

**Asteya** means *non-stealing*, and can be thought of as “take nothing which does not belong to you.” Not only does this *yama* imply “no shoplifting,” it also challenges us to take nothing - time, attention, food, affection, etc. that does not truly belong to us. *Asteya* arises from a sense of lack, and the misunderstanding that our happiness depends on acquiring something outside of us.

When we take without balancing by appropriate giving, we lose our connection to gratitude for the abundance that already exists. When we imitate others out of feeling “less than” or “not good enough,” we rob ourselves of the opportunity to develop our own unique qualities, to walk our own unique path.

This *yama* invites us to balance the dualities of our nature, rather than overdoing one aspect and “stealing” from its counterpart. For example, our body needs both activity and rest - if we stay up too late, we are “stealing” from the rest we need. If we sleep in too long, we “steal” from the opportunities and challenges we face. If we are constantly the center of attention, or if we shy from the attention we need, we “steal” from the give and take of a healthy relationship. If we overuse certain muscles, we “steal” from the efficiency of the body’s design. *Asteya* is about balance, and recognizing our own abundant “enough-ness”.

In Yoga, we practice balancing effort with ease; balancing our neediness with our abundant inner wealth.

**Homework:** *Become a curious yoga detective: Is one part of your life demanding more attention than it needs at the expense of another equally important part? Experiment with practicing gratitude for what you have. On the yoga mat, seek to balance each pose with equal effort and release.*

**Homework Recommendation:** *Jot down your observations to keep building your two-page reflection paper.*

Sources: Yoga Mind Body Spirit, Donna Fahri . [www.yoganorthwest.com/reflections/asteya.htm](http://www.yoganorthwest.com/reflections/asteya.htm), Ingela Abbott.  
“Yamas & Niyamas,” Sarahjoy Marsh