

YOGA BASICS

Empower Your Yoga Journey: A Guide to
Mindful Practice and Personal Growth

Introduction to Yoga

FOR TONING AND STRENGTHENING

Welcome to your journey towards a stronger, more toned body through the ancient practice of yoga. This workbook is designed to guide you through the essentials of yoga that specifically target muscle strengthening, toning, and overall physical enhancement. Whether you are new to yoga or looking to deepen your practice with a focus on physical conditioning, this guide will offer you the tools and knowledge to achieve your goals.

The Essence of Yoga

Yoga is a comprehensive discipline that unites the body, mind, and spirit. Originating in India over 5,000 years ago, it has evolved into various styles and practices, with each offering unique benefits to its practitioners. At its core, yoga is about finding balance and harmony within oneself and with the surrounding world. While it is often associated with flexibility and relaxation, yoga is equally effective for building strength, toning muscles, and improving overall fitness.



Benefits of Yoga for Toning and Strengthening

Yoga is an incredibly versatile practice, offering numerous benefits for those looking to tone and strengthen their bodies. Here are some of the key benefits:

- ✓ **Improved Muscle Tone:** Yoga poses require you to lift, hold, and balance your own body weight, leading to improved muscle tone and definition.
- ✓ **Enhanced Strength:** Regular practice strengthens the core, as well as the upper and lower body, by engaging multiple muscle groups simultaneously.
- ✓ **Increased Flexibility:** While the focus of this workbook is on toning and strengthening, the flexibility gained from yoga practice aids in muscle recovery and injury prevention.
- ✓ **Better Posture:** Strengthening the muscles around the spine and abdomen contributes to better posture, reducing the risk of back pain and other posture-related issues.
- ✓ **Mind-Body Connection:** Yoga emphasizes mindful practice and breath control, enhancing the connection between mind and body for more efficient workouts.
- ✓ **Stress Reduction:** The meditative aspects of yoga help in managing stress, which is essential for overall health and well-being.

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is structured to progressively guide you through the theory and practice of yoga for toning and strengthening. Here's how to make the most of it:

- ✓ **Start with the Basics:** Even if you have some experience, beginning with the foundational concepts will enhance your understanding and practice.
- ✓ **Practice Regularly:** Consistency is key in yoga. Set a regular practice schedule and stick to it, using the sequences and poses provided.
- ✓ **Use the Practice Logs:** Documenting your practice can be incredibly motivating and insightful. Use the logs to track your progress, challenges, and breakthroughs.
- ✓ **Listen to Your Body:** While challenge is part of the process, never push your body into pain. Use modifications and props as needed.
- ✓ **Embrace the Journey:** Yoga is not just about the physical results but also about the journey. Embrace the learning and growth that come with your practice.

As you embark on this path, remember that the goal of yoga is balance. While we focus on toning and strengthening in this workbook, the ultimate aim is to achieve a harmonious balance between strength and flexibility, effort and relaxation, and mind and body. Let's begin this journey with an open heart and mind, ready to explore the strength and potential within.



CHAPTER 1

Foundational Concepts

Understanding the basics of yoga, including the anatomy of muscles, the significance of breath, and the principles of alignment, is crucial for a safe and effective practice, especially when focusing on toning and strengthening. This chapter lays the groundwork to deepen your yoga practice and enhance its benefits.

UNDERSTANDING THE BODY'S MUSCLES

To tone and strengthen the body effectively through yoga, it's important to have a basic understanding of the muscle groups you'll be working with. The human body has over 600 muscles, but we'll focus on the major groups used in yoga:

- ✓ **Core Muscles:** The core is more than just your abs. It includes the muscles around your trunk and pelvis, such as the rectus abdominis, obliques, transverse abdominis, and the muscles of the lower back. A strong core is essential for stability, balance, and a healthy posture.
- ✓ **Upper Body Muscles:** This group includes the muscles in your arms, chest, and shoulders, like the biceps, triceps, pectoralis major, and deltoids. Strengthening these muscles helps in poses that require arm balance and support.
- ✓ **Lower Body Muscles:** The lower body contains some of the largest muscles in your body, including the gluteus maximus, hamstrings, quadriceps, and calves. These muscles are vital for standing poses, stability, and mobility.

THE ROLE OF BREATH IN YOGA

Breathing is the essence of yoga. It connects the mind and body, helping to focus your attention and improve your practice. In the context of toning and strengthening, breathwork is crucial for maintaining energy, stabilizing core muscles, and enhancing concentration.

- ✓ **Ujjayi Breath:** Also known as the "Victorious Breath," Ujjayi is a technique that involves breathing through the nose with a slight constriction in the back of the throat. This creates a soothing sound, helps to heat the body, and increases oxygenation and endurance.
- ✓ **Diaphragmatic Breathing:** Engaging the diaphragm during breathing encourages proper oxygen exchange and engages the core muscles, supporting spinal stability and core strength.

ALIGNMENT AND FORM

Proper alignment and form are non-negotiable in yoga, especially when focusing on toning and strengthening. Correct posture ensures that you're engaging the right muscles and avoiding injury. Here are some key principles:

- ✓ **Foundation:** Every pose has a point of contact with the ground, whether it's your feet, hands, or sit bones. Paying attention to how you distribute your weight across these points is crucial for stability and strength.

- ✓ **Engagement:** Active engagement of muscles, known as "muscle hugging bone," helps to stabilize and strengthen the body. This involves consciously contracting muscles to support the body in various poses.
- ✓ **Alignment Cues:** Following specific cues for each pose ensures that you align your joints and bones in a way that promotes efficiency and reduces the risk of injury. This includes positioning the hips, shoulders, and spine in relation to each other.

PRACTICE POINTS

- ✓ **Muscle Awareness:** As you move through your yoga practice, try to be aware of which muscle groups you're engaging. This mindfulness can enhance strength and stability.
- ✓ **Breath Connection:** Link your movements to your breath, inhaling to expand and create space, and exhaling to deepen into poses and engage muscles more fully.
- ✓ **Alignment Focus:** Always prioritize alignment over depth in poses. It's more beneficial to perform a pose correctly with good form than to achieve a deeper expression with poor alignment.

This foundational knowledge serves as the base for your journey through toning and strengthening with yoga. As you progress, keep these principles in mind to deepen your practice safely and effectively.



CHAPTER 2

Yoga Poses for Toning & Strengthening

Building strength and toning the body are central to this yoga practice. This chapter delves into specific yoga poses (asanas) that target various muscle groups, promoting overall strength, stability, and endurance. Each pose is accompanied by step-by-step instructions, benefits, and tips to maximize effectiveness.

CORE STRENGTHENING POSES

✓ PLANK POSE (PHALAKASANA)

INSTRUCTIONS	Start in a tabletop position. Step your feet back until your body forms a straight line from your heels to your head. Engage your core, thighs, and arms. Keep your gaze slightly forward.
BENEFITS	Strengthens the arms, shoulders, and core
TIPS	Press the ground away from you to engage your shoulder blades and keep your hips in line with your body.





BOAT POSE (NAVASANA)

INSTRUCTIONS	Sit with your knees bent, feet on the floor. Lean back slightly and lift your feet off the floor, bringing your shins parallel to the floor. Extend your arms forward. For more challenge, straighten your legs.
BENEFITS	Tones the abdominal muscles and strengthens the spine.
TIPS	Keep your chest lifted and spine straight to avoid straining your back.



UPPER BODY TONING POSES

✓ CHATURANGA DANDASANA (FOUR-LIMBED STAFF POSE)

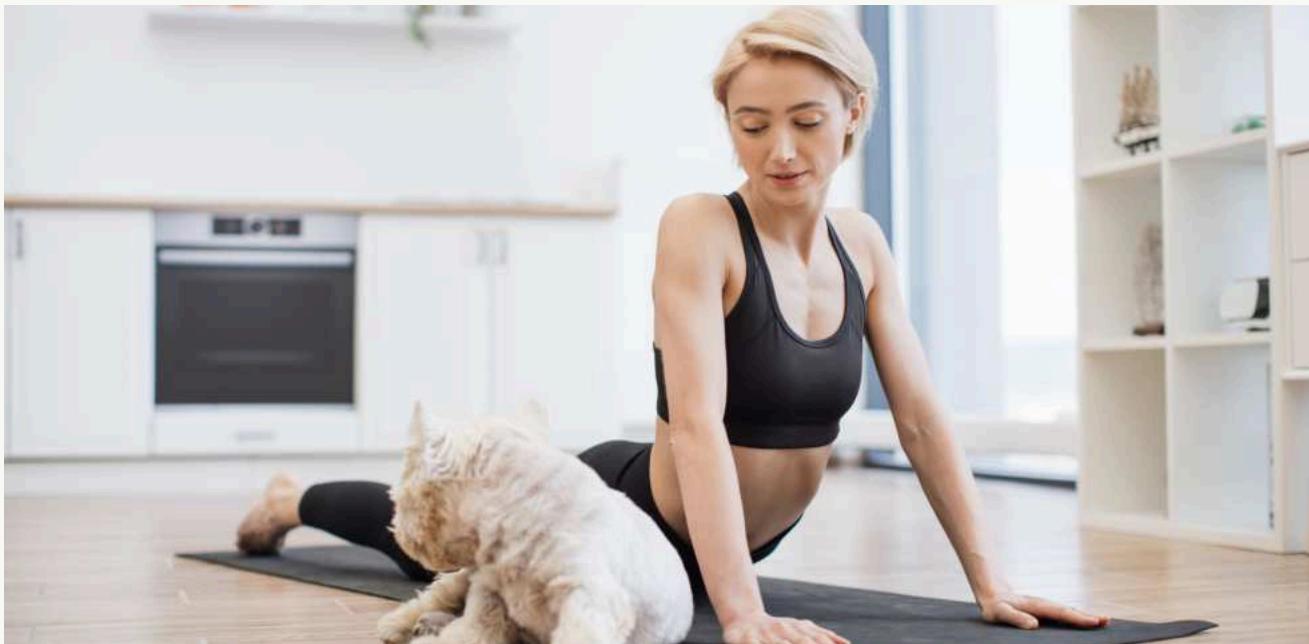
INSTRUCTIONS	From Plank Pose, shift forward slightly and lower your body until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Keep your elbows close to your body.
BENEFITS	Strengthens the arms, shoulders, and wrists; tones the core.
TIPS	Do not let your shoulders dip below your elbows; keep the core engaged to support your lower back.





COBRA POSE (BHUJANGASANA)

INSTRUCTIONS	Lie prone on the floor. Place your hands under your shoulders, elbows close to your body. Press into your hands and lift your chest off the floor, keeping your elbows slightly bent.
BENEFITS	Strengthens the spine, shoulders, and buttocks; opens the chest and lungs.
TIPS	Keep your gaze forward and up, and your shoulders away from your ears to avoid neck strain.



LOWER BODY STRENGTHENING POSES

✓ WARRIOR II (VIRABHADRASANA II)

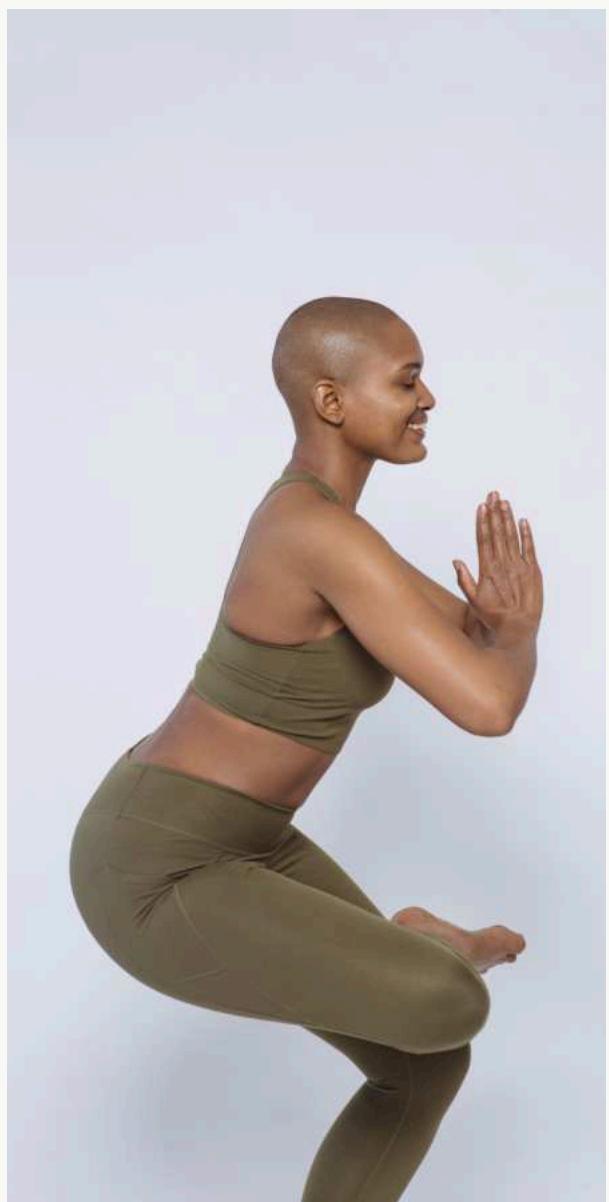
INSTRUCTIONS	Stand with your feet about 4 to 5 feet apart. Turn your right foot out 90 degrees and your left foot in slightly. Bend your right knee until it is over your right ankle. Extend your arms to the sides, parallel to the floor.
BENEFITS	Strengthens and tones the legs, ankles, and feet; opens the hips and chest.
TIPS	Keep your back leg strong and straight, and your front knee pointing in the same direction as your front foot.





CHAIR POSE (UTKATASANA)

INSTRUCTIONS	Stand with your feet together or hip-width apart. Bend your knees, pushing your hips back as if sitting in an invisible chair. Raise your arms up alongside your ears.
BENEFITS	Tones the thighs, ankles, calves, and spine; strengthens the shoulders & chest.
TIPS	Keep your weight in your heels and make sure you can still see your toes when you look down.



BALANCING POSES FOR OVERALL STRENGTH

✓ TREE POSE (VRKSASANA)

INSTRUCTIONS	From Plank Pose, shift forward slightly and lower your body until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Keep your elbows close to your body.
BENEFITS	Strengthens the arms, shoulders, and wrists; tones the core.
TIPS	Do not let your shoulders dip below your elbows; keep the core engaged to support your lower back.



PRACTICE TIPS

- ✓ **Warm-Up:** Begin with gentle movements to warm up your body before moving into more intense poses.
- ✓ **Consistency:** Regular practice is key to gaining strength and tone. Aim to practice these poses 3-5 times a week.
- ✓ **Breathwork:** Use your breath to deepen your practice; inhale to prepare and exhale to move or deepen into poses.
- ✓ **Listen to Your Body:** Always practice within your current limits and abilities. Use modifications or props as needed to support your practice.

By incorporating these poses into your regular yoga practice, you'll build strength, improve tone, and enhance your overall physical fitness. As you become more familiar with each pose, focus on deepening your practice and increasing your hold times for further benefit.



Yoga Sequences

After familiarizing yourself with individual poses that target toning and strengthening, integrating these poses into sequences can amplify their benefits. Sequences allow for a flow of movement that dynamically challenges your strength, flexibility, and balance. This chapter presents two sequences: one designed for energizing and strengthening your morning and another for winding down and gently reinforcing strength in the evening.

MORNING STRENGTH SEQUENCE

This sequence is designed to energize your body and mind, setting a strong and focused tone for the day ahead. It focuses on core activation, leg strength, and arm stability.

WARM-UP

- Begin with a few minutes of gentle breathing in a comfortable seated position to center your mind and warm up your spine with gentle twists and side bends.

SUN SALUTATIONS (SURYA NAMASKAR)

- Perform 3-5 rounds of Sun Salutations to warm up the body, focusing on smooth transitions and the flow of breath.

STANDING POSE FLOW

- Transition into Warrior I (Virabhadrasana I), then open up into Warrior II (Virabhadrasana II). From here, move into Triangle Pose (Trikonasana) to stretch and strengthen the legs while engaging the core.
- Repeat on the other side.

CORE ACTIVATION

- Come to the floor for Plank Pose (Phalakasana), holding for 30 seconds to 1 minute, followed by Side Plank (Vasishthasana) on each side to target the obliques.

ARM STRENGTH

- Practice Chaturanga Dandasana (Four-Limbed Staff Pose) to build arm and shoulder strength. Follow with Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana) or Upward-Facing Dog (Urdhva Mukha Svanasana) to open the chest and strengthen the back.

COOL DOWN

- End the sequence with a gentle Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottanasana) and a few minutes in Corpse Pose (Savasana) to relax the body and integrate the benefits of your practice.

EVENING WIND-DOWN SEQUENCE

This gentle sequence is designed to calm the mind and body, promoting recovery and strength without overexertion. It focuses on stretches that also engage and reinforce muscle strength subtly.

✓ GENTLE WARM-UP

- Start with Cat-Cow stretches to mobilize the spine and release tension in the back and shoulders.

✓ BALANCING POSES

- Incorporate Tree Pose (Vrksasana) to improve balance and focus while strengthening the legs and core.
- Practice Eagle Pose (Garudasana) for a gentle engagement of the thighs, hips, and upper back.

✓ HIP OPENERS AND STRENGTHENERS

- Move into Warrior II (Virabhadrasana II) to maintain leg strength, followed by Extended Side Angle (Utthita Parsvakonasana) for a deep stretch and strength engagement.

✓ GENTLE CORE AND BACK STRENGTHENING

- Transition to the floor for Bridge Pose (Setu Bandhasana), focusing on lifting through the hips to engage the glutes and back muscles.
- Wind down with Supine Spinal Twists (Supta Matsyendrasana) to relax the spine and ease any remaining tension.

✓ RELAXATION

- Conclude with Legs-Up-The-Wall Pose (Viparita Karani) for 5-10 minutes, allowing for relaxation and recovery.
- Finish in Corpse Pose (Savasana), allowing your body to assimilate the practice's benefits fully.



PRACTICE TIPS

- ✓ **Breathe:** Maintain a steady, rhythmic breath throughout your practice to support movement and focus.
- ✓ **Mindfulness:** Stay present with each pose and transition, observing the sensations in your body and the quality of your mind.
- ✓ **Adaptation:** Feel free to modify any pose or sequence to suit your body's needs, using props like blocks, straps, or cushions for support.

By incorporating these sequences into your routine, you'll not only build physical strength and tone but also foster mental clarity and emotional balance. Allow your practice to be a time of exploration and connection with yourself, respecting your body's limits and potentials.



Pranayama (Breathing Exercises)

Breathing exercises, or Pranayama, are a fundamental aspect of yoga that enhance physical and mental well-being. When focusing on toning and strengthening, integrating Pranayama can significantly improve your practice by increasing oxygen flow to the muscles, boosting energy levels, and aiding in concentration and stress reduction. This chapter introduces key breathing techniques that support strength-building and overall health.

UJJAYI BREATH (VICTORIOUS BREATH)

Ujjayi Breath is a cornerstone of Pranayama practice, especially useful during physical yoga practices for its ability to maintain a rhythm and focus.

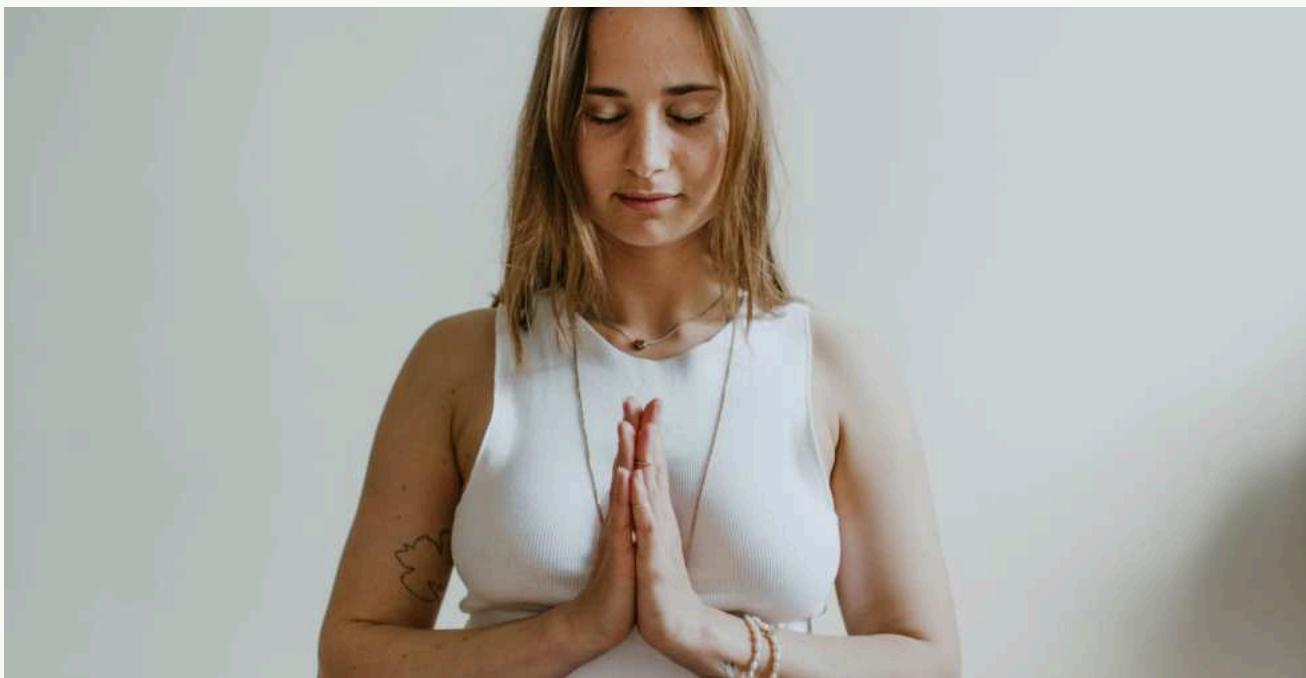
TECHNIQUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Begin by inhaling and exhaling naturally through the nose.Gradually constrict the back of your throat to create a slight hissing sound on the inhale and exhale. It should be audible to you but not too loud.Keep your mouth closed throughout, focusing on the sound to help you stay present and engaged.
BENEFITS	Increases oxygenation, builds internal body heat, improves concentration, and helps synchronize breath with movement.



KAPALABHATI PRANAYAMA (SKULL SHINING BREATH)

Kapalabhati is a cleansing and energizing breathing technique, perfect for mornings or before your yoga practice to awaken the body and mind.

TECHNIQUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit comfortably with your spine straight and your hands on your knees.• Take a deep breath in, and then expel the breath out forcefully through your nose by contracting your abdominal muscles. The inhalation should be passive, with the emphasis on the exhalation.• Begin with a round of 20 breaths, gradually increasing as you become more comfortable with the practice.
BENEFITS	Cleanses the respiratory system, strengthens abdominal muscles, increases metabolic rate, and invigorates the nervous system.

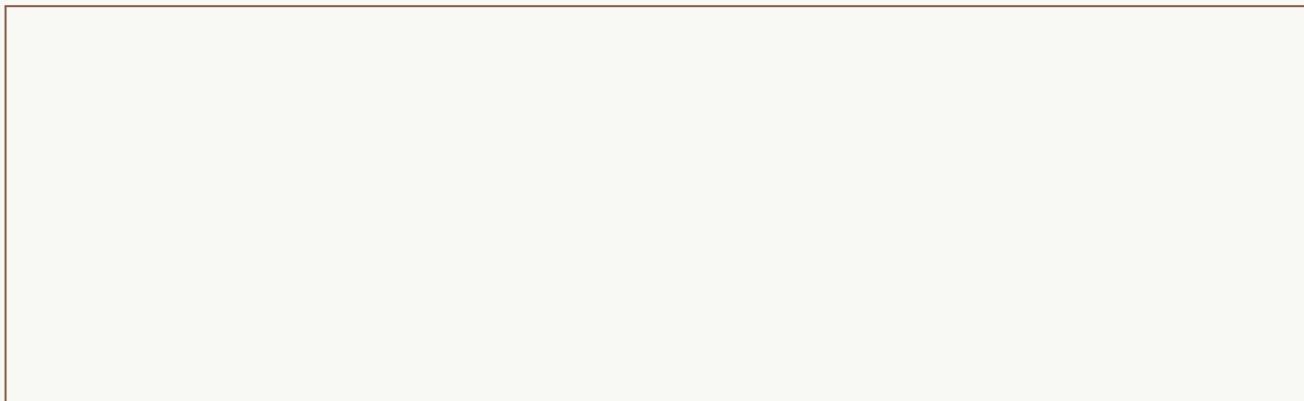
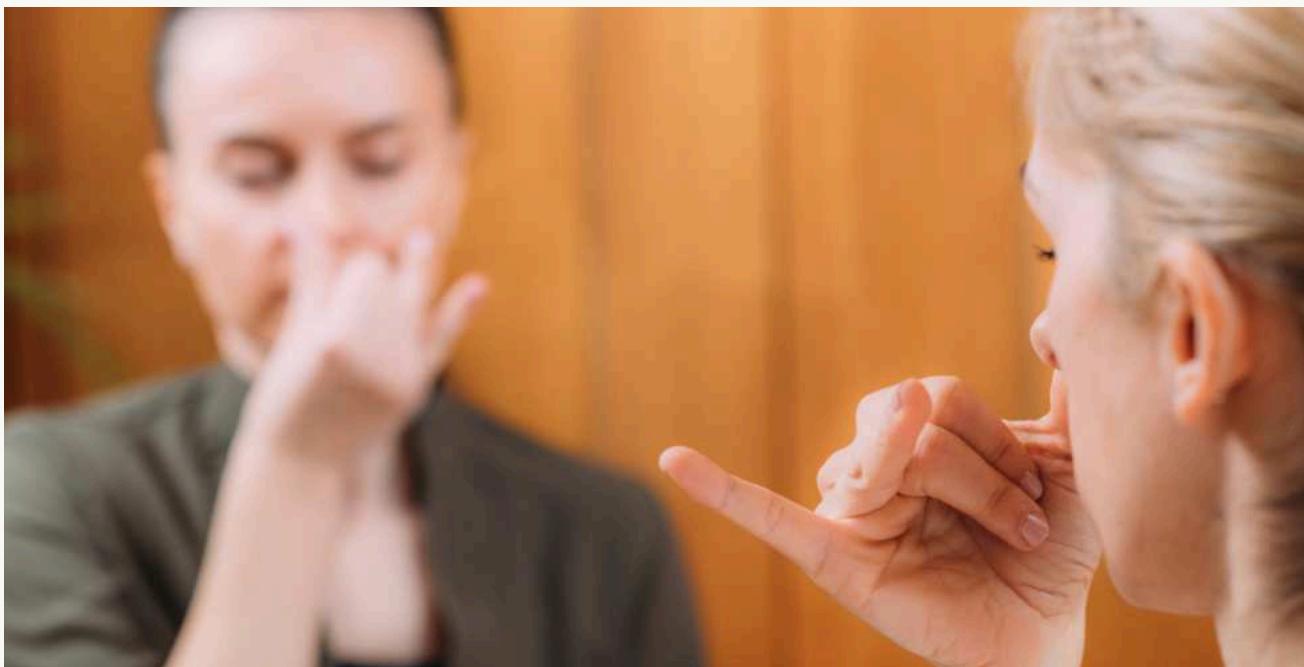


NADI SHODHANA PRANAYAMA (ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING)

Nadi Shodhana is a calming and balancing breath that can help to reduce stress and improve mental clarity, making it an excellent practice for evenings or after intense physical activity.

TECHNIQUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit in a comfortable position with a straight back.• Place your left hand on your left knee. Use your right hand to close your right nostril with your right thumb.• Inhale deeply through your left nostril, then close it with your right ring finger. Open your right nostril and exhale slowly.• Inhale through the right nostril, close it, and exhale through the left. This completes one cycle.• Continue for 5 to 10 cycles, focusing on making your breaths slow and deep.
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BENEFITS	Balances the left and right hemispheres of the brain, calms the mind, reduces stress, and enhances concentration.
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INTEGRATING PRANAYAMA INTO YOUR PRACTICE

Incorporate these breathing exercises into your daily yoga routine to maximize the physical and mental health benefits. Start or end your yoga sessions with Pranayama, or use these techniques as standalone practices to invigorate, balance, or calm your body and mind throughout the day.

- 🕒 **Morning:** Kapalabhati to awaken and energize; Ujjayi throughout your yoga practice for focus and energy.
- 🕒 **Evening:** Nadi Shodhana to calm the mind and prepare for rest; gentle Ujjayi to release any lingering stress.

Pranayama is a powerful tool in your yoga practice for toning and strengthening, not just physically but also mentally and emotionally. By learning to control and extend your breath, you can deepen your yoga practice, enhance your health, and improve your overall well-being.



CHAPTER 5

Nutrition and Lifestyle for a Strong Yoga Practice

A holistic approach to toning and strengthening through yoga encompasses more than just physical practice. Nutrition and lifestyle choices play a significant role in your overall health and the effectiveness of your yoga practice. This chapter offers guidance on how to support your yoga journey with healthy eating habits and lifestyle adjustments.

NUTRITION FOR STRENGTH AND RECOVERY

The foods you eat can either support your yoga practice or hinder your progress. A balanced, nutrient-rich diet fuels your body, aids in recovery, and enhances your physical and mental performance.

- ✓ **Whole Foods:** Focus on whole, unprocessed foods that provide a rich array of nutrients. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats should form the foundation of your diet.
- ✓ **Protein:** Adequate protein intake is essential for muscle repair and growth. Include a variety of protein sources, such as legumes, nuts, seeds, dairy (or dairy alternatives), and lean meats.
- ✓ **Hydration:** Staying hydrated is crucial, especially on active days. Water supports every cellular process in your body, including the transport of nutrients and oxygen to your muscles.
- ✓ **Anti-Inflammatory Foods:** Incorporate foods with anti-inflammatory properties like turmeric, ginger, berries, and green leafy vegetables to help with recovery and reduce muscle soreness.

LIFESTYLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

Beyond nutrition, certain lifestyle adjustments can enhance your physical capabilities and mental focus, contributing to a stronger yoga practice.

- ✓ **Adequate Sleep:** Quality sleep is essential for muscle recovery, hormonal balance, and overall health. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night, and establish a calming nighttime routine to improve sleep quality.
- ✓ **Stress Management:** Chronic stress can hinder your body's ability to recover and strengthen. Incorporate stress-reduction techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or gentle yoga flows into your daily routine.
- ✓ **Cross-Training:** While yoga is excellent for strength and flexibility, incorporating other forms of exercise can enhance your physical fitness and prevent imbalances. Activities like walking, swimming, or cycling can complement your yoga practice and improve cardiovascular health.
- ✓ **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Cultivating a mindfulness practice can enhance your connection to your body during yoga and everyday activities. Regular meditation can improve focus, reduce stress, and support a balanced approach to health and well-being.

PRACTICE LOGS

Creating a habit of logging your practice, including yoga sessions, meditation, nutrition, and other lifestyle factors, can provide insights into what works best for your body and mind. It can also help you track progress, set goals, and stay motivated. Consider keeping a journal or using an app to record:

- ✓ **Yoga Practices:** Note the type of practice, duration, and how you felt during and after the session.
- ✓ **Dietary Intake:** Keep track of what you eat, focusing on how different foods affect your energy levels and recovery.
- ✓ **Sleep and Stress:** Monitor your sleep quality and stress levels, noting any correlations between these factors and your physical or mental performance.
- ✓ **Additional Activities:** Record any cross-training or stress-reduction activities and their impact on your overall well-being.

Adopting a holistic approach to your yoga practice by integrating nutritious eating habits, healthy lifestyle choices, and mindfulness can significantly enhance your physical strength and mental clarity, leading to a more balanced and fulfilling life.



Conclusion and Path Forward

As you continue your journey in yoga, focusing on toning and strengthening, remember the essence of yoga is growth and self-awareness, not perfection. The practices outlined here—combining asanas, pranayama, mindful nutrition, and lifestyle choices—offer a holistic approach to wellness, emphasizing the importance of physical health, mental clarity, and emotional balance.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR MOVING FORWARD

This sequence is designed to energize your body and mind, setting a strong and focused tone for the day ahead. It focuses on core activation, leg strength, and arm stability.

- ✓ **Holistic Approach:** Keep integrating yoga practice with healthy lifestyle choices, understanding that physical, mental, and emotional health are interconnected.
- ✓ **Set Intentions:** Regularly revisit your goals and intentions, allowing them to evolve as you progress in your practice and personal growth.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Yoga is a lifelong journey. Explore workshops, classes, and communities to deepen your understanding and practice.
- ✓ **Experiment and Explore:** Try different styles of yoga and engage with the broader yoga community to find new inspirations and insights.
- ✓ **Reflect and Be Grateful:** Acknowledge your progress and the effort you've put into your practice. Celebrate the small victories and lessons learned along the way.

FINAL WORDS

Your yoga practice is a personal journey that unfolds uniquely for you. Embrace it with curiosity, openness, and compassion towards yourself. The path of yoga offers endless opportunities for growth, discovery, and transformation. May your practice be a source of strength, serenity, and joy. Namaste.



Yoga Practice for Self-Love



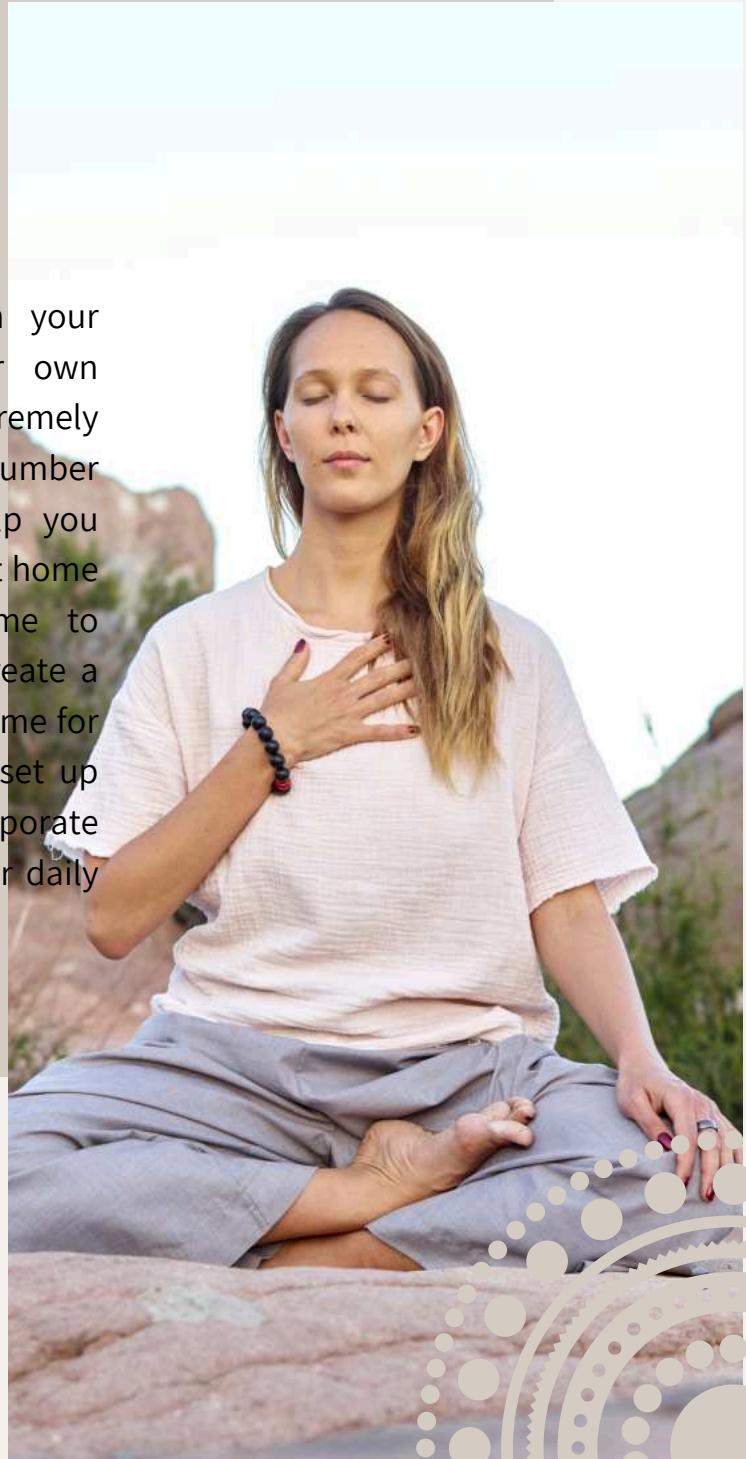
When it comes to love, the important thing to remember is that loving yourself has to come before anything else. However self-centered this may sound it is true that every thing we do comes from within us, whether that is caring for others, giving selflessly or doing good in the world. Therefore, we need to ensure that we care for and love ourselves so that we can be the best we can be.

Yoga can help in all sorts of ways to help us to care and love ourselves. One way to show self-love is to have a massage with warm oil. Having a restorative yoga session is another way. Other effective ways include different yoga postures, meditations and breathing techniques which can all help to focus your mind on you and your own unique needs.

Starting a home yoga practice

Having a dedicated area in your house and developing your own home yoga practice can be extremely rewarding. There are a huge number of resources available to help you start and maintain a consistent home practice. So, take some time to gather some resources and create a time and space in your own home for your yoga practice. With this set up you'll be able to easily incorporate regular yoga practice into your daily routines.

Create a dedicated space in your home for your yoga practice.





How to Feel Better

When life feels stressful, these strategies should help calm your mind.

The amygdala, the brain's emotional centre, is activated immediately to respond to stress. The prefrontal cortex, associated with the logical, thinking part of the brain, takes a lot longer to react. As a result, the body is flooded with the stress hormone, cortisol and blood pressure increases. This fight or flight response has physical and psychological effects. While not causing illness directly, it can contribute significantly.

*You can train your
brain to react
constructively to stress*

Fortunately, when everything seems to be spinning and unraveling around you, there is a solution. You can manage the stress with an array of different tools. As well as getting enough sleep, eating healthily and connecting with friends, these tools will help you to keep your mind and body in better balance.

Dealing with ramped up emotions can be exhausting. The more the amygdala is activated emotionally, the more anxiety we have.

Therefore, try to find the trigger for your emotional response. If the news is causing anxiety, for example, try limiting your exposure. Physical activity can also help to reduce the emotional activation of your brain.



Gratitude

A powerful method of stopping negative thoughts is to focus on the good in our lives. Studies have shown that gratefulness is associated with lower risk of depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.

MODULE ONE



TIPS AND HACKS TO HELP YOU

Just spending a few minutes of thinking about things you're thankful for can improve your mood. There are lots of ways to count your blessings. Read on to find how you can incorporate more gratitude into your everyday life.

- Keep a gratitude log and write down five things you're grateful for every night.
- Write a thank you note to someone who has helped you in the day.
- Close your eyes and think of all the people for whom you are thankful.

With practice, this process will become second nature and you will be automatically looking at the positive in your day-to-day experiences. It is important to look for gratitude with intent because the brain tends to focus on the negative during times of stress. Being able to override this is a powerful tool.

Another stage of looking at gratitude, is to be thankful for adversity. Through overcoming challenges, you get an opportunity to grow. It is hard to go through something tough, but you can emerge stronger.

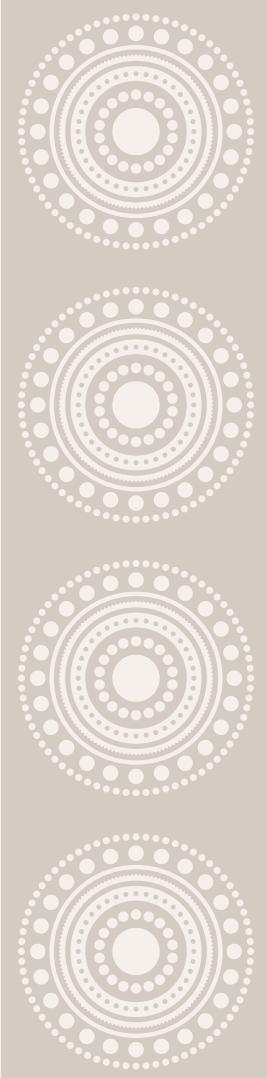
Take Time To Be Kind



We know that being kind has a positive mental impact on our mental health, increasing our happiness and feelings of connection. But what about watching other people being kind? How does this effect our mental wellbeing?

Studies suggest it works in exactly the same way. It doesn't matter whether you are the one giving or receiving kindness, or even if you're only observing it, compassion has been shown to improve your wellbeing.

Researchers found that after watching a video of children doing acts of kindness, levels of happiness, optimism, calmness and gratitude were lifted.



Take a Realistic View

Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Whatever you answer, research has shown that it is actually better to take a more balanced, realistic view.

However, how do you know if your view is a realistic, grounded one? The key is to balance realistic goals and aspirations with an inner critical voice and weigh up the evidence carefully. Would taking this step enhance your life or make you miserable?

Balance realistic goals and weigh up the evidence carefully.



Optimism and pessimism are biologically determined to a small extent. The main reason for a person being overly optimistic or pessimistic is due to their past experience.

Previous experiences of similar events, may trigger a suite of responses that are optimistic or pessimistic. It is also important how others have reacted to our optimism or pessimism in the past.

My Daily Yoga Routine



India incorporates yoga into every day because of its physical and mental health benefits. Here she shares a typical day and explains how she fits yoga into a busy schedule.

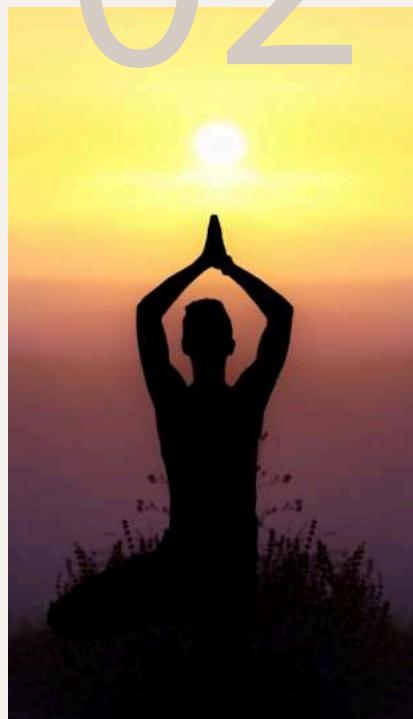
First of all, I think of my life as being yoga. When I wake up in the morning, I open my eyes to the sound of soothing music and a calm voice leading me through some energizing stretches or a short guided meditation. The next thing I do in the morning is work out what yoga class I am attending and then I work my day around it, never the other way around. After my morning yoga practice, I'm ready to face the chaotic outside world. I carry with me the uplifting mantras I chose for the day which help me to find peace. A big benefit of a daily practice, is that you find yourself keeping your yoga and your practice top of your mind. This is a great foundation for a day filled with success, while feeling grounded and present. It's also helped me to finally break my habit of immediately reaching for my smartphone and disappearing down the email and social media rabbit holes. Namaste!

Mindful Wellness

01



02



03



MINDFUL BREATHING

Focused deep breathing can be an effective way to be mindful.

MINDFUL EATING

To be mindful when eating, the key thing to remember is: slow down.

MINDFUL EXERCISE

Paying attention to the present moment when exercising.

PRO'S TIP

Mindfulness or living in the present moment, is such a simple exercise that can bring valuable health benefits.



Get To Know Yourself

Do you find yourself doing the opposite of what you know is good for you? Though you may believe that you possess a single self, the truth is you have many selves.

According to research, it is normal and natural for the mind to divide into different parts. These parts drive our everyday thoughts and trigger knee-jerk reactions that we might come to regret.

However, we shouldn't try to hide or block these parts of ourselves. Instead, we should listen to the message they are trying to tell us. This means talking to the different parts of yourself and noting how the different parts interconnect. This in turn strengthens your ability to understand and balance your life.

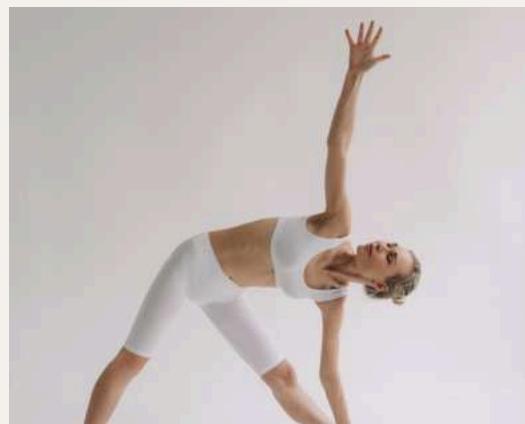
Therefore, when you're wrestling with different problems, it might be that your different personalities or parts are in conflict with each other. If you learn to engage with them, then you can work towards resolving your problems.

The History of Yoga

We all know about the benefits of yoga but how and why did it all start?

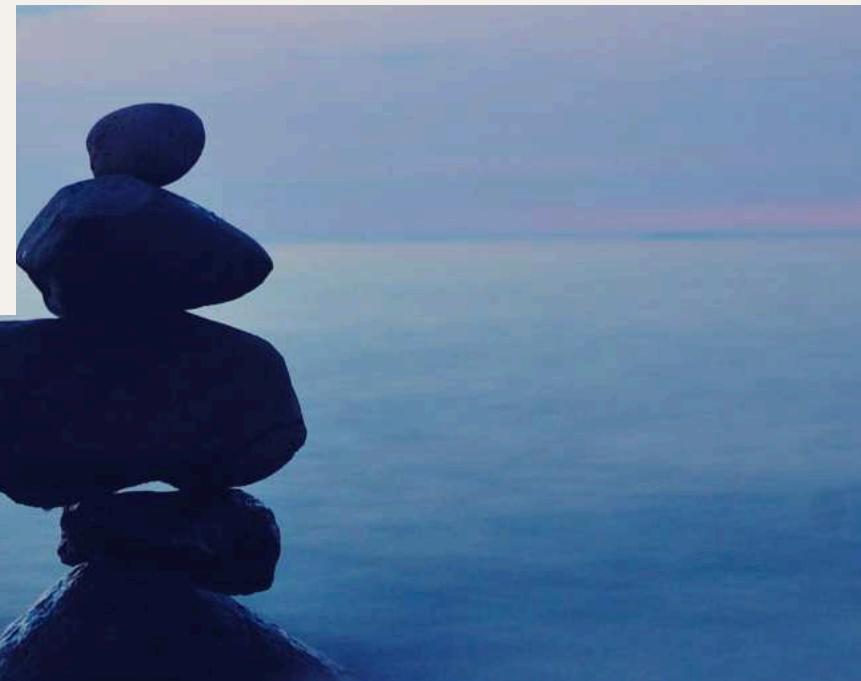
Yoga is an ancient practice and way of life involving moving the body and meditation. Its relevance is even more important today, where yoga can provide a well-needed refuge from our busy, modern lives.

There are many types of yoga. Hatha, which is a combination of many styles, is one of the most popular. It is a more physical type of yoga rather than a meditative form and focuses on pranayamas which are breath-controlled exercises, followed by a series of asanas (yoga poses), and ends with savasana which is a relaxation sequence.



Yoga also helps people towards a better body image by developing inner awareness and focusing your attention on your body's abilities. It helps develop strength of both the body and mind. Yoga is not about exercise or improving physical appearance - it is more a way of life and a way of listening to the body.

Typically yoga studios don't have mirrors so people can focus their awareness inward rather than on how they look. People who practise yoga tend to show more acceptance to their bodies and consequently, yoga has become an important asset in the treatment of eating disorders and programs to promote self-esteem.





How Yoga Changed My Life

India had her first yoga class 10 years ago and the resulting changes that she made to her life inspired her to become a qualified yoga coach herself.

I arrived at my first yoga class feeling disconnected and anxious. However, by the end of the class, I felt balanced and calm. Over the next 2 weeks, I practised yoga every day and made an exciting decision - I was going to train to be a yoga teacher and make yoga a way of life for me.



FEELING CALM
Yoga always makes me feel calm.



A STRONG BODY
I now have a fit and strong body.



FEELING GROUNDED
Yoga helps keep me present in the moment.

The Benefits of Yoga

A pain-free back

Yoga is as good as basic stretching for easing pain and improving mobility in people with lower back pain. In fact, it is true that yoga is recommended as a first-line treatment for chronic low back pain.

“
With a regular yoga practice, you will feel more alert and enthusiastic, with fewer negative thoughts.
”

A healthy heart

Regular yoga practice may reduce levels of stress which contributes to a having a much healthier heart. Other factors contributing to heart disease, such as high blood pressure, can also be helped through yoga.



A supportive community

Taking part in yoga classes can ease loneliness and provide a place for group healing and support. During yoga the focus is on the unique individual. Being listened to in this way and participating in the creation of a personalized yoga plan helps to boost self-confidence and esteem.

Sun Salutation



Forward Fold



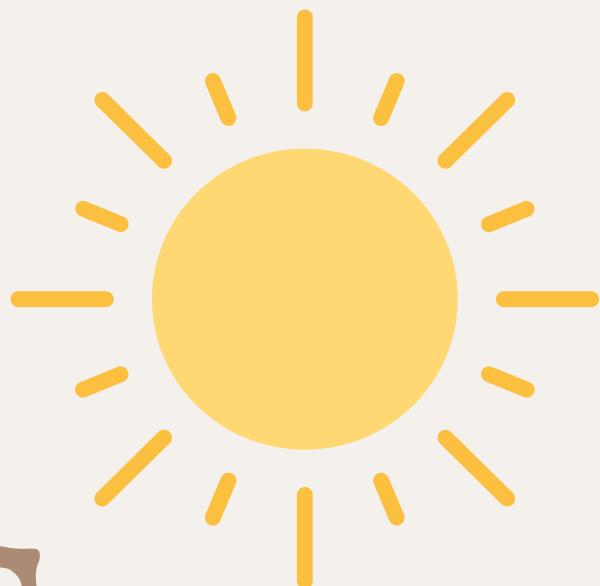
Mountain Pose



Forward Fold



Flat Back



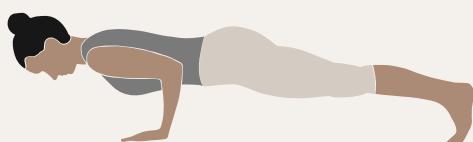
Lunge



Flat Back



Down Dog



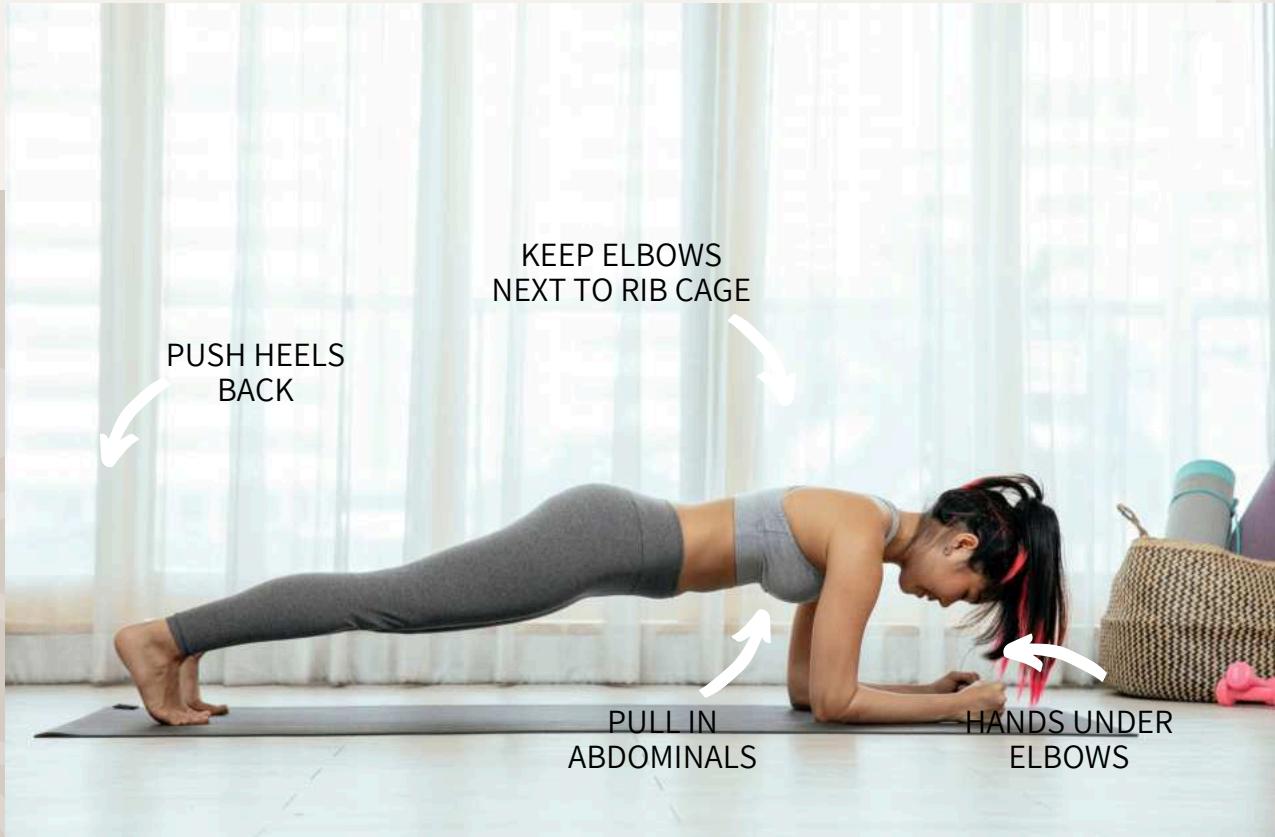
Chaturanga



Up Dog

Four Limbed Staff Pose

Chaturanga Dandasana



This is essentially a low plank and when done correctly, chaturanga will strengthen your entire core and upper body.

Downward Dog

Adho Mukha Svanasana



- Spread hands wide and press into mat
- Draw belly and abdominals in and up
- Point heels towards earth
- Push tailbone up and back
- Keep spine long

Start off on all fours with knees behind hips. Place hands shoulder-width apart and spread fingers wide. Press hands into the mat, tuck toes under and inhale. Exhale and lift knees off the floor and straighten legs.



Five steps



01

HEADER HERE

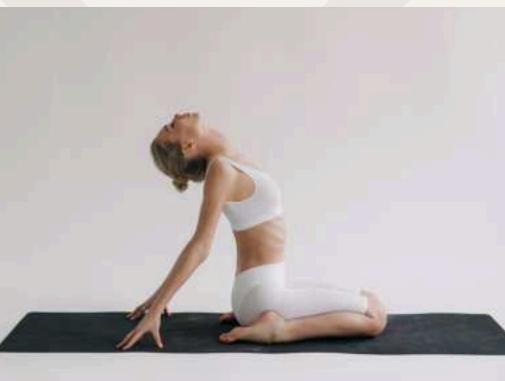
Give detailed instructions for this step here so your client can follow



02

HEADER HERE

Give detailed instructions for this step here so your client can follow



03

HEADER HERE

Give detailed instructions for this step here so your client can follow



04

HEADER HERE

Give detailed instructions for this step here so your client can follow



05

HEADER HERE

Give detailed instructions for this step here so your client can follow

How It Works

- Explain the first step of how the yoga plan will work.
Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.
- Then, explain the next step of how the yoga plan will work.
Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.
- Then, explain the next step of how the yoga plan will work.
Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.
- Following this, explain the next step of how the yoga plan will work. Include resources and the people involved.
- Following this, explain the next step of how the yoga plan will work. Include resources and the people involved.
- Finally, explain last steps of how the yoga plan will work.
Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.

How the Yoga Plan Will Work

01

Explain the first step of how the yoga plan will work. Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.

02

Then, explain the next step of how the yoga plan will work. Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.

03

Following this, explain the next step of how the yoga plan will work. Include resources and the people involved.

04

Finally, explain the last step of how the yoga plan will work. Include resources, timeframes and the people involved.



Session #1

Explain how this will help your client and what they can expect as an end result

STEP 1

Describe the first step of the yoga session here. Include the resources your client will need and let them know how to hold the pose for it to be effective.



STEP 2

Describe the next step of the yoga session here. Include the resources your client will need and let them know how to hold the pose for it to be effective.



STEP 3

Describe the next step of the yoga session here. Include the resources your client will need and let them know how to hold the pose for it to be effective.



STEP 4

Describe the final step of the yoga session here. Include the resources your client will need and let them know how to hold the pose for it to be effective.



Session #1

This is where you can write the introduction to your yoga tutorial. Explain how it will help your client and what they can expect as an end result when they follow the steps in this tutorial.

First of all, write a step in the tutorial here.

Then, write the next step in the tutorial here.

Follow this with the next step in the tutorial.

Next, write the following step of the tutorial here.

After this, write another step for your client to follow here.

And finally, finish with the last step in the tutorial here.



Illustrate one of the steps with a diagram or image



Illustrate one of the steps with a diagram or image



Illustrate one of the steps with a diagram or image

Now your client has a complete set of instructions for how to execute your teaching point. Additionally, include some questions here that will help your client reflect on their progress.

Session #1

This is where you can write the introduction to your tutorial. Explain how it will help your client and what they can expect as an end result when they follow the steps in this tutorial.

01



02



03



Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

04



05



06



Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

Session #1



Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

STEP 1

STEP 2

Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow



Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow

STEP 3

STEP 4

Give detailed instructions
for this step here so your
client can follow



Yoga Quiz

1. How important is yoga to your daily life?

- a** Extremely important
- b** I enjoy the practice when I do it
- c** I'm not that bothered about it

2. Can you see the benefits of yoga?

- a** Yes, I can see all the benefits clearly
- b** Yes, but I can't imagine achieving them
- c** No, I can't see or imagine any benefits

3. How excited are you about your yoga practice?

- a** So excited, I can't wait to get started
- b** I am a little bit excited but a bit wary
- c** Not very excited, I'd rather not

4. How much support will you need?

- a** I am hoping to do this all myself
- b** Some support will be helpful
- c** I'm going to need a lot of support

5. How much time will you dedicate to meditation?

- a** I will do it every day
- b** I'm not sure but I think most days
- c** I don't think I'm going to be able to fit it in

Mostly a s You Got This!

You are determined, organized and motivated to make yoga a part of your life. You will quickly see the benefits of yoga and experience an incredible change in your life. Don't forget to celebrate your successes as you progress through your practice.

Mostly b s Take It Slow

You are a little unsure about the change that is about to happen when you start your yoga practice but you are willing to give it a go. Like many people, you know that you're going to struggle to find it difficult to fit yoga practice into your busy life, but you're willing to ask for help.

Mostly c s Baby Steps

You struggle to see the benefits that regular yoga practice will bring to your life and you try hard to find the motivation to work on your practice. You only want to take small steps which is actually a good thing as it lets you get used to the change gradually.

Yoga Quiz

RATING SCALE



1. Each day I feel excited to work on my yoga practice
2. I can see the benefit that daily yoga will bring
3. I know I'm going to be successful at a new pose
4. I will need some support to help my practice progress
5. I am always willing to make changes to progress
6. I need someone to work with me to keep me on track
7. I understand the benefit of meditation
8. I look forward to fitting meditation into my day

Happiness Quiz

YES

NO

I spend a lot of my free time doing things that fulfil me.

I share my feelings openly with others.

If stressed, I relax by spending time on self reflection.

I am optimistic and can always find the good in a situation.

I go out of my way to do nice things for others.

I pay attention to the small, beautiful things in life.

I always feel grateful for what I have.

I have a close circle of supportive friends.

I have a loving family around me.

I enjoy writing in my journal to reflect on my day.

I regularly spend time meditating.

Yoga Quiz

1. Question: How willing are you to make changes?

- a Yes, definitely
- b Maybe, but I'll have to see
- c No way

Other (please specify)

2. Question: Can you see the benefits of daily yoga?

- a Yes, of course
- b I think so, with time
- c No, I can't see any benefits

Other (please specify)

3. Question: How excited are you about your yoga practice?

- a Very excited
- b I'm quite excited
- c Not excited at all

Other (please specify)

Yoga Quiz

Look at the statements below and answer true or false depending on the extent to which you agree or disagree at this time.

	True	False
I consider myself happy with my practice.		
I feel happy when I do yoga.		
I know to listen to my body when doing yoga.		
I feel calm when I do yoga.		
I am committed to a daily yoga routine.		
I know I can get help if needed.		
I am satisfied with my yoga practice.		
My yoga teacher is experienced and helpful		
My yoga teacher understands my needs		
My yoga teacher is supportive.		

Green Pizza



Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Serves: 2

INGREDIENTS

2 each garlic naan
1/3 cup low fat cream cheese
1 each zucchini, thinly sliced
1 cup broccoli, chopped
1/4 cup feta, crumbled
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 cup arugula
1 each avocado, sliced
1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped
1/4 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400°F or 200°C.
- Place naan on a large baking sheet and spread the top with cream cheese.
- Evenly distribute zucchini and broccoli between the two naan. Sprinkle with feta, drizzle with olive oil, and season with Italian seasoning. Place in the oven and bake for 12-15 minutes or until the naan is crisp. Remove from the oven.
- Top the pizzas with arugula, avocado, and basil. Season with salt and pepper before cutting into slices.

NUTRITION	Amount per serving	Calories 360	Protein 44g
		Carbohydrate 14g	Fat 10g



Swedish Rye Bread

200g rye flour
200g strong flour
7g fast-action dried yeast
½ tsp fine salt
1 tbsp honey
1 tsp caraway seed

Servings: 8
Prep: 50 minutes
Cooking: 25 minutes

NUTRITION FACTS

Amount per serving

Calories 360

Protein 44g

Carbohydrate 14g

Fat 10g

STEP 1: Tip the flours, yeast and salt into a bowl. In a jug, mix the honey with 250ml warm water, pour the liquid into the bowl and mix to form a dough. Tip out onto your work surface and knead for 10 mins until smooth.

STEP 2: Leave to rise in a warm place for 1-2 hrs, or until roughly doubled in size. Dust a 2lb/900g loaf tin with flour.

STEP 3: Tip the dough back onto your work surface and shape into a smooth oval loaf and pop into your tin. Leave to rise somewhere warm until doubled in size.

STEP 4: Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Remove the cling film and dust the surface of the loaf with rye flour. Slash a few incisions on an angle then bake for 30 mins until dark brown and hollow sounding when tapped.

STEP 5: Serve with salad and vegan cheeses.



NUTRITION FACTS

Amount per serving

Calories 360

Protein 44g

Carbohydrate 14g

Fat 10g

MAKES 3 SERVINGS

1 tsp coconut oil
2tsp curry paste
500g chicken breast
400 ml light coconut milk
1 tsp sugar
handful of green beans
lime wedges (optional)

Chicken Curry

This Chicken Curry is super high in protein. Despite that, it's very light and fragrant and just as good as any you'd get in a restaurant.

-
- Heat the coconut oil in a pan on a high heat and add the chicken and cook until brown.
 - Reduce the heat to medium and add the paste to the pan, stirring consistently and cook for 3 minutes more
 - Add the coconut milk and sugar to the pan.
 - Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes until thickened.
 - Throw a handful of chopped green beans into the curry and cook for 5 minutes more.

Healthy Spaghetti



SERVINGS	PREP	COOKING
4	25 min	45 min

DIRECTIONS

1. Place spaghetti in a pan of boiling, salted water.
2. Heat oil in pan and add onions, garlic, anchovies and capers. Sprinkle over the chilli and brown.
3. Pour in the tin of tomatoes as well as 100ml water. Bring the sauce to a simmer.
4. Stir regularly until reduced and dark red in colour
5. Drain the spaghetti and tip into the tomato sauce. Serve with Parmesan and black pepper.

INGREDIENTS

1 clove of garlic
1 tin anchovies
1 tablespoon capers
1 dried chilli, chopped
1 large red onion, sliced
100g black olives
1 tin tomatoes
400g spaghetti

NUTRITION	Amount per serving
-----------	--------------------

Calories	360	Protein	44g
Carbohydrate	14g	Fat	10g

Apricot Ice Pops



PREP TIME
45 min



FREEZE TIME
1 day



SERVES
6

INGREDIENTS

20 apricots, peeled
100g clear honey
50g caster sugar
1 tsp ground cardamom
75g pistachios, chopped

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1: Put the apricots in a blender and process until smooth. Pour the mixture through a strainer. Add the honey, sugar, 100ml water and the cardamom, and mix together until smooth.

STEP 2: Divide the mixture between the ice pop moulds. Put the mould in the freezer and chill for 30-45 mins. Insert the lolly sticks and leave to freeze for at least 4 hrs.

EQUIPMENT

Blender
Fine mesh strainer
6 lolly moulds

STEP 3: To remove the lollies, dip the mould in hot water for a few seconds, then carefully remove the lollies, dipping each into the chopped pistachios to serve.

Avocado Toast

PREP TIME 5 minutes

COOK TIME 15 minutes

SERVES 2

INGREDIENTS

2 slices sourdough
1 large avocado
juice from 1/2 lime
2 teaspoons cumin
sea salt & pepper
2 slices bacon
1 onion, sliced
2 large eggs

DIRECTIONS

- Toast sourdough slices and set aside.
- Mash up avocado in a bowl and season with lime, cumin and sea salt & pepper.
- Cook bacon rashers and set aside.
- Add the sliced onion to the skillet with the bacon fat and cook for at least 10 minutes.
- Then, add whole eggs to the skillet and cook sunny-side up
- Next, assemble the toast. For one piece of sourdough, add 1/2 of all the ingredients – the avocado mash, onions, 1 slice bacon and 1 egg. Repeat for the other slice.



CALORIES	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	SUGAR	FIBRE	SODIUM
350	20g	30g	25g	5g	10g	800mg

Spinach Salad



CALORIES	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	SUGAR	FIBRE	SODIUM
350	20g	30g	25g	5g	10g	800mg

This spinach salad is healthy and delicious. Grow the spinach in your garden and you'll always have plenty to use for this recipe.

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1: Place the spinach leaves in a salad bowl. Top with red onion slices and crumbled feta.

STEP 2: Make vinaigrette dressing by mixing olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Add salt and pepper to taste.

STEP 3: Drizzle vinaigrette over spinach leaves and sprinkle with pomegranate seeds. Serve with crusty white bread as a side dish to fish or meat.

SERVES 6

PREP TIME 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

bag of **spinach** leaves
1 **red onion**, sliced
200g crumbled **feta**
1 **pomegranate**
4tbsp **balsamic vinegar**
4tbsp **olive oil**

Carrot Cake

SERVES 8 - 10

for the cake:

2 cups flour
1 tsp cinnamon
1 cup sugar
4 free-range eggs
3 cups grated peeled carrots

for the frosting:

8oz cream cheese
2 cups powdered sugar
1/3 cup whipping cream
1/2 cup pecans

Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Oil and line the base and sides of two 20cm cake tins. Whisk the oil, yogurt, eggs, vanilla and zest in a jug. Mix the flour, sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg with a good pinch of salt in a bowl.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry, along with the carrots. Mix well to combine, then divide between the tins.

Bake for 25-30 mins or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins.

To make the icing, beat the butter and sugar together until smooth. Add half the soft cheese and beat again. Sandwich cakes together with half the icing. Best eaten at room temperature.



Peri Peri Kebabs

350

20g

30g

5g

14m

6

CALORIES

PROTEIN

CARBS

FAT

TIME

SERVES

INGREDIENTS

8 x 50g Peri Peri beef kebabs
4 x wholemeal pittas
200g cherry tomatoes
150g shredded lettuce
220g fat free Greek yogurt
1 x cucumber, grated
2 x garlic cloves, minced
2 tbsp olive oil



When you're training hard you don't always have time on your hands to cook, which is why this great recipe is the ideal post-workout meal. With every serving you get a mix of protein, carbs and only a little fat.

DIRECTIONS

- Put the beef kebabs under grill for 4 minutes on each side.
- Combine all the ingredients for the Tzatziki in a medium bowl and mix until well combined.
- Quarter the cherry tomatoes and shred the lettuce.
- Place pittas in toaster and toast.
- Take the beef kebabs from the grill, cut pittas in half and stuff them with Peri Peri beef kebabs, lettuce, cherry tomatoes.
- Serve immediately with Tzatziki on the side.

Food Diary

DATE _____

BREAKFAST	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	CALORIES
TOTAL				
LUNCH	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	CALORIES
TOTAL				
DINNER	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	CALORIES
TOTAL				
SNACKS/DRINKS	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	CALORIES
TOTAL				
DAILY TOTALS				

WATER INTAKE:



Food Diary

DATE _____

		CALORIES	TOTAL CALORIES	WATER
M	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			
T	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			
W	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			
T	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			
F	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			
S	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			
S	B			
	L			
	D			
	S			

Meal Planner

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS
SUNDAY				
SATURDAY				
FRIDAY				
THURSDAY				
WEDNESDAY				
TUESDAY				
MONDAY				

Meal Planner

MONDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Yogurt and fruit	Carrot soup	Chicken pie	dates and nuts

TUESDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Avocado and poached eggs	salmon sandwiches	Lasagne and green salad	Fruit and popcorn

WEDNESDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

THURSDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

FRIDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

SATURDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

SUNDAY

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks

Grocery List

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

<input type="checkbox"/>	

DAIRY AND EGGS

<input type="checkbox"/>	

MEAT AND FISH

<input type="checkbox"/>	

FROZEN

<input type="checkbox"/>	

CANNED

<input type="checkbox"/>	

BEVERAGES

<input type="checkbox"/>	

BREAD/PASTA/GRAINS

<input type="checkbox"/>	

BAKING

<input type="checkbox"/>	

SNACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	

OTHER

<input type="checkbox"/>	

Recipe Card

RECIPE:

NOTES

FROM THE KITCHEN OF:

SERVES:

PREP TIME:

COOK TIME:

TOTAL TIME:

INGREDIENTS

METHOD

How To Be Happy

A cheat sheet for ways to cheer up naturally

Sleep it off

Exhaustion can be an underlying cause of depression. Therefore, it is important to sleep well. Setting a routine for bedtime will help you to regulate the quantity and quality of sleep.

Boost nutrition

Get the nutrients you need for emotional and mental health such as omega -3 fatty acids, Vitamin B and magnesium by eating lots of fish and leafy colourful vegetables. Avoid processed sugar and carbs.

Keep moving

Move your body as much as you can, especially outside. Sunlight helps to boost your mood and reset your circadian rhythm. Aim for 150 minutes of aerobic exercise as well as 90 minutes of strength and balance training.

Mindfulness

Take quick 5-minute sessions of breath-focussed meditation each day to help ease negative thoughts and boost your mood. Meditation has been shown to create new neural pathways and reduce depression.

Get creative

Try to find creative outlets so that the parts of the brain associated with joy, creativity and love are activated. Make art, read or create something new. Any creative activity will boost your mood and make you feel happier.

Challenge yourself

Setting yourself a tough challenge and then seeing it through can be very rewarding. Learning to cope with discomfort and difficulty grows resilience and you may end up feeling more at ease in other parts of your life.

get motivated CHEAT SHEET

START YOUR DAY RIGHT

Look at your goals and remind yourself why they are important. Reflect on what you'll gain when you achieve these goals.

Focus on the positive and channel positive emotions into your day ahead.

Create a positive mindset through affirmations as a great way to start your day.



CREATE BOUNDARIES

You'll be able to motivate yourself better if you're willing to step away and take a breath.

Do activities throughout the day that help you de-stress, if stressful tensions arise. This might be taking a walk, playing a game, meditate.

Remind yourself that you are doing really well and that you are taking control of your thoughts and actions.

PRIORITIZE

Take control of everything you need to do by writing a to-do list. Prioritize items on this list so that the more important things get done first.

Create boundaries around what will help you succeed and connect with people that are like-minded and will support you.

Basic Yoga Poses

A cheat sheet for techniques on how to do these basic yoga poses

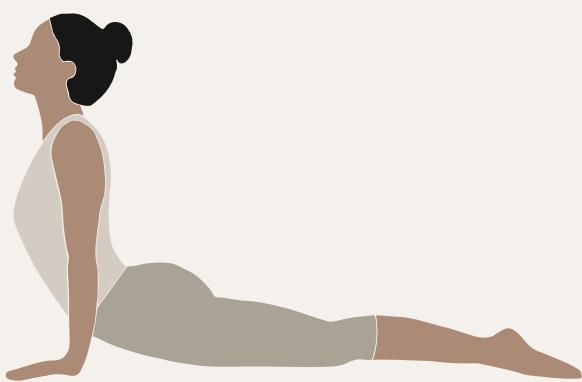


DOWNWARD FACING DOG

- Start in an all fours position, with hips above knees and shoulders above wrists.
- Bring hands slightly forwards of your shoulders
- Tuck toes under, exhale and engage lower belly drawing the navel back to spine. Press hands and lift hips back and up.
- Slide shoulder blades down along the spine
- Stay for 5 breaths.

LUNGE

- Start in Downward Facing Dog.
- Exhale, step right foot forward, between hands. Lower left knee to the floor, sliding the foot back until feel a stretch in left hip and thigh.
- Keep hips low and level with each other.
- Inhale, engage lower belly and lift chest away from the thigh.
- Gaze up and come into a gentle backbend.



UPWARD FACING DOG

- Lie on stomach, with hands next to ribs, fingers pointing forward, elbows tucked in.
- Press tops of feet into floor and engage thighs and knees.
- Inhale, press into hands and feet, and lift chest and legs off floor.
- Engage lower belly and knit lower ribs.
- Draw shoulder blades onto back and lift breastbone.
- Gaze ahead and hold for 1 - 5 breaths.

How To Be Calm



Chamomile

Chamomile reduces anxiety and stress as well as lowering blood pressure and body weight.

Breathe

Breathe in through the nose, then take a long exhalation through the mouth. Repeat 3 times.

Move

If you're anxious, meditation may be difficult. So, try a gentle yoga flow that enables you to move and stretch.

Focus

Do you always seem to be multi-tasking as you rush through your day? If so, try to focus on one thing at a time instead.

Posture

Try poses such as Locust Pose, Camel Pose and Cow Face Pose to reduce tension in the neck and strengthen the back.

Sleep

Create a bedtime routine, banish devices from your bedroom and aim for 7 - 8 hours of sleep per night. Go to bed early.

3 Pranayama Techniques

Breathing techniques can reduce stress, aid in digestion and improve sleep. Here is a cheat sheet of 3 Pranayama exercises worth doing.



Nadhi Sodhana - alternate nostril breathing

Use your right thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale through your left nostril and then close the left nostril with your right ring finger. Open the right nostril and exhale through this side. Inhale through the right nostril and then close this nostril. Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side. This is one cycle. Perform up to 10 cycles and notice how this helps to make you feel relaxed.



Kapalabhati Pranayama - skull shining breath

Inhale through both nostrils, then sharply exhale out of your nose while pulling your navel in toward your spine. The exhalation is very active and short, whereas the inhalation is short and passive. Do one round of 30 and notice how this warms up your body and makes you feel active.



Ujjayi Pranayama - victorious breath

Take a breath in through both nostrils. Inhale as much as you can and hold your breath for a second, then constrict the throat. Make a short exhalation and then start inhaling—slowly and rhythmically. Allow the air to pass through the constricted throat, creating a snoring sound. Continue inhaling until chest is full. Hold the breath for 5 seconds. This exhalation will sound like an ocean wave or gentle rush of air. Repeat up to 20 times.

Miracle Breath

Next time you're overwhelmed try mindful breathing and meditation. The following Miracle Breath creates awareness and balances emotions.

Sit in Sukhasana with hands gently resting on knees, palms facing upward.

Close eyes. Roll them up and in as if looking at a point between brows.

Open lips slightly and pucker them.

Inhale through mouth for count of 4, making a soft noise. Place the tip of tongue on roof of mouth.

Hold breath for 4 seconds.

Then exhale completely through nose.

Repeat and continue breathing in this way for 1 - 3 minutes.

30-Day Yoga Challenge

01 Downward Dog	02 Bridge	03 Warrior I	04 Tree	05 Child's Pose
06 Seated Twist	07 Frog	08 Chair	09 Locust	10 Pigeon
11 Warrior II	12 Forward Fold	13 Chaturanga	14 Triangle	15 Floor Bow
16 Eagle	17 Camel	18 Cobra	19 Crow	20 Dancer's Pose
21 Rock Star	22 Savasana	23 Plow	24 Upward Dog	25 Firefly
26 Dolphin	27 Swan	28 Wheel	29 Headstand	30 Butterfly

Understanding Afflictions

Afflictions or 'kleshas' are negative mental states that prevent us from achieving emotional balance and peace. This cheat sheet gives ways to be aware of them and consequently, get to the root of pain and trauma.

KLESHA	DETAILS	REMEDY
Ignorance <i>Avidya</i>	Yoga teaches us that if we can overcome ignorance, we can overcome other afflictions.	Natarajasana - this pose is balancing and a backbend. It represents Lord Shiva's power to destroy ignorance.
Ego <i>Asmita</i>	Yoga helps us to control the ego by giving selfless service and becoming divinely conscious	Adho Mukha Svanasana - the head is below the heart and we can look at ourselves from a different perspective.
Attachment <i>Raga</i>	Being attached means we get caught up thinking about what we had in the past and what we want in the future	Nadi Shodhana Pranayama - breathing through alternate nostrils brings the mind and body together to create a greater sense of balance.
Aversion <i>Dvesha</i>	If we live in a state of unbalance and division, we forget that true happiness can only be found within.	The Mantra Om - the sound of this mantra helps to quiet your mind and stop thinking about likes and dislikes.

How To Have a Digital Detox

A cheat sheet for ways to take a break from your digital devices.

Set your intentions

Before you post, ask yourself what your intentions are. Are you helping your community or are you seeking recognition? Be honest. Stay in alignment with how you want to share yourself with the world.

Build a community

Are you trying to attract an audience to promote your work? If so, try creating content that will be meaningful to your community instead. Look at who supports you and devise ways to engage and support them back.

Be present

Aim to be fully present in your current moment rather than trying to create the perfect photo to post. Some moments need to be just for you and not necessarily shared. Be mindful of your well-being and stay balanced.

Give some love

Obsessing about the number of 'likes' you have doesn't support good mental health. Instead, to boost your esteem when feeling low, try meditating, writing in a journal or other self-affirming pick-me-ups

Take some time

Social media has been shown to disrupt natural sleeping patterns. With this in mind, remember to take some time away from social media and rest or engage in other activities you enjoy like reading, cooking or going for a walk outside.



7-Day Yoga Cheat Sheet

Monday

TOTAL BODY RELAX

Sink into deep relaxation and dissolve the tension from your day. Let go completely

Tuesday

BALANCE & BREATH

Push balance, stretch and strength boundaries with this challenging yoga class

Wednesday

CORE STRENGTH

A class to help you establish your core stability and moving in an effective and safe way.

Thursday

SHOULDERS

Thoroughly stretch all the muscles of the shoulders, neck, upper arms and back. Leaves you feeling great.

Friday

HIPS AND BACK

Focus on stretching the lower body - hips, groin and lower back in this gentle, short yoga class - great for beginners.

Saturday

BEDTIME YOGA

Gentle yoga practice to get you ready for sleep. Relax and prepare your body for a good night's rest and relaxation.

Sunday

DEEP RELEASE

Focus on the hip flexors to relieve lower back pain and other issues. Great for improving overall flexibility.

Notes

This ongoing yoga program is open to beginners and intermediate students. You'll experience significant results if you follow the schedule but feel free to make changes or even miss a class if you need to.

Why should you take up yoga?



Improve posture



Strong bones



Lung health



Muscle strength



Relieves stress



Weight loss



Reduce injury



Healthy heart



Improve balance

Checklist

Keep these key areas in mind as you complete each yoga session. Make notes to help you when it comes to reviewing your progress



FOCUS THE BREATH

To start your practice, focus and be aware of your breath and let this guide you throughout.



CHECK TECHNIQUE

Make sure you're carrying out each pose correctly and targeting the right areas.



PUSH YOURSELF GENTLY

If you want to see real results in your yoga practice you need to gently push yourself.



FINAL RESTING POSE

This is key to every yoga session. Relaxation allows your heart rate to come back to rest.



HYDRATE

Drink lots of water after your yoga session. Drink at least 8 glasses of water to stay hydrated.

A Checklist for Yoga Sessions



10 YOGA ESSENTIALS THAT YOU NEED TO PACK IN YOUR YOGA BAG

- Water bottle. Staying hydrated before and after yoga is essential.
- An open mind and desire to be with yourself and the breath.
- Your own mat so you'll know it will be clean and hygienic.
- Your yoga plan. A quick look can remind you of your yoga goals.
- Yoga towel. For drying off sweaty hands and feet.
- Warm top and socks to keep warm during the meditation.
- Change of clothes so you can carry on with the rest of your day.
- Yoga blanket - as a bolster and to keep warm in meditation.
- Post-yoga snack. Yoga can make you hungry so pack a protein bar.
- Yoga blocks - provided but you might like to use your own.

Your Yoga Brain

Yoga and meditation are essential for safeguarding your brain from the effects of depression and anxiety. This list explains each part of the brain and how yoga practice affects it.



FRONTAL LOBE

This is the brain's command centre and controls movement, decision-making and problem-solving. Yoga improves frontal lobe function.



CEREBELLUM

This coordinates movement and balance and regular yoga practice contributes to better memory, attention, and motor function.



PARIETAL LOBE

This is responsible for body awareness and yoga meditation has been shown to increase the thickness of the parietal lobe.



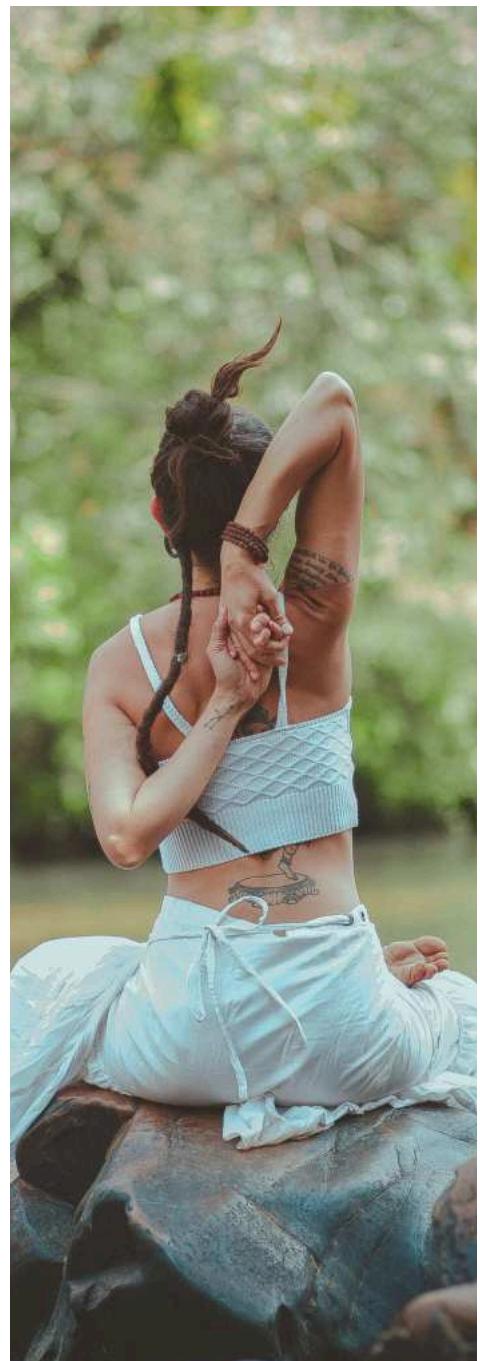
OCCIPITAL LOBE

This is responsible for visual processing and allows you to flow through yoga poses. Any occipital lobe deficits contribute to depression so regular yoga practice can help to prevent this.



TEMPORAL LOBE

This is responsible for auditory speech and language as well as emotions. Studies have shown that regular yoga practice gives more emotional balance.





A Checklist for Yoga Beginners

Here is a list of things for beginners to consider when starting yoga practice.

-  Where you will do your yoga practice. Home or studio?
-  Consider how often will you do your yoga practice.
-  Start with simple poses and avoid hurting and over exerting your muscles.
-  Yoga is a way of life, not exercise. Try to understand the philosophy of yoga.
-  Follow a good teacher either online or at a studio.
-  Be aware of your breath. Focus on your breath throughout your practice.
-  Give time for Savasana (final resting pose) to finish your practice.
-  Keep going until yoga becomes part of your daily routine.

What To Pack For a Yoga Retreat

You've booked your first yoga retreat, so now it's time to collect together a few essential items to make sure you have an incredible experience.

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| | Yoga mat | | Comfortable shoes |
| | Comfortable yoga clothing | | Sunglasses |
| | Water bottle | | Yoga props |
| | Small towel | | Bathing suit |
| | Healthy snacks | | Journal |



Checklist

Keep these key areas in mind as you complete each session.

SHOW UP

Bring your attention to your breath and this moment. Focus on your body in this moment.

LISTEN

Listen to your body and notice which parts of your body need more attention.

CONNECT TO THE BREATH

Let your breath guide you through each pose. Focus on your breathing to help you be present in the moment.

CHOOSE A PRACTICE

Decide how you want your yoga practice to look. What type of yoga will you include in your practice.

PAY ATTENTION

Aim to keep your attention on the moment. If you feel it wandering away, gently bring it back.

Best Yoga Tools for Kids

These resources will help children to focus on yoga as well as enjoying the experience

Yoga dots

Egg timers

Yoga posters

Yoga mats

Inflatable globe

Animal figures

Ribbons

Pocket dice

Mind jars

Pillows

Pebbles

Mandalas

Scarves

Hula hoops

Stuffed toys

Bean bags

Yoga books

Gemstones

Yoga straps

Stickers

Shells

Parachute

Music

Animal masks

Balls

Pencils

Glitter wands

Balloons

Plastic footprints

Books

Jenga

Lavender spray

Cushion

Blankets

Balance beam

Healthy snacks



CHECKLIST

Keep these key areas in mind as you complete each yoga session.



FOCUS THE BREATH

To start your practice, focus and be aware of your breath and let this guide you throughout.



CHECK TECHNIQUE

Make sure you're carrying out each pose correctly and targeting the right areas.



PUSH YOURSELF GENTLY

If you want to see real results in your yoga practice you need to gently push yourself.



HYDRATE

Drink lots of water after your yoga session. Drink at least 8 glasses of water to stay hydrated.

CHECKLIST

Welcome to the Yoga Studio Challenge. Check off each challenge as you complete it.



PHASE ONE

- Gather your resources for your yoga session
- Make a plan with your yoga teacher
- Post your plan on the Yoga Studio Challenge Facebook page

PHASE TWO

- Schedule your yoga practice and meditation times
- Carry out your yoga practice daily
- Record your progress on the Yoga Studio Challenge Facebook page

PHASE THREE

- Take photos of your key poses
- Review your poses and technique with your personal yoga teacher
- Celebrate your success and achieving your yoga goals

Chakra Guide

SAHASRARA	COLOUR: Violet/white LOCATION: Top of the head MANTRA: No sound FUNCTIONS: Knowledge, fulfilment, spirituality	
AJNA	COLOUR: Indigo LOCATION: Between eyebrows MANTRA: Ohm FUNCTIONS: Intuition, imagination, visualization	
VISHUDDHA	COLOUR: Blue LOCATION: Back of the head, throat MANTRA: Ham FUNCTIONS: Self-expression, communication	
ANAHATA	COLOUR: Green LOCATION: Heart, middle of the chest MANTRA: Yam FUNCTIONS: Love, kindness, compassion	
MANIPURA	COLOUR: Yellow LOCATION: Above the navel MANTRA: Ram FUNCTIONS: Assertiveness, strength, power	
SVADHISTHANA	COLOUR: Orange LOCATION: Sacrum MANTRA: Vam FUNCTIONS: Sexuality, creativity, sensuality	
MULADHARA	COLOUR: Red LOCATION: Perineum MANTRA: Lam FUNCTIONS: Survival, grounding, stability	

The Seven Chakras



Crown



Third Eye



Throat



Heart



Solar Plexus



Sacral



Root

The Benefits of Yoga



Daily Planner

DATE:

TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR:

YOGA:



MEALS:



NOTES:

WATER:



FRUIT & VEG:



MY MOOD:



My treat today is:

Weekly Planner

W/B:

Monday

Priorities/ Urgent:

Tuesday

Appointments:

Wednesday

Thursday

Notes:

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Yearly Planner

YEAR:

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER

Yoga Goal Planner

GOAL:

ACTION STEPS:

Detailed description of the first action step.

Detailed description of the second action step.

Detailed description of the third action step.

Detailed description of the fourth action step.

Detailed description of the fifth action step.

Detailed description of the sixth action step.

Detailed description of the seventh action step.

Detailed description of the eighth action step.

Detailed description of the ninth action step.

NOTES:

Daily Yoga Log

DATE

TIME

FEELINGS BEFORE PRACTICE

INTENTION AND MANTRA FOR TODAY'S SESSION

PRACTICE

PRANAYAMA

SUN SALUTATION

FULL ATTENTION

MEDITATION

MOON SALUTATION

SHAVASANA

REFLECTIONS AFTER PRACTICE

Daily Yoga Log

DATE

TIME

INTENTION

YOGA POSES

PRANAYAMA

MEDITATION

SUN SALUTATION

FULL ATTENTION

PRACTICE NOTES

Meditation Journal

DATE

TIME

LOCATION

MANTRA AND INTENTION

FEELINGS BEFORE

FEELINGS AFTER

WHAT DID I LEARN?

WHAT ACTIONS WILL I TAKE?

Weekly Practice

Gratitude Log

DATE

MORNING GRATITUDE

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

PEOPLE I'M GRATEFUL FOR

HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE DAY

Yoga Teaching Plan

DATE	LEVEL	DURATION
SESSION FOCUS:		
KEY SEQUENCES AND POSES		
BLESSING	RESOURCES AND PROPS	MUSIC/PLAYLIST
NOTES		

Monthly Planner

DATES TO REMEMBER

IMPORTANT

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

S

M

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W

T

F

S



It's not about
being good at
something. It's
about being
good to

yourself

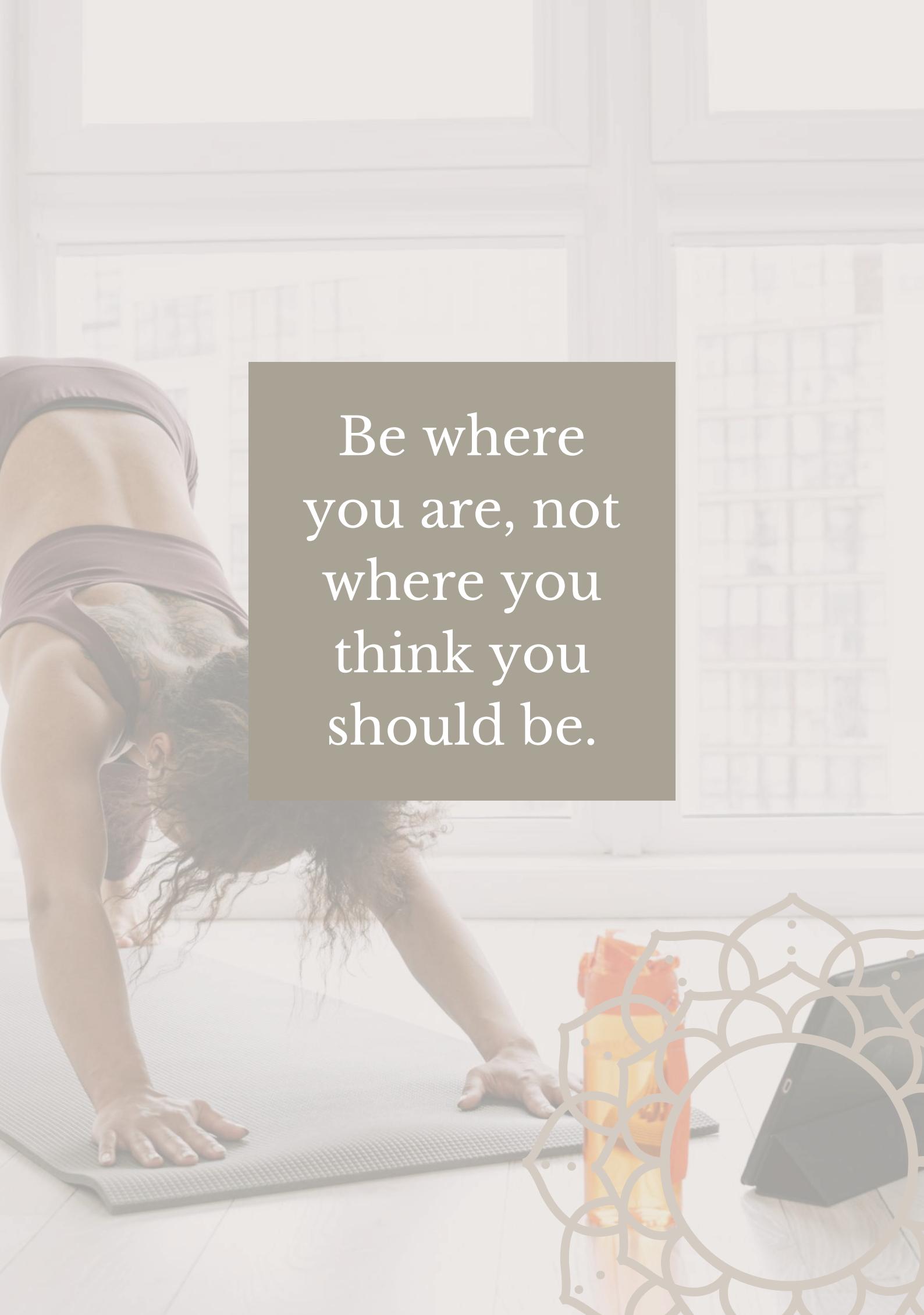




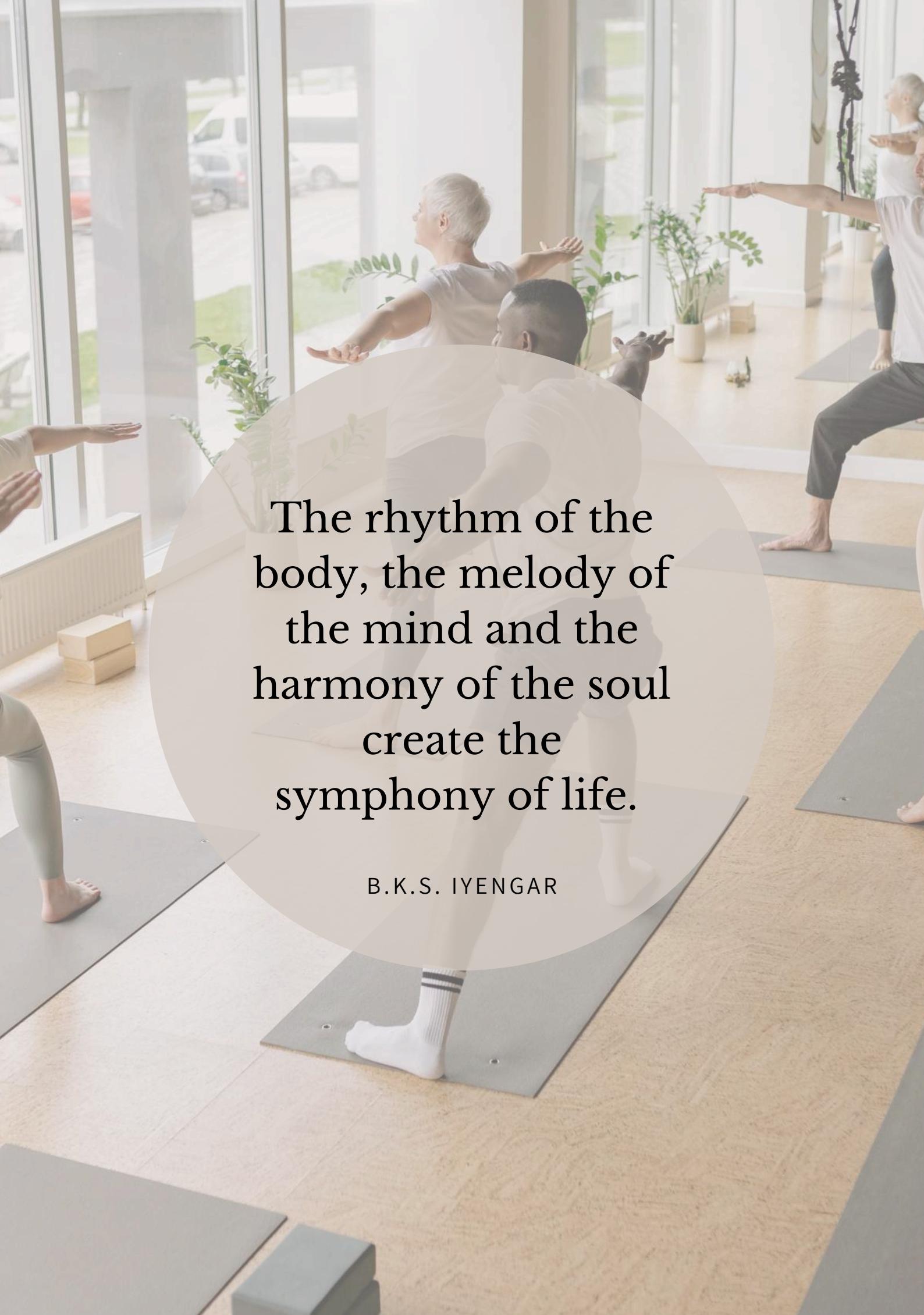
Yoga is the
journey of
the self,
through the
self, to the
self.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA



A woman with long, curly hair is performing a downward dog yoga pose on a light-colored mat. She is wearing a dark tank top and grey leggings. In the foreground, there is a large, stylized circular graphic with a geometric, mandala-like pattern. To the right of the woman, there is a red and yellow water bottle and a black tablet or small laptop. The background shows a bright room with white walls and a window.

Be where
you are, not
where you
think you
should be.

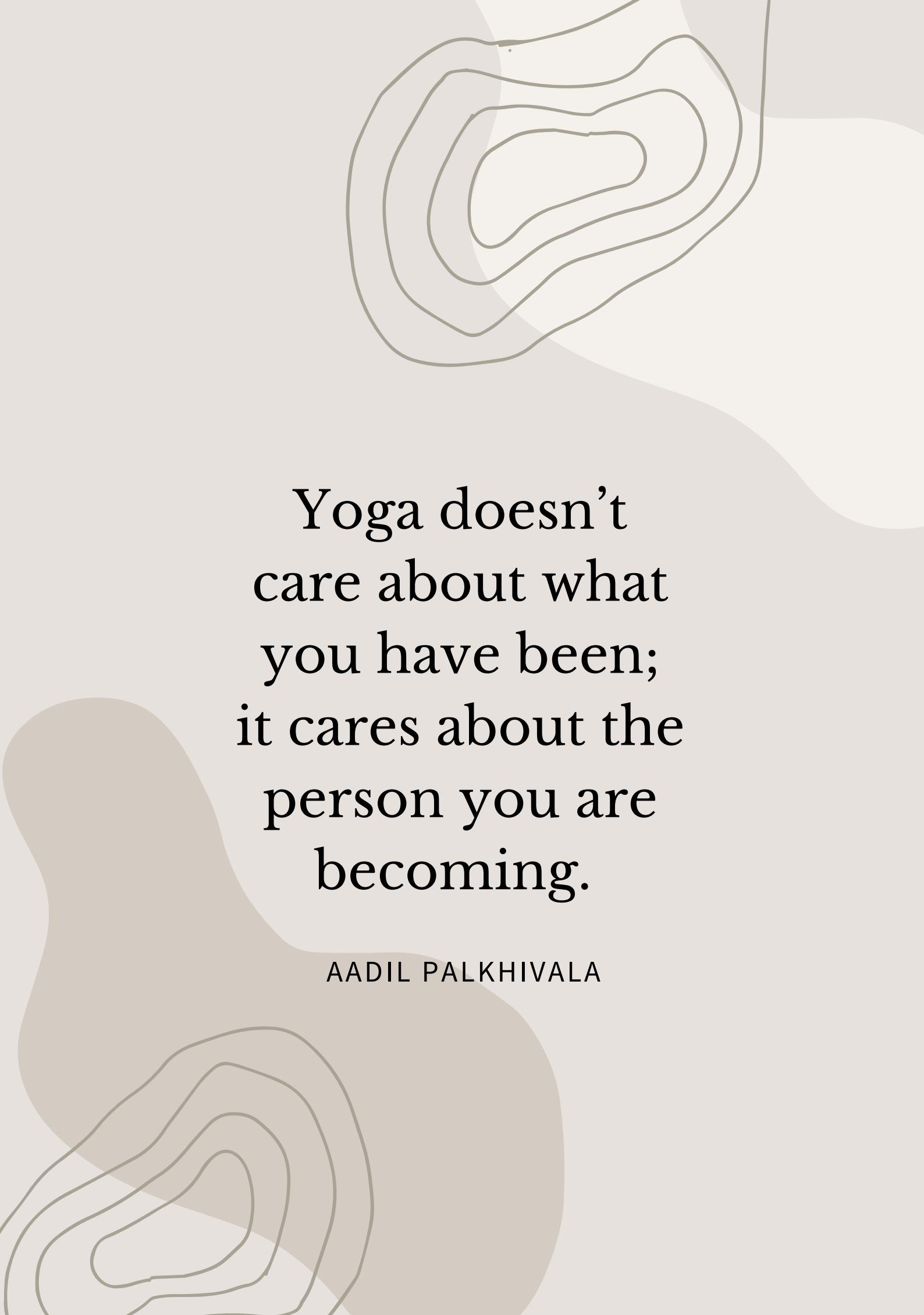
A photograph of a yoga class in progress. Several people are on grey mats, performing various yoga poses like warrior and tree. The studio has large windows on one side, letting in natural light. A circular graphic overlays the center of the image, containing a quote.

The rhythm of the
body, the melody of
the mind and the
harmony of the soul
create the
symphony of life.

B.K.S. IYENGAR



Your soul is
your best
friend. Treat it
with care,
nurture it with
growth, feed it
with love.



Yoga doesn't
care about what
you have been;
it cares about the
person you are
becoming.

AADIL PALKHIVALA

RESOURCES



RESOURCE 1
Give extra details about
the resource here



RESOURCE 2
Give extra details about
the resource here



RESOURCE 3
Give extra details about
the resource here



RESOURCE 4
Give extra details about
the resource here



RESOURCE 5
Give extra details about
the resource here



RESOURCE 6
Give extra details about
the resource here

Daily Yoga Practice

Date: _____

Today's intention:

Things that I'm grateful for today:

Before my yoga practice, I felt:

After my yoga practice, I felt:

30 Days of Yoga

DAY 1	
DAY 2	
DAY 3	
DAY 4	
DAY 5	
DAY 6	
DAY 7	
DAY 8	
DAY 9	
DAY 10	
DAY 11	
DAY 12	
DAY 13	
DAY 14	
DAY 15	

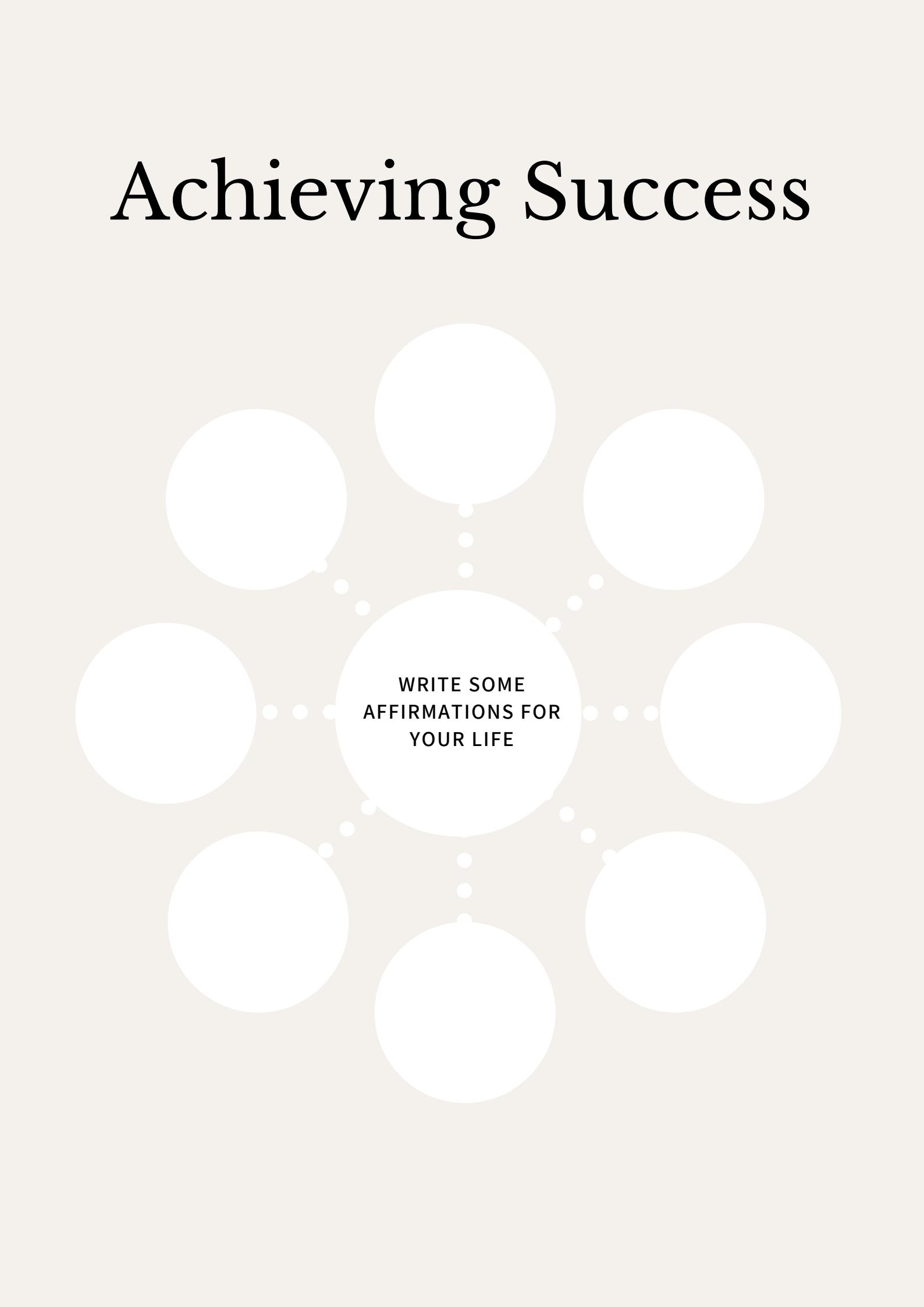
DAY 16	
DAY 17	
DAY 18	
DAY 19	
DAY 20	
DAY 21	
DAY 22	
DAY 23	
DAY 24	
DAY 25	
DAY 26	
DAY 27	
DAY 28	
DAY 29	
DAY 30	

Achieving Success



WRITE SOME
AFFIRMATIONS
FOR YOUR LIFE

Achieving Success



WRITE SOME
AFFIRMATIONS FOR
YOUR LIFE

My Yoga Goals

What you still need to do:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Habits that help you:

Habits that don't help you:

How do you feel about the progress you're making with your yoga?

My Yoga Practice

How much effort were you able to use in yoga today?

How did the resources help you with your yoga practice?

Did anything distract you during your practice?

How did you find the yoga breathing?

What benefits did you notice yoga today?

Is there anything you want to change in your practice?

My Yoga Practice

Choose your 10 go-to yoga poses and record them here. Describe the pose and why you enjoy it. Also, think about the impact this pose has on your yoga practice.

DESCRIPTION OF POSE	
Chair	
Dolphin	
Mountain	
Eagle	
Cobra	
Half Frog	
Camel	
Locust	
Extended Puppy	
Wild Thing	

My Yoga Practice



How much effort were you able to put into your yoga today?



How did the resources help you with your yoga practice?



Was there anything distracting you during your yoga practice?



How did you find the yoga breathing?



What benefits did you notice from the yoga session today?



Is there anything you'd like to change about your yoga practice?

Yoga Wordsearch

Can you find the 6 yoga poses hidden in this wordsearch?

s	a	m	a	r	i	n	g	g
p	n	r	i	r	e	k	m	n
t	i	a	k	e	c	u	t	i
b	h	c	a	m	e	l	u	h
c	p	o	u	k	a	o	r	t
a	l	b	n	e	g	t	u	d
k	o	r	a	t	l	j	m	l
e	d	a	c	p	e	o	u	i
g	b	a	r	e	f	y	l	w



Camel



Wild Thing



Cobra



Chair



Eagle



Dolphin

My Yoga Practice

The key to yoga is developing a healthy habit and daily yoga routine.

I want to practise yoga because:

Through my yoga practice, I want to achieve:

The steps I will take to achieve this will be:

The positive ways that yoga will impact my life are:

The mantra I will use is:

Yoga Evaluation

Take some time to reflect on this month's practice and answer the following questions.

What did you discover about your body?

What did you discover about your mind?

What did you discover about your spirit and sense of self?

What did you discover about your wellness and health?

Daily Yoga Practice

Date:

Today's mantra

Where I am at

What I want to focus on

My practice today will include:

Where I want to be

My Yoga Practice

By marking the scale, please rate these areas before starting your yoga practice using the scale 0 - 10 where 0 is the lowest and 10 is the highest:

BEFORE YOGA PRACTICE

Mental tension (stress, worry, distraction)



Emotional tension (depression, anger, worry, frustration)



Muscle tension (sore, aching, cramping, tight)



Pain (head, body)



AFTER YOGA PRACTICE

Mental tension (stress, worry, distraction)



Emotional tension (depression, anger, worry, frustration)



Muscle tension (sore, aching, cramping, tight)



Pain (head, body)



My Core Values

From the list below, circle each core value that resonates with you.

	Fairness	
Authenticity	Faith	Openness
Achievement	Fame	Optimism
Adventure	Friendships	Peace
Authority	Fun	Pleasure
Balance	Growth	Popularity
Beauty	Happiness	Recognition
Boldness	Honesty	Reputation
Compassion	Humor	Respect
Challenge	Influence	Responsibility
Citizenship	Justice	Security
Community	Kindness	Self-Respect
Competency	Knowledge	Spirituality
Contribution	Leadership	Success
Creativity	Learning	Trustworthiness
Curiosity	Love	Wealth
Determination	Loyalty	Wisdom
	Meaningful Work	

My Core Values

Group similar values from your list in any way that makes sense to you. Prioritize and create a maximum of five groups.



Now, choose one word from each group that best represents the label for the whole group.



You now have identified your 5 Core Values and you can use these in your goal setting and planning opportunities.

Vision Board

Take some time and reflect over the past year. Take time and think about the year and the life you lived. Ask yourself the following questions...

What experience made you happy?

What experiences changed you?

What held you back?

What have you achieved in different parts of your life?

How was your physical and mental health?

How did you build relationships?

Vision Board

Now envision your next year. For each of the boxes below think about your goals and how you envision each of the aspects listed. Think about the WHY behind each of the goals and make sure they're driven by genuine intentions. Notice if there are words or mantras that jump out at you for this next year.

BUSINESS

FITNESS

RELATIONSHIPS

FINANCIAL

EXPERIENCES

MINDSET

Vision Board



Yoga Questions

Take some time to reflect and consider what it is that you want from your yoga practice.

How did yoga come into your life and why do you think it did?

Define your yoga practice. What does it mean to you?

What is your goal for practising yoga?

How does your yoga practice impact your daily life?

Yoga Reflection

Consider your yoga practice and think about the following prompts.

My favourite yoga pose:

Yoga helps me to:

The best part of yoga is:

When I do yoga, I feel:

Yoga Goals

Think about why you want to develop your yoga practice and what you hope to achieve. Plan out your 3 main yoga goals and break these down into the action steps you need to take to achieve each goal.

GOALS	ACTION STEPS
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

My Values

To understand what your values are and what is important to you, answer the questions in this worksheet.

What motivates you to get up in the morning?

What keeps you up at night?

Why do you live where you live?

Why do you do the work you do?

Why do you buy what you buy?

Why do you have the friends you do?

Why do you desire what you desire?

When are you at your happiest?

Yoga Questions

Consider your yoga practice and use this worksheet to generate some ideas. To help, ask yourself the following questions: What do I enjoy about yoga? What do I find challenging? How can I take my practice further?

MY YOGA PRACTICE

Conclusions and summary:

Yoga Goals

If there were no obstacles to my yoga practice, I would love to...

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

Yoga Goals



What is one key thing you want to achieve in your yoga practice at this moment?

What are the three areas you wish to develop in your practice?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you see as the real challenge in your yoga practice right now?

Imagine you've had the perfect yoga session. What outcomes make you most proud?

Yoga For Beginners



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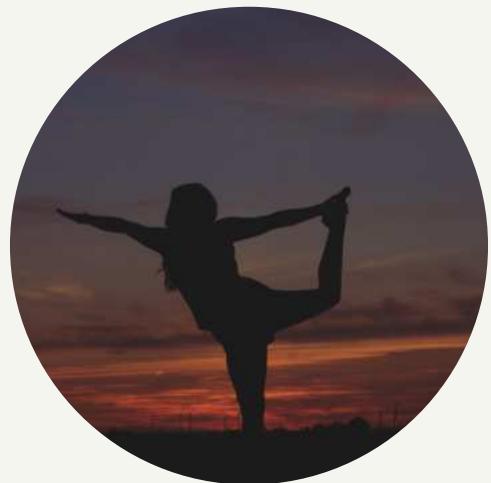
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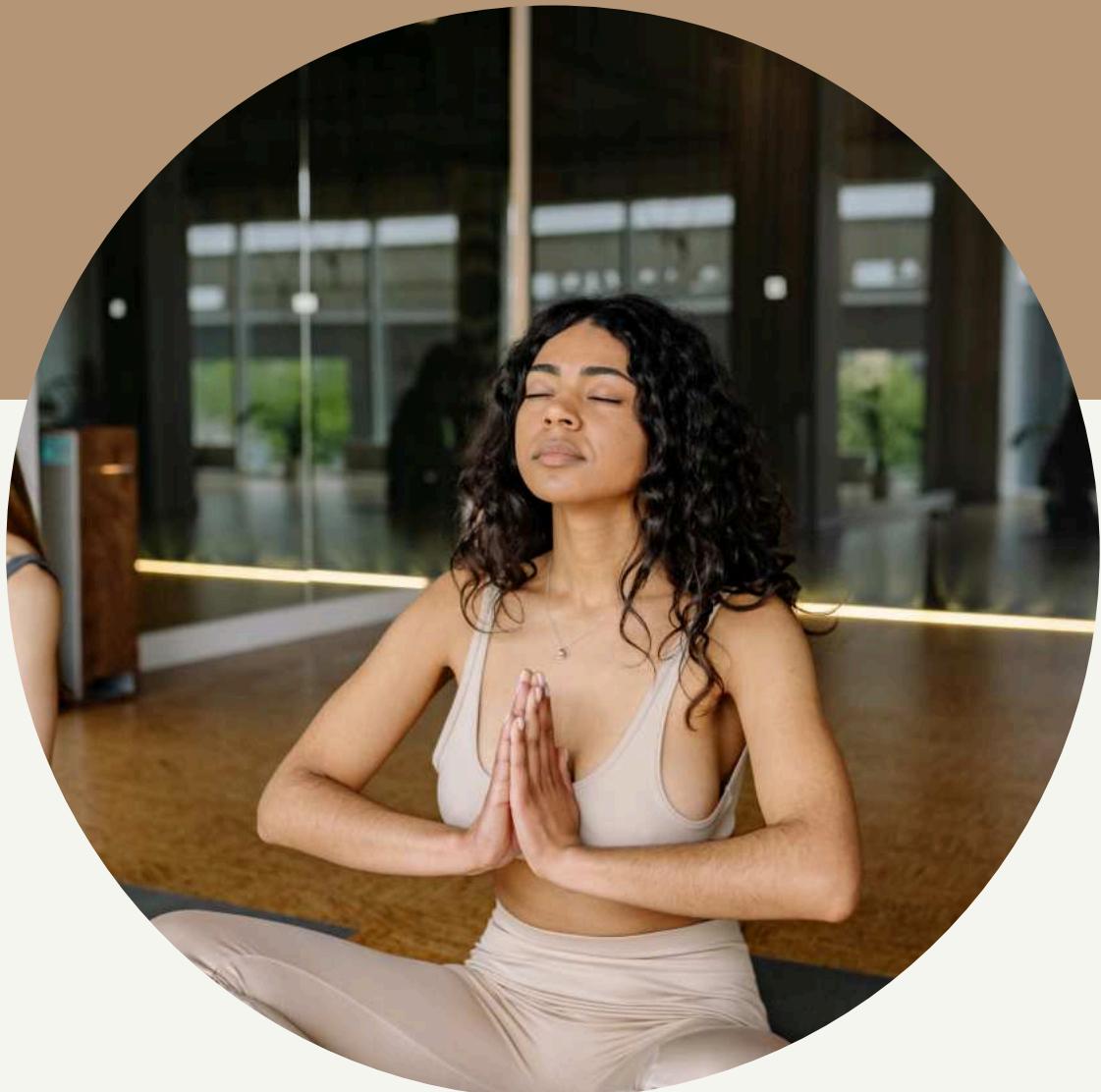
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YOGA AND
MEDITATION

01



INTRODUCTION





01 / INTRODUCTION

Yoga is something different to most people. It's quite diverse, and practitioners have different expectations when they start. That's perfectly okay. Whether your goal is greater enlightenment, a more toned and muscular body, or relief from disease, there's a yoga for you. This book will serve as a guide.

The philosophy of yoga has been around for 5,000 years. That's an undeniable staying power. Yoga is not just an 'exercise', it is a philosophy, a way of thinking

rather than a religion. In ancient India, the word *yoga* meant union. It refers to a union of the entire self – mind, body, and spirit.

This union is achieved through physical poses, frequently called *asanas*, although *asana* is just one of the many types of yoga. These poses are meant to heighten awareness of mind and body, which makes yoga a natural corollary to meditation.

Today's researchers are discovering the many benefits of yoga. While it



can increase spirituality, it also has the ability to heal many

ailments and diseases, especially stress, immune system disorders, and heart problems. It also provides increased flexibility, which can reverse the aging process.

The more vigorous yoga practices are considered cardiovascular exercises. Along with a proper diet, you will be able to lose weight. The gentler types of yoga do not have cardiovascular benefits, so remember to do additional exercises.

Why are people becoming interested in yoga? The most common reason is to improve flexibility and physical health. Besides the physical benefits, yoga also boosts the mental power and paves way to spiritual enlightenment. For most, it's the spiritual awakening that turns yoga into an important part of their lives. This is a gradual but wonderful development and opportunity for personal growth. The essence of yoga is always to become a better version of oneself.

02 /

CHAPTER 01 – WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF YOGA?





02/CHAPTER 01 – WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF YOGA?

People have been practicing yoga for thousands of years. While the original purpose was to elevate to a greater spiritual level, it became clear that yoga benefits the person as a whole. Modern scientific research has shown that the tremendous overall health benefits of a yoga lifestyle.

Yes, yoga does improve the body, but surprising scientific research has shown that it changes the brain, as well. It's about becoming a better version of yourself and

getting in touch with the real, authentic you as the brain becomes more uncluttered. It keeps us focused on the present. While yoga begins on the mat, it extends to our entire day as greater compassion and awareness becomes a part of our life.

Yoga won't provide untold riches, although the physical benefits are remarkable. The world is already filled with abundance, much of which we ignore. The real beauty of yoga is that it grounds us to the present, connecting us to the



abundance that is within our grasp. A better, more fulfilled life is within our reach when we let go and simply accept what is there.

Each yoga pose, which usually involves stretches, has its own purpose and benefit. The practitioner becomes aware of tension and learns to release it. Yoga poses are very specific, and perfection comes with practice, but it is not the ultimate goal. Yoga involves a lot of stretching, but, more importantly, it creates balance by increasing flexibility and strength. Whatever type of yoga you practice, your body and mind simply improve.

Yoga is extremely diverse and individual, which makes it important to work at your own level of comfort. Don't use the person next to you in class as a guide, or even the teacher. Work the poses in the best way for you. This isn't a speed contest, and you have nothing to prove. Yoga is a lifetime commitment, not a competition.

Even if you are not used to exercising, you can practice yoga. You may not be as flexible as the next person, but you will get there. Yoga is always a work in progress and never a competition. While it is a physical practice, yoga will inevitably touch on your spiritual side. It unifies mind and body to become one.

Research conducted throughout the 20th century has found a myriad of physical benefits to practicing yoga.

Relief from Stress

Our lives are filled with daily stressors, and we know that stress can cause tremendous damage to the body and mind. The boss wants to talk, your spouse is upset, the mortgage is overdue, and the kids want the keys to the car. Just another typical day.

Holding yoga poses, stretching muscles, being focused on the presents, and breathing deeply and slowly helps us achieve a state of greater relaxation and harmony. We are able to consciously choose our response to stress instead of being at its mercy. Remaining calm under difficult circumstances is a choice, and yoga can provide the tools.

Yoga and Pain Relief

Studies have proven that practicing yoga can provide tremendous relief for people suffering from multiple sclerosis, arthritis, and other chronic conditions. We'll discuss its amazing effect on the auto-immune system and cardio system at greater length in other chapters.

Yoga and Breathing

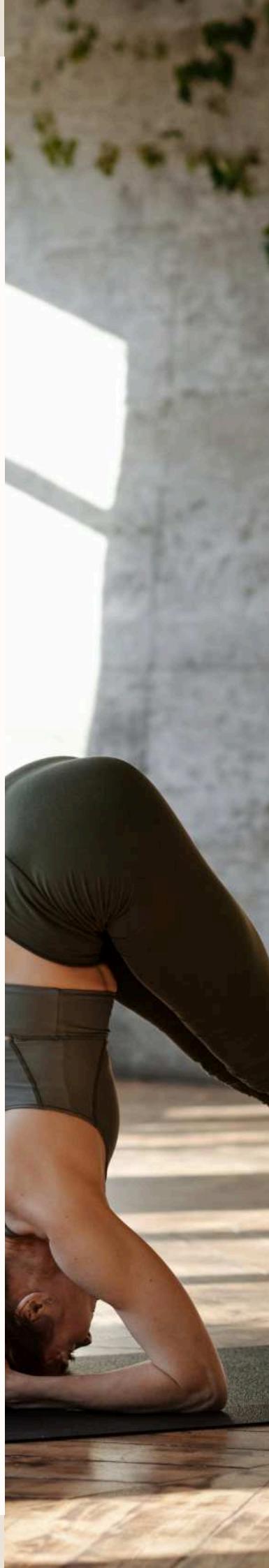
Yoga combines physical movements with breathing. Slower, deeper breathing can alleviate stress.

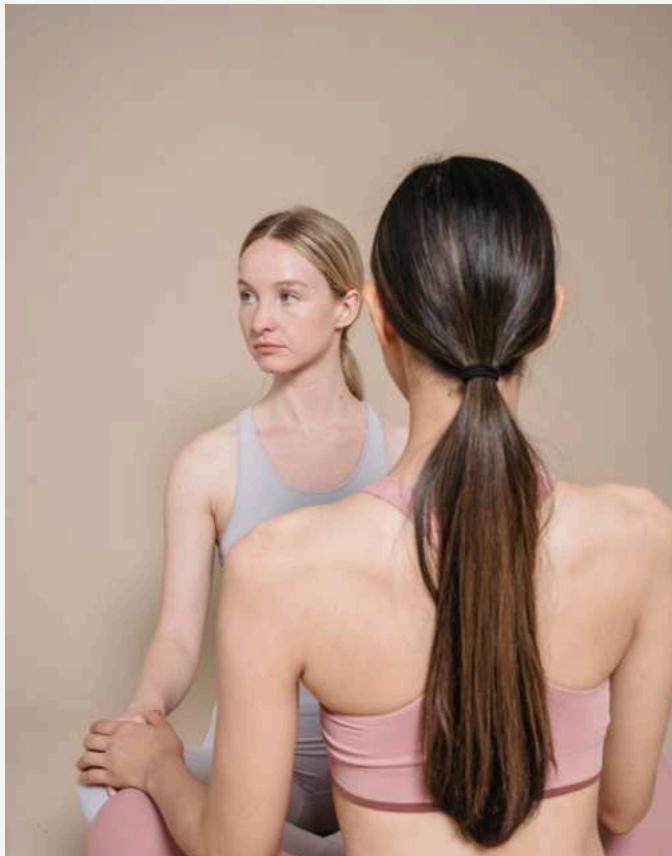
Yoga and Flexibility

Yoga involves a lot a stretching, which strengthens muscles. Since yoga impacts the entire body, flexibility and elasticity from head to toe. It also loosens tight, tense muscles and helps us become more relaxed.

Yoga and Weight Management

Yoga does not burn up as many calories as some other exercise regimes. However, it does increase body awareness. People who practice yoga become more aware of what they eat and the effect such food has upon their health.





This usually leads to better, healthier eating habits and a natural loss of unwanted weight.

Yoga and Circulation

If your blood isn't supplying your body and brain properly with oxygen, your health will suffer. You need proper circulation for the brain to function, energy, and the growth of cells. Sluggish circulation can cause nerve and tissue damage, blood clots, dizziness, among other problems.

The thorough stretching in most yoga poses will improve circulation. The Camel Pose described in this book is an excellent way to improve circulation.

Yoga and Cardio Health

For patients who have experienced heart surgery, depression and anxiety can be a natural result. Yoga can be helpful in managing this type of postoperative stress. It can also lower blood pressure, serving as a preventive heart-healthy measure. The specific heart benefits will be discussed in a separate chapter.

There's No Hurry – Take Your Time

These benefits will take time to achieve. Yoga is not a two-week miracle program. So, as you begin with your yoga sessions, allow sufficient time for the results to manifest themselves. You should see a huge difference in approximately two months. Whatever your reason for practicing yoga, you should notice an improvement in all aspects of your being.

03 /

CHAPTER 02 – THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF YOGA





03/ CHAPTER ANCIENT YOGA

Yoga has become quite trendy these days as practitioners in their yoga pants and mat head toward the popular yoga studios to attend their weekly yoga session. What many of these fashionable yogis probably are unaware of is the long history of yoga dating back to ancient times in India's and its spiritual roots.

Most of what we think of as yoga only dates back 150 years. While people today practice yoga for their health, its roots are entwined in rich spiritualism that

02 – THE HISTORY OF

took a lifetime to master. For ancient yogis, yoga was a way of life.

Mention of yoga first appeared around 1500 BC in Hindu literature. The first writings, in traditional Sanskrit, the term yoga, which means yoke, frequently refers to a dying warrior rising to heaven and reaching a higher power. The original concept of yoga was clearly to elevate those who deserved it to a higher level, to connect the individual to the universe as a whole.

For ancient Buddhists, yoga wasn't



even a specific discipline. It grew out of the desire to attain spiritual goals and controlling both the mind and the body to achieve this.

These spiritual leaders recognized that man is fallible, but always capable of improvement by changing dysfunctional thinking. They recognized the power of the mind to bring about inner peace and alleviate suffering by broadening individual consciousness and becoming open to new ideas. They already understood the basics of the mind/body connection.

Yoga, including meditation, was and still is a quest for knowledge. Ancient practitioners thought, correctly, as it turns out, that knowledge would lead to a higher level of consciousness and existence.

Old writings describe several levels of being, with increasing knowledge bringing the practitioner to the next, higher, level. It was viewed as a process which for many encompassed a lifetime of learning. Yoga, the physical part of gaining enlightenment, was to prepare the way to meditation, which was spiritual in nature. The physical side of yoga began to emerge around 500 A.D.

By the third century, yoga was an accepted Buddhist practice involving a spiritual quest through meditation. This is the classical period, where the writings Vyasa introduced the all-important Yoga Sutras, which lists yoga as a precondition for a higher existence. For several centuries, the practice of yoga became an accepted practice to attain important personal values, although it was still far from today's set of poses.

More meditative, it was intended to help "transcend" human suffering and rise above it. It was also used to broaden, or deepen, consciousness as a path to personal enlightenment. Yoga was seen as a means to overcome

destiny and regain control of the self. The beginning of training and controlling the mind is clearly emerging.

Up to the 15th century, while the West was in a state of constant strife and war, Eastern Buddhism focused on peace of mind. The difference between a Western and Eastern mindset is becoming more noticeable. By this time, the emphasis of yoga shifts from transcending pain to reaching a higher plane of existence. Man himself is to become a deity.

By the eighth century, hatha yoga, a mix of poses and meditation, came into practice. It is the beginning of "modern" yoga as we know today.

Modern Yoga

Yoga, the old spiritual quest of Buddhism, didn't reach the West until the last 19th century. This coincided with an interest in Indian culture as a whole due to the burgeoning spice trade.

Western culture became intrigued by the writings of Swami Vivekananda, a monk who traveled to Europe and introduced the intelligentsia to Buddhist spiritual writings, especially the 4th century Yoga Sutras, which involve clearing the mind of unwanted thoughts and learning to focus on one thing.

Yoga, as we know it today, became popular in the U.S. in the 1940s, when young Americans began to take yoga classes. By the 1980s, the known health benefits of yoga increased its popularity, although the practice was seen as more physical than spiritual by the majority of practitioners.





By the 21st century, the devotees of American yoga have increased from 4 million at the turn of the century to 20 million by 2011. This increase in popularity is mainly due to the increased scientific studies of the numerous benefits of yoga, especially the alleviation of stress. Whether spiritual or not, people want to increase their health. Many people, however, still seek both mental and physical elevation. Yoga offers both

While mastering the physical aspects of yoga is important, it is equally

crucial not to lose sight of the spiritual benefits. Yoga is more than posting adorable selfies on Instagram.

Thousands of years ago, yoga was a preparation for the spiritual enlightenment of meditation. It was intended to prepare and relax the body for meditative practice. It is important not to lose sight of that.

To achieve your spiritual side, keep in mind the Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga:

1. You have unlimited potential. The purpose of yoga is to reach a high level of consciousness.
2. The universe is filled with abundance. To receive, learn to give.
3. Understand the universal law of cause and effect, known as karma. Your actions, whether positive or negative, will be returned in equal measure.
4. Don't resist life's forces. Your desires will manifest themselves when you least resist.
5. Be clear on what your desires and intentions are.

6. Stop struggling and remain open to all opportunities that come your way.
7. Know what your true purpose in life is.

Meditation, which will be discussed in the final chapter of this book, will help you achieve the spiritual laws of yoga.

04

CHAPTER 03 - ESTABLISHING THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION WITH YOGA





04/ CHAPTER 03 - ESTABLISHING THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION WITH YOGA

The purpose of yoga has always been to connect the mind to the body. That is what the Buddhists had in mind thousands of years ago. Even then, it was clear that when the mind and body work as one, the self becomes healthier, more aware, and is able function at a higher level.

But how exactly are the mind and body connected? People who are aware of their thoughts and feelings are better able to cope with stress and life's adversities. They form better and healthier

relationships. Ultimately, they believe in their ability to succeed.

We all face setbacks. It's how we handle them that makes the difference.

Emotional wellbeing is rarely a constant, however. Unexpected events can lead to depression, anxiety, stress, and confusion.

Losing a job, physical injury, the death or injury of someone we love, or the end of a relationship can cause emotional upheaval. Even



good events, such as a new home, marriage, or new job can cause anxiety as we face the unknown.

When our mind experiences turmoil, the body immediately responds. As if you needed a reminder, the body is there to tell you that all is not well. The body does that in a number of ways, such as developing high blood pressure, an ulcer, insomnia, etc. These symptoms are all physical manifestations of an anxious mind. Whether we realize it or not, the mind and body work as a team.

So, where does yoga come into play?

As yoga increases our mental awareness, we become more aware of underlying emotions and thoughts. That allows us to express and acknowledge them rather than keeping them buried and allowing them to fester. Appropriately expressing negative emotions allows us to deal with them and put them behind us.

When we deal effectively with negativity, we are able to acknowledge the more positive aspects of our lives. Sometimes, we can become so overwhelmed, we no longer see anything good or positive, even if it is all around us. Yoga provides that necessary balance. Yes, work can be stressful, but we see that there is more to our lives than that. This is a healthy outlook that boosts the overall quality of our life when we need it.

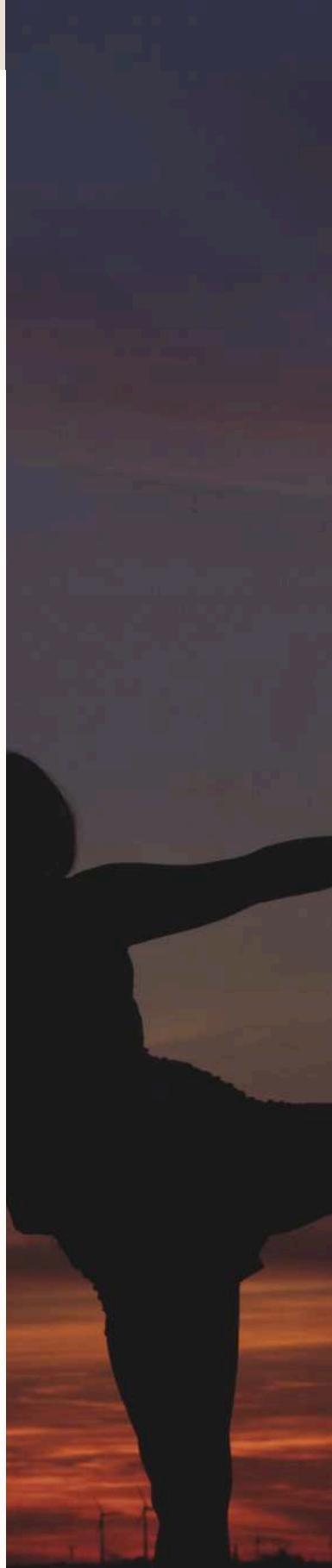
A healthy mind/body connection provides us with the ability to cope with adversity as we become more resilient. Resilience is a skill that can be learned and developed. It prevents us from being victims of circumstances and gives us greater control over our lives. We can strengthen our resilience through relaxation and developing a calmer outlook.

Both yoga and meditation are invaluable tools for taking greater control over our thoughts, feelings, and our life in general. When we are in control, we sleep better, eat healthier, and connect with others on a higher level.

Our emotional health invariably affects our immune system, as we will see in another chapter. A weakened immune system can leave the body vulnerable to colds, inflammations, and infections.

The myriad of ways that the mind impacts the body became clearer during the 20th century, when repeated studies reveal how stress and emotions can become inevitably linked and connected. Thankfully, modern physicians are taking a more integrated approach to their patients' health. More are recommending yoga and meditation not only for stress, but for cardiovascular diseases, all well.

Discuss the overall benefits of yoga with your doctor. Whenever the state of your mental and physical health, it can always be enhanced.



05

/ CHAPTER 04 – YOGA – STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY





05/CHAPTER 04 – YOGA – STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY

Strength training, usually in the form of lifting weights or Cross Fit, has been gaining popularity. Women especially are appreciating a more toned, muscled and strong body.

Increasing bodily strength is important to prevent osteoporosis and the natural loss of muscles as we age. Strong muscles help keep joints healthy and prevent injuries.

While the benefits of strength training are clear, some people

question whether practicing yoga counts toward increasing strength and muscles. This may be especially the case for athletic males, who view yoga as a "girlie" activity. But can yoga really build strength and muscles?

It depends on the type of yoga you practice. Certain types of yoga are deliberately gentle. Restorative Yoga falls into that category. This doesn't make them any less effective; it merely means more people, especially older ones, can enjoy yoga's benefits. As we've discussed, yoga is for everyone.



However, there are yoga exercises that are demanding and challenging and would be difficult for even a strong male. Poses such as Planks and Warrior require support of the entire body and will certainly develop muscles and strength. These poses strengthen the entire body, not just specific muscles that would get a workout during weightlifting. The poses can be done with small hand weights for maximum results. Thus, yoga can be better at building strength than some other forms of exercises.

Ashtanga and Vinyasas Yoga can increase strength through greater repetition of poses, especially in the upper body region and legs. In addition, holding poses for a longer period of time, such as up to two minutes per pose, is a terrific muscle enhancer. Just keep in mind it takes time to build that type of stamina.

But building muscles is an individual goal. How much muscle is enough? For maximum muscle-building, weights can certainly help bring about quicker results. Many people use both yoga and weightlifting for some dramatic bulking up.

Unlike weight training, yoga isn't specifically geared toward the physique. It is much more than exercise.

With weightlifting, you can build muscles indefinitely by simply adding additional weights. If you wish, you can build isolated muscles such as your thighs into the size of a tree trunk. With yoga, you build strength in a more balanced way as all muscles, big and small, are built up. The emphasis is on strength rather than bulk. Your body becomes more resilient and allows you to use that strength in all physical activities, such as lifting, twisting, and bending. Instead of a more muscular person, you become a stronger individual.

You can incorporate other exercises into your yoga program. But yoga itself, when practiced regularly, will continue to improve your body and add strength and flexibility.

Yoga stretches are widely known for improving flexibility. Flexibility and balance become especially important as we age and become vulnerable to injuries. Many people believe that you need to be flexible before starting yoga practice, but the opposite is true. You can begin yoga in any physical condition and keep improving your flexibility.

There are three specific areas of the body that are frequently tight: the hips, shoulders, and the hamstrings. We spend a lot of our time inactive and sitting, and these muscles can become quite inflexible through non-use.

Daily yoga stretches will increase your flexibility tremendously as you provide these muscle groups with a real workout. As always, don't stretch your muscles to the point of pain. Stretch to the limit of your own comfort, and you will soon see the results.

Now, let's discuss another muscle that can be inflexible, namely the brain. Yes, the brain is indeed a muscle. If you have rigid attitudes, such as that things should be done only one way, you are limiting your mental power. Perhaps your mind is frequently made up about certain issues, and you see no reason to explore them further. The purpose of yoga is to unleash your mental powers. It involves change in all areas of your life. Yoga is a huge four-letter word.

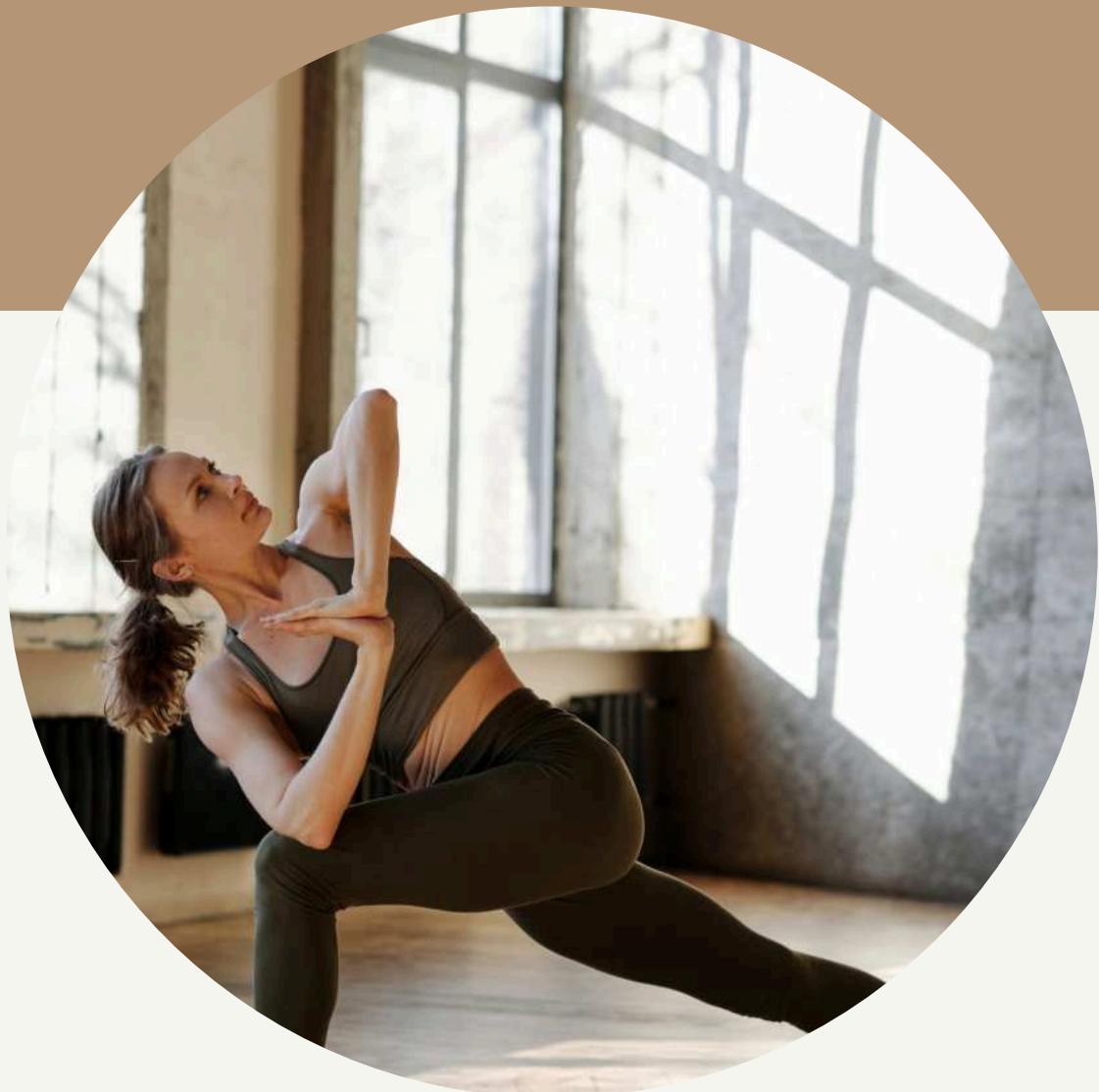


The combination of yoga and meditation open up the mind to new ideas and ways of doing things. It encourages curiosity. Many people hold on to old, traditional ideas because of fear. Yoga is meant to alleviate that fear and open up new, life-enhancing possibilities.

When it comes to yoga, you will soon enjoy a more flexible body, as well as a mind that becomes open, flexible, and curious.

06 /

CHAPTER 05 - MANAGING WEIGHT WITH YOGA





06/CHAPTER 05 - MANAGING WEIGHT WITH YOGA

It is a well-known fact that exercise especially the aerobic kind, has a positive effect on heart health. Heart disease is a major killer, as plaque in the arteries begins to block the natural flow of blood. More than 600,000 in the US die of heart disease, yet it is totally preventable. The major causes are smoking, obesity, a poor diet, and inactivity. A yoga lifestyle usually eliminates all four of these factors to ensure better cardio health.

Many people avoid the word

"exercise," imagining pumping madly in an aerobics class or jogging endlessly around a track. These exercises are certainly beneficial, but they aren't the only ones that can help us maintain a healthy heart and longer life.

Yoga, with its gentle yet challenging poses, can bring about the benefits of aerobic exercise in an easier way.

There have been numerous studies comparing yoga to no exercise at all and comparison yoga to regular aerobic exercises.



When compared to people who engaged in no physical exercise or exertion, practitioners of yoga showed clear and tremendous improvements in heart health. They lost weight and achieved significantly lower blood pressure. Their cholesterol level also improved.

These results were expected. The surprise came when people practicing yoga were compared to people who engaged in regular aerobics. There were no major differences between the two groups in weight loss, cholesterol level, or blood pressure. The yoga group achieved the same level of benefits as the aerobics group.

A group of independent researchers, the Cochrane Collaboration, confirmed the results, but indicated that the duration per week spent on practicing yoga affects the long-term. People who attend a weekly yoga class will enjoy fewer benefits than those who practice yoga several times a week or on a daily basis.

Many Americans suffer from atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart rhythm that can be caused by high blood pressure, stress, and excess weight. Like regular heart disease, atrial fibrillation, too, can be prevented.

A study at the University of Kansas used a group of 52 patients suffering from atrial fibrillation and had them engage in two weekly yoga sessions for several months. The results of the study found that the participants enjoyed an improve heart rhythm and a lessening of anxiety and blood pressure.

Recent evidence suggests that yoga, when practiced regularly, produces the same heart benefits as traditional aerobic exercises.

Transcendental meditation is a type of yoga meditation we will discuss in a further chapter. A study of the American Heart Association found that transcendental meditation can lower the risk of cardio death in almost half of the patients with heart problems.

Another study at the Medical College of Wisconsin assigned half of a group of patients with high blood pressure to a transcendental meditation group and had the other half taking blood pressure medication. The meditation group practiced 20 minutes a day for up to five years.

The study showed that almost half of the meditation group had a reduction in heart problems when compared to the group of medication.

Further studies are being conducted. But there is clear evidence that yoga has a significant positive impact on heart health.

Yoga and Weight Management

While there are quicker ways to lose weight, yoga can help you shed a few pounds.

Yoga doesn't burn the same number of calories as aerobic exercise. You'll burn around 150 calories doing an hour of yoga, which you'll burn over 300 doing an hour of walking.

But there's more to weight loss than just burning calories, though yoga does provide a healthy workout. There is another, subtler, influence, however.



Yoga increases awareness of our bodies and the food we use to fuel it. If your diet consists of burgers and chips, the enhanced mind/body connection will reinforce the toxicity of certain foods and make you reach for healthier, more life-affirming choices. Toxic food simply becomes less appealing. This means that most people will reach for a salad instead of a burger.

If you want to lose weight on your yoga regime, opt for the more strenuous types of yoga, such as Kundalini Yoga and Yin Yoga.

07

/ CHAPTER 06 –
DIFFERENT TYPES OF
YOGA





07 / CHAPTER 06 – DIFFERENT TYPES OF YOGA

There are so many different types of yoga disciplines, it can be confusing to pick one. Don't let the variety stop you from diving into the yoga pool. There are certain yoga types that are geared toward beginners, and these are your best option when learning about the movements.

Also, keep in mind that the teacher can make or break the experience. If you don't feel comfortable in a particular class, it may be the instructor rather than the yoga. Explore until you find your perfect yoga fit.

To begin yoga at home, you will need a mat, yoga blocks or towel for support, when needed, and a strap to use as a prop in certain bending poses.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha yoga is the most general type of yoga and perhaps the most difficult to define. Depending on the teacher, classes can be slow and easy, but some may be more strenuous. To be sure a particular Hatha class is suitable for you, visit a class as a guest before signing up.



Hatha yoga consists of gentle movements without a continuing flow between each pose. This makes it easy for beginners to learn the basics. It is extremely adaptable to individual needs and physical conditions and a great way to increase strength and flexibility while reducing the risk of injury.

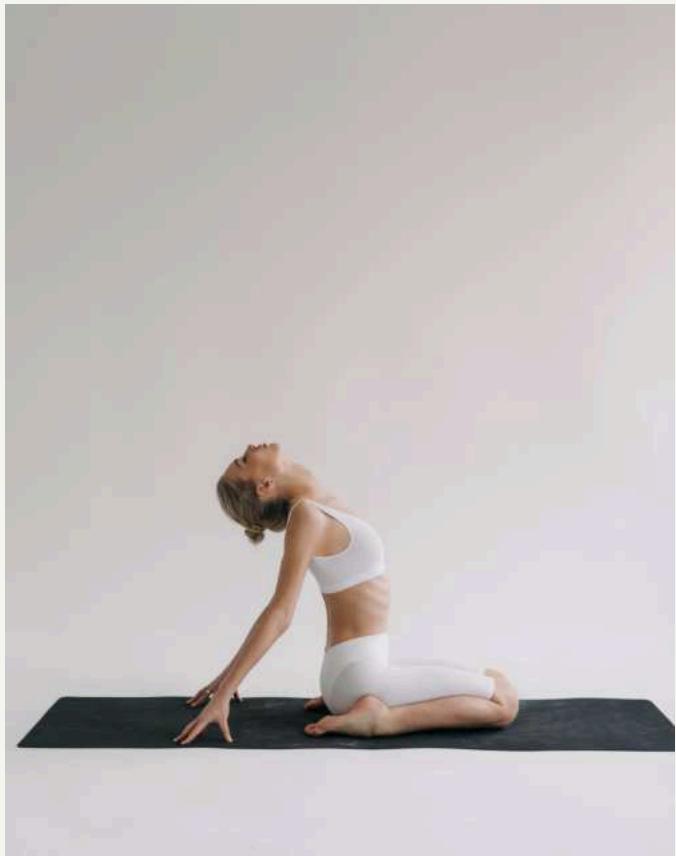
It is the best place to start and learn the basic poses before moving on to more arduous movements and positions. The focus is on holding a pose and strengthening balance. Hatha yoga is slow-moving, so if your goal is to move fast and sweat, it isn't the best option. The benefits of hatha yoga is a decrease in stress and blood pressure as the body learns to relax.

Vinyasa Yoga

Vinyasa yoga has a quicker pace than Hatha, and poses can rapidly flow into each other, rather like dance steps. Each movement is linked to an inhale and exhale, thus linking movement with breathing. The mind remains focused and in the present.

There are no strict sequences to poses, and teachers can "mix and match" to vary the routine. Therefore, if a particular Vinyasa class doesn't appeal to you, another might. Vinyasa yoga is less gentle than Hatha and pushes the boundaries of flexibility and strength. It provides a wonderful cardio workout, as your body is continuously moving, except when doing the restful Downward Dog. It is sure to work up a sweat. Relaxing music is frequently played in the background.

Like Hatha, Vinyasa is an excellent starting point for beginner-level yoga students.



Iyengar Yoga

Iyengar yoga is an extension of Hatha yoga specifically focused on bodily alignment and can be tremendously healing. It increases flexibility through slow stretching moves that are held for a period of time. These still moments have meditative qualities. It tones the muscles and calms the mind. Better alignment can strengthen muscles, help with pain, and improve posture.

Iyengar yoga involves the entire body and improves circulation and

digestion. With a better, healthier body, better lifestyle choices usually follow.

This form of yoga may use chairs, belts, or other props to improve bodily alignment. It is perfectly appropriate for beginners.

Ashtanga Yoga

Ashtanga Yoga is more structured than some of the other asanas. There are a series of movements, six in all, and each series must be mastered before moving on to the next.

Ashtanga Yoga is not for beginners. It challenges strength, endurance, and flexibility; therefore, it is best to begin Ashtanga Yoga after some familiarity with other yoga disciplines.

Ashtanga works the entire body, so results will come quickly. It does require commitment, and most practitioners of Ashtanga do the exercises every day.



Each series can take years to master. Patient people will love Ashtanga, because it requires repetition of the same poses. There is no variation until you reach the next level.

Bikram Yoga

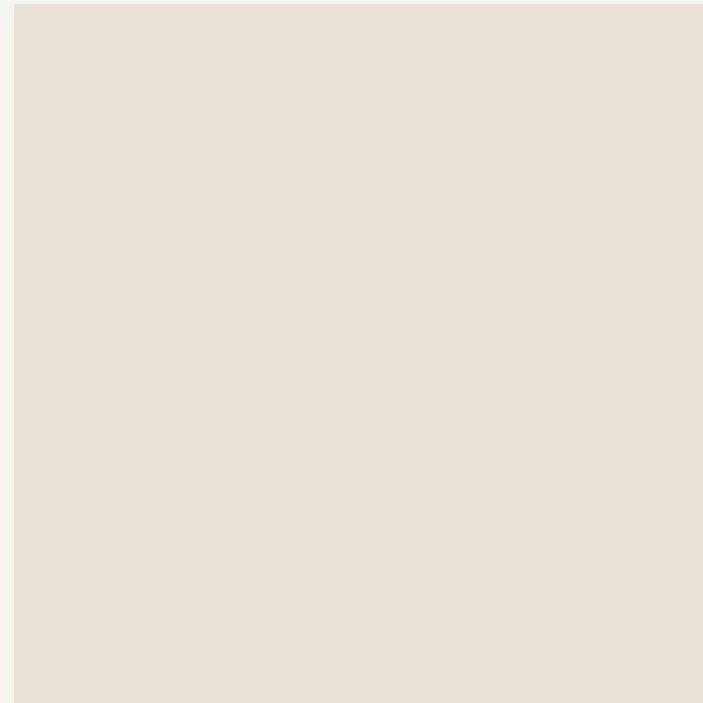
There are 26 poses to be completed in a structured sequence for each Bikram session, which last for 1 hour and a half. The twist to Bikram is that it is practiced in 105 degrees heat. You will sweat and will need to remain hydrated. The heat, of course, adds an additional challenge. It also adds benefits, such as ridding the body of toxins.

Hot Yoga

As the name implies, Hot Yoga is also performed in a room filled with high temperature. It differs from Bikram in that Hot Yoga is unstructured, without the 26 specific poses. This makes it suitable for beginners, but do consider the added challenge presented by the heat.

Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini uses meditation to energize the body. Its effects on the mind are extremely powerful as it increases awareness and strengthens your inner self to allow for a more authentic you. This harks back to yoga's beginnings in its quest for spiritual elevation. Kundalini Yoga blends movements with breathing and chants.



Yin Yoga

Yin Yoga combines the physical with the mental and is specifically designed to provide energy and calm a busy mind.

The benefits of regular practice are a sense of calm, reduction in stress, improved circulation and flexibility, and greater joint mobility. The principle behind Yin Yoga is the yin and yang concept of Taoism, which seeks to balance all opposites in nature.

The exercises are done on the floor and involved holding poses for a long period of time. This affects the lower body parts, specifically the hips, thighs, and spine. Poses may be held for five minutes or more.

In a world that assaults us with stimuli on an ongoing basis, the mind easily becomes overloaded and overwhelmed. This is considered "normal" to such an extent people pride themselves on being Type A personalities. They are filled with a sense of urgency to always be on the move. The body is unable to relax, and the mind cannot become quiet.

Yin Yoga brings balance back to mind and body. The long poses stretch the tissues and strengthen the body while allowing awareness into the mind. Much energy is expended in suppressing unwanted thoughts and emotions. Yin Yoga releases that energy.

Restorative Yoga

Restorative yoga restores your mind and body. It is easy, slow-moving, with poses that are held long to provide a state of utter relaxation. Props such as blocks may be used to help you hold on to your pose.

Restorative Yoga helps you slow down when everything around you becomes hectic. Think of it as an isle of tranquility in a crazy world.

08

/ CHAPTER 07 - ATTAINING BETTER IMMUNITY WITH YOGA POSES





08/CHAPTER 07 - ATTAINING BETTER IMMUNITY WITH YOGA POSES

A healthy immune system is the body's first defense against inflammation and diseases, from cancer to the flu. To function properly, your immune system needs to be in balance. That means that cells, organs, and tissues function together as an army, ready to defend the body against invaders, such as germs and other impurities. The immune system produces antibodies to help heal infections and rid the body of toxins.

Ever wonder why some people catch every bug that is making

the rounds, while others appear to be immune? Times of stress can render our immune system especially vulnerable. That is why the healthier our immune system, the quicker we can overcome the effects of bacteria, germs, and toxins. Healthy cells immediately come to our defense and attack those invaders. These helpful soldiers are the white blood cells.

Yoga is a natural relaxant and stress reliever and an excellent way to keep our immune system at an optimal level. It provides that necessary boost during times of



stress.

Scientists have been studying the connection between yoga and the immune system. A study in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine indicates that yoga can be helpful in lessening inflammation. In 15 separate trials, researchers tested whether the practice of yoga would affect inflammation. Most of the studies were done using easy, Hatha poses. The results of these studies showed a pattern that yoga did decrease inflammation and had a positive effect on the body.

The best yoga programs were those that lasted up to 12 weeks of hourly sessions. Consistent practice was the key to success.

Besides inflammation, there are specific asanas that can help release the irritation of the common cold, such as the Tortoise Pose.

Tortoise Pose

Sit with your buttocks and legs pressed into the floor. Stretch your legs open. Inhale, and lower your torso close to the floor as you exhale. Feel the stretch in your spine and inner thighs. Keep the pose for 10 breaths.

Place your hands beneath your knees and take hold of each leg.

Depending on how flexible you are, you can lean forward as far toward the floor as you are able, but don't force it. Inhale to expand your chest, and exhale as you fold your body downward.

For sinus congestion, the Downward Dog (see Poses) can help alleviate congestion. This downward-bending pose also helps with infections as it drains the lungs.



Camel Pose for Bronchitis

If you suffer from bronchial congestion, the Camel pose can open up the body to allow you breathe easier.

The Camel Pose will also help with neck and back pain. The Camel Pose can be strenuous on your back, so check with your doctor before getting started.

Start by stretching your spine by doing the Cobra Pose. This is an excellent warm-up and will prevent

too much strain on the spine. The Camel Pose is a difficult pose to master immediately, so take your time and work your way up to the full backward extension.

Remember, no yoga pose is ever forced. Kneel on a mat with hands on your hips. Tuck in your chin and press your tailbone toward the floor. Arch your pelvis forward. If needed, place your hands by your tailbone.

This is an easy, modified Camel Pose. Once you have mastered it, you can bring your arms back and grab your heels. Remain in the Camel Pose for 60 seconds, or until you begin to feel uncomfortable.

Whatever type of yoga you are currently practicing, it will help strengthen your immune system. The above forward and backward bends are simply extra helpful in giving your system a needed hand.



Yoga Poses

There are approximately 84 asanas, and this chapter will introduce you to a few of the basic ones. A few dos and don't before you start your journey:

- Do wear comfortable clothes.
- Don't practice asanas on a full stomach.
- Don't force any poses to the point of pain. Yoga is painless and should feel comfortable. Your flexibility and strength will improve with practice.

Mountain Pose

This is your starting point for all standing poses. It may look easy, as if you're simply standing there, but it is intended to make you feel grounded.

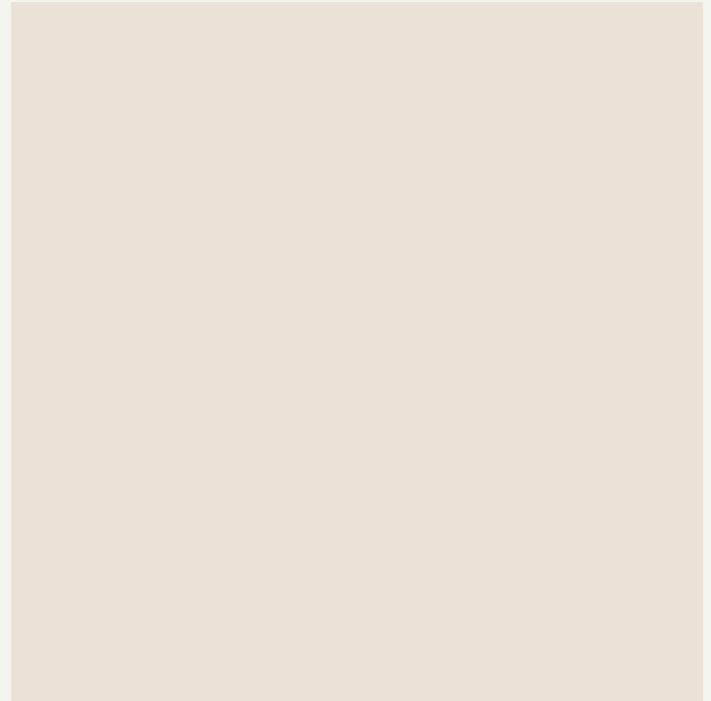
Stand straight with your feet naturally apart. Press all ten toes into the ground. Raise your kneecaps and inner thighs for an upward lift. Tuck in your stomach and raise your chest. Keep your shoulders down.

Hold the palm of your hands toward your body. Inhale and feel your chest rise up further. Hold the pose for 5 seconds.

Cat Pose

This is one of yoga's most popular poses. Get down on your hands and knees, making sure your knees are aligned with your shoulders. Keep your head neutral.

Exhale and raise your spine up and



your head down. Inhale and lower your spine and raise your head to the ceiling. Do this several times.

Downward Dog

Another favorite animal pose among yoga enthusiasts, this pose provides a wonderful stretch.

Go down on your hands and knees and keep your hands flat on the floor.

Inhale and raise your knees up. Your heels will lift. Lift your tailbone up toward the ceiling.

During the exhale, lower your heels to the floor and straighten the knees until your legs are straight. Keep your arms firm as you straighten them.

Warrior I Pose

Exhale and spread your feet about 4 feet apart. Lift your arms until they are perpendicular to the floor.

Shift the left foot 60 degrees to the right and the right foot 90 degrees to the right. The heels should be aligned.

Exhale and bend the right knee over the right ankle. With practice, your right thigh will be parallel to the floor.

Raise the ribcage and press down on your left foot. You should feel the stretch up the back of your left leg to your belly. Bring the palms of your hands together.

Remain in this pose for 30 seconds. Inhale, push the back heel into the floor and reach up and straighten the right knee.

Take a deep breath and reverse the legs and repeat the exercise.

Extended Puppy Pose

This pose stretches the spine as it soothes the mind. Get on your hands and knees. Move your hands forward and curl toes under.

Exhale and bring your buttocks back to your heels. Keep your arms stretch forward while keeping your elbows off the ground.

With your buttocks above your heels, lower your forehead to the floor. Feel your spine stretch. Breathe into your spine and hold the pose for 30 seconds.

Triangle

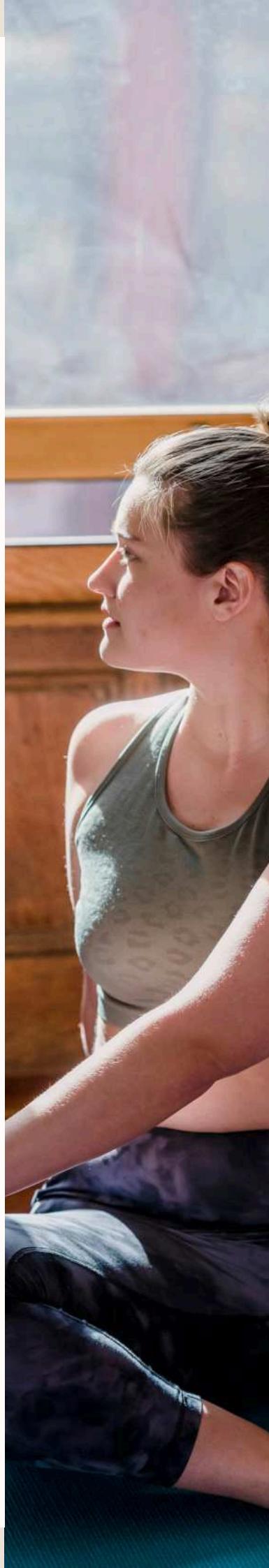
The Triangle stretches and tones the entire body. Stand with your feet far apart. Lift both arms to shoulder height.

Turn the right foot out by 90 degrees and the other foot in by 45 degrees. Lower your right hand to your knee, or if you are able, touch your ankle. Raise your other hand to the ceiling.

Hold the pose for 8 breaths, then repeat the exercise with the other side.

Cobra

Lay on the floor with your face down. Your legs are stretched behind without touching. Rest your hands palms down beneath your shoulder while your fingers are pointing forward.





Inhale as you pull your chest and head upward as your arms straighten and your hands keep pressing into the floor. As you raise your chest, hold your shoulders back.

Don't force any lift that doesn't come naturally.

Hold the Cobra Pose for up to 30 seconds.

Tree Pose

The Tree Pose helps achieve and maintain balance while standing on

one foot. This is a great asana for beginners.

Start by standing with your feet together. Raise your right foot as high as you can, to the upper left thigh. Lift your hands and press the palms together. Keep looking ahead while maintaining your balance.

Plank Pose

Move to the Plank Pose from the Downward Dog. Inhale and lift your torso forward until your elbows are on the floor.

Press your lower arms into the floor and gaze at the floor.

Hold the Plank Pose for 30 seconds and work up to 1 minute. This pose is designed to build strength. Keep breathing and make sure your shoulders are relaxed.

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CHAPTER 08 - HOW TO GET STARTED DOING YOGA?





09/CHAPTER 08 - HOW TO GET STARTED DOING YOGA?

As you start your yoga journey, it is necessary to keep in mind how important your mental attitude is for success. Bodily agility and flexibility will come with practice. But to begin practicing, you need the correct mindset.

For a beginner, it can be very confusing. Just picking out the right yoga outfit can be a headache! Then, how do you decide which yoga practice is the best one for you?

So, start by relaxing and consider the following your roadmap to

successful yoga practice:

Rid Yourself of Expectations

If you have viewed pictures of yoga poses and have decided that you could never achieve that type of agility, keep in mind that it undoubtedly took years, perhaps decades, for the model to get to that level. He or she was specifically chosen for his or her expertise.

Yoga is not about achieving the perfect pose. It's all about improved breathing and alignment. One step at a time, and the rest will follow. If you can't touch your toes, touch



your knees, instead. Toss any expectations you may have and start with an open mind. Yoga is non-judgmental; it is not a competition. Although with practice, you will naturally improve.

Age and body shape are mental limitations and have no effect on your ability to begin yoga practice. If you are physically unable to do a particular pose, there are dozen other poses you can master.

Find the Right Teacher

As you've probably figured out in high school and college, the right teacher can make a huge difference in any class. If you don't feel motivated and inspired by your yoga class, perhaps the teacher is wrong for you. This doesn't mean the teacher is bad in any way, but he or she is not helping you meet your goals.

Consider whether the teacher is teaching things that you need to learn. Regardless how good the teacher is, if he or she isn't helping you meet your needs, look for another one. Your best friend may rave about her Hot Yoga class, but if this isn't for you, you need to keep looking for another class. Perhaps you want something less physical and more spiritual. There are plenty of yoga teachers out there, and one will be just right for you.

Are you moving toward your goal? A good teacher will guide you step by step along the journey. If you feel at a standstill, perhaps the teacher is not for you.

Can you ask questions? A good yoga teacher is available before and after class for his or her students and will listen and address individual concerns. If your teacher is not approachable, find one who is.



Yoga has become so trendy, people are actually fretting about which designer outfit is best and what color mat they should buy.

Do you really need \$125 Dior pants to attain enlightenment? Wear whatever feels comfortable. And don't compare yourself to anyone else. Yoga is a personal journey. As has been stated in this book before, it is not a competition.

All you need for yoga is a simple pair of leggings, shorts, tank top, or

Don't hesitate to ask your teacher about his or her training or philosophy. The best type of teacher is someone who views yoga as a continuous workin-progress and is still studying with his or her own teacher.

It's the Yoga, Not the Outfit

Do you know one of the major reasons people don't go or stop going to the gym? They feel self-conscious among a group of perfect bodies.





T-shirt. Seriously, you're not trying to make a fashion statement. The only thing you need to keep in mind is comfort. Special outfits are available for Hot Yoga.

You'll want a yoga mat that lasts, so do choose a quality mat. It will be an excellent investment.

Yoga Classes

Some yoga classes can cost up to \$20.00. This can add up, but it shouldn't be a deterrent to getting started. There are ways to practice

yoga on a budget.

The local YMCA, gyms, and some community centers frequently offer yoga classes at low rates. During warm weather, yoga groups may meet at local parks.

When signing up for classes, buy in bulk. Signing up for 20 classes at a time instead for individual classes may get you a discounted rate.

Some yoga studios rent mats and water bottles. They may only charge a dollar or so, but the extra expense can add up. Bring your own mat and bottled water from home.

Some yoga studios offer "Karma Yoga" classes. These classes are free in exchange for doing some work at the studio, such as manning the front desk and cleaning up after a class. If cost is a concern, don't hesitate to ask about



this option. Some studios will be happy to trade a class for a bit of service rendered.

The Best Time to Practice Yoga

A handy excuse not to get started with yoga practice is time. The fact is, we are all busy. We all have the same 24-hour day. If we intend to accomplish something, we need to *make* time.

Traditional yoga involves sunrise or sunset. But using any time for yoga is better than no yoga at all, although practicing yoga on a full stomach is not a good idea. Get up an hour earlier than usual and do your asanas before you do anything else. It energizes and activates your body and mind in the best possible way. The physical poses get your body going, while the breathing clears the mind.

Yoga Intentions

Some yoga teachers ask you to set your intentions at the start of the program. What exactly does that mean?

Setting an intention is not needed for you to enjoy the benefits of your yoga sessions. But it can take them to a higher level.

Setting your yoga intention brings yoga into your daily life. Yoga doesn't stop when the asanas are done. They are supposed to be the beginning of your spiritual

journey, not the end. Yoga was originally developed as a spiritual quest. The rest simply followed.

Intentions clarify your purpose in practicing yoga. It focuses on a personal quality that you wish to improve or enhance.

Perhaps you hope for greater patience, awareness, or compassion toward others. Maybe you wish to let go of past hurts. Make that real in your mind.

Your intentions are the bridge between your poses and the rest of your life. Yoga is not like walking out of the gym and forgetting about it until the next class. The mental practice should become a part of your daily life. You will set your mind to make it real by keeping your intentions in focus. That is genuine spiritual elevation.

Before You Begin, Talk to Your Doctor

It's true that anyone can practice yoga. However, you should discuss any possible limitations with your doctor before getting started. This won't prevent you from doing yoga, but it might simply limit a few movements to prevent injury. Your doctor might also have some ideas about which type of yoga is best for you. Having a doctor who is knowledgeable and supportive of yoga is a tremendous asset.

Slow and Easy Does It

If yoga is a new experience for you, it is natural to be excited and jump right in. But the goal of yoga is not who can do the most poses in the least amount of time. Yoga is a slow and deliberate process. Each session should be devoted to making poses easier. Work at your own level of comfort. It cannot be stressed enough that yoga is non-competitive.

If certain poses are more difficult than others, simply practice them more

until they become easier. There is no time limit for mastering yoga poses. When poses become easier, go a bit beyond your comfort zone to reach the next level, but never to the point of physical discomfort.

Begin at Your Own Starting Point

Joining a new yoga class, where everyone else seems to know what they are doing, can be intimidating. But, that is the case when you begin any new endeavor.

Regardless of anyone else, you are your own starting point. It is entirely irrelevant that everyone else is able to balance on one leg for 60 seconds, while you keep tipping over. Instead of fretting, enjoy the progress as you keep improving. Savor who you are every step along the way. Self-acceptance is the essence of enlightenment.

The spiritual side of yoga encourages compassion. Start with yourself.



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CHAPTER 09 - PREVENTING INJURIES





10 / CHAPTER 09 - PREVENTING INJURIES

Practicing yoga is as safe as walking. That being said, injuries are still possible, and you should take care to avoid them.

Start by following a few basic rules. Don't practice yoga on a full stomach and avoid alcohol. Remain hydrated at all times.

Every yoga class should begin with warm-up exercises. If yours does not, look into another class. As we've discussed, the right teacher makes a tremendous difference and can reduce your chances of injury. Certified

teachers undergo up to 500 hours of training to qualify for certification. Make sure you are dealing with a qualified teacher.

Don't try to do poses for which you aren't ready. This can cause severe muscle strain. Attempting poses for which you are unprepared is one of the leading causes of yoga injuries. Learn your body's limitations and respect them. You make the decision how far to stretch, not your teacher.

You may be feeling more agile on certain days than others. If you are



having a bad day, accept it and don't attempt difficult poses that may have been possible at other times. Listen to your body.

Certain areas of the body, such as neck, lower back, knees and hamstrings are particularly vulnerable to injuries. Take care with any poses involving those body parts.

It is easy to become lightheaded when changing poses, so be sure to remain hydrated at all times.

Most yoga poses can be modified by using blocks or towels. Don't hesitate to use these modifications until your body is able to create the poses more effortlessly.

Don't begin yoga by jumping into risky poses, such as a headstand. This can cause serious neck injury. Work your way up to the more difficult poses.

11

CHAPTER 10 – YOGA
AND MEDITATION





11 / CHAPTER 10 – YOGA AND MEDITATION

Yoga is the bridge between meditation and spirituality. The original Buddhists used yoga as a means to prepare for meditation. Meditation, like yoga itself, is secular. It can be practiced by anyone. The purpose is to quiet loud mental chatter and calm the mind.

Benefits of Meditation

1. Meditation allows you to become more aware of your inner and outer life. You start to notice emotions and thoughts that you may have previously denied.

2. It provides insight to improve your relationships.
3. Being aware helps you act in the moment instead of acting out of habit. Negative emotions can have you act in ways that are harmful, even when you are unaware of the reason for your behavior. When you become aware of these feelings, you can deal with them in a positive way.
4. Meditation allows you to be less critical of yourself and others.
5. Meditation keeps you from acting on random emotions and lets you analyze facts before taking action.



6. Meditation reduces stress and anxiety.
7. Meditation helps you adapt to changing circumstances.

How Does Meditation Work?

Much research has been done on meditation for the past decades. Physically, meditation lowers our blood pressure and calms our nervous system. When we meditate, our heart rate and breathing slow down.

Through greater awareness, meditation allows us to change the way we think about past experiences. If you were continuously put down as a child, you began to accept it as normal. As an adult, those same feelings are still deep within you. You expect to be put down, even if there is no reason for such expectation. Regular meditation can change that negativity to allow you to accept more positive thoughts and emotions.

Studies have revealed that meditation can actually change our brain structure. People who meditate have enhanced areas dedicated to awareness and focus. A study at Harvard University has shown that while age can diminish certain areas of the brain, regular meditators retain the brain capacity of someone decades younger. For anyone seeking a higher level of existence, meditation clearly has much to offer.

Another Harvard study showed that with regular meditation, areas of the brain that deal with fear and anxiety were reduced, while areas involving empathy and compassion became enlarged. Changing how our brain reacts is the ultimate in taking control of our lives.

How to Start Meditating

Like yoga, meditation requires commitment. It is an ongoing process. The more we meditate, the better we get, and there are no limits to how well



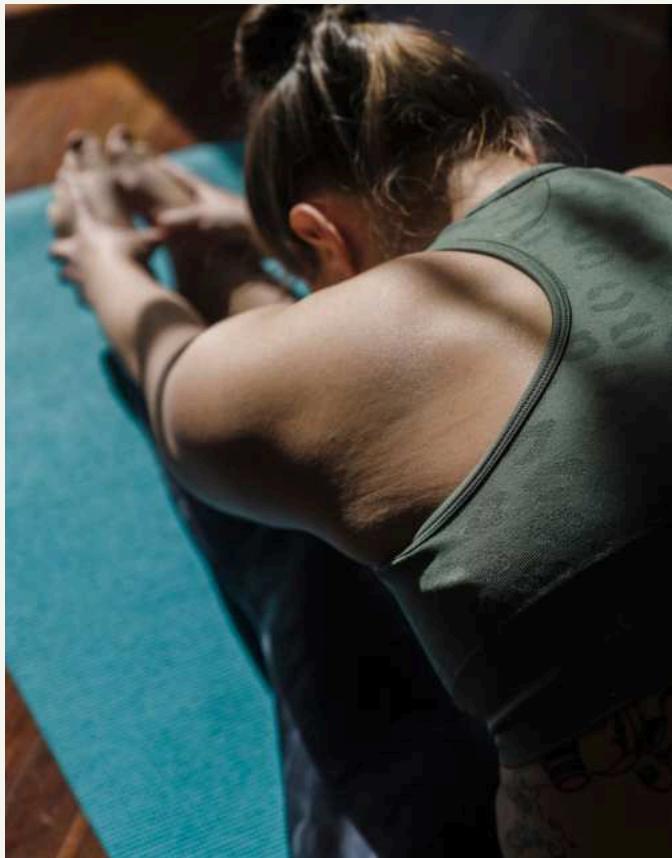
up to half an hour or forty-five minutes.

Try to meditate at the same time every day so that it becomes a daily habit. Find a comfortable place where you won't be disturbed. Meditating after getting up in the morning can get your day started on a positive note; however, meditating before going to bed can help you sleep better. Of course, there is no reason you can't meditate during both times of the day.

we are able to meditate. Ancient and current Buddhist spend a lifetime on meditation and self-empowerment.

Meditation requires a quiet place. Most people close their eyes and focus on their breathing, noticing every inhale and exhale. While other thoughts may intrude, they are simply acknowledged and set aside in a non-judgmental way. Start with just a few minutes – it is surprisingly difficult to sit quietly for any length of time because we are used to being constantly active. Work your way up





Finding Time to Meditate

Claiming not to have enough time is simply an excuse not to get started. You don't own time; you make it by getting up half an hour earlier in the morning. If you have your own office, close the door during lunchtime and use the hour, or part of it, for meditating. Do you spend a lot of time on social media? Limit your time and you've bought yourself at least an hour or two every day.

Mindful Meditation

One of the most useful types of

meditations is mindful meditation. It brings greater awareness to our thought and emotions. Many people are chained to negative thoughts, frequently about occurrences from years past. No matter how much time has passed, these emotions can still control our actions.

Mindful meditation allows us to acknowledge those negative feelings, then put them aside so that they no longer have the power to control us.

Mindful meditation is based on one critical axiom that cannot be overstated:

You Are Not Your Thoughts.

Mindful meditation couldn't easier. If you can breathe, you can meditate. Simply follow a few simple steps and enjoy the relaxing benefits.

Find a quiet place, preferably with natural light. Ensure that you will not be disturbed. If you can find a peaceful place outdoors, it would be ideal.



A good amount of time to set aside for meditation is half an hour, but you can start with just five minutes and increase your time gradually. Like yoga, it should be easy and not painful or uncomfortable.

Wear comfortable clothing. You don't want anything tight disrupting your meditative flow.

It is helpful to have a timer set to keep you from glancing at your watch.

You can use a chair or sit on the floor using cushions. If on the floor, cross your legs in a comfortable lotus position, which is the traditional Buddhist meditating stance. If you are sitting on a chair, have your feet touch the floor or use blocks on which to rest your feet.

Your torso should be straight, but not stiff. Rest your hands on your thighs. You should feel comfortably at rest.

Most people prefer meditating with their eyes closed as it removes distractions. But if you prefer, you can leave them open.

Next, just relax. Gradually begin to focus on your breathing as you inhale and exhale deeply. Notice how the air feels going in and going out. Feel the rise and fall of your chest.

It is natural for your focus to

jwander as other thoughts enter your mind. There is no reason to get upset and pretend these thoughts aren't there. Acknowledge them and then return your focus to your breathing.

If your mind wanders a great deal, simply observe what is happening in a non-critical way. Don't force them away, merely pay attention to what is happening.

One way to increase your focus is by counting. Inhale, count 1, exhale, count 2 ... up to twenty. Then count in reverse.

Remain still for a few minutes after you have finished meditating. Notice how you feel, your thoughts, and emotions. Become an observer, not a critic.

Meditation is as easy as this, yet it can bring about powerful changes. When practiced with yoga, you will notice your mind and body working in natural harmony.

12 /

CONCLUSION





12 / CONCLUSION

People have been practicing yoga for thousands of years, and it is still attracting new advocates, especially those in the medical profession. There is no doubt that it has a lot to offer as we attempt to reach a higher level of existence.

1. Yoga is not a religious practice. Nevertheless, it does put us in touch with our spiritual essence. The original Buddhist yogis practiced yoga to increase enlightenment and enhance their understanding of the world around them. Yoga was a

preparation to meditation. The origin of yoga was far more spiritual than it is today, but it still enhances our spiritual self.

2. Yoga improves our immune system, heart rate, cardio health, circulation, and breathing. It reduces stress, anxiety and enhances flexibility and muscle tone. The benefits of yoga can reduce the effects of aging both physically and mentally.

3. There are many different types of yoga, some easy and gentle, while others are extremely demanding.



They all provide benefits, but we should choose the yoga that is best for us.

4. Nothing about yoga should be painful or forced. If you feel pain or discomfort during yoga practice, talk to your teacher. You are either doing the exercise incorrectly, or you are in the wrong class. There are many classes from which to choose, so you never have to settle for one that makes you feel uncomfortable.

5. Yoga poses affect our entire body as they stretch our muscles to the limit. Unlike other exercises, which may focus only on certain body parts, yoga poses involve the body as a whole. That is why many consider yoga superior to aerobics or weightlifting. Of course, aerobics and weights can be practiced in conjunction with yoga for optimal physical benefits.

6. Yoga connects the mind with the body to create one functioning unit. We are well aware of how the mind can affect the body and our overall health. Negative thoughts can cause serious diseases and inflammations, such as arthritis. The purpose of yoga is to clear the mind of negativity and bring optimal health back to the body. Never forget that the mind and body work together.

Use the following rules as the best way to approach your yoga sessions:

■ Everyone has his or her own starting point, so don't worry about weight, age or flexibility. Your poses will improve with practice, but it should never be a competition with the rest of the class.

■ Finding the right teacher will make a big difference. A good teacher should answer questions and never force poses that are beyond the student's capability. If this is your experience, find another teacher.

- Many people begin yoga with certain expectations. However, everyone is different. You may never be able to do a headstand, while the rest of the class appears to do so with ease. That is perfectly okay. The only rule in yoga is to work at your own level of comfort. Nothing should ever be forced.
- Start slowly. People practice yoga for decades and are still striving for perfection. There is no perfect yoga pose. There is only you, your body, and your mind reaching ever-higher levels.
- Before you begin a yoga class, check with your doctor. Yoga movements are safe, and injuries are rare, but you still want to ensure that there is nothing to prevent you from practicing yoga safely.
- Meditation is an important part of yoga. As we have discussed, ancient yogis used yoga to prepare the body for their meditative practices. To get the full physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of yoga, make meditation a part of your life.

Yoga can add much to your life and can help you become a better version of yourself.