

General instructions for yoga practice

Yoga practice becomes more effective and beneficial when performed in a proper manner and with correct preparation. The following instructions should help you in getting the best out of your Yoga practice.

No straining please! Asana are perfected gradually. Beginners may find their muscles stiff at first, but after a few weeks of regular practice they will find that the muscles are suppler. Never exert undue force during the practice. Do not strain at any time. All movements should be smooth and jerk free. Terminate the practice immediately, if there is abnormal discomfort or excessive pain in any part of the body. Listen to your body and make adjustments accordingly. Relax whenever feeling tired or out of breathe. Understand that Yoga is not competitive. If in doubt, talk to your instructor.

Awareness: This is essential to the practice of yoga. Asana have profound effect, if they are performed with awareness. Develop continuous awareness of physical movements, integrated breathing and affected body parts. Do not talk to others when practicing. Concentrate on your practice.

Relaxation: Start yoga session with a calm and quiet mind and relaxed body. Shavasana may be performed at any point during the practice, especially, when feeling physically or mentally tired. Relaxation between asana is as important as the practice of asana. Avoid sleeping immediately after the asana.

Contra-indications: Please discuss with the instructor about the contra-indications, if you are affected by any disease or discomfort. Female practitioners should avoid practice during the menstruation periods. Consult your instructor for asana during pregnancy.

Breathing: Always breathe through the nose unless specified otherwise. It is very important to synchronise breathing with the movements as per the instructions.

Sequence: Maintain the correct sequence of asana as an asana could be a counter-pose to the previous asana or preparatory pose to the subsequent one.

Emptying bowels: Empty the bowels and bladder before the practice. It is advisable to drink a glass of water before starting the session and empty bladder immediately after the session. Practice with empty stomach. Practice only after about three to four hours after a normal size meal. Avoid eating for at least half an hour after the yoga practice.

Clothes: Wear loose, light and comfortable clothing.

Time of practice: In the morning, two hours before sunrise is the best time. In the evening, about the sunset is also a favourable time. Try to maintain the same timetable, and practice daily. Do not rush through the practice due to lack of time, instead, practice a reduced number of asana.

Place of practice: Practice in a well-ventilated, clean and quiet place, indoor or outdoor. Do not practice in strong wind, cold or a polluted place. Each practitioner is required to bring his/her own yoga mat or a blanket/bed-sheet. Avoid practicing on spongy mattresses and bed. Avoid practicing on bare ground or concrete floor.

Bathing: A bath or shower before the practice may improve the effects of asana, but avoid bathing for at least half an hour after the asana.

Sunbathing: Practice of asana should be avoided after a long period of sunbath.

No other exercises should be performed immediately before or after the yoga practice.

Incorporating the practice of Yama (self-restraints), Niyama (self-observance), Pratyahara (non-attachment), Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation); and following a healthy lifestyle would definitely enhance the benefits of your Yoga practice.