

REUSI DAT TON HERMIT YOGA

THAI SELF-STRETCHES
AND SELF-MASSAGE



BY TRADITIONALBODYWORK.COM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	6
REUSI DAT TON (THAI YOGA).....	6
WHAT'S IN A NAME?.....	8
REUSI DAT TON - AIMS AND HEALTH BENEFITS.....	10
HISTORY.....	12
ORIGINS OF THE THAI HEALING ARTS.....	12
ORIGINS OF REUSI DAT TON.....	17
THE ANCIENT REUSI HERMITS OF THAILAND.....	20
IS REUSI DAT TON THE FOUNDATION OF THAI MASSAGE?.....	22
REUSI DAT TON STATUES.....	24
SAMUT THAI KHAO OF REUSI DAT TON.....	26
REUSI DAT TON DEPICTIONS ACROSS THAILAND.....	28
REUSI DAT TON APPLICATIONS.....	30
REUSI DAT TON STYLES AND FOCUS.....	30
WAT PHO'S 18 SELF-STRETCHING EXERCISES.....	33
ITTM'S 15 THAI HERMIT YOGA EXERCISES.....	35
WAT PHO'S 18 VERSUS ITTM'S 15 EXERCISES.....	39
REUSI DAT TON EXERCISE SETS IN THAILAND.....	41
BREATHWORK IN REUSI DAT TON.....	43
THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS.....	44
DHAMMANAMAI HOLISTIC CARE.....	46
THAI DANCE AND REUSI DAT TON.....	48
REUSI DAT TON SELF-MASSAGE.....	49
TRAINING PRACTICE.....	51
WHAT TO EXPECT?.....	51
THAI YOGA IS NOT REALLY YOGA.....	54
PRECAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS.....	55
CLOTHING AND MATERIALS.....	58
WHEN AND WHERE TO EXERCISE?.....	59
WHAT IS ABDOMINAL BREATHING?.....	60
BREATHING TECHNIQUES.....	63
USING POWER IN EXERCISES.....	67
WARM-UP AND COOL-DOWN.....	68
POSITIONING YOUR BODY.....	69
STYLES OF SITTING ON THE FLOOR.....	71
PERFORMING THE EXERCISES.....	74
REUSI DAT TON TRAINING IN THAILAND.....	75
EXERCISE EXAMPLES.....	77
VIDEOS.....	77
LONGEVITY EXERCISE.....	78

BALANCE EXERCISES.....	81
RELIEF OF CHEST AND WAIST DISCOMFORT.....	85
RELIEF OF CHEST PAIN.....	88
CHEST OPENING EXERCISE.....	90
RELIEF OF SHOULDER AND LEG STIFFNESS.....	92
QUADRICEPS STRETCHES.....	95
SUPPLEMENT.....	98
WHAT IS THAI MASSAGE?.....	98
THAI MASSAGE VERSUS THAI YOGA MASSAGE.....	100
SEN SIP ENERGY LINES.....	103
THE WAT PHO TEMPLE.....	106
THAI TOK SEN.....	109
THAI TRADITIONAL DANCE.....	110
REUSI DAT TON IN JAPAN.....	113
APPENDIX.....	115

Preface

This eBook is a comprehensive reference guide to Reusi Dat Ton, the traditional Thai art of yogic self-care, self-stretching, and self-massage.

Although you will find some exercise examples in this book, please mind that this is not a training course. The book aims at providing you with a conceptual understanding of the Reusi Dat Ton theory and practice.

If you want to learn doing Reusi Dat Ton yourself, check out our Reusi Dat Ton Video Workshops.

Any questions, remarks, or requests with regard to the content of this guide can be sent to talk2us@traditionalbodywork.com

Our website address is <https://www.traditionalbodywork.com>

Title: Reusi Dat Ton Hermit Yoga | Thai Self-Stretches and Self-Massage

Book version: Edition 2 | Published October 2025

Cover image: by TraditionalBodywork.com

Written by Marce Ferreira

Copyrights

All rights reserved. This eBook or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of TraditionalBodywork.com except for the use of brief quotations in a book or course review.

About the Author

Marce initially studied Information Technology and worked seventeen years in software and database development for a variety of international companies and organizations.

A sabbatical year in Southeast Asia in 2009 changed his life's direction. After discovering the beauty and healing power of Traditional Thai Massage and Reusi Dat Ton (Thai Yoga), he decided to become a practitioner and teacher.

After his return to Europe, he started offering treatments and training, and — for about a decade — regularly returned to Thailand to teach English and to further his training, completing 800+ hours of studies in the Thai healing arts.

In 2018, he co-founded the TraditionalBodywork.com website as a platform to publish articles, eBooks, and Video Workshops about Thai Massage and Reusi Dat Ton.

Today, he also publishes works about other types of massage and bodywork, somatic practices, alternative and complementary therapies, nature, spirituality, and unconventional lifestyles.

In addition, he also shares essays, poems, and reflections about his personal life and experiences.

You can learn more about Marce Ferreira and the website through <https://www.traditionalbodywork.com/website/>

Introduction

Reusi Dat Ton (Thai Yoga)

Thai Traditional Yoga or *Thai Yoga* — in Thailand known as *Reusi Dat Ton* — is an ancient form of Thai self-care practices, and part of Thai traditional medicine.

The system consists of breathing exercises, [self-massage](#), self-stretching, meditation, visualizations, chants, and a variety of static and dynamic poses and sequences that are performed in standing, sitting, or lying positions.

Reusi Dat Ton, like [Thai Traditional Massage](#), is based on the concept of [Sen Line Energy Channels](#), the latter distributing Vital Life Energy (known as *Lom Pran* in Thailand) across the body. It's believed that through the regular practice of Reusi Dat Ton one can stimulate and balance the free flow of Vital Life Energy in oneself, hence ensuring a healthier body and mind.

Additionally, [specific benefits](#) can be attributed to doing Reusi Dat Ton: stimulating, improving, and regulating the blood circulation system; supporting the lymphatic system and detoxification; stimulating the immune system and balancing energy levels; decreasing physical and mental stress and tensions; improving flexibility and equilibrium; improving muscle strength and toning; enhancing mobility and range of motion; and encouraging postural corrections, to name some.

There are also targeted [therapeutic benefits](#) that can be attained by performing certain exercises that focus on chest, arm, hand, wrist, knee, leg, or foot pains and problems; back, shoulder, and neck pains; headaches; digestion disorders; blurred vision; dizziness; cramps and numbness;

hemorrhoids; pelvic and genital issues; coordination and balance difficulties; among others.

Reusi Dat Ton is a quite unknown aspect of Thai culture, yet much that counts for the history of Thai Massage can be likewise applied to Reusi Dat Ton. Proof of its ancient history can be found in the [depictions of the techniques](#) that can be seen in historic artwork and temples at various locations in Thailand. Famous are the statues in the garden of the Wat Po temple in Bangkok, where one can find sculptures of Yogis — the [Reusis](#) or *Lersis* — showing a variety of Reusi Dat Ton poses.

The word *Reusi* in the Thai language comes from the Indian word *Rishi*, which means *ascetic* or *hermit*. The word *Dat* means *stretch* and *Ton* refers to *oneself*. Freely translated, *Reusi Dat Ton* means something like “the hermit who stretches himself.”

Looking closer at the techniques, it seems plausible that Reusi Dat Ton shares a common source with Tibetan and Indian Yoga, both styles entering Southeast Asia with the spread of Buddhism. By some, it’s thought that [Thai Massage may originate from Reusi Dat Ton](#), that is, Thai Massage as the applied form of the various yogic, self-massage, and self-stretching techniques.

A single Reusi Dat Ton session can be carried out virtually anywhere, with or without a yoga mat, and typically takes about twenty-five to thirty-five minutes. The practice can consist of rather basic exercises that can be learned easily or of very advanced techniques, which could take years of practice to perform correctly.

What's In a Name?

You may have noticed that there are several ways of writing the term *Reusi Dat Ton*. It's perhaps annoying, but it's the way it is in Thailand, and subsequently in the rest of the world.

Every other school, institute, or teacher talking about "Thai Yoga" or "Thai Hermit Yoga" may use another way of spelling *Reusi Dat Ton*. In fact, there's no naming standard.

For instance, you can encounter spellings like Reusi Datton, Reu-Si Datton, Ruesri Dat Ton, Rusie Dutton, among some other variations.

The problem came about because of the phonetic translation (*phonetic* means *how it sounds*) of the Thai phrase "ท่าฤๅษีดัดตน" into "Reusi Dat Ton," that is, the conversion of the Thai sounds into the Latin (Romanized) alphabet.

Although there is a standardized Romanized spelling for the Thai language, it's not widely used, and Thai words or letters converted to the Latin alphabet are thereby often spelled in a more or less phonetic manner. This results in a range of dissimilar spellings, because everybody *hears* something slightly different.

Now, if we would translate "ท่าฤๅษีดัดตน" to its *actual* meaning, it would become something like "The Contortionist Postures of the Hermit" or "The Rishi Ascetic that Stretches Himself." Yet *phonetically*, the Thai phrase "ท่าฤๅษีดัดตน" sounds like "Reusi Dat Ton," which can result into the following plethora of Romanized phrases:

Rusie Dutton, Rusie Datton, Rusie Dat-ton, Lusie Dutton, Lusie Datton, Rusie Dotton, Reusi Da Ton, Reusi Dat Ton, Rue-Si Dat Ton, Rue-Si Datton, Reusi Datton, Ruesri Dat Ton, Ruesri Datton, Rue Sri Dut Ton, Rusri Datton, Ru Si

Datton, Rue See Dat Ton, Rue See Dut Ton, Rue See Dad Ton, Rasi Daton, Rasidaton, Rasueri Dat Ton, and Lucy Dutton, among other fascinating labels.

When you take this anomaly into account, you can understand that finding Reusi Dat Ton training courses, schools, or teachers in Thailand, or elsewhere in the world can be a daunting task.

Yet, apart from the problems with the phonetic translation there's another issue: Traditional Thai Massage — like Reusi Dat Ton — is often also called *Thai Yoga*, which makes it hard to differentiate between Thai Massage and Reusi Dat Ton training courses or sessions.

On top of that, Reusi Dat Ton is sometimes also called Thai Rishi Yoga, Hermit Exercises, Thai Hermit Yoga, Thai Ascetic Yoga, Hermit Self-Healing Exercises, Thai Monk Stretching, or Thai Ascetic Self-Stretching, to give some examples, which hence further complicates the matter.

However, when we've finally found a school or trainer, another problem arises: there are [different styles](#) of carrying out Reusi Dat Ton, which is further differentiated by sharing 15, 18, 80, 127 or even more postures and exercises, to be learned in various time spans.

In addition, most of Reusi Datton teaching is done by giving short classes, mostly only the [ITTM 15](#) or [Wat Pho 18](#) exercise sets. There is just a very small number of more diverse training courses available, and most of them hardly take more than one or two days. Thai Massage or Reusi Dat Ton training schools and teachers that offer an extensive, in-depth training in Reusi Dat Ton are still the big exception.

Then again, it's perhaps for the best — in a way it keeps authentic Reusi Dat Ton relatively safe from commercializing into unrecognizable features. And that's undeniably worth a lot nowadays — to say the least.