

What Is Hatha Yoga?

Hatha Yoga is the Yoga of physical well-being which enhances our overall health. It facilitates healing, reduces stress and brings balance to the mind and emotions. Yoga includes several different aspects which work together to maximize its effectiveness. Some aspects are body awareness, breathing, stretching and movement, meditation and deep relaxation. We will include several aspects in each class along with a brief explanation of what they are and how we will use them.

Through the body awareness exercises, you will begin to notice areas of tension and tightness. Once you are aware, then you will find that it is easier to let go of the tension. Awareness enhances the connection between your body and your mind.

Through breathing exercises, your lung capacity will increase and you will also learn how smooth, steady breathing helps you to reduce stress. As you progress you will experience better circulation, more energy and a calmer and more focused mind.

Muscle tension tends to accumulate in certain areas of the body such as the neck and shoulders or low back. The stretching and movement exercises will help you to release and relax these areas. The stretching will also tone and strengthen every major joint and muscle in the body.

Meditation is a place of stillness, balance and connection with the deepest part of ourselves. It allows healing to occur.

Deep relaxation integrates the experience of the class and allows you to soak in all the benefits. This is a time to completely let go.



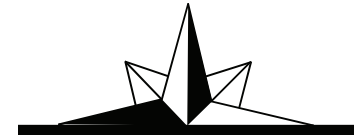
Hatha Yoga Studio

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Tips For A Smooth Yoga Practice



*“The real voyage of
discovery consists not in
seeking new landscapes
but in seeing with new
eyes.”*

-Marcel Proust

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Before you begin...

It is your responsibility to take care of your body therefore avoid the following poses or make the suggested adjustments if you have any of these conditions:

◆ **Sciatica** – Avoid forward bends with legs fully extended or any intense hamstring stretching.

◆ **High Blood Pressure** – Avoid breath retention and fully inverted poses, such as Shoulder Stand and Plow.

◆ **Glaucoma, other eye disorders, ear congestion/infection in head area** – Avoid breath retention and fully inverted poses, such as Shoulder Stand and Plow.

◆ **Lower Back Injuries** – Allow a slight bend in the knees during all types of forward folds. Contract abdominal muscles up and in.

◆ **Upper Back or Neck Injuries** - Avoid any inverted postures, including Bridge, Plow, and Half or Full Shoulder Stand. Do not drop head back during back bends. Only experienced students with no history of neck or upper back injuries should attempt these poses and only after the body is warm. Only advanced students may do Plow or Full Shoulder Stand.

◆ **Knee Pain/Injuries** – Modify any pain-inducing pose, such as Pigeon Pose. Place extra padding under the knees if needed.

◆ **Wrist Pain/Injuries** – Modify any painful positions, including Cat/Cow, Spinal Balance, Plank, Crocodile, or Upward Facing Dog, by resting on your knuckles instead of the palms. Do not do this modification for Downward Facing Dog. Be sure and rest your weight on your palms. Make sure you are evenly distributing your weight inward, toward the thumbs and forward toward the base of each finger.

◆ **Pregnancy** – You should consult your doctor about taking Yoga classes. Avoid radical breath changes, inverted poses and lying on your right side or back for extended periods. Avoid back bends, balances without props, inversions and jumps, full lunges, double leg lifts and prone poses like Cobra or Locust.

Guidelines For Your Yoga Practice...

It is called a practice because it is an ever-renewing process.

◆ Avoid eating before class—allow an hour after a light snack and at least three hours after a heavy meal.

◆ Wear loose but not baggy clothes, minimal jewelry and perfume.

◆ Yoga is best performed in bare feet.

◆ Begin each class with an open mind which will allow your body to be open to new movements and achievements.

◆ Do not fling or force yourself into a posture. Nothing in yoga should be violent, uncontrolled or careless.

◆ Breathe evenly and steadily through your nose while in each pose. As a general rule, breath in during upward or lifting movements and breathe out during downward or twisting and folding movements.

◆ If something hurts, stop. Yoga postures are meant to release tension—not induce tension in the body.

◆ Try to be present in a posture. Focus on the reality of it moment by moment and notice how it changes as you move.

◆ Generally lift, lengthen and extend the body in each pose.

◆ Go to your edge knowing that it will change as you move further into your personal yoga practice.

◆ Before every yoga practice, sit quietly to prepare yourself for class.

◆ Namaste, a nice parting word, ends each yoga class just as clapping ends most traditional exercise classes.

Remember Yoga is ...

Breathing...

Feeling...

Listening to your body...

Letting go of competition...

Letting go of judgment....

Letting go of expectations.....

Namaste is both a spoken greeting and a gesture, a mantra and a mudra. The prayerful hand position is a *mudra* called *anjali* from the root *anj*, to honor; *namas* means “bow” or “reverential salutation” and comes from the root *nam*, which carries meanings of bending or humbly submitting and becoming silent; *te* means “to you.”

Yoga is a non-competitive activity. Every aspect of our western culture is competitive. Honor your culture but for the hour you are in Yoga class experience a culture of non-competitive unity with one's self. This is your yoga practice; it is discreet from and not in competition with anyone or anything. Whatever your body/mind can do on your mat today is your practice today. What it did last class is a memory. What it will do next class is an imaginary dream.