

BARPS is a method to practice yoga asana, so it includes all the principles of asana, pranayama and dhyana as we understand them in the KYM tradition. But more specifically it is an approach that attempts to circumvent the ideas of yoga that have been imposed upon yoga which might not be conducive to the practice of yoga, the way I understand it to be. For one, yoga has been conflated with religion and more particularly Vedanta. But historically and philosophically, the two are and have always been distinct and even opposed to each other. For instance, Vedanta is an orthodox doctrine that is both dismissive of matter and the body, and to place an embodied practice under the larger umbrella of Vedanta or orthodox religion is to curb its potential and undermine and overwhelm the transformative possibilities that are inherent to both the body and Yoga. BARPS is an attempt to extricate the corrective, moralistic and perfectionistic ways in which yoga asana is popularly approached today, making it into a product as opposed to moment in time and space.

BARPS is an acronym for a methodical practice that intails the progressive processes of bracing, aligning, rotation of joints, poisoning of breath and attention, and finally spaciouly stretching to occupy the asana from the inside. It is not a practice of not doing but “seeing”, seeing the engagement of the body within its various dimensions, and doing so finely, unimposingly and self-caringly and become absorbed in the process that is determining the shape. From the moment-go, it is a self-regulatory practice that fosters autonomy and adhikara over one’s body and practice, because eventually, it is “my body, my practice and it will be through the application of my judgements” that I will navigate shapes from the inside.

Below is a fifteen day break down of BARPS sessions that I will teach.

B-A-R-P-S

1. **Breath:** BARPS is a practice that attempts to subtly bridge the body and mind through breath. The very first session will introduce different techniques of yogic breathing in order to experience various textures of breath which will then be appropriately incorporated into practice over the two week period. Bracing: just as pranayama is explained as “mindful breathing”, I define asana as “mindful contact with the surface. How I brace a point of the body against the surface will determine the tangents of engagement that run inside my body determining the shape that it occupies
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3. **Buoyancy:** the body is subject to two primal forces, one that pulls it down, i.e., gravity, and one that makes it available unto a state of suspension and upliftment. Buoyancy pre-exists in my body, and for me asana necessarily requires inviting, allowing and ably delivering the body to this very subtle counter-force that may offer my body, breath and attention a state of suspension.
4. **Balance:** a tripod is essential for any object to stand upright. Balancing on one or even two feet is an optical illusion. Within each leg run three lines that culminate in three points in the foot, namely the inner-ball, the outer-edge and the heel. The practice involves gauging the tri—lines with which the body may garner support and resist the floor in order to stay in balance.
5. **Alignment:** alignment is not a cosmetic factor of asana as it can be made out to be. It is integral to it. Because in its eventuality asana is a shape with a mental aim, a target or a purpose (artha). And in order to sustain that the body-breath-mind must remain suitably aligned to this aim.

6. **Availability:** aspiration alone is not enough to arrive at that aim, I must equally allow myself to become available to it, strike that right balance between strife and release to make the practice both tenacious and tentative in order to listen to the body and become available to the inspiration and autonomous life-force of this aim or goal. It is this what makes the practice or *abhyasa* imbued with *vairagya*.
7. **Agency:** “My body, my practice and my judgments” is the mantra of BARPS. In order to remain realistically and unambitiously in the driving seat of my personal practice I must remain wary of the tyranny of perfection as well as the lofty moralistic ideas that are essentially judgmental and dismissive of realities of the body. At every step of the practice, I evoke agency as *adhikara* or authority is central to transformative embodied practice.
8. **Rotation of joints:** each of our joints are round, like knobs, and therefore offer multiple possibilities of rotations. It is self-determining the exact range of rotation in asana that makes the practice self-regulatory. And the exactness of this rotation is a result of how the body is connected to the materiality of the floor on the one hand and the mental goal or *dharana* on the other.
9. **Reciprocity:** I am of the firm opinion that the body is not alone, not only is there a palpable “excess” that is approximate to the body, but there also pre-exists in the body an appetite for this excess. The relationship between the body and its excess is similar to that of a poet and her muse, or between *bhava* and *vibhava* in Indian poetics. Like the muse evokes poetry out of the poet, sometimes in spite of the poet, this palpable excess too brings the body unto a meticulous shape, sometimes in spite of itself, i.e., asana is not a matter of plain labour and strife but equally inspiration.
10. **Rigor:** yoga is described as *tapas*, i.e., a committed practice the repetitiousness and consistency of which is heat producing. The persistence, perseverance and resilience that it involves both engages and generates rigor in the body-mind.
11. **Preparation:** the real work that goes into asana practice lies in the pre-engagement of the body, orienting the bones, calibrating the joints and the firing of the muscles before the shape is undertaken. In other words, preparation requires visualising and activating the blueprint of the shape before assuming it.
12. **Poise:** poise is central to the practice of asana, *pranayama* and *dhyana*. In fact, it is the one element that qualifies the practice as yoga. it involves the fine threading of the breath through the pinhole of attention and beyond. A look-before-you-leap moment, it necessarily requires pausing, collecting, and aligning of the attentive-breath before it can submit to the absorptive realm of excess.
13. **Permission:** no amount of mastery of technique and attentiveness can make my attention available till I claim the permission to do so. Ironically, agency requires permission, a permission that I claim and grant myself to own my body and practice with *adhikara* or authority. We need to remember that transformative practices are essentially transgressive acts that both elicit and generate courage and clarity.
14. **Sensing:** yoga is an intuitive practice as it involves going beyond the known, it involves the gradual unfolding of the body into a desired shape through the process of sensorially sensing the shape/s from the inside.
15. **Stretching:** yoga involves the process of elasticising, intermittently putting the body through modes of stretching and relaxing. The body innately desires the dual processes of both building tension inside the body and then releasing it, i.e., the modes of becoming a rubber-

band and a noodle intermittently. There is pleasure in the condition of noodleness if it is preceded with a mindful stretch.

16. **Spaciousness of sukha:** the promise of yoga is sukha which etymologically denotes “just-right” (su) space (kha). And this moment of spaciousness is marked by the suspension of buoyancy, availability, permission and a fine calibration of the above listed elements. It is out of sukha that both courage and clarity may emerge.