



The Yoga Institute

# 21 WAYS TO REMAIN POSITIVE DURING A LOCKDOWN



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AND  
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# CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	7
<i>21 Ways to Remain Positive during a Lockdown</i>	8
1. Love Yourself	9
2. Accept	10
3. Be Grateful	11
4. Forgive	12
5. Keep the Faith	13
6. Overcome Your Fears	14
7. Stop Complaining	15
8. Avoid Overthinking	16
9. Be Self-reliant	17
10. Let Go	18
11. Be Compassionate	19
12. Laugh / Smile More Often	20
13. Be Productive and Stay Creative	21
14. List Down 10 Positive Points	22
15. Eat Healthy and Live Well	23
16. Stay Physically Active	24
17. Do Asanas with Bhavas	25
18. Focus on Your Breath	26
19. Keep a Journal	27
20. Practise Conscious Relaxation	28
21. Meditate	29
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	30



## INTRODUCTION

During a time where we are all facing a lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, maintaining a balanced state of mind and staying optimistic may seem challenging.

This e-book discusses 21 principles and techniques that you can not only adopt during this lockdown, but also incorporate in your daily life to maintain a positive state of mind all the time, no matter what the circumstances.

The principles and techniques are based on the essence and teachings of Dr Hansaji J. Yogendra and have been presented in a lucid and practical manner so that it benefits everyone.

The principles are just as an advisory to maintain a healthy lifestyle, not a prescription for any medical condition.

Wishing you a healthy and happy life!



## 21 WAYS TO REMAIN POSITIVE DURING A LOCKDOWN

Uncover the secret to a healthy and happy life with 21 practical ways to remain positive during a lockdown. These principles and techniques can be applied and practiced by an individual in any circumstances of life and help them to lead more fulfilling lives.

# 1

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## LOVE YOURSELF

The first duty that you owe is towards yourself. If you do not love yourself, you cannot love another person or anything else. Self-love is important to living well. Practice good self-care too. Take care of yourself first. You cannot pour from an empty cup. If you want to be happy, then start with yourself. No matter how difficult or tough the external situations may get and no matter how people behave, if you know your true self and love yourself, no external situation can affect or break you.

For your own mental and emotional well-being, it is important to listen to your inner voice and direct all your energy towards loving yourself. Now is a good time to slow down and take a step inwards and be kind to yourself. Radiate positive and good energy at all times. Take responsibility for yourself and stop playing the victim. Become your own hero. In order to be a strong person, the first quality is self-love. However, self-love is a journey in itself. So, begin today and take one day at a time. And no matter how things unfold, be kind to yourself at all times.

## 2

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### ACCEPT

A very important part of self-growth is acceptance. Accepting yourself the way you are, accepting others the way they are and accepting the current situation the way it is. The more we try to change the natural course of things, the more stress we mount upon ourselves, leading to unfulfilled expectations and resultant growth of negativity and frustration. The moment we realize that external circumstances are not in our control and that it is not our job to either change or control it, we begin to practice acceptance in our lives.

There is absolutely no need to compare yourself to anyone else. The grass will always appear to be greener on the other side. Learn to water your own grass and watch it flourish in its own way. Once you inculcate acceptance in your life, you will realize that things are already good the way they are. You have just changed the lens through which you view yourself, others and the world. Be gentle with yourself and think rationally. Allow your intellect to overcome your fear and anxieties. Ensure your acceptance is unconditional and without boundaries. It is the secret to unconditional happiness.

# 3

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## BE GRATEFUL

Being grateful is a super power. In a world where the rat race just does not end, because of the vicious cycle of wants and desires, to be grateful for what you have and continue to do your duties without expectations, is not unrealistic but an invaluable skill to have. Practising gratitude will help you to declutter your mind of negative thoughts and make space for productive and healthy thoughts. Being grateful will not change your external situation, but it will change the way you look at things.

In order to maintain peace and harmony within, it is important for you to look for the good in every situation, no matter how difficult. It is easy to find 100 reasons to be ungrateful for, but this will only harm you and accumulate toxic emotions. Acknowledge and recognize the people and things in your life and express gratitude towards them. This practice trains the mind to look for the positive in every situation as compared to the old wiring of finding faults and looking for what is lacking in life. Grateful people are happy people and radiate a loving attitude under any circumstances.

## 4

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### FORGIVE

Forgiveness is not for the weak; it is for the strong. It does not involve forgetting, but an intentional act of healing yourself. Holding on to past anger, hurt, regrets will only continue to harm you and no one else. Once you learn to value yourself, you will understand that nothing is worth destroying your inner peace. If you want move on in life and focus on your personal growth, it is important to learn to forgive. Forgiveness does not only mean to forgive others, it also means to forgive oneself.

Too often you may find yourself engaging in self-blame. This is as harmful as blaming others. Under the current circumstances, it is easy to blame others and find faults, but this will only add to the problem and not provide any solution. Forgiveness has the power to diminish stress and inner conflict and filter out the negativity from your mind. It is only when you learn the power of forgiveness that you are able to take a step closer towards healing your hurt and resentment. It brings about clarity in your life as you begin to focus your energy on what is good for your well-being and growth.

## 5

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### KEEP THE FAITH

Faith had the ability to move mountains. It generates a comforting feeling within us. It creates a hope that tomorrow will be a better day. It brings about a realization that nothing in this world is permanent and that everything is changing. Our current situation though unfavourable is not everlasting. This too will pass. Living a life with immense faith and positivity, will only make you stronger and increase your ability to face the most challenging situations of life with comfort and ease. The external situation will remain the same, but your endurance level increases when you live a life of faith rather than fear.

Begin every day with a heart filled with renewed hope and faith that this is going to be the best day of your life, no matter what. When you accumulate all your positive energies and direct it towards a productive goal, accomplishment of that goal becomes much easier. Rather than living a life under constant fear and hopelessness, try to live with faith and hope. Fill your mind and heart with nothing but positive and optimistic thoughts, accordingly your actions and behaviour will be redirected in the right direction.

## 6

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### OVERCOME YOUR FEARS

Fear leads to unnecessary stress and tension. Fear is nothing but lack of belief in oneself. When you doubt your own abilities, fear is created in your mind. Fears are irrational and need to be tackled with instead of ignored. Understanding the root cause of your fear is very important. Once you have understood it, learn to embrace it rather than resent it. You will be able to face your fear only if you acknowledge and accept it. This is possible only when you have trained your mind to be strong enough to accept your weakness and learn from it.

Fear only lives in the mind. A weak mind is a feeding ground for a lot of negative emotions; fear being one of them. Whenever you are faced with a crisis, your negative mind immediately takes you to the worst case scenario. Instead, focus on the best case scenario and do not let fear take over. Become a master of your mind and do not let fear control you instead control you fear and turn it into a opportunity.

# 7

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## STOP COMPLAINING

Complaining is the trait of a weak mind. Complaining encompasses always finding faults, always cribbing and always being dissatisfied with life, no matter what. Once you practice acceptance and gratitude, you will realize that there is absolutely nothing worth complaining about. in life Our minds tend to focus on things that are not right rather than focusing on the things that are going well for us. This, in turn, gives rise to a never-ending cycle of complaints and regrets.

Complaining is a result of unfulfilled expectations. Expectations give rise to disappointments. Hence, the first rule is to stop expecting anything from anyone or life in general and become content. Constant complaining does not accomplish anything; in fact, it only turns it into a habit. Hence every time, some remote inconvenience is caused to us, you begin complaining and send out your negative energy into the universe. Rather, try to look within and understand the cause of your discontent and rationally try to resolve it.



## 8

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### AVOID OVERTHINKING

Overthinking can destroy you, quite literally. It is the tendency of creating situations that do not exist in the first place. Overthinking creates a problem for every solution and gives rise to negativity and increases the risk of an emotional outburst. What leads you to this problem in the first place? It is your insecurity and low self-esteem. These are the biggest hindrances to your personal growth. Human beings have the power of intellect, but when delusions take over, our ability to think rationally is diminished and overthinking takes over.

With so much of negativity and misinformation doing the rounds nowadays, a weak mind can easily fall prey to overthinking and get crazy. Thus given the ill effects that overthinking can have on your overall well-being, it is imperative to observe your thoughts, and then train them to act rationally. It is in your own self-interest to catch yourself the moment you begin to overthink, and stop then and there. Avoid spending more than five minutes on any negative thought and conserve your energy for more productive and creative thoughts.

## 9

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### BE SELF-RELIANT

It is important for each and everyone of us to be self-reliant, both physically as well as emotionally. Being heavily dependent on someone or something, eventually make us weak. Even under the current circumstances, when things are beyond our control, self-reliance teaches us that we can overcome whatever difficult situation we have before us. It is important to note here that this does not mean to meddle with the situation. It simply means when the time comes to do our bit, we do it without depending on anyone.

Self-reliance is a virtue that requires immense trust in oneself. It makes you more confident and improves your self-esteem. All these factors play a significant role in generating positivity and keeping a well-balanced mind. When the mind is strong and free of distractions, it becomes easier to take important decisions in life swiftly and rationally. It enables you to become self-sufficient and independent, and more responsible towards others as well as yourself.

# 10

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## LET GO

Holding on to something can cause you more pain than letting it go. This applies to situations, people, your thinking patterns or your belief systems. It is important to free yourself from the bondage of attachment that you hold within yourself. It is important to continue to do your best and surrender the results to a higher reality. When you learn to surrender, you learn to let go of the things you cannot control. Do the best as per your ability, the results of course are not something that you can choose. You can only accept.

Letting go is a conscious choice that you need to make for your own betterment. It generates a feeling of freedom from within. What you once thought was required for your survival, is actually something that you had to let go. When you let go of unhealthy feelings and emotions, you let go of the unhealthy situations and circumstances that they create. You pave your own path of happiness and peace by letting go of that which no longer serves you.

# 11

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## BE COMPASSIONATE

We're all in this together! No matter where in the world we may be and no matter how much we may have achieved in the material world it goes all in vein when we struggle to keep ourselves safe from something we cannot even see! No one is rich or poor, big or small, we are all human beings with certain limitations. This crisis calls for all us to develop unrestricted compassion towards each other. Compassion is the acceptance of suffering and a step forward towards healing. We cannot live in denial all our lives.

A simple act of kindness may not change the world, but it definitely changes the world of the person to whom kindness was shown. In a world filled with so much negativity at the moment, a small step towards kindness, a drop of compassion and a feeling of empathy towards one another can definitely change the situation in our heads and bring about a ray of sunshine in the midst of darkness. The more compassionate our feelings, the more bearable life can get. It helps us to search for the good and not thrive on the bad.

# 12

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## LAUGH / SMILE MORE OFTEN

No matter how serious the current scenario is, learn to smile instead of frown. Ensure you are doing your duty and do not stress over things beyond your control. In fact, laugh over it. Do not worry about being silly. No one has ever suffered by staying positive, happy and smiling forever. Don't take life too seriously, laugh more often. Make others smile. Laughter is more contagious than the current contagion, hence spread laughter and joy and lighten the moment.

Laughing and smiling can have positive influence on your overall well-being and it can greatly reduce your stress levels. A good laugh is a very effective method of releasing blocked or repressed emotions. It also expands your lungs and stretches your muscles, especially your facial muscles. Hence, it is a good idea to take a break from the constant negativity and indulge in some good laughter. Even when you are angry, stressed or sad, force a smile on your face and see how you automatically feel a little better.

# 13

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## BE PRODUCTIVE AND STAY CREATIVE

An empty mind is indeed a devil's workshop. The devil being the negative thoughts that dominate your thinking and blur your vision to see and act rationally. The mind is like a monkey, it keeps hopping and jumping from one thought to another creating stories of its own and fixating on the negatives. The mind needs to be given a tool to direct all its attention towards more productive and creative things. Thus it becomes imperative to spend all your waking hours directing your energy on tasks that will enhance your creativity and productivity.

Simple day-to-day tasks like proactively doing household chores, de-cluttering, reading a chapter of a book, responding to an email and for that matter any other task no matter how small, which will add to reducing your burden of doing it all at a later stage or at the last moment will keep you productively occupied. Breaking down complex tasks into smaller ones or taking up one task at a time will help in ticking off your 'To do list' and will also ensure you spend your time productively and not procrastinate thus leading to unnecessary stress later on.

# 14

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## LIST DOWN 10 POSITIVE POINTS

If someone asks you to list 10 negative things from the current crisis, you would be able to list 50 of them. Why just 10! But if someone asked to put down 10 positive things, would you be able to at least get past five? Make it a habit to write down 10 positive points from your day regularly day especially during a crisis where finding one good thing seems so difficult. Inculcating this healthy habit can have a tremendous effect on your state of mind.

The very fact that you woke up healthy to see another day, is in itself the greatest blessing of life which not just you but many tend to ignore. The fact that you have been given an opportunity to slow down the pace of your hectic life is another thing to be thankful for instead of just whining about the lockdown. It just gets easier as you ponder on the minute things from your daily life that you usually took for granted and use this technique when listing the 10 positive points in every single day.

# 15

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## EAT HEALTHY AND LIVE WELL

We are what we eat. As the food so is the mind, as the mind so is the man. Food is meant to provide the body with nutrition and energy, not to simply satisfy the taste buds. A healthy and well-balanced meal not only nourishes the body but also the mind. Simply put, when you eat natural, freshly cooked, mildly spiced and easily digestible food, your body remains active, and energetic and you feel light. This, in turn, keeps your mind well balanced and fresh, keeping your thinking productive and healthy.

On the other hand, when you eat only to satisfy your taste buds, you tend to overeat extremely sweet or spicy food, or artificially prepared and preserved food. Foods like these give you instant pleasure but can irritate your gut and cause digestive related disorders at a later stage. An unhealthy digestive systems leads to an agitated mind and can even spoil your mood and state of mind. This is how important a role food plays in the overall well-being of an individual. Currently despite the shortage of a few goods, try to eat nutritious meals and stay healthy.



# 16

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## STAY PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

We tend to hold a lot of stress and tension in our body in the form of stiff joints and tight muscles. This is a subconscious trait and therefore it becomes necessary to move the body at regular intervals and release all blocked emotions held in various parts of the body. Staying physically active has a lot of benefits on your overall health and well-being. It improves the cardiovascular strength which keeps the heart efficient, which in turn pumps a good amount of oxygenated blood to various parts of the body. When each and every cell in the body is nourished with fresh supply of blood, the body works in harmony with the mind and they function at their fullest capacity.

Simple exercises which involve stretching and strengthening the entire body should be done daily even if it is for just 15 minutes. Walking around the house and doing something or the other around the house also can be quite therapeutic if you do not consider it to be a chore. Just remember to stay physically active and not be lethargic.

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## DO ASANAS WITH BHAVAS

The practice of asanas is very different from just doing physical exercises. Asanas are a set of mindful movements, not just mechanical exercises. Each asana is performed with conscious breathing and with an intention of invoking a feeling or emotion within us. All meditative asanas in yoga inculcate a feeling of quietude. It is a channel of internalizing oneself and the feeling with which they are performed is called dharma bhava. Asanas that require neuromuscular coordination involve immense focus and concentration and are practised with jnana bhava.

Backward bending asanas that opens up your chest, releases all blocked up emotions from your heart centre thereby invoking self-confidence and self-reliance in you are practised with aishwarya bhava whereas forward-bending asanas which inculcate a feeling of humility and surrender are practised with vairagya bhava. Thus, one can practice Sukhasana with dharma bhava, Talasana with jnana bhava, Bhujangasana with aishwarya bhava and yoga mudra with vairagya bhava. Practising yoga asanas with bhavas will enhance its benefits on your overall well-being, keeping you healthy from within.

# 18

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## FOCUS ON YOUR BREATH

When the breath is erratic, shallow and fast, it is almost impossible to think rationally or positively. The mind then becomes confused and is unable to control its thoughts and consequent behaviour. Hence, it is important to slow down the pace of your breath and take deep inhalations and exhalations. This process will not only slow down your breathing rate but also enhance the supply of oxygenated blood to your head. Increase in supply of fresh oxygenated blood, will immediately calm you down and release your stress and anxiety.

Hence, whenever consumed with any negative emotions, first draw all your attention to your breath. Observe the pattern: it will always be shallow when you are not in a balanced state of mind. Begin to consciously control your breath by equalizing the process of inhalation and exhalation. Begin with two seconds and subsequently increase it to 3, 4 and 5. Focus your attention on your abdomen by placing your palm on your naval region and observe its movement as you practice this equal breathing technique. You can also place your palm on your heart centre and observe how your lungs expand and contract as you breathe.

# 19

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## KEEP A JOURNAL

Expressing your emotions from time to time is not only cathartic but also ensure that you do not bottle up your emotions, which could lead to an emotional outburst later. Journaling your emotions or in simple words keeping a diary and writing in it whatever you are going through the day, helps to reflect on a situation and act wisely. It helps to empty the mind and make space for more positive thoughts and rational behaviour.

Clogged up emotions can lead to confusion, anxiety and stress. Regularly releasing them in a healthy manner will ensure that they do not cause an unfavourable effect on our minds. It doesn't matter what your handwriting is like, and it doesn't matter how many spelling or grammatical errors you make. The key is to release everything that your hold in your mind and to make yourself lighter and happier. Examine your own thoughts . Watch how they manifest as you read them in your journal. This technique will allow you to deal with your thinking pattern much more effectively.

## PRACTISE CONSCIOUS RELAXATION

It is equally important to get adequate rest and relaxation. However, this does not mean to sleep long hours and just lie in a bed or a couch aimlessly for hours together, doing nothing. Doing so only makes you lazy and lethargic and makes it even more difficult to get back to a disciplined routine. The technique of conscious relaxation helps you to not only relax but also improves your concentration thus keeping you alert and aware at all times. These practices also induce a good night's sleep, which is essential for everyone to lead to a healthy and stress-free life.

One such technique of conscious relaxation is Nispanhbhava which involves taking a comfortable position, closing your eyes and passively directing your attention to the various sounds around you, without application of any emotion or judgement. This technique has the ability to immediately calm you down and helps in relieving undue stress and anxiety. Another technique of conscious relaxation that you can practice is Shavasana. This technique involves progressive relaxation of each and every part of the body beginning from your toes and moving upwards towards your head. This technique lightens your body and completely relaxes each and every part of it.

# 21

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## MEDITATE

Meditation does not involve sitting in one place for long hours with your eyes closed. In fact, meditation is a mental exercise, which helps it to become more relaxed, focused and aware. It can be done anywhere, anytime. The key is mindfulness. If your mind is full of thoughts, meditation is not possible. If you inculcate mindfulness, then meditation is possible. Meditation makes your mind more focused and one-pointed. It is an excellent technique to relieve stress and stay more positive in life.

For beginners, an object of concentration would be required to arrest the constant working of the mind and direct its attention towards one thing i.e., make it more one-pointed. Hence, practise by gazing at an object in front of you. Then close your eyes and visualise just that one object in your mind. At all times, conscious breathing technique is to be adopted. Slowly and steadily progressing with your meditation practice will ensure that your mind begins to come within your control and you are able to take charge of your feelings and emotions.

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We hope that this e-book benefits the readers and is in keeping with the vision and mission of The Yoga Institute to spread the awareness and goodness of the philosophy of yoga to as many people as possible.

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