

ROCKET YOGA

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Rocket Yoga is a dynamic, playful practice derived from Ashtanga that combines traditional sequences with modifications and variations, creating an accessible yet challenging flow that builds strength, increases flexibility, and encourages practitioners to progress at their own pace while maintaining a sense of freedom and fun.

OVERVIEW

STYLE | Fast-paced, uplifting, and playful; rooted in Ashtanga with creative modifications

STRUCTURE | Combines structured Ashtanga series with added arm balances, inversions, and freedom to modify

BREATH | Ujjayi breath anchors the flow and supports internal energy

FLOW | Fluid and energetic; sequences move quickly but allow for personal expression

PACE | Fast and vibrant; strong focus on building heat and momentum

FOCUS | Strength, flexibility, inversions, playfulness, and breaking through limits

TEACHER ROLE | Energetic facilitator who invites play, progress, and confidence in flight

VIBE | Bold, fun, and liberating; a rebel's approach to disciplined practice

DESCRIPTION

Rocket Yoga: Break the Rules, Fly High

Rocket Yoga is the renegade cousin of traditional Ashtanga. Created by Larry Schultz in the 1980s for the Grateful Dead's tour crew, Rocket Yoga takes the structure of Ashtanga's Primary and Intermediate Series and infuses it with energy, accessibility, and joy.

Where Ashtanga can be strict and hierarchical, Rocket Yoga says:

"You are the authority on your practice."

This high-energy flow makes challenging postures (like arm balances and inversions) accessible to everyone by allowing modifications, playfulness, and a healthy dose of rebellion.

Origins of Rocket Yoga

Rocket Yoga was created by Larry Schultz, a devoted student of Pattabhi Jois, who sought to make Ashtanga more accessible and exciting. Schultz took the traditional sequences and:

- Added modifications to make them safer and more inclusive
- Reordered postures to increase strength and flexibility
- Encouraged personal expression and experimentation

The name "Rocket" comes from Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead, who said: "It gets you there faster."

Style and Structure

Style

Rocket Yoga is:

- Structured yet playful
- Strength-focused and inversion-heavy
- Rooted in Ashtanga discipline, but flexible in spirit
- An invitation to try things, fall, and fly

Structure

Rocket Yoga has three main sequences, drawing from the Ashtanga Primary and Intermediate series:

- Rocket I (targets lower body and core; based on Primary Series)
- Rocket II (targets upper body and backbends; based on Intermediate Series)
- Rocket III (a mix of both; sometimes called “Happy Hour Rocket”)

Each class typically includes:

- Opening sun salutations (A & B)
- Standing postures
- Seated forward folds and twists
- Arm balances and inversions (crow, handstand, forearm stand)
- Backbends
- Finishing sequence + Savasana

In true Rocket fashion, modifications and improvisation are welcomed throughout.

Breath and Flow

Breath

As with Ashtanga, Ujjayi breath is essential. It supports:

- Internal rhythm and focus
- Energy flow (prana)
- Endurance and stability

Breath becomes the metronome of movement, guiding the body's dance with grace and control.

Flow

Flow is:

- Fast, hot, and freeing
- Encourages persistence over perfection
- Prioritizes continuous movement, transitions, and play
- Invites students to pause, skip, or modify without guilt

Unlike rigid styles, Rocket is a choose-your-own-adventure with fire.

Pace, Focus, and Teacher Role

Pace

Rocket Yoga is known for its energetic, brisk pace:

- Postures are often held briefly before flowing to the next
- The tempo builds internal heat quickly
- Classes move through sequences with vitality and drive

Focus

The focus is on:

- Building strength and flexibility simultaneously
- Arm balances, inversions, and transitions
- Letting go of ego and embracing effort and play
- Encouraging courage, experimentation, and joy

Teacher Role

Rocket teachers are:

- Empowering, motivating, and real
- Offer guidance, but invite autonomy and exploration
- Normalize “falling out” and “trying again”
- Create a non-dogmatic space where challenge meets laughter

Vibe and Community

The vibe in Rocket Yoga is:

- Playful and rebellious
- Fierce and supportive
- Inclusive of all levels
- Often set to upbeat music that matches the energy

The community is usually:

- Adventurous and lighthearted
- Full of people who love to move, fly, and fall with grace
- Connected through a shared love of personal growth and freedom

Benefits of Rocket Yoga

Physical Benefits

- Increased upper-body and core strength
- Greater balance, mobility, and flexibility
- Improved coordination and body awareness
- Stronger arm balances and inversion skills
- Detoxification and cardiovascular conditioning

Mental and Emotional Benefits

- Boosted confidence and sense of play
- Increased mental resilience and courage
- Release of perfectionism and ego
- Enhanced body-mind connection
- Lightheartedness and joy

Energetic and Subtle Benefits

- Powerful activation of Manipura (solar plexus) for personal power
- Balance of root and crown energies (earth and air)
- Rewiring of fear patterns through upside-down work
- Liberation of creative energy and expressive flow

Who Is Rocket Yoga For?

Rocket Yoga is ideal for:

- Practitioners who love inversions and arm balances
- Students who want a high-energy class without rigidity
- Those who appreciate strong flow with a rebellious spirit
- Intermediate to advanced yogis seeking variety and challenge
- Beginners who are adventurous and open to trying (with modification!)

May not suit:

- Those needing a slow or therapeutic practice
- People recovering from injury (unless deeply modified)
- Students seeking a quiet or meditative atmosphere

CONCLUSION

Rocket Yoga is where tradition meets freedom, and discipline meets joyful defiance.

It's a bold, breath-fueled playground that invites you to flip your perspective, challenge your limits, and fly — not because it's easy, but because you're capable.

Here, falling is progress. Effort is devotion. And the sky is never the limit.