



Creating a Tranquil Home

Let your spirituality extend beyond the yoga mat to create a peaceful sanctuary

By Laurel House
and Jagatjoti Singh Khalsa

A house is a space filled with your most precious possessions. But it transcends its existence as a house and becomes a home and a sanctuary when you are grateful for its service as a space to rest your head, energize, love your partner, raise your children, and welcome friends. It is a place to sit in prayer, in meditation, or in silence to restore and rejuvenate your self and your spirit.

When you have a practice that is designed to serve your soul, you are better able to journey into yourself and become more aware of your surroundings and the energy that exists around you and flows through you. Integrating this kind of “tuning in,” or consciousness, into your home and re-creating what you sense through color, texture, lighting, and objects can encourage communication, support loving relationships, welcome wealth, nurture the body and soul, and serve as a platform for strength and grounding.

In turn, a conscious home can become the foundation of your sadhana (discipline), which permeates your life with calmness, grace, and peace so you can meet the challenges outside of home. Seems a lot to get from home design, doesn't it? But that's why this exercise is more than just about designing a model home. A conscious home represents you, and you are not designed but grown, evolved, and organic.

See your space with consciousness

Part of being sensitive to a space and what it is trying to tell you has to do with being present. Designing a space, deciding how you want it to serve you, and how you plan to serve it is like a courtship. The relationship is not just a series of technical requirements compiled from a checklist: Send this card, buy these flowers. The relationship is about listening. It is like being with someone special who tells you that her favorite color is red.

This tells you a something about who that person is, and then you put that information into practice by sending her red flowers one day.

In the following exercise, try to acknowledge what resonates with you. There is no right or wrong answer. Forget about what the trend of the moment says you should like. Allow your intuition to guide you.

Enter the space and close your eyes.

What does it feel like to be in that space?

Take a deep belly breathe through your nose. Take in the scents that surrounds you.

How does the air feel against your skin?

Does energy flow, or is it stagnant?

What do the walls feel like?

What does the floor feel like below your feet and against your hand?

Open your eyes.

What is the initial emotion that strikes you?

What is the first thing you see? Where do your eyes wander? Do they go to the window? To a corner? Where do you want them to go? You can redirect the eye using mirrors, color, window dressings, plants, or lighting, patterns, or colors.

What do you gravitate toward in your space? If your eyes or your body avoid an area, why? Sometimes making the energy of a room feel good is about going back to gratitude. Consider how the space will be used: for example, that this place is where your children play, where you make love,

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Meditative Spaces

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where you will grow emotionally and spiritually, where you will feel safe. Try to tweak your attitude about the space and see if it tweaks your response to it.

Allow yourself a few extra

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breathes to listen to this sacred space. Be present in the space and think, "I am going to make this the perfect environment to.... create a child... do my homework... prepare delicious meals... entertain my friends... spend time on myself." And hear what it tells you.

Ultimately, a conscious home is the perfect harmony between inhabitants and the space. It is a perfect balance and reflection of the soul, the highest Self, the God in each of us and the God of our family, and the space itself. 🙏

Yoga 101

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full control of that energizing principle in one's own being."

So here's how to get started. As Iyengar puts it: "Words can... make a reader think that he understands a spiritual experience. Reading, however, only makes him more learned, while practice in what he has read brings him nearer to truth and clarity."

Types of Pranayama

For the following practices, sit in a comfortable cross-legged position with your shoulders back and down and your face relaxed. Start slowly, for about 30 seconds, and work your way up. If you feel dizzy or short of breath, stop. And don't do any breath retentions without the guidance of a teacher.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

This is often considered the most important aspect of breath control. Most people recruit their chest and neck muscles instead of the diaphragm when they breathe; this results in shallow breath, fatigue, anxiety, and headaches. Here's how to breathe more deeply.

Try it: As you inhale, your rib cage expands and your abdomen rises; as you exhale, your rib cage lowers and your abdomen pulls in. Imagine filling your lungs to their very top on your inhalation and then getting rid of all the air completely on the exhalation. Once you have this down, try keeping your breath as slow and smooth as possible.

Modification: Do this lying down, with a book or a sandbag on your abdomen.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

The Sanskrit name for this breath is Nadi Shodhana

Pranayama, which means "channel purification." This breath, which involves closing off one nostril and then the other, reduces stress and anxiety.

Try it: Bring your right hand up to your nose, and fold over your index and middle fingers so your right thumb is poised to close your right nostril and your ring finger is next to your left nostril. Close your right nostril with your thumb, and slowly exhale completely through your left nostril. Inhale completely through your left nostril. At the end of the inhalation, close your left nostril with your ring finger, open your right nostril, and exhale slowly and completely, then inhale. Repeat this pattern for two minutes: exhale, inhale, switch.

Shining Skull Breath

Also known as Kapalabhati, this rapid expulsion of breath cleans the sinuses and energizes the body.

Try it: Take a deep inhalation; your abdomen rises. To exhale, push the air out of your abdomen so that it pulls in. (You can put a hand on your abdomen to check that it's pulling in.) After the expulsion of air, you will automatically inhale. Repeat this pattern 10 times in quick succession, and then increase as you become more familiar with this breath.

Try each of these pranayama practices, and figure out which one resonates most deeply with you. Whether you choose to incorporate one or all of them into your life, allow it to help you connect more deeply with your breath, body, mind, and heart. 🙏

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