



Yoga



Yoga is a sacred physical and mental practice that originated in the Indus Valley around 5,000 years ago. Yoga comes from *yug*, the Sanskrit word for “union.” Yoga means union of the body, mind and spirit.

Yoga is one of the most complete forms of exercise, working on all systems in the body. But it helps with happiness too. Yoga taps into our endocannabinoid system, releasing anandamide (*ananda* means “bliss”) and other feel-good chemicals throughout the body. Yoga also decreases the stress hormone known as cortisol.

Today there are many different yoga styles and poses (*asanas*). But all of them are rooted in the slow, gentle style of Classical Hatha, which emphasizes correct posture and breathing rhythm. Traditionally, the purpose of ‘doing yoga’ was to prepare the body and mind for seated meditation.

Yoga philosophy encourages us to accept our body the way it is right now, with the aim of slowly working toward improvements on the mat and in life. (Criticizing ourselves is considered a form of violence!)

Try one of these FREE slow and simple 20-min Hatha Yoga sessions:

- Yoga for Complete Beginners: <https://youtu.be/v7AYKMP6rOE>
- Balance: <https://youtu.be/JAOUZR3Jw3E>

Yoga tip!

Yoga doesn't need to be expensive or fancy. You don't need yoga pants or even a mat if you don't have one. You can do free online yoga classes at home in your pyjamas if you want.

Kavita Maharaj. *Yoga Fitness Leader: Part 1*. Red Door Yoga Inc. 2013

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/marijuana/feeling-blissed-out-after-a-yoga-session-the-reason-may-lie-within-the-bodys-endocannabinoid-system/>



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Activity steps

1. Ask participants what they already know about yoga. Discuss for a few minutes.
2. Give each participant a Yoga handout and walk through the contents
3. Invite participants to do some simple stretches, or try one of these slow and simple 20-minute Hatha Yoga sessions.
 - *Yoga for Complete Beginners:* <https://youtu.be/v7AYKMP6rOE>
 - *Balance:* <https://youtu.be/JAOUZR3Jw3E>
4. After yoga, lead a conversation using the reflect and discuss questions below

Reflect and discuss

- How do you feel after doing yoga? Did you notice any difference from before you started?
- Can you see yourself weaving yoga into your self-care routine? Why or why not?
- What are other ways to relieve stress or release natural feel-good chemicals in the body?