Pearls of Wisdom

Home Yoga: Creating sacred time and space for daily spiritual practice

1. **Meditate:** Allow room for meditation, in whatever form, to be an intrinsic part of your daily life.

2. **Choose a time:** Commit to a regular time each day for your practice. This may be the most important discipline because maintaining a daily practice allows you to stay connected to the Divine aspect of yourself. This is your ‘Holy Time.’ A time of communing with your spiritual essence and allowing the God force within you to nourish and guide you each and every day.

3. **Pick a space:** Create a sacred space within your home for this practice. This is your temple. Keep it spotless and adorn it with sacred objects of your own choosing. They serve as a constant reminder of the sacred/divine aspect of your life.

4. **Learn:** Create a spiritual library of high quality library of books and music.

5. **Rise:** Try and get into the habit of rising early. Rising with the dawn is a great time to begin with a simple meditation and pranayama routine followed by a short reading of spiritual materials. Morning meditation opens your mind, raises your vibration and opens you up to unlimited potentials.

6. **Be creative** with your practice. In my opinion, dancing into the dawn with some Tai Chi moves as a dynamic meditation is as valid as traditional silent sitting meditation.

7. **Energy flows where attention goes:** Be sure to direct your attention and intentions towards the positive rather than the negative aspects in life!
Pranayama & Bandhas

The principle meditation used at Island Yoga is a technique known as Tantric Vipassana.

- Start with 3-6 rounds of Nadi Shona (alternate nostril breathing).

- This is followed by three rounds of Kapalabhati breathing (breath of fire.) Begin with one round of Kapalabhati (10-20 breaths) then take a deep inhalation and hold the breath (Kumbhaka). Relax the torso, shoulders and facial muscles. Bring the focus to the middle eyebrow point. Introduce Mula Bandha lock (root lock) Hold the Kumbhaka for as long as you are comfortable then a long slow exhalation and release the root lock. Pause for a few quiet breaths with the eyes closed and then start on round two and then round three.

- The third and final part of the preparation is 3 rounds of Uddiyana Bhand (navel lock)
Tantric Vipassana Meditations

Technique 1

- Simply breathe in through the heart center (3 second inhalation)
- Pause for one second, then exhale (4 seconds) using the silent humming bee sound of “mmm.” Visualize the “mmm” vibration moving up and opening the throat, third eye and crown chakras.
- Draw in the next 3 second inhalation through the heart center and repeat the process.
- Complete 7 rounds and then 14 rounds (count 7 rounds then count 14 rounds) making 21 rounds in total.
- Next sit silently, eyes closed with the focus centered on the middle eyebrow point (Ajna Chakra)
- Introduce the breathing mantra “So Hum”, gently inhaling to the silent sound of “So” and gently exhaling to the silent sound of “Hum”. Continue this process until either the mantra naturally fades away or the meditation is completed.
**Technique Number Two:**

Use the same method as Number One but use “Ohmmmmmm” instead of “Mmmmmmm.”

The whole Tantric Vipassana Meditation should last for 15-20 minutes and the combined preparation and meditation is completed in 30 minutes.

As you progress with your meditations, it often becomes desirable to meditate at dusk and dawn. Feel free to use one of the suggested techniques at dusk and the other at dawn.

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**Final note on meditations:**

The “So Hum” breathing mantra can you be used as a complete meditation in its own right without using the Tantric Chakra opening sequences. Here you can count the “So Hum’s”, first to 7, start again to 14, start again to 21 making a total of 42, then simply continue to gently watch the inhalation/exhalations. Alternately, you can simply use the “So Hum” mantra without counting.

Follow this link to learn the techniques of Kapalabhati:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2v-9LmU7lE
I like to think of Tai Chi Chi Gong as Oriental Yoga and the evolution of this yoga certainly matches Indian yoga in terms of complexity and sophistication. Learning Tai Chi allows you to really get in touch with and to develop your internal/external bio magnetic energy fields. After learning just a few simple moves or sequences...in Tai Chi it’s called “The Form.”

You are able to practice a wonderfully elegant spiraling circling dance that last 4-5 minutes. Repeating this dance (form) in a continuous loop 2-3-4 times allows the Chi to accumulate and form a powerful energetic field (aura) This is sometimes called an “Iron Shirt” and is akin to attaining an exterior protection/immune system that promotes significant mental and physical health benefits.

Used principally as a means to gain increased health and vitality, the form also quickly becomes an exquisitely graceful moving meditation which is best practiced early morning. This allows you to connect and harmonize with the rising planetary Chi which is known as sunrise.

As well as the self healing/health benefits of Tai Chi, many practitioners are also drawn into the healing arts. Japanese Reiki healing is a wonderful compliment to Tai Chi Chi Gong, and of course, Tai Chi is also the perfect compliment to your yoga practice.

One last note of explanation regarding the meaning of Tai Chi Chi Gong:

Chi Gong practice is the internal cultivation of energy (Chi). We then insert this Chi into the Tai Chi spiraling dance sequences to give the form is power and vitality; this is where it become a beautiful outer expression of internal power.
Master Mantak Chia, a Thai/Chinese has probably done more than most over the past 40 years to make Tai Chi accessible to the west. His “Universal Healing Tao System” is acknowledged as a comprehensive healing arts and Tai Chi resource.

Master Chia is based at the beautiful Tao Garden retreat center and spa just north of Chiang Mai.

www.Tao-Garden.com

Highly recommended reading:
“Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao” by Mantak Chia.
This book details the channeling and circulation of internal Chi power and includes the principle Taoist meditation for circulating Chi energy; the “Microcosmic Orbit”

Another highly recommended DVD for beginners to Chi Gong is “Qi Gong Healing Form LevelOne” by Jeff Primack

www.qigong.com

Final Note:
We at Island Yoga plan to open a Tai Chi school here on Koh Yao Noi.
The website domain is thailandtaichiyoga.com and retreats begin November 2015

Island Yoga 9 Form Tai Chi Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVJ_BrQaYKQ
Pranayama or “The Art and Science of Breathing” is a powerful yoga practice in its own right and also a key component to asana practice.

**The most common and popular of the breathing**

- Ujjayi breathing
- Bhasrika (bellows breathing)
- Kapalabhati (breath of fire)
- Bhramari (hummingbee)
- Nadi Shodhanam (alternate nostril breathing)
- Kumbhaka (breath retention)

The “Science of Breath” by Swami Rama, Rudolph Ballentine and Alan Hymes and is a recommended publication.

**Bandha Locks:** There are 3 main locks that act as “seals” to retain the prana/chi within the torso.
- Jalandhara (throat lock)
- Uddiyana (abdominal lock)
- Mula Bandha (anal/root lock) lock).
Dynamic Meditations: Sodarshan Chakra Kriya is from the Kundalini tradition and uses the mantra “Wa Hey Guru”


Sacred Mantras

The word mantra comes the ancient Sanskrit language and it essentially consists of 2 words, manas and trayate.

Manas stands for mind and trayate is a verb that means to liberate or set free. Thus the complete meaning would be “that which liberates the mind from material captivity”
**Recommended Mantras**

**Om Mani Padme Hum:** This is a Tibetan Buddhist mantra and one favored by the Dalai Lama. An approximate translation would be “Behold, the jewel in the lotus”. This is an ancient mantra that can be used in silent prayer, spoken aloud as a monotone mantra or made melodic with or without music as a chant.

**The Gayatri Mantra**

The Gāyatrī Mantra is a highly revered mantra of the Vedic tradition. Gayatri can be interpreted as the Sun or the Supreme Intellegence.

\[ Oṃ bhūr bhuvah svah \\
   tát savitúr váren(i)yaṁ \\
   bhárgo devásya dhīmahi \\
   dhíyo yó naḥ prachodáyāt \]

This link is Deva Primal chanting the Gayatri as a Japa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHpA6qotiwg
Recommended music & Chants

Deva Premal Albums: Embrace, Love Is Space, Moolamantra, The Essence, Dakshina
Deva Premal and Miten Album: Soul In Wonder

www.devapremalmiten.com

Krishna Das can be regarded as the western Godfather of devotional Indian chants. He has performed with some of the world’s top musicians and has an impressive catalogue of cd’s to his name. Maybe a premier selection would be:

Albums: Flow Of Grace, All One, One Track Heart,

www.krishnadas.com

Snatam Kaur Khalsa is another recommended chant artist performing Indian devotional music and touring the world as a peace activist.

Recommended CD: Shanti

www.snatamkaur.com
I’ve kept this list short as it could easily become endless!!! This is a selection of the books/authors that have influenced my own spiritual journey:

Deepak Chopra: Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga  
David Hawkins: Power VS Force  
Stuart Wilde: Infinite Self  
Gary Zukov: Seat of the Soul  
Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now

Maybe the best YouTube lecture I have come across is by Dr Bruce Lipton which details the connection between micro biology and consciousness; the intimate connection between our living cellular body and our environment.

Bruce Lipton is also a very engaging, funny and charismatic speaker who has authored the bestselling “Biology of Belief”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjj0xVM4x1I

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