

Beginners Guide To Yoga

We hope to enlighten you through this book so that you may learn how to practice yoga and meditation on your own. The physical and mental benefits you'll receive will probably be shocking to you!

One thing you should realize is that while this book will be talking about the religious practices and history of yoga and meditation, you do NOT have to change your religion or subscribe to any of the religious notions of either method!

The information contained about the spiritual side is purely for informational purposes only. Yoga isn't a religion, but it can have spiritual effects for those who practice it.

It doesn't matter if you are Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Protestant, or Scientologist! No matter what type of religion you may or may not practice, yoga can benefit you without you having to change your faith in any way.

Yoga (as it is explained here) is simply a method of strengthening and toning the body while also receiving the emotional and psychological effects it can bring.

Meditation in this book is used simply as a way to boost mental clarity, reduce stress, and clear up any mental and emotional issues. It is not meant to promote any kind of spiritual agenda, although it can enhance your religious experience if you choose to use it that way.

Beginners Guide To Yoga

We're going to delve a little bit into the rich history of yoga and meditation so you can learn a little about its origins. Only when you understand where it came from and why it was practiced can you truly understand why they are such remarkable tools for mental and physical health.

We'll talk about a lot of the important equipment that you may need to want for practicing yoga and meditation, from mats to bags, balls to blocks. You'll learn what each piece of equipment is used for, and also whether you really need to buy it or not.

You'll learn what yoga and meditation are and can do for you as well as their limitations. Neither is a one-size-fits-all solution for everyone, nor will they cure any and every ailment there is.

Some practitioners believe that yoga and meditation can cure every ailment, illness, and disease on the planet, but unfortunately there is just no proof of this.

If you're looking for a miracle cure for cancer or diabetes, this probably won't be what you're hoping for. But if you need a simple solution for easing panic attacks, depression, mental fog, back pain, stress, or other minor to moderate physical and mental issues, yoga and meditation might be exactly what you need.

Beginners Guide To Yoga

What Yoga Is And Isn't

Yoga is far more than just a series of stretching exercises. It's not some kind of religion or cult, and it doesn't require one to turn into a vegan or sell all of their worldly possessions! It's nothing like its stereotype.

Yoga first came to the Western hemisphere in 1893 at the World's Fair in Chicago. It was brought by Swami Vivekananda who was one of India's most popular gurus.

The word yoga gets its origins from the Sanskrit word "Yug". It means to bind or join. Basically it is about unity of the physical body with the mind. It's about "conscious living".

It's not all about calisthenics. While the physical aspects are certainly an important part, this is not the only true purpose. It's also about the mental benefits.

It's not any type of religion. There are no gods to worship, and it is not an organized system at all. Any spiritual benefits are purely emotional and psychological.

Yoga doesn't actually distinguish between the physical body and the mind. Yoga can work to improve your physical health in many ways, not just aiding in weight loss, but also improving tone and even reducing physical pain.

Beginners Guide To Yoga

Yoga allows you to release the tension that can build up in your body. It helps the various parts of your body become loose and limber, from your muscles and joints to your tendons and ligaments. It can help back pain, joint pain, muscle pain, and much more.

People aren't meant to be stiff and rigid. We were designed to be flexible creatures. We may not all have the flexibility and grace of a prima ballerina, but we should all be healthy and fit. Yoga is one means to achieving such a goal.

Here are some of the benefits that have been proven to exist through yoga:

- ✓ Improved flexibility
- ✓ Better range of motion
- ✓ More fluid motion
- ✓ Immune system strengthening
- ✓ Reduced joint pain
- ✓ Reduced muscular pain
- ✓ Better breathing
- ✓ Higher lung capacity
- ✓ Higher metabolism
- ✓ Better sleep quality
- ✓ Reduced stress and anxiety

There are many other remarkable benefits reported to be received from yoga. You may discover many more.

Beginners Guide To Yoga

Yoga is beneficial in many ways. It's not all about the physical effects, as I've mentioned previously. Yoga may have its roots in the spiritual, but its foundation is based in science.

Yoga's health benefits have been proven time and time again by many sources. Its physical benefits can be paramount to a healthy lifestyle.

But of course there are mental and emotional benefits, as well. Yoga helps you achieve a type of mind/body harmony through the use of:

- ✓ Postures (called asana)
- ✓ Breathing (called pranayama)
- ✓ Meditation (which we will cover later)

All three of these are essential for obtaining the full benefit of yoga. For example, you may believe your breathing has nothing to do with your physical shape, but that's not true. Your body needs oxygen to function properly, and the more efficient your respiration is, the better your body can perform.

Likewise meditation can also help you physically. When you meditate you relieve muscle tension. This can ease all kinds of aches and pains including back pain, joint pain, and even stress and anxiety.

There are a number of direct physical benefits that can be obtained from yoga when you use the three principles together:

- ✓ Central nervous system harmony

Beginners Guide To Yoga

- ✓ Decrease in heart rate
- ✓ Lower blood pressure
- ✓ Better efficiency of your cardiovascular system
- ✓ Gastrointestinal system improvement
- ✓ Improved flexibility and dexterity
- ✓ Better balance
- ✓ Better memory and mental clarity
- ✓ Depth perception improvement

There are a number of psychological benefits, too:

- ✓ Can help break a smoking habit
- ✓ Can help curb binge drinking
- ✓ Can help you eat healthier
- ✓ Can help ease insomnia
- ✓ Can reduce stress and anxiety
- ✓ Can decrease panic attacks
- ✓ Can ease depression
- ✓ Can help lethargy

While yoga isn't a cure-all and results won't happen overnight, it can certainly help you make some big changes to your psychological and physiological states.

There are even some claims out there that yoga can ease the symptoms of many other illnesses, like diabetes. This has never been proven by medical science, but some people claim it can reduce the need for insulin by up to 50%.

Beginners Guide To Yoga

Yoga is also something that is relatively easy on the body. You can tailor a yoga workout to your own fitness level, and increase the difficulty as you progress.

There's no reason you shouldn't be able to perform at least some of the asana no matter what physical condition you're in. As long as you have some mobility in your arms and legs, you should be able to start out with some of the easier asana and gradually increase the intensity of your yoga workout as you progress.

Don't overdo it. Too much of a good thing can be bad for you. You want to use yoga to improve your physical condition, not make it worse.

If you overdo it, you may end up injuring yourself. This could make existing conditions worse and also set back any progress you've made so far.

At the very least an injury could cause you to miss several days of workouts, which could hamper your progress, so it's best to take it easy until you get used to it.

Types of Yoga

There are several different types of yoga. Most people just think of yoga as being one standard set of poses, but it's not quite that simple.

Beginners Guide To Yoga

Western yoga is generally just defined as “yoga”. There aren’t usually any types mentioned. Western yoga often uses a mixture of different yoga types, and different instructors may even come up with their own poses or mix their own unique blends.

There are in fact six types of yoga traditionally practiced, plus a new type, bikram yoga, that has been rapidly gaining in popularity recently.

The six traditional types of yoga are:

1. Hatha
2. Raja
3. Karma
4. Bhakti
5. Jnana
6. Tantra

Now we’re going to take a closer look at each individual types of yoga and their differences.

Hatha Yoga

The teachings of hatha yoga are the type most commonly practiced in the Western hemisphere. The word hatha comes from the Sanskrit term ha (meaning sun).

There are two important principles that hatha yoga is based on:

1. **Meditation** – You will find at least one posture that is especially comfortable to you and that you can sustain for long period of time while you meditate. As you advance, you'll ideally learn several postures that you are comfortable with. Many people find the lotus position especially helpful for meditation.
2. **Improving Energy Within The Body** – This is all about improving the flow of energy throughout your body so improve your overall health.

Raja Yoga

Raja yoga is very similar to hatha yoga. Raja is considered a bit more difficult than other forms of yoga, because it requires more discipline and control than other forms.

Raja yoga focuses on concentration, meditation, and discipline of the mind and body.

There are eight limbs of raja yoga:

1. Moral discipline
2. Self restraint
3. Concentration
4. Meditation
5. Breath control

Beginners Guide To Yoga

6. Posture
7. Sensory inhibition
8. Ecstasy (not the drug!)