

What is Yoga?

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice that helps to bring about increased tranquillity, health, energy and ultimately a greater connection with oneself and our surroundings. Yoga helps to still the mind in order to achieve a happier and more contented life.

The main practices include asanas which are the physical postures, pranayama, specific breathing practices and meditation. Yoga also suggests that we can live in such a way that supports the quietening of the mind through specific guidelines; these are called the Yama's and Niyama's.

Any one of these practices – or ideally a combination of all of them will help people to live a happier life, find more contentment and inner peace. Anyone can do yoga, you don't have to be fit or flexible, in fact the only prerequisite is being able to move and breathe! The word yoga in Sanskrit translates as "union" and the origins of yoga can be traced back as far as 4500 BC.

Benefits of yoga – why practice it?

There are many, many benefits to practicing yoga, too many for one information sheet. Below are just a few of the main benefits that most people will realise.

Ultimately the main benefit of yoga is to find more happiness, contentment and inner peace and I am living proof that yoga can help bring about positive change. As a direct result of yoga I am a more grateful, happy, joyful and healthier person.

It's not always easy to get on the mat – but it is definitely worth the effort!

Most people come to yoga to achieve a healthier, more flexible and lean body and to help with stress management, but then they realise that there are many additional benefits over and above this, including:

- Reduces stress, tension and anxiety
- Improves focus, concentration and memory
- Increases energy and decreases fatigue
- Improves overall body posture, flexibility and balance
- Relieves head, neck and back strain, carpal tunnel syndrome, insomnia, high blood pressure and work-related injuries from repetitive motion
- Improved cardiovascular endurance
- Improved and healthier working endocrine, circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems
- Enhanced overall muscular strength (specifically helps to reduce back, neck and shoulder pain)
- Enhanced immune system
- Healthier internal organs as a result of internal massage
- Improves attention and decision-making skills
- Improves alertness and productivity and ability to react more calmly in demanding situation
- Mood, outlook and attitude improves
- Self-acceptance increases as does social skills
- Depression and low thoughts/mood decreases
- Anxiety and panic feelings decrease
- Hostility and anger decreases

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