

**SURYA NAMASKAR AND ITS IMPACT ON WEIGHT LOSS****Dr. Swati Katyayen\***

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**ABSTRACT**

Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) is a dynamic sequence of 12 yoga postures performed with rhythmic breathing, traditionally practiced in the early morning. This holistic routine integrates aerobic movement, flexibility training, and mindfulness. Obesity is becoming a bigger issue among kids and middle-aged adults these days. This article explores the physiological mechanisms by which Surya Namaskar contributes to weight loss, reviews clinical evidence, and assesses its role in sustainable fitness regimens.

**KEYWORDS:** Surya-Namaskar, Sthaulya, Weight Loss, Obesity, BMI.

**INTRODUCTION**

Weight gain and obesity have become global public health concerns, linked to sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, and chronic stress.

While exercise and calorie control remain primary strategies, holistic practices like yoga offer a complementary approach. Surya Namaskar, often referred to as the “complete body workout,” offers both aerobic and anaerobic benefits for weight loss. When practiced regularly, it can significantly contribute to fat loss, improved metabolism, long-term weight management, and many more health benefits. Thus, looking upon the importance of Surya Namaskar to reduce obesity, this article is presented.

**STHAULYA OR OBESITY**

Medo dhatu accumulates as a result of *Sthaulya's* abnormal behavior. In modern medicine, it is compared to obesity and is defined as excess body fat that presents a health risk. The World Health Organization's most widely used definition of obesity, which describes it as "a common chronic disorder of excessive body fat," claims that obesity has become a global

epidemic that impacts many developing and even underdeveloped nations in addition to the industrialized world. It has spread around the world, affecting not only the industrialized world but also many developing and even poor countries.<sup>[1]</sup>

A person with excessive body weight and mass, especially in the Udaradi (abdominal) area, is called Sthula, according to Aacharya Bhavamishra, and the state of Sthula is called Sthaulya.<sup>[2]</sup>

अति स्थूलस्य लावदायशो ह्रासो जवापरोधः  
कृच्छ्रव्यवायता दौर्बल्यं दौर्गध्यं स्वेदाबाधः  
क्षुदतिमात्रं पिपासातियोग्यचेति भवन्त्यष्टौ दोषाः ॥  
(च. सू. 21/4)

(i) The aging process of a very obese person is rapid. (ii) There is no enthusiasm in his body to do any work and (iii) he faces difficulty in sexual intercourse too. (iv) Weakness, (v) foul smell in the body, (vi) excessive sweating, (vii) excessive hunger, and (viii) excessive thirst. These eight defects are found in overweight people.<sup>[3]</sup> To overcome all these issues, Surya Namaskar plays a vital role in an obese person.

## SURYA NAMASKAR

Surya Namaskar is a comprehensive and ideal fusion of breathing, physical movement, and mental focus used for spiritual advancement, health, and energy.<sup>[4]</sup> In order to achieve a variety of physical, mental, and spiritual advantages, the ancient Indian practice known as Surya Namaskar, or Sun Salutation, involves praying to the rising Sun in the morning while performing a sequence of physical postures and breathing exercises. Early in the morning, facing east, a calm person stands and prays to the Lord Sun (Surya in Sanskrit) using Surya-Namaskar. Surya-Namaskar has particular spiritual meanings in addition to its physical postures. The graceful combination of twelve poses, controlled breathing, and relaxation is known as Surya-Namaskar.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Twelve Mantras of Surya Namaskar

Before each Surya Namaskar round, the twelve names of Lord Sun are said one at a time. These are

1. *Om Mitraya namah*
2. *Om Ravaye namah*
3. *Om Suryaya namah*

4. *Om Bhanve namah*
5. *Om khagaya namah*
6. *Om pushnaye namah*
7. *Om hiranyagarbhaya namah*
8. *Om marichaye namah*
9. *Om Adityaya namah*
10. *Om Savitre namah*
11. *Om Arkaya namah*
12. *Om Bhashkaraya namah*

One gains lots of Sun energy if Surya Namaskar is performed using these mantras.

### Structure and Mechanics of Surya Namaskar

A single round of Surya Namaskar involves 12 interconnected asanas. Each round takes 2–3 minutes depending on speed and intensity, involving:

- Dynamic stretching and flexing of major muscle groups
- Alternating forward bends and backbends
- Weight-bearing poses engaging the core, arms, and legs
- Synchronization of movement with deep breathing
- Chanting mantras of Surya Namaskar

One round of Surya Namaskar is done by below 12 Asanas-

Join both feet and stand up straight. While the toes should be separated, the heels should be joined. The torso, neck, and head should all be in a single line. Put your hands together in the namaskar position. Breathe normally. This is the starting position. This is the 12th posture at the end of the round. Now begin the first round of Surya Namaskar by chanting the Lord Sun's initial name.<sup>[6]</sup>

**1. *Pranamasana***- The first pose is also called the prayer pose. *Pranam* means "to pay respect" or "bow down" in Sanskrit and *Asana* means "pose" or "posture". While performing this pose, stand with your feet together or slightly apart then join your hands in a Namaste gesture then bend backward and slowly raise your hands as you inhale.

**2. *Hastauttanasana***- Hasta Uttanasana, also known as the Raised Arms Pose or Standing Back Bend. Stand with feet together and hands by your sides. Now, inhale deeply and raise

both arms overhead. Gently bend your back slightly.

**3. *Hastapadasana***- The name, derived from Sanskrit, combines "hasta" (hand) and "pada" (foot) which means Hand-to-Foot Pose. Exhale and lean forward while maintaining a straight knee and place your hands on the ground on either side of your feet. Make an effort to touch the forehead to the knees. Place your palms on the floor. Pull your right leg back and take a deep breath.

**4. *Ashwa Sanchalanasana***- Holding your breath, take the left leg behind you. Connect the ankles and toes of both legs. As with a wooden board, align the head, waist, and buttocks. Take a look at the front.

People who find problems while doing this pose need to do some modifications for comfort such as they can put a blanket under the knee for support.

**5. *Dandasana***- *Dandasana* or staff pose is a fundamental seated yoga posture that is used as a starting pose for other yoga poses. Sit on the floor with your legs and back straight. Place your palms on the floor, either alongside your hips. Draw your toes back towards you. Hold the pose, maintaining a straight spine.

**6. *Ashtanga Namaskara***- Ashtanga Namaskara, also known as the Eight-Limbed Pose is a yoga posture in which the body is supported on eight points: feet, knees, chest, chin, and both hands. Lie on the floor parallel to the ground. Touch the floor with both feet, both knees, both palms, the chest, and the chin. The hips and abdomen should be slightly raised above the floor. Hold the breath outside and stop breathing for a few seconds.

**7. *Bhujangasana***- Bhujangasana is also known as a cobra pose because it resembles a cobra raising its hood. Take a breath, straighten your hands and raise your chest overhead to enter the *Sarpasana* or *Bhujangasana* pose. Maintain the pose for a few breaths, feeling the stretch in your spine and chest.

**8. *Adho Mukha Svanasana***- Adho – Forward; Mukha – Face; Svana – Dog. Adho mukha svanasana posture replicates a dog bending forward. Pull the back up into an inverted V position. Hold your pose and breathe.

**9. *Ashwa Sanchalanasana***- Do Padhastasana and step the left leg back and bend the right knee. Arch your back and touch the floor with the fingers of your hands. Look straight and

stretch your left leg backward while inhaling.

**10. *Hastapadasana***- As you inhale, insert your right leg between your two palms. Same as pose three.

**11. *Hastauttanasana***- *Hastauttanasana* is known as the raised arms position. Move the left leg and connect it with the right foot as you exhale. Come to the second position.

**12. *Tadasana***- The final pose in Surya Namaskar is *Tadasana* or Mountain pose. Take a breath and stand up, keeping your palms in the same Nsmaskar stance as before. This concludes one Surya Namaskar round.

### Calories Burned

The number of calories burned varies by body weight and speed of practice:

- Slow pace (4–5 rounds in 10 min): ~35–50 kcal
- Moderate pace (6–8 rounds in 10 min): ~55–75 kcal
- Vigorous pace (10+ rounds in 10 min): ~80–100 kcal

When done in sets of 12–24 rounds, Surya Namaskar can function as a high-intensity interval workout for weight loss.

## 3. Physiological Basis for Weight Loss

### 3.1 Increased Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)

Surya Namaskar stimulates multiple physiological systems, enhancing circulation, oxygenation, and metabolism. Regular practice improves thyroid function, which plays a central role in metabolic rate regulation.

### 3.2 Fat Mobilization and Muscle Engagement

The continuous flow from pose to pose activates the core, glutes, quads, and arms. This muscle engagement supports lean muscle development, which helps burn more calories even at rest.

### 3.3 Hormonal Influence

By reducing stress hormones (like cortisol) and balancing insulin sensitivity, Surya Namaskar supports fat burning and reduces tendencies for emotional eating.

## 5. Psychological Benefits and Behavioural Impact

Weight loss is not only physical—mental discipline, body awareness, and stress management play a critical role. Surya Namaskar promotes

- Mindful eating habits
- Reduced food cravings through stress relief
- Emotional regulation and improved sleep quality—all linked to weight control

## 6. Practical Recommendations

Goal	Recommended Practice
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General fitness	6–12 rounds, 5 days/week
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Weight loss	18–24 rounds, 5–6 days/week
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For beginners	Start with 4 rounds, increase weekly
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Combine with	A balanced diet, pranayama, walking, or light cardio
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Surya Namaskar can be tailored to intensity levels—from slow, meditative practice to fast-paced flow akin to cardio workouts.

## CONCLUSION

Surya Namaskar is an effective, low-cost, and sustainable tool for weight loss. Its integration of movement, breath, and awareness addresses the root causes of weight gain, including sedentary behavior and stress. When practiced regularly with proper diet and lifestyle habits, it can yield measurable improvements in body composition, energy levels, and metabolic health. This study demonstrates that Surya Namaskar can help obese people lose a considerable amount of weight.

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