

guide to **YOGA**



Terri Ann's

— **123 PLAN** —

- MIND - BODY - NUTRITION -

GUIDE TO YOGA

An important study found that Yoga stimulates the production of DHEAS, or dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate, something excreted by your adrenal cortex which serves many functions. It enhances your immune system, is an anti-diabetic, anti-obesity, cardioprotective, and neurosteroid hormone. However, the natural levels of production in your body decrease with age and with stress. As these levels decrease you are more susceptible to infection, premature signs of aging, and other problems. The reason this particular study was so groundbreaking is because it found regular yoga practice and remedial meditation decreases stress, improves immunity, reduces cortisol levels, and improves your natural production of DHEAS.

The most important part of this particular research is that all of the participants as a requirement were people who had never practiced yoga or meditation before.

This means the participants who did just one hour of basic beginner yoga with no prior experience were able to reap so many benefits.

And so can you.



YOGA LOOKS EASY, BUT IS IT?

Have you ever looked at someone who's holding a yoga pose calmly and quietly and thought, "it doesn't look like they're working very hard" or "that looks really easy. I could totally do that"?

You aren't alone.

Yoga, like meditation, is very different from most forms of exercise because breathing is at the crux of a good practice. You don't see as much external power, as you would with someone who is running really fast or lifting heavy weights. You also don't hear as many quintessential gym grunts and yells, but rather silence and soft, controlled breathing.

A huge part of any yoga practice is focusing on your breathing. The goal in yoga is not to be able to lift heavier things or run faster but rather to hold poses with more strength in the entire body, with more stability, and with more controlled breathing.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE INTERNAL

Again, unlike other forms of exercise, yoga has its roots intertwined with that of meditation so a great deal of emphasis is placed on your breathing techniques, your relaxation in a pose, and your ability to mindfully push aside stray and distracting thoughts while you settled deeply into a pose that may from the outside looks simple.

The majority of the progress physical and mental takes place internally.

When you come into a pose you have the option of hanging out so to speak, relaxing in that pose, or working hard in that pose.

FOR EXAMPLE:

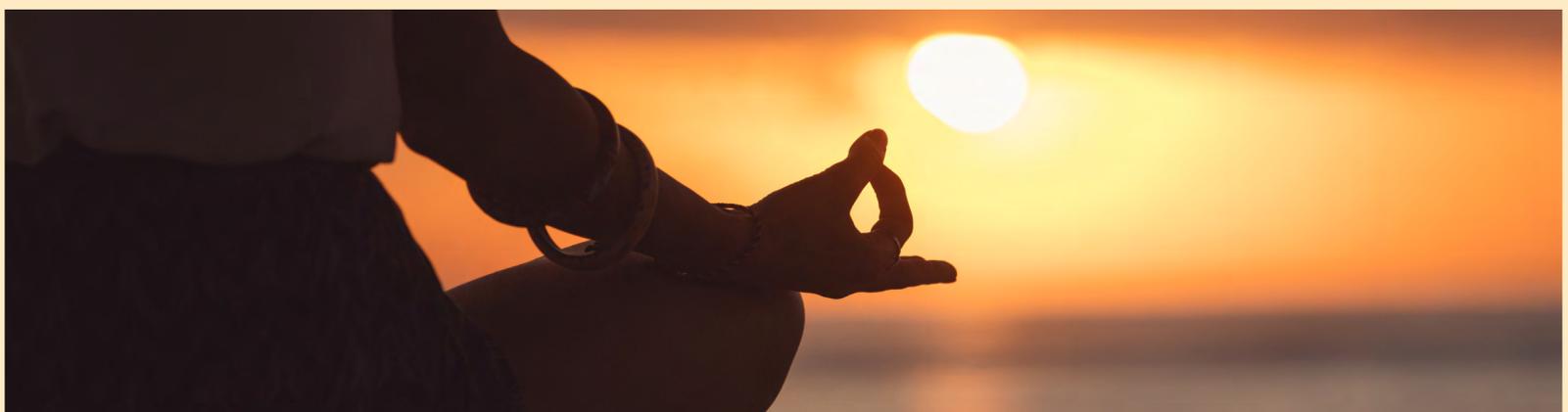
If you go into child's pose, seemingly one of the simplest poses, one of the first you will learn, you can relax in that, let your belly hang free, let all your muscles relax,



or...

you can hold your arms tightly, biceps wrapping forward, triceps pulling back, pressing down through your fingertips the same as you would hold your arms for a plank pose, or downward-facing dog.

It's up to you to work what you're not good at, to strengthen both sides of your body equally even if one side is weaker than the other. If you don't improve what you are not good at, you won't make any legitimate progress.



PRANAYAMA: THE IMPORTANCE OF YOGIC BREATHING

In yoga, pranayama is very important. Yogic breathing serves as the cornerstone to your ability to focus your breath, focus your mind, and target the areas in your body that need the most oxygen in the blood.

Relaxation techniques like these are great when you have breath control. We talk so much about breathing, especially focusing on your breathing during yoga, and how you need to be in control of your breathing when holding a pose, because if you are raggedly breathing, barely able to get your breath, you are pushing yourself too hard and not focused internally. When that happens, you lose the strength, the focus, and the pose.

Breathing also plays a big scientific role in your relaxation. In Sanskrit they use the word pranayama which is actually a compound made up of prana which means “life force” and yama which means “control”. So, breathing during your yoga is the science behind controlling your life, your energy.



ACHIEVING SMALL GOALS

Whether you have dabbled in yoga twice a month or you start your day with mindful meditation, it is important that you learn how to use these short relaxation techniques gradually. Don't try to start out day 1 with a 45 minute body scan as you hold your plank pose.



When you try to achieve something without the proper training in your mind and body, you might end up disappointed. This disappointment lives deep inside the soul and subsequently rears its ugly head whenever you try to take steps down that same path. Even the thoughts of getting back into the practice of relaxation, waking up knowing it is a new day and that worrying about failure only takes away from today's peace, can be hampered by an initial setback.

It is for this reason that you need to make sure you gradually learn to relax at home each day. That is why you should not expect too much from yourself at the start and simply begin with 3–5 minutes every day

THE POWER OF BREATHING

Breathing is the centerpiece to relaxation. By controlling your breathing you can learn to perfect your physical postures and relax your mind, producing more GABA.

Everybody understands that breathing is an essential element, something that we typically do subconsciously. Many people, albeit fewer, understand that you can control the way you feel with your breathing which is why people take deeper breaths to help calm themselves in a stressful situation or to reduce feelings of anxiety or anger. Even fewer recognize the power of breathing exercises.

Mind over matter is a common phrase, founded in science. Breathing techniques are scientifically shown to help with a plethora of issues including improving your nervous system, reducing pain, and even changing your mood.

One of the more unique things about breathing are the links between your left and right nostril and your brain. At any given time you are not actively breathing for both of your nostrils at once. Rather, you switch throughout the day every few hours. Something almost entirely unknown by most people, side through which you are breathing is directly related to the part of your brain most active in that moment. Breathing through the left nostril means your right side of the brain is more active, and vice versa. More impressive is the fact that you can control your mood by simply switching the side through which you are breathing. When you need to be more creative more right brain focused, you can force yourself to breathe only through the left nostril. Such control over the mind and body is a truly inspiring tribute to the forces in the universe. Expounding upon this small aspect of our life force, our breathing is actively integrating pranayama.

With that in mind, you can consciously regulate the rhythm of your breathing as a therapeutic tool. Improving your normal breathing can reduce stress, reinvigorate your energy, and strengthen your concentration.



START SMALL

When you start with yoga, don't overexert yourself and remember that every day, you bring something different to your practice. You might feel well rested, hydrated, and happy one day but then the next day an old injury is flaring up in your knee or you have a bit of wrist pain from typing so much.

As you observe yourself and take body scans of your muscles during your yoga workouts, be kind to yourself and recognize that some days you might bring a different attitude than others and no matter what you are able to achieve, how deeply you can hold a pose, or what level of control you have over your breathing, you are still making progress.

YOGA POSES AT HOME

Doing yoga breathing properly can help you visualize all negativity in your bodies leaving with each exhalation, allowing you to heal the mind and body.

Tip: It is important that with each yoga pose, you hold it for one full minute during which you should breathe deeply enough to expand your chest and your abdomen during the inhalation and completely contract them during the exhalation. By doing this relaxing breathing you can help the whole respiratory system. When breathing, it is important to keep the length of the inhalation and exhalation equal to avoid ending up with too little or too much air during the exercises.

Yoga poses are a great way to improve balance. This can be a whole routine or just holding what few poses you know throughout the day.

● Plank pose is one of the fastest ways to build heat and is a great way to warm up for your yoga. For this, you want to start on your hands and knees. Press your hands and your fingertips shoulder-width apart into the ground or the mat. Wrap your biceps forward and triceps back, with your arms completely straight and feel your pecs engage.



Once you feel the pectoral muscles, and the back muscles engaging with the arms, press down into the toes and lift your knees off the ground so that your legs are straight and your body forms a straight line all the way from your shoulders to your ankles. You don't want to arch your back or sag your belly. If you're not sure how this feels you can do a few Cat and Cow poses while on hands and knees to really bring awareness to the way your back and belly are located.

As a beginner this is not a pose you will necessarily be able to hold for more than 30 seconds, but the whole point is to build up and if you need to, take regular breaks, maybe add plank pose in between weight lifting or cardiovascular exercises.

● Warrior 2 or 3 work your core, your arms, and your legs, giving you overall balance.



● Trikonasana, also known as extended triangle, is a great way to not only stretch but build your core muscles.



● Ardha chandrasana, sometimes known as half moon pose, is a standing exercise that will build strength in your legs, your glutes, and your core while also significantly improving your balance. You can add to your balance exercises by lifting up the foot that is holding you in the post and coming back down, and repeating this over and over.



● Utkatasana, or chair pose, is a type of low squat that really works your legs, while also improving your balance. To further improve your balance you can hold a chair pose while lifting up the heels of your feet and lowering them back down or by squeezing in your glutes and releasing them regularly.



● One of the best poses for opening your hips, strengthening your legs, and handling stress is the archer pose. Doing this for one to three minutes on each side can help with your mind and body.



● Single leg lifts, doing one leg at a time, is a great pose for those who want to improve posture. If your goal is increasing core strength which can have a positive effect on all of your daily activities and fight the battle against aging muscles, you can turn to alternating leg lifts. To do these lifts, lie on your back and place your hands under your buttocks with the palms facing downward. This adds support to the lower back. After this one leg should be lifted ninety degrees and held in place for one minute, then lowered. This process should be followed by the next leg. As this happens, inhale when you lift your legs and exhale as you bring your legs down.



● Cat pose works the spine and chest while downward facing dog helps the hips, back, and thighs, and are recommended yoga poses for those who want to increase core strength. These should be incorporated into the beginning and end of each basic yoga work out. During each pose, it is recommended that you close your eyes to help them focus on breathing and stretching. Closing the eyes allows you to remove any distractions and clear your mind.



Following a basic yoga exercise, you should take a few moments to lay down with your eyes closed and imagine that you are one with the ground and that all negativity in your body and mind is flowing from your body into the ground on which they are laying.

EAT RIGHT

One of the biggest mistakes people make when they jump into yoga is failing to up their eating habits in conjunction with upping their exercise habits. This is especially true with people who use beginner yoga and don't associate the slow and controlled movements with calorie burning.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Let's assume you normally have a bowl of cereal in the morning for breakfast, then you head to work, you have a steak salad or a pasta dish from the nearby deli for lunch, you come home, and you have a decent dinner of chicken or salmon with rice and vegetables.

But now you are going for a 1 mile walk during your lunch break a few days per week, a particularly hilly walk that leaves you very sweaty and exhausted at the end. You are also adding 20 minutes of balance and flexibility exercises in the form of yoga which is a hybrid yoga class online that leaves you very fatigued. On days that you aren't doing this yoga you are now doing a lot of stretching yoga that emphasizes elongation.

In this case, if you dive right in and start adding these seemingly simple exercises to your daily routine everyday for a week, it won't take long for you to feel a very specific type of exhaustion that is usually the result of caloric deficiency and specifically protein deficiencies.

So just be sure that as you increase your exercise habits, you increase your dietary habits with a few snacks of nuts, chips and salsa, hard-boiled eggs, after each of your workouts. And on days that you are not working out as much,

days where everything was so busy that you never got to your walk or your yoga let alone your strength training, go back to your regular dietary plan so that you don't overeat.



ALWAYS BUILD



When you do workouts at home you can build upon everything you learn. As you hold poses longer, add more repetitions to a circuit of poses, or integrate things like small weights, you can build your balance, flexibility, and strength.

You might do a boat pose for yoga, Navasana, and then come down (without your feet or head touching the ground) into an extended Navasana. But as you build, you can do the same core workout or yoga pose while adding a bicep curl.

BE SAFE

As you practice yoga, make sure you are always aware of your environment so that you have a safe and stable place in which to work out. For example: it is much safer for you to do balance poses, even beginner poses on a flat and stable surface rather than on carpet, and if you are planning to do yoga or high jumps or anything that has a lot of movement, make sure you pick a space that has ample room around you so that you don't accidentally kick or hit furniture and injure yourself.



Thank you