. Cultivation of hasta and pada bandhas (hand and feet) to connect to the earth and draw the energy up through the legs into mula-bandha at the base of the pelvis. All restorative and lunar flows inherently express and support apana within the body.

PRANAYAMA "apana breath" - exhaling through the mouth, lengthening exhalation, viloma pranayama with exhale

DRISTI/GAZE Gazing downward, resting eyes on a point of the body, eyes closed and gazing inward.

A woman in a bikini stands on a beach at dusk, illuminated by a campfire. The word 'SAMANA' is overlaid in white text.

SAMANA

Embodying Samana

Samana is the balancing, harmonizing air moving toward the core. By balancing our mind and emotions we are able to absorb and digest all we imbibe. From a healthy appetite to the hunger of passion and life, our core energy is involved. Samana offers equilibrium within ourselves and our environment. The movement around the navel region is the area of samana. When we are not in harmony with our core energy we lose our appetite, lack motivation, lose our center and balance. Impaired samana vayu can lead to poor digestion and absorption of nutrients and impressions.

In Vinyasa, Samana vayu and uddiyana bandha have similar actions. Naturally asanas that involve strong core cultivation such as arm balances require the integrity of our center to maintain and support the lift. This coiling in energy is necessary to support the joints in all standing asanas, by not collapsing the hip joint and by lengthening the lower spine, this prevents an excessive lordotic curve. Practices that are samana vayu intensive should be balancing and harmonizing



LOCATION/ELEMENT Solar Plexus, Navel Center - Water or Fire

FUNCTIONS/ACTIONS Balancing Air, Digestion, assimilation, absorption.

BHAVA/FEELING balancing, harmonizing

GUNAS/ATTRIBUTES As water: heavy, cold, liquid As fire: hot, sharp, subtle

TALA/RHYTHM strong, balance

ASANAS primarily arm balances and core cultivation practices, uddiyana bandha, twisting asanas help invigorate, purify and tone the core.

PRANAYAMA Kappalabhati, Bhastrika

DRISTI/GAZE nabhi dristi (inward gaze at the navel), upward gaze (urdhva dristi), eka grata (one-pointed awareness)

A close-up photograph of a vibrant pink lotus flower in full bloom, centered in the frame. The petals are covered in numerous small, glistening water droplets. The flower is surrounded by a dense layer of white and yellow flower petals, creating a soft, textured background. The word "PRANA" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the pink flower.

PRANA

Embodying Prana

Prana vayu presides over the thoracic region of the body, through inhalation it is considered to be the forward moving energy. Just as we fill a cup of water from the bottom up (rising), the contents poured in (moving down) give us the feeling of prana vayu in our bodies. As we breathe in we are filled from the bottom up (rising energy) while at the same time taking in (downward) energy. Thus our power to take in, and assimilate is the function of prana vayu. Both through our physical and mental body we take in - breath and impressions. If this movement becomes impaired then there is an inability to properly take in and assimilate nutrients and sensory data.

In Vinyasa the area within the chest is stimulated and activated by movements that are heart opening, to expand the energy in the chest and heart. As we take in the expansive movement to surrender and taste that which we are opening to, we assimilate within our sadhana (practice). By connecting apana and prana as opposing actions we can activate the rising action within standing asana as well as backbends feeling that we must root to rise. This is also embodied in the Prana Mudra Vinyasa and other Body Vinyasas which create awareness of the embodied breath flow.



LOCATION/ELEMENT Heart and thoracic region, Fire

FUNCTIONS/ACTIONS drawing in the life-force, associated with inhalation in some schools of yoga, assimilation, rising and inward movement, governing reception, intake of impressions and nutrients, propulsive force.

BHAVA/FEELING filled with energy, inspiration, peace

TALA/RHYTHM energizing, uplifting

ASANAS Back Bending/heart opening asanas, focusing on the inhalation while in asana

PRANAYAMA Bhastrika, inhalation retention

DRISTI/GAZE inner gaze, through the eyes take in and assimilate visual impressions



UDANA



Embodying Udana



Udana vayu is the force that expels the air in speech and communication. Presiding over exhalation in the form of speech and vibration, udana allows for self-expression. Our ability to speak in truth and freedom and not “hold back” are important aspects of honoring this energy flow. Udana offers us the ability to be upright. Udana will become impaired if one resists natural urges to express or release. The throat is also associated with the thyroid. Therefore, variations in thyroid hormones and function correlate to the movement of udana within the body.

In vinyasa Udana is as the vital energy within the throat. Asanas that activate jalandhara bandha stimulate udana vayu such as salamba sarvangasana (shoulder stand) and halasana (plow). Feelings of the movement of energy rising to the head during pranayama and meditation correlate to the movement of udana vayu. Adding chanting within asana stimulates udana vayu extending the exhalation.

LOCATION/ELEMENT Throat and neck, Air

FUNCTIONS/ACTIONS upward moving, governs growth, communication, thinking, nervous system, speech and listening, expulsive forces such as sneezing, vomiting, belching, etc.

BHAVA/FEELING the sense of ascending and rising within one's self. freedom of expression. positive outlook.

GUNAS/ATTRIBUTES Mobile, light, dry, subtle

TALA/RHYTHM not specific, in nada yoga udana is increased through chanting and offering long sustained notes

ASANAS chanting within asana, raising the arms overhead, inversions, simhasana vinyasa (lion's breath vinyasa)

PRANAYAMA Bhramari, Shitali

DRISTI/GAZE urdhva dristi (upwards), dristi upon ajna chakra (bhru madhya)



VYANA



Embodying Vyana

Presiding over all forms of circulation from the way we circulate nutrients to ideas and thoughts. Vyana moves food, water, oxygen, and thoughts throughout the body. Expanding and radiating, vyana is pervasive as ether. Transporting energy to all places where it can express itself and expand. Vyana gives freedom of movement and independence in the mind; but, when impaired we contract and lose creativity. Decreased circulation of nutrients and impressions usually results from vitiated vyana.

In Vinyasa, vyana vayu moves energy from the periphery through the nadis as well as the circulatory, lymphatic and nervous system pathways. Therefore, we apply asanas and sequences that embrace free movement, space, and mandala rotation.



LOCATON/ELEMENT everywhere - ether

FUNCTIONS/ACTIONS outward moving air, from center to periphery, governs circulation, omni-directional. movements within the circulatory, lymphatic and nervous systems.

BHAVA/FEELING wholeness, pervasive, all encompassing

GUNAS/ATTRIBUTES subtle, dry, mobile, cold

TALA/RHYTHM both slow and dynamic rhythm that mirrors a flowing current like the flow of flute music

ASANAS Sahaja (spontaneous) expression within asana, circular and undulating variations, mandala formation.

PRANAYAMA Ujjayi breathing, Nadi Shodhana

DRISTI/GAZE circular eye exercises, omni-directional

