

# 5 Steps to Intention Setting During Your Yoga Practice

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One of the tools in the [guided meditation](#) practice of Yoga Nidra is the setting of an intention or resolution. This is referred to as a Sankalpa in Sanskrit.

This practice and the power of [working with an intention](#) doesn't have to be limited to just a Yoga Nidra guided meditation practice.

When I started practicing Yoga Nidra regularly and started to teach my first Yoga Nidra classes I began to realize the power of the practice of setting an intention at the beginning and end of each of these practices. I started to make this a much more significant part of my practice every time I got on my mat, not just when I was lying down to do Yoga Nidra. I started to give this practice more significance in all of the classes that I was teaching as well.

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**“Yoga is a process of replacing old patterns with new more appropriate patterns.” – Sri T. Krishnamacharya**

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If you want to start working with an intention in your practice then you first want to take a look at what it is that you are hoping your practice will help you achieve. [Why are you doing yoga](#); [what brought you to class](#); why are you on your mat; is it to find more balance and peace; encourage more health

and wellness; build more strength and **flexibility in your body**; learn to focus your mind; find a deeper sense of meaning and purpose; cultivate more love, compassion and kindness in your life, or maybe it's something else?

Take a moment right now if you haven't really thought about it and try to answer this question for yourself. **Why are you doing yoga?** What brought you to class?

To create your intention, think of a statement that reflects the change you want to make in your life or where you want to go. Make sure to word it in the positive tense as if you've already made this change in your life. It's as if you've already reached your destination. Imagine that you've already completed your journey. If your goal is to find more balance and peace, then imagine you've already found balance and peace.

Your intention could be something as simple as '*I am living a balanced life*', or '*I am in balance*'. Make sure your statement is simple and something you can easily repeat over and over again to yourself. You're going to bring this intention into class and use it every time you practice.

Setting an intention seems like such a simple thing. Many people make intellectual resolves all the time but they rarely bring results. Swami Satyananda writes in his book *Yoga Nidra* that this is because the resolve is not planted deeply enough and is made when the mind is disturbed or when the mind is not ready to receive it. When you plant the seed of your intention at the right time in your yoga practice it has the chance to take root and work on the subconscious layers of your mind. The key is that the mind must be open and receptive and ready to receive the seed of the intention for it to be effective and for you to see results.

When working with an intention you want to set your intention near the beginning of your practice and then again at the end of the practice after savasana or meditation. Swami Satyananada says the resolve you make at the beginning of the practice is like sowing a seed, and the resolve at the end is like irrigating it. The body and mind are very relaxed and very receptive at the end of your practice, especially when you have just come out of a deep savasana or meditation. This is the most important time to set your intention.

Master teacher, Rod Stryker, says that in order for your intention to grow and flourish you must prepare the mind by shifting into a state of gratitude. One of the things he encourages before planting the seed of your intention is to find gratitude for this moment in time and everything that has led up to this moment.

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## 5 Steps to Setting Your Intention

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1. **Attitude of Gratitude:** When you arrive for your practice start to shift into a **state of gratitude**. Take a moment to be grateful for this moment and the time you have on your mat that you have set aside for yourself. Practicing gratitude is a great tool that will help you a lot in becoming more open and more receptive.
2. **Assess the Situation:** The first thing I ask my students to do in my classes when class begins is assess the state of their body, the rhythm of their breath and then, the state of their mind. Chuck Miller, one of the founders of Yogaworks in Santa Monica, used to say that **before you start you first have to stop**.
3. **Create an Offering:** After their assessment, I ask my students to take a moment to offer their practice to someone they love or to the Universe. This small gesture can be felt immediately. Just by dedicating your practice to someone else or offering it to the Universe you feel yourself opening up a little, becoming a little more receptive.
4. **You're Already There:** When you are setting your intention it's important to feel the intention already working on you. Imagine that it has already happened. You've already reached your destination. See yourself already having made this shift in your life. It's already done. Try to see who is there with you.
5. **Give Thanks:** Offer thanks for everyone who has helped you along the way on your journey. If it's hard for you to visualize then practice repeating your intention to yourself over and over again.

Working with an intention is a powerful way to deepen your practice. Are you ready to change your life? Are you ready for a new direction? Maybe it's time to set an intention.

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