

# YOGA<sup>TM</sup> MAGAZINE

www.yogamagazine.com

ISSUE 245/ SEPTEMBER 2023

UNVEIL INNER HARMONY

**Kesari**  
on MEDITATION

**YOGA** *for*  
**AUTISM**

ECOSOMATICS &

**yoga**

MASTERING *the*  
**SLEEPING**  
**buddha**

**REACTIVITY** *in*  
**MEDITATION**

**POWER** *of*  
**UTKATA**  
**KONASANA**

**EMBODIED YOGA**  
**EXPERIENCE**



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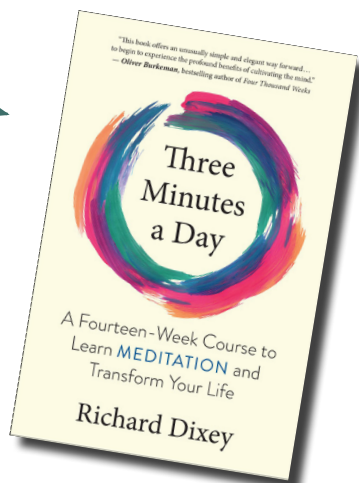
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# BRINGING ECOSOMATICS TO योग

Words: Cheryl Pallant Ph. D.



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Most of us would relish the idea of doing yoga barefoot upon the ground or unrolling our mat on a deck with a view of the beach, mountains, or forest. The visual beauty of the surroundings, the fresh air, and natural sounds inspires and energises, taking our practice to the next level. Nature provides an indulgence for our senses. There's another reason why our practice improves, and it has to do with ecosomatics.

Very simply, ecosomatics is the convergence between somatics, the subjective experience of our personal body, and ecology. Ecosomatics recognises that our body is in continuous dialogue with the environment. Our body is part of the planetary body. Or said another way, the ecology of our body is part of the ecology of earth. The two are interconnected. The earth's air is our air. The plants that the earth produces are the food that fills our plates. Our actions affect the air, water, and soil. Inversely, the air, water, and soil affect our sense of well-being. This mutual relationship ties the health of our body to the health of the planet.



In many ways, yoga is already an ecosomatic practice. At its heart, yoga means uniting, typically in reference to our true self, our divine energy, our body, and soul. None of these ideas are complete without recognising our bodily connection to nature. Yes, we are situated upon the earth, but our body is nature as much as is a tiger lily or honeybee.

Bringing an ecosomatic awareness to our yoga practice enhances this mutual relationship. It shifts a personally focused activity into a recognition that the activity is also collective and ecological. It's a matter of expanding our perspective to knowing that we are not only positioning our feet upon the floor or soil, but we are also engaging our mind, body, and spirit to be more whole and integrative with repercussions that influence surrounding life. Essentially, our practice is personally beneficial and helpful toward the rest of the planet.

## Breath Practice with Earth

With whichever pranayama technique, or breath practice, you enjoy, know that the air you take in is produced by nearby plants, however, it may also have traveled from quite a distance. Breathing connects an awareness of our body to faraway regions of the planet. If we do pranayama outdoors, the benefits increase. We are inhaling phytoncides, the chemicals released by trees like pine, oak, cedar, and fir which prompts the body to produce more white blood cells, which are known to combat virally infected cells. We can also gaze upon a plant, watch it sway in the wind, all the while knowing that as we breath, it breathes. We can express gratitude toward the plant for its role in soaking up carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

Among my favourite asanas is *Tadasana*, or Mountain Pose. Regardless of whether I do it indoors or outside, my attention includes connecting to earth.

## Mountain Pose with Earth's Energy

What I appreciate about this pose is that it prepares me for consequent asanas and alerts me to overall alignment. It points out the ways my posture can be improved and how standing may be taken for granted. It's a reminder that while situated on my mat, I am also meeting the earth's surface.

Spread toes and rock feet heels to toes until establishing a firm connection with the floor or ground. Stand with big toes touching, heels slightly apart. Elongate the spine upward, tilt the sternum slightly upward. Soften the shoulders while opening the chest. Let the head rest softly upon the neck. Relax the jaw. Spread the fingers downward as if reaching to the floor or ground. Look straight ahead with a

soft gaze. Allow attention meditatively to turn inward to the many small adjustments the body requires to hold this pose.

To connect to the energy of the earth, imagine the arches of your feet as windows and slide them open. Invite earth energy to rise into your arches, up your legs, into your torso, your arms, and up to your neck and head. Imagine a stream or waves of energy. Simultaneously, invite the energy of your body to flow downward and out through your feet into the earth. Initially, you'll rely on your imagination but over time and with practice, you can begin to feel the energy rising and descending.

## Mountain Pose with Arms Overhead

The Mountain Pose with the variation of arms overhead allows our limbs to reach both upward and down. Like a tree's roots descending into dirt and branches extending toward the clouds, the body is held dynamically in the opposing forces of up and down which generates energy and calm. This posture also reinforces arm and leg muscles, balance, core strength, and stability.

Stand as you did previously. Once you've established a firm connection to the floor or ground, bring arms out to the side, then overhead with palms facing or touching each other. Try to bring arms parallel to the ears, fingertips extending fingers skyward. Imagine opening the fingertips and crown of the head to the energy of the sky which descends into the head, arms, chest, and lower body. The body's energy can also exit through the head and fingertips.

Add opening your arches to earth energy and feel your body as a channel for earth and sky energy. Imagine your body a conduit or link between earth and sky. Let go of thinking and witness energy flowing through your body.



with this wave pattern is considered optimum for human health. The wave produces a barely perceptible hum that generates calm and a type of protective shield. In doing Mountain Pose and opening our arches, head, and fingertips, we can imagine ourselves participating in this resonance with the planet and perhaps perceive it too.

## The Importance of Ahimsa

Yoga is a reminder that we practice for the health of our body and that every moment with its resistance, weariness, stress, and excitability is an opportunity to develop alignment, balance, stretch, strengthening, and calm. Yoga is meant to support all life and benefit all beings. In Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutras', or 'Eight Limbs of Yoga', a lesser-known limb than Asana and Pranayama is Yama, which includes practices devoted to mental and moral restraints. Within this limb is *ahimsa*, which refers to refraining from violence and harm.

When pushing against habits and limits and developing new skills, we may be prone to criticise

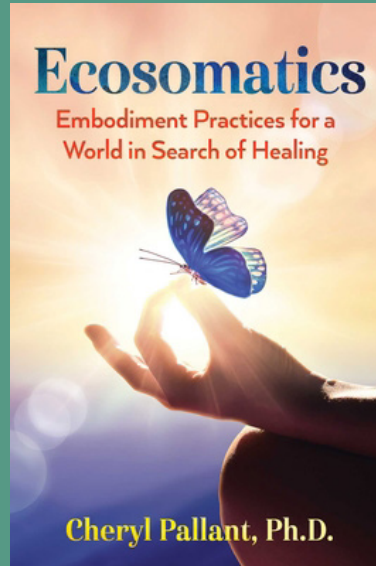
## Earth's Energy

Every living being emits subtle energy, or *prana*, the earth included. Yoga can clear, charge, and balance this energy. When in a meditative state resulting from practices like yoga, our *prana* as well as our brain waves more readily align with earth's energy. Physicist Winfried Otto Schumann studied global electromagnetic wave patterns. His findings in the 1950s led to acknowledging a frequency around 7.83 hertz, generally referred to as the earth's heartbeat, what became known as Schumann Waves. Synchronising

ourselves and compare our ability to another. This behaviour is a small but significant violence that helps no one, the *prana* in our body and surrounding energy field negatively impacted. Growth best occurs through encouragement. When encouraged, we feel free to be our true self and connect to our heart and compassion which are generative and life enhancing.

Given that yoga and ecosomatics show how our thoughts, actions, and energy connect to and therefore impact life around us - people, plants, animals, insects, and more - we have all the more reason to practice kindness and compassion. This awareness can deter the violence we may be inadvertently spreading and instead place us in alignment with the life-giving energy that supports all life. It's as simple as shifting perspectives from a narrow view of ourselves to opening to the mystery and awe of body, mind, spirit, and planet. Expanding the horizon of perceptions is a reminder that there is so much more to the usual landscape of our body.

***"Expanding the horizon of perceptions is a reminder that there is so much more to the usual landscape of our body".***



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