

## AERIAL YOGA

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Aerial Yoga combines traditional yoga postures with aerial arts using a suspended silk hammock for support, allowing practitioners to explore deeper stretches, inversions, and floating sequences with reduced joint pressure, while building core strength, improving balance, and experiencing the unique joy of moving in three-dimensional space.

### OVERVIEW

STYLE | Playful, adventurous, and supportive; blends yoga with aerial movement

STRUCTURE | Postures performed with the aid of a silk hammock; includes grounded, suspended, and inverted poses

BREATH | Conscious breath supports transitions, balance, and nervous system regulation

FLOW | Flow varies; some classes move fluidly, while others emphasize strength, technique, or stretch

PACE | Moderate; blends moments of stillness with dynamic movement in the air

FOCUS | Spinal decompression, flexibility, core strength, balance, body awareness, and trust

TEACHER ROLE | Active facilitator and safety guide; cues transitions and offers spotting/modifications

VIBE | Uplifting, empowering, and playful; combines freedom with focus

### DESCRIPTION

#### Aerial Yoga: Elevate Your Practice, Expand Your Perspective

Aerial Yoga invites you to take your practice off the ground and into the air using a silk hammock suspended from the ceiling. This innovative style blends traditional yoga asanas with principles from aerial arts, acrobatics, and Pilates, offering a gravity-defying experience that is both fun and deeply therapeutic.

The hammock becomes a versatile prop — acting as a sling for inversions, a support for balance, a cocoon for rest, and a tool to deepen stretches or add resistance. The result is a practice that challenges the body, expands proprioception, and brings a childlike sense of joy and curiosity.

Aerial Yoga is known for its spinal decompression benefits, allowing practitioners to experience traction and relief from compression in a safe and supported way — especially during inversions.

#### Origins of Aerial Yoga

Aerial Yoga emerged in the early 2000s through the work of performers and movement educators who saw the potential of aerial silks and yoga combined. Pioneers like Christopher Harrison (creator of AntiGravity® Fitness) and other aerialists began incorporating traditional yoga poses into the fabric — and a new genre of practice was born.

Since then, various schools and styles have evolved, each with their own approach — ranging from restorative and therapeutic to acro-inspired and fitness-based.

#### Style and Structure

## **Style**

Aerial Yoga blends asana, strength training, acrobatics, and mindfulness in a three-dimensional practice.

The silk hammock allows for:

- Full-body support in postures
- Suspension and inversion with reduced joint load
- Dynamic movement and flow
- Playful exploration of shapes and transitions

Depending on the class, the style may be:

- Grounded and gentle (restorative or meditative)
- Strength-focused (core, upper body, balance)
- Flow-based (Vinyasa-like sequences in the air)
- Inversion-heavy (spinal decompression, flips, and fun)

## **Structure**

A typical Aerial Yoga class may include:

- Grounded centering and breathwork
- Warm-up using the hammock at hip or knee height
- Standing and balancing poses supported by the silk
- Inversions (e.g., aerial Down Dog, Floating Baddha Konasana)
- Core engagement and strength work
- Floating savasana inside the hammock

Props (mats, blocks, straps) may still be used, but the hammock is the primary tool and anchor point.

## **Breath and Flow**

### **Breath**

Breath plays a vital role in aerial yoga for:

- Supporting transitions in and out of suspended poses
- Calming the nervous system during inversions or novel movements
- Cultivating body awareness in space

Teachers often cue steady, grounding breath to help students navigate the sensations of flying, stretching, or flipping.

### **Flow**

Flow in Aerial Yoga may feel:

- Graceful and dance-like
- Segmental and strength-focused
- Playful and exploratory
- Meditative and floaty (especially in slower or restorative styles)

Transitions often involve unique movement patterns: swivels, drops, wraps, and releases that aren't found in mat-based yoga.

## **Pace, Focus, and Teacher Role**

### **Pace**

Pace varies by style:

Some classes are slow and fluid, focusing on deep stretch and awareness  
Others are energized and acrobatic, building heat and challenging balance

Teachers typically allow space for acclimation, especially for beginners unfamiliar with inversions or silk navigation.

### **Focus**

Aerial Yoga develops:

- Spinal decompression and back-body awareness
- Core strength and body control
- Flexibility, especially in the hips and shoulders
- Balance and proprioception
- Trust, both in the silk and in one's own body

There is also often an emotional focus on play, courage, and releasing control.

### **Teacher Role**

Aerial Yoga teachers are:

- Anchors of safety and technical guidance
- Skilled in spotting and modifying poses
- Creators of joyful and exploratory sequences
- Attuned to student confidence and body awareness

A good aerial teacher will support students with step-by-step instruction and hold a container of fun, focus, and freedom.

### **Vibe and Community**

The vibe in an Aerial Yoga class is:

- Joyful and bold, yet deeply grounding
- Encouraging and communal, as students cheer each other on
- Safe and exploratory, with room to try new things and let go of fear
- Often filled with laughter, awe, and a sense of wonder

It's the yoga class where grown-ups get to play — and where transformation happens midair.

## **Benefits of Aerial Yoga**

Physical Benefits

- Decompression of the spine and joints
- Enhanced flexibility and full-range mobility
- Increased core strength and coordination
- Low-impact inversions and backbends
- Better circulation, lymph drainage, and balance

#### Mental and Emotional Benefits

- Release of fear, tension, and control
- Improved body confidence and courage
- Stress relief through novelty and laughter
- Heightened focus and trust in the moment

#### Energetic and Subtle Benefits

- Stimulates upper chakras through inversion and elevation
- Balances root and sacral energy with suspended grounding
- Awakens playfulness and inner freedom
- Invites surrender through gravity and flow

#### Who Is Aerial Yoga For?

##### Ideal for:

- Curious beginners wanting a playful introduction to movement
- Yogis looking to deepen flexibility or try safe inversions
- Athletes or dancers working on strength and mobility
- Those healing from joint pressure or spinal compression
- Anyone craving a light-hearted and liberating experience

##### May be challenging for:

- Those with vertigo, glaucoma, or spinal injuries (consult a teacher first)
- People uncomfortable with heights or novelty (though often this transforms with time!)

#### CONCLUSION

Aerial Yoga is an invitation to lift off — not just from the ground, but from limiting beliefs, tension, and habitual patterns. By blending the wisdom of yoga with the freedom of flight, it opens space for deeper stretch, higher strength, and a fresh sense of wonder.

It's yoga with wings.

And it's not about performing — it's about possibility.