



www.antasthayoga.com/yoga-solar-impulse/

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FAQ Solarimpulse / Antastha Yoga

How did your journey with SolarImpulse start?

André and I have met in 2004 and he has Antastha Yoga now been practicing Yoga with me for more than 10 years.

Our collaboration for the Solar Impulse challenge started shortly after he had a significant insight: although the SolarImpulse team is blessed with the top league of scientists and technicians providing the best technology and equipment for the plane itself, André realized that as a human, he would need professional support on a holistic level to face the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual challenges.

André found his answer in Antastha Yoga: my experience of the yogic world in a scientific context made a perfect match to understand the challenges which André would face, both at the level of the body and the mind.

What is Antastha Yoga?

Antastha, of Sanskrit root, means “the deepest”.

Antastha Yoga is a holistic approach by which the human being is perceived in its integrity and is being guided deep within. It is the pure expression of a combined modern understanding of the human body with a traditional, ancient yogic wisdom integrating body, mind and soul.

The essence of this practice is twofold: withdrawal of sense through pratyahara and self-study through Swadhyaya. This is achieved by blindfolding the practitioner.

Based on the old tradition of the Akharas, the spiritual and physical training centres, Yogamalish was created: a practice inducing healing and flexibility, which uses self-massage in a warm room with ayurvedic oil while practicing a specific asana series.

This combination gives you a new unexpected flexibility that lets you glide into the asanas and into a meditative state.

Last, the precise hands-on adjustments used during Antastha practice enables you to unlock positions and find unexplored potential within your body.

Antastha Yoga will not only improve and heal issues on the physical level, it is also an effective way to get relief from mental and emotional challenges.

What is special about Antastha Yoga?

We are challenged in day-to-day life with information overload. Our brains and memories need to digest all this information. It is very challenging to sit in meditation when there is so much to be processed.

Since most of our world is available at our fingertips, we barely move, which creates a restless mind and a painful body. So our mind needs stillness and our body needs movement. Antastha provides a perfect combination of stillness and movement at the same time.

Through the use of a blindfold, you are drowned to tap into your innermost potential to practice the asana, thus reaching a meditational state. Not having any visual reference point sharpens your clarity of mind and opens you to new realms of reality. You are instantly tuned into yourself, free from physical or emotional blockages. And these are key ingredients to a successful and happy life.

Tools and techniques were gathered over the last decades, combining ancient wisdom of Yoga for health improvement with modern psychology and scientific knowledge to create an immediate support. At the end of an Antastha Yoga session, internal quietness and clarity of mind with a refreshed and readjusted body are the rewards.

Tell us about your background

Yoga in its spiritual, physical, emotional and mystical dimension is everything to me. That's all I know. Since childhood I was blessed with opportunities to learn from great masters in India, and have since developed a holistic and sometimes spontaneous understanding of Yoga's astounding health benefits. That is how I created Anthasta yoga.

Furthermore, I studied Biology, Chemistry and Naturopathy, which evolved my knowledge of body dynamics and psychology. I do not only teach yoga, but I accompany my students through a lifetime journey of opening up to new realms of their potential.

Throughout my career, I trained hundreds of Yogateachers and coached thousands of staff in international organizations such as the UN, World Bank, Nokia/Siemens and Microsoft. I trained teachers for Deepak Chopra at the Chopra Center in California and I was the main Yoga advisor for Julia Roberts' movie Eat, Pray, Love.

Antastha Yoga (www.antastha.com) is my deepest expression of this lifetime practice and teaching and determines the way I am working and training Solar Impulse Pilot and CEO, André Borschberg, for his challenge.

What inspired you to this Yoga style?

The vast and rich treasures yoga has to offer are not to be just read in books. A large part of yogic knowledge is communicated through verbal transmission from teacher to student as well the personal experiences and insights.

Being curious of how the human body and mind works and the connection between them, made me wonder and study deeper. Antastha Yoga provided me the means to share the experiences. This is my attempt to impart the wonder that I discovered through Antastha Yoga with the world.

By practicing Antastha Yoga, one achieves a state, which usually comes after months or years of practice. This powerful method has an instant effect on the body and mind:

- Your postures become more agile and easy.
- Your stress levels are down.
- Your body feels nourished and „worked out“.
- Your mind is calm and clear.
- Your potential starts to unfold.
- You will find your truth.

So Yoga helps even at a height of 10.000 feet.

How can Antastha Yoga help „normal people“ here on solid ground?

With Si2 project we have experienced that even in most challenging situation Antastha Yoga is very effective. It allows us to take the human spirit to another level.

Most of the limitations - whether physical or mental - are self-imposed. The moment you are on the mat getting into “never done that before postures”, you open up new boundaries and new areas of conscious and sub-conscious.

Can you explain what happens within the body and mind during the flight and how Anthasta Yoga is affecting that positively?

The Solar Impulse technical challenge is already massive by definition. Traveling in an unpressurised cabin at such an altitude is similar to climbing Mount Everest everyday for four days.

Body and mind are stretched to their utmost stress levels, thus requiring from the pilots absolute sharpness and alertness, which are not only crucial to the success of the

challenge but are also vital to their survival. Being in a constant survival mode is very strenuous and doesn't allow much space for meditation.

For that Antastha Yoga helps André to mentally manage the challenges of meditation and to understand and use his body mind connection. Physically it increases André's flexibility, lowers his blood pressure, reduces his stress hormones, improves his joints and muscle toning as well as his digestion and sleep, it regulates his cardiovascular and hormone system and increases his general energy level.

You talked about extreme challenges the pilots have to face: what are these challenges and what is your solution to it?

One of the big challenges they will be facing is sitting in confinement for five or more consecutive days and nights. Their muscles atrophy due to a lack of blood circulation, weakening the body, leading to a longer recovery time. Also, carbon dioxide and citric acids level increase, overall impacting the immune system, as well as their digestion.

The pilots are using Antastha Yogas „CNS series“, specially designed to balance the central nervous system, along with a special set of classical, static yoga postures, breathing techniques, and meditation. When exercised blindfolded on the plane, its benefits are striking:

The CNS postures provide better cognitive coordination and reflexes. It helps neutralizing the challenges faced during the flight such as possible muscular atrophy, loss of concentration and under functions of all body systems.

The breathing techniques, called pranayama, help him deal with respiratory and blood circulations challenges due to the extremes of temperature and altitude: they are designed to reduce André's breathing frequencies to adapt better to the lack of oxygen and keep his concentration and his emotional state stable.

Postures like „shoulder bridge“, „spinal twist“ or „knees to chest“ increase the blood circulation in his vital organs, detox them, keep his endocrine system in shape and maintain his joint movements and general flexibility.

The meditation supports the vital upkeep of his concentration and reduces his need for sleep. The blindfold - by the lack of light hitting the eye - creates an increase of melatonin, the main sleeping hormone, hence providing an immediate release of stress.

How will you support the pilots during the flight and how will you communicate?

To help the pilot before during and after the flights I will be traveling with the Si2 team as well as be connected through Google hangout. Other than that we have recorded Antastha Yoga session for practice in the cockpit.

There are 3 phases to the Antastha Yoga program

1.before flight = preparation

maximum physical and cardiovascular exercises, flexibility and fitness

2. during flight = maintenance

maintaining the alertness while supporting deep relaxation during sleep and digestion, meditation for mental balance and yoga nidra for deep relaxation

3. after flight = recovery

Helping the body eliminating the extra nitrogen built-up in the body due to lack of movement.

Recovering muscle strength through the combination of massages and yoga. Yogamalish lymphatic system remove tiredness from the body.

What is most interesting for you within this project?

I am fascinated and inspired by the intense passion, the innovative vision, and the fact that two people are almost risking their life to give humanity a fresh impetus for a better world. Being able to benefit their incredible journey beyond human boundaries through knowledge of yoga is a privilege. Through specific techniques, we are exploring and expanding these boundaries.

I am amazed that, despite using the finest technologies and delivering an almost perfect machine, the human factor remains the key to success. Thus, by skillfully combining modern technology with ancient knowledge of almost 5000 years, we coined a new frame of work for the pilots. Being a part of and witness to this endeavor is very exciting.

What is your vision for the future?

My vision for the future is that everyone - beyond religion, origins, cultural background - uses and enjoys all the benefits of yoga, one of the biggest gifts to humanity. That people seize the beauty of it beyond „just“ the physical aspect.

Antastha Yoga is my dharma – which means the purpose of one's life. I am so fortunate to share this gift and facilitate to go deeper in the realm of all possibility.

What is your vision on a professional level: talking about the combination of a modern yoga adapted to our needs?

I have been honored and very grateful to be able to work with organizations such as the UN, WMO and private sectors where people always strive for perfection. They also need tools to help face extreme stress e.g. in the field of humanitarian support.

For a project like SolarImpulse, we are able to take yoga to the next level, whereby both pilots face extremes in temperatures and in altitude. Although they are assisted by the best technology, when it comes to human body and mind and awareness, yoga is so far the best known and proven “technology” there is.

Five days flying without break, although there is a huge technology set up in place, for the pilot there will still limited monitoring and navigation actions, is there a routine for the whole long journey based exclusively on yoga/meditation as a central path of the flight challenge?

The pilots will be following 2 different yoga routines throughout the challenge.

During the preparation phase, we focus on developing fitness and performance levels of the pilots. Through a series of selected yoga poses, we will enhance their flexibility. Finally, meditation will be key for their state of mind.

Their routines are recorded on iPads, and they will have access to them during the flight phase. Nevertheless we will conduct google hang out from the control centre to immediately tackle any challenge they could be facing.

During the day, they will be flying at 8000 meters while during the night, they will be descending to 3000 meters. Because of the constant changes in the altitude the body goes through extreme stress. This directly impacts the nervous system, the cognitive reflexes, increases the nitrogen pockets in the body and the danger of altitude sickness increases.

Although on a high altitude they cannot do so much movement, on a low altitude - and free from mask and atmospheric challenges - it will be time for charging not only the plane but also their own batteries. For that, we have designed an Antastha Yoga series of static yoga postures hence getting rid of tiredness in their system and preventing muscle atrophies. André has designed his plane seat to the exact dimensions of his yoga mat.

On another dimension, pranayama practice will help the body recover faster. It supports brain cells to gain oxygen and fresh energy. In parallel, the pilots have been trained to understand how to understand their prana (flow of energy) and awareness to sustain their bodies through a 5 days/ 5 nights challenge.

How will be the yoga training and preparation help fatigue and concentrations problems when environment and inputs (temperature, noise, etc) are different during the challenge from the the training on the ground?

For that matter, three phases are to be considered: preparation, maintenance and recovery.

First, during preparation, Antastha Yoga series works on tuning up the nervous system and increase flexibility. The blindfolded yoga practice is to increase the sense of grounding and focus.

Second, in-flight Antastha Yoga focuses on maintenance and resilience. At a lower altitude they will be practicing their yoga postures with the blindfold to bring their awareness in meditative state. The yoga postures result in proper blood circulation, agility of the muscle tones and joint mobility. This then also helps getting rid of stress impact on the body and the spirit.

At a high altitude the pilots only have heated clothes and socks to deal with the extreme difference of temperatures inside the cabin (from minus 20 degree to 50 plus). Those

extreme temperature changes give a great challenge to human body where Pranayama (breathing techniques) are design to deal with it.

Third, upon landing, different series will be implement to help the pilot to recover as well in the cockpit and on the ground. These recovery series are training pilots conscious steps to relaxation in order to optimize the recovery in short time.

The challenge itself is extreme for body and mind, an unforeseen event will bring the pilot beyond this already high level; in order to put the body in an alert situation in the case of an emergency, a certain level tension and stress is needed as part of a survival instinct for an healthy human judgment, which yoga training methods are foreseen to cope and find a right balance in these cases?

Stress is a good thing if properly managed: it creates alertness, provides a sense of life, forces the blood circulation where most needed by the body in given circumstances.

Not knowing how to deal with stress results in nervousness and anxiety and it clouds the judgment. Through constant practice of yoga, they have reached a high level of awareness which allows them to observe their actions and in the process they have learned to rise above the after effects of stress as through meditation and yoga.



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