

BUILDING IMMUNITY

Krishna Prakash

Founder, Shrimath Yoga



Foreword by

Dr Mahadevan Seetharaman Ph. D

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During the time of stress, the “fight-or-flight” response is on and the self-repair mechanism is disabled. It is then when we say that the immunity of the body goes down and the body is exposed to the risk for disease.

Annie Wilson

Effect of Meditation on Cardiovascular Health, Immunity &
Brain Fitness

Dedicated to

All those who are in the health, essential services,
government machinery & volunteers of various
organizations across the World, and more important to
corona* referred in India as *Mahā-māri!*

* dedicated to corona because it has made us to step back
and focus on the health as well as quality time with family

I always encourage them to practice in a way that will help them go back to their own tradition and get re-rooted. If they succeed at becoming reintegrated, they will be an important instrument in transforming and renewing their tradition.

... Learning to touch deeply the jewels of our own tradition will allow us to understand and appreciate the values of other traditions, and this will benefit everyone."

Thich Nhat Hanh, Living Buddha, Living Christ

Foreword

I met Krishna or KP as I call him during my time as the CEO of the Institute of *Ayurveda* and Integrative Medicine in Bangalore (India). He had a different demeanour and perspective to *Yoga* compared to most *Yoga* professionals I have met to date. That is what drew me to *Shrimath Yoga* and since then have spent a significant amount of time learning *Yoga* and *Yoga Nidra* at their traditional *Gurukul*.

A challenge like the coronavirus is unprecedented in these times. As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads across nations, the world is shocked and still grappling with options for containing or stopping the spread of the virus. Experts say that people with stronger immune systems and respiratory health are better equipped to handle this novel virus.

As he has done several times in the past, and in line with the traditions of the *Bihar School of Yoga*, Krishna has come forward to release this eBook on Building Immunity at the appropriate time. *Sri Swami Satyananda* emphasized the importance of bringing awareness into all dimensions of *Yoga* practice, allowing the awareness to gradually expand, so that over time awareness can be

brought into all the activities and aspects of life.

The book explains why “Building Immunity” is our *dharma* now, which involves protecting ourselves from getting infected, avoiding being a carrier, transmitter or receiver. The author also shares ways to naturally boost immunity including means to not only optimize the metabolism of the body but also improve the functioning of the mind.

All of the thoughtful recommendations fall under the following categories - *Asanas* (postures), *Pranayama* (life force modulation), *Mudras* (symbolic gestures), *Kriyas* (cleansing techniques), *Yoga Nidra* (full-body relaxation), Meditation, Food, Rest, Sleep & Gratefulness. These ways are not hard to follow, and we owe it ourselves, our friends, family and fellow beings to practice *dharma*.

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26/04/2020

Before his return to the US, Dr Mahadevan Seetharaman was the COO at Isha Arogya Research Foundation and the CEO & MD at IAIM Healthcare (funded by 4 TATA trusts).

Stay in. Build immunity. Be safe.

Introduction

Building immunity is the best gift that we can give ourselves. We learn a lot by trial and error method but in this given situation, when we have access to the wealth of information from our living traditions, we need not reinvent the wheel. Ideally any major incident in life happens to remind us of a truth and the wise learn from it.

One of the salient features of *Sanatana Dharma* (the eternal way of life) is that our ancients have presented to the World a plethora of knowledge systems that stay valid irrespective of the times we live in, and one such systems is Yoga. A few processes from Yoga are elaborated in a way that common public can understand and practice during this lock down as well as make it part of their daily routine. This booklet is certainly not intended for Yoga professionals :)

Krishna Prakash

14th April 2020

Vaishaka Krishnapaksha Saptami

Love is a viral vibration, infect others with it without regard, that it may spread epidemically, boosting the immunity of a humanity that could deafen the sound of hate, only the diseased soul makes.

Tracey Bond

Now is not the time to play the blame game or hate anyone but it's the time to do what we can to be safe and ensure all of us are safe to see tomorrow!

Stay in. Build immunity. Be safe.

Building immunity, our *dharma*

What is *dharma*?

Dharma is the most complex word, idea or concept to understand, internalize and practice. The *Vedic* tradition of India defines *dharma* as that which supports, sustains and enables proper functioning of any system. Some of its meanings are duty, just, right thing to do, righteousness and appropriateness.

What is our *dharma* now?

In the present covid-19 situation, our first *dharma* is to protect ourselves from getting infected and, also not be a carrier, transmitter or receiver. Once we understand this, we would whole heartedly do whatever it takes to expedite our *dharma*. Our respective governments too have the *dharma* to provide us right advise at appropriate stages and almost all of them are trying their best to disseminate right information and advisory to the citizens.

Building Immunity

The best way to expedite *dharma* is to learn and build our immunity. For this to happen, the body's metabolism and mind's functioning need to be optimal. Here, we focus on sharing a few processes and lifestyle suggestions available in the tradition that has been practiced since time immemorial. Some of these may appear extremely simple and innocuous yet their benefits are long lasting and free of side effects.

Merriam Webster defines tradition as, “an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behaviour.” So, kindly let us not confuse the word tradition with religion. Moreover, there is no religion for rain, sun or virus!



1. **Asana:** A “regular routine” of 20 to 45 minutes helps the body metabolism to function optimally. Without fail, kindly include 3 rounds of *Surya Namaskara*.

At Shrimath Yoga we follow the traditional Yogic Surya Namaskara <https://youtu.be/2uCFPeMj-BM>

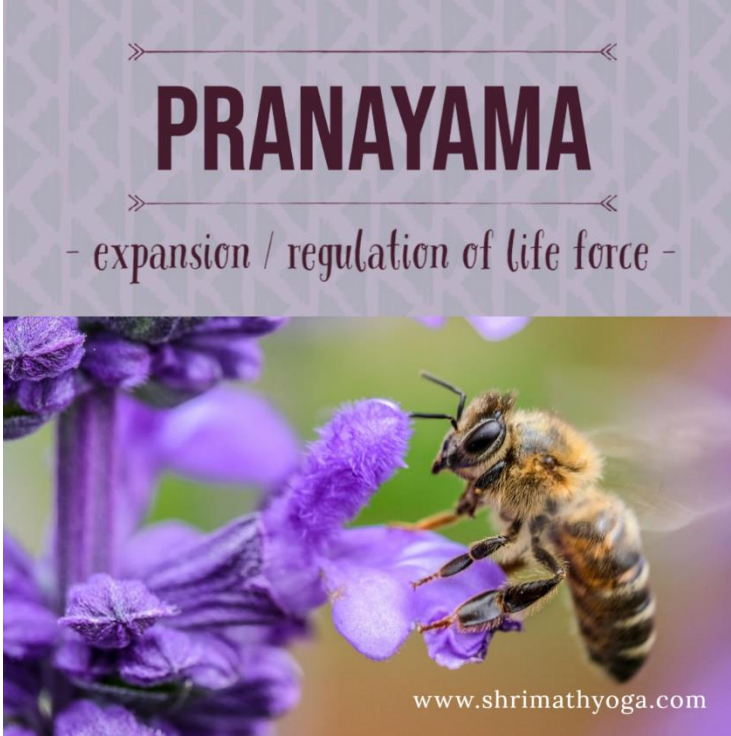
Based on your body type, the age and health condition, any *Yoga* teacher would train you for this “regular routine.”

As you cannot go walking, jogging, running or to a gym, it is important to learn a few *asanas*. Utilize Zoom, WhatsApp or any similar ones to get in touch with a Yoga teacher and learn. As these are simple ones, one need not be afraid of whether they would learn and practice right.

- **Tip:** whichever set of postures you learn, ensure you are able to hold each posture in the final position for 15 to 20 seconds

The mind & body are not separate entities. The gross form of the mind is the body & the subtle form of the body is the mind. The practice of asana integrates & harmonizes the two. Both the body & the mind harbour tensions or knots. Every mental knot has a corresponding physical, muscular knot & vice versa. The aim of asana is to release these knots... mental tensions by dealing with them on the physical level.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



2. ***Pranayama:*** *Prana* means life force and *Ayama* means regulation / control. The best way to build immunity to increase *prana shakti* in our body. Now, all of us know that ear, nose and throat i.e. ENT are 3 key entry points through which infections can happen. Thus, the *pranayama* technique brahmari ie. the humming bee (technique) is an

essential practice to ward off infections that could happen through our ENT. *Brahmari* handles brain (thoughts) and ENT system.

- **Recommended duration:** 6 m, 2 times a day
- **Method:** There are many ways to do this but let us practice in the simplest way. Just close the tragus (entrance to the ear) with your index finger. With closed eyes, inhale as deep as possible without making noise. Then as you exhale contract the glottis (throat region), make the mmmm... sound and in parallel exhale as gently as you can. The duration of exhalation should be more than the inhalation.
- **Note:** because the volume of the humming sound during this practice is advised to be above our regular talking volume, it neutralizes the thoughts as well.

Majority of us feed our mind with negative thought patterns which lowers our immunity. *Brahmari* would help us to arrest that pattern.

Mudra psychic lock



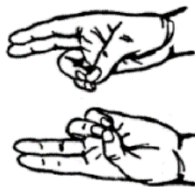
3. ***Mudra***: *Mudra* can be loosely translated as “psychic lock” but it is much more than that. After the practice of *brahmari*, one can practice *prana mudra* and *linga mudra*. Practice of *mudras* help us to send and circulate the life force to the select body parts and depending on the intended purpose, either enhance or slow down their functioning.

Prana mudra helps to breathe well and strengthen the respiratory system. *Linga mudra* helps to tones and tune the nervous system as well as strengthen the portions below navel till toes.

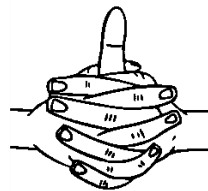
- **Recommended duration:** 6 to 12 minutes each
- **Method:** If you choose to practice mudras sitting on a chair then place a mat between the soles and the floor. You can practice these mudras while watching television, listening to music or while answering phone calls. But the ideal way is to consciously allocate time to sit quiet and practice these 2 *mudras* with closed eyes.

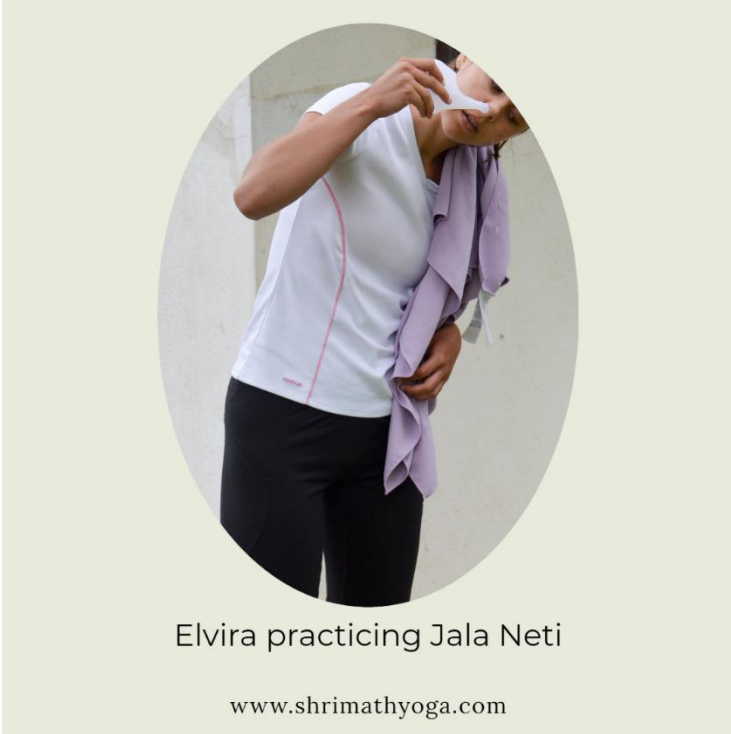
In *prana mudra* the palms face up. Back of the hands to be placed on the thighs.

Prana mudra



Linga mudra





Elvira practicing Jala Neti

www.shrimathyoga.com

4. **Kriya (cleansing techniques):** *Jala neti* is an excellent cleansing technique that not only clears the nasal passage of pollen, dust or any foreign particle, but also helps in preventing infections that could happen through the sinus cavity, in our present case CoVid19.

As per the living traditions of *Yoga*, *jala neti* helps in getting clarity of mind and is a good complementary practice along with *brahmari*

As per Ayurveda, the disturbance or imbalance of *kapha* is a prescription for infections. Thus, it is advised to get up before sunrise i.e. when *vata* is active, to perform meditation, studies and practice kriyas like *jala neti*. By sun rise, *kapha* get active and it is not advisable to sleep post that.

- **Recommended** to study from someone who already does this process
- **Care to be taken** to use lukewarm salt water as it mimics the bodily fluids and would not create confusion to the immune system.

Regular practise of neti maintains healthy secretion and drainage mechanisms of the entire ear, nose and throat area. It also gives resistance to various diseases of the ears, eyes and throat.

Editorial team of Yoga magazine, Bihar School of Yoga



5. **Yoga Nidra:** This is an ancient practice brought out by *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*. Given the current situation, a brief 20-minute session would do wonders. You could listen to the recording uploaded by any teacher of *Bihar School of Yoga*. To write any more on this would be beyond the scope of this article. If you wish to have a glimpse of *Yoga*

Nidra then record the following instructions in your own voice and play it out, while you lie down and undergo in *shavasana* (corpse pose) with closed eyes. This is by no means the elaborate script, but scores of people have reported tangible benefits after this mini-*Yoga Nidra* module.

Mini Yoga Nidra process instructions

Preparation

- Kindly lie down, in the corpse pose, with eyes closed
 - Let your heels face each other and be at the respective edge of the mat
 - Let your hands be a foot apart from your body with the palms facing up
 - Let there be a gentle smile on your face, as a conscious smile would help to stay alert and awake!
- Stillness of body gradually translates into stillness of the mind thereby helping us to internalize this process. So, if need be, adjust your posture, clothes and your position accordingly
- Now we are ready to practice *Yoga Nidra*...

Awareness

- With a gentle smile, be aware of your surroundings...
- Now gradually become aware of the sounds around you (like the chirping of the birds, music etc.)
- Become aware of yourself on the mat... completely relaxed
- Now, consciously say to yourself that you would be aware and awake throughout the practice

Rotation of Consciousness

- Prepare to rotate your consciousness to various parts of the body
- Gently bring the awareness to your
 - Right thumb
 - Right index finger
 - Right middle finger
 - Right ring finger
 - Right little finger
 - Right palm
 - Back of the right hand resting on the carpet / floor
 - Right wrist

- Right forearm
- Right elbow
- Right upper arm
- Right shoulder
- Right shoulder blade
- Area between right shoulder blade to right hip
- Right hip
- Right thigh
- Right knee
- Right calf muscle
- Right ankle
- Right heel
- Sole of the right foot
- Top of the right foot
- Right big toe
- Second toe
- Third toe
- Fourth toe
- Right little toe

Ensure that you are aware and awake...

- Now become aware of your
 - Left thumb

- Left index finger
- Left middle finger
- Left ring finger
- Left little finger
- Left palm
- Back of the left hand resting on the carpet / floor
- Left wrist
- Left forearm
- Left elbow
- Left upper arm
- Left shoulder
- Left shoulder blade
- Area between left shoulder blade and left hip
- Left hip
- Left thigh
- Left knee
- Left calf muscle
- Left ankle
- Left heel
- Sole of the left foot
- Top of the left foot
- Left big toe

- Second toe
- Third toe
- Fourth toe
- Left little toe

Ensure that you are aware and awake...

- Starting from the heels, in a sequence, be aware of all parts of your body that are in contact with the mat. Now, become aware of the top of your head
- Forehead
- Right eyebrow
- Left eyebrow
- Eyebrows
- Right eye
- Left eye
- Eyes
- Right ear
- Left ear
- Ears
- Right Nostril
- Left Nostril

- Nose
- Right cheek
- Left cheek
- Cheeks
- Upper lip
- Lower lip
- Lips
- Chin
- Neck...
- Now, allow your awareness to flow downwards
till the toes and then back to top of your head

Breath Awareness (2 to 3 minutes)

- Remind yourself that you are a mere witness...
- Gradually become aware of the breath as and when it happens
- Observe the up and down movement of the abdomen, expansion and contraction of the chest, with each breath

Closing Instructions

- Be aware of your breath... (for a minute)
- Become aware of yourself lying in the corpse pose...
- Continue to keep the eyes closed till further instructions and be aware of the sounds around you...
- Now, gently move your toes and fingers, and bring your legs together
- Now, take your right hand, sideways, above the head and place it on the ground; bend at your left knee, and turn to your right side with your left palm placed in front of your chest on the ground. Relax in this position for a while...
- Gradually with the support of your hands reach a comfortable sitting posture
- When you feel ready to open your eyes, do palming and then with few blinks open your eyes
- Maintain silence, at least for 2 to 5 minutes

Most people sleep without resolving their tensions. This is termed as nidra. ... no matter what or why, but the sleep that results after yoga nidra, after throwing off the burdens, it is of a blissful, higher quality altogether.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Shrimath students practicing Meditation

www.shrimathyoga.com

6. **Meditation:** Learn to reconnect with yourself through meditation. If you already have a mantra or prayer or tasbeeh, you could ensure regular practice. Else approach an authentic tradition and pick up a meditative process. A minimum of 16 to 20 minutes of meditation or a similar practice is essential to build immunity at the mind level.

Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food
Hippocrates



7. **Food:** It is better to have non-refrigerated, non-aerated, freshly cooked food. This stands good not only for the present pandemic situation but can be part of our regular habit as well.

It is encouraged to remain silent while having food so that digestion and assimilation happen better.

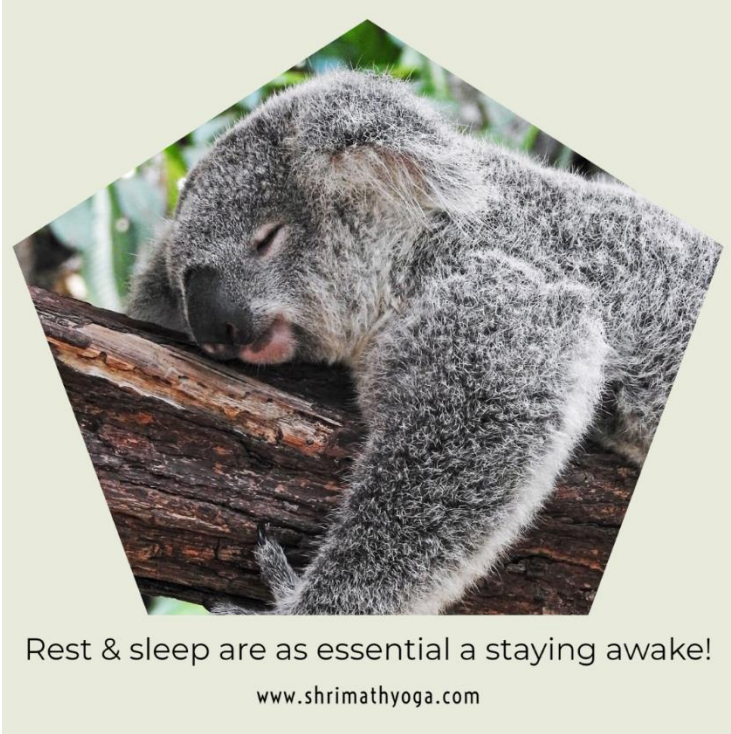
Also, it is better to take lukewarm water instead of cold water, both during the meal and throughout the day. If we could lace the lukewarm water with herbs like *tulsi* / holy basil or cumin seeds then it is still better.

The spices that one should have at home are clove, pepper, cinnamon, cumin seeds, carom seeds, coriander seeds and fenugreek as one could have herbal healing potions, instead of tea and coffee.

In food, usage of dry ginger in the morning and ginger during the day and having yellow myrobalan powder in lukewarm water before going to bed, keeps our body clean.

Learn from right source, and practice water as well as juice fasting once a month, each.

When we start a few of the above then in a matter of 3 days we can observe positive change in our body metabolism thereby building our immunity.



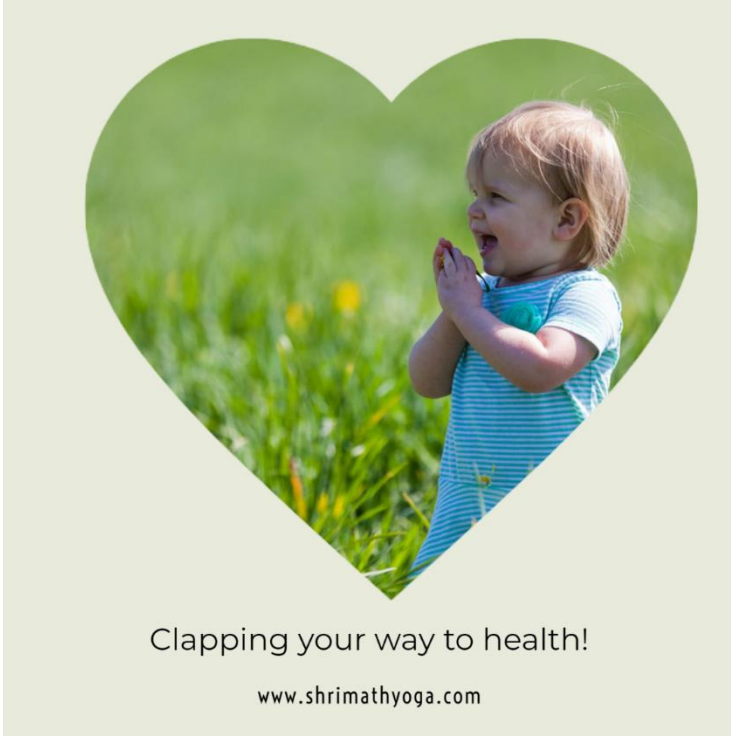
8. **Rest & Sleep:** The body needs at least 7 hours of sleep daily. The ideal time is to sleep from 10pm to 5am. At least during this lock down, we can implement this schedule and see for ourselves a marked difference in our mental and physical health in a matter of 3 days.

The internal organs function without any interruption from our side. Like us, they too have a duty time and it is between 11am to 3am they function optimally. Our pineal gland secretes melatonin, a hormone that regulates our sleep. This acts like a switch as it is only during the sleep, our body repairs, engages in active waste generation and prepares us to face the next day better.

Without sufficient sleep, your body makes fewer cytokines, a type of protein that targets infection and inflammation, effectively creating an immune response. Cytokines are both produced and released during sleep, causing a double whammy if you skimp on shut-eye.

Of course, there's more to boosting your immunity and guarding against illness than getting ample sleep. It's also important to practice smart stay-healthy strategies such as washing your hands with soap regularly, avoiding close contact with people who are obviously under the weather...

Courtesy: National Sleep Foundation, USA



9. **Importance of Clapping:** Generally, we clap to express our happiness or to encourage and appreciate others. Dr Rahul Dogra practicing at Kairali Ayurveda says that 28 out of 340 pressure points in the body are located at our hand. So, if we know the right way to clap, we can activate these pressure points which in turn energize our internal

organs by flushing out the toxins resulting in building immunity.

This routine keeps to improving blood circulation, works to improve conditions of arthritis, blood pressure and helps to resolve the (bad) cholesterol.

- **Recommended duration:** 20 minutes or at least 6 minutes before each of our 3 meals
- **Method:** exactly the way it is shown in the image. At each clap, the respective fingers and palms should be in touch with each other. The clapping should be hard enough to create tingling sensation and we should be able to literally feel the heat at our palms!

Conclusion

If we follow the above 9 ways, we can visibly experience a shift in our immunity levels within 3 days. Apart from the above, it is important to maintain a positive frame of mind, not just now but always. Finally, when we practice these, we can be rest assured that we have done our dharma. On witnessing us, many near and dear ones would be inspired to expedite their *dharma*.

धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।

Dharma protects the protector

Manu Smriti 8.15

Youtube link of the session

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEVgIVMmpx4>

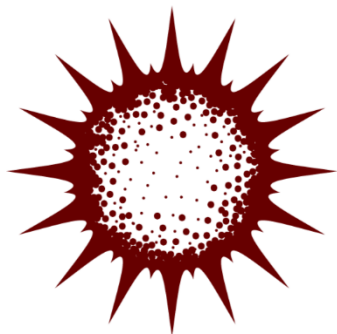
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Building immunity, our *dharma*

www.shrimathyoga.com

BUILDING IMMUNITY



Before starting to practice the techniques mentioned in the book, kindly take guidance of experts. Interact / learn in person or a tool like zoom. Stay in. Be safe.

Krishna Prakash

Krishna established Shrimath Yoga as a residential Yoga school to share the knowledge of Yoga, Veda & Tantra as taught in the living traditions

- Since 2011, participants from more than 40 countries have taken part in his sessions, both at the campus & online

- In 2019, he was inducted a LIFE MEMBER at Indian Yoga Association, founded by BKS Iyengar and now operating under the guidance of Swami Ramdev, Dr HR Nagendra, Sri Sri Ravishankar, Jaggi Sri Vasudev, Swami Paramanand, Hansaji, Dr Pranav Pandya, Dr Ishwar Basavaraddi, Sri OP Tiwari and others

- For more details, kindly visit www.shrimathyoga.com or mail us at email@shrimathyoga.com