

Guidelines for Your Practice: When, How Much, Where & How

1. Regularity is of paramount importance. Ideally practice at the same time every time. It will help you set a habit. One easy way to do this is to make an appointment with yourself, and honour it. If for some reason you really cannot keep your yoga appointment, immediately set up an alternative time that day, or the next.

Early morning practice times can work well, as you can usually find a bit of extra time in the day, just by setting your alarm a little earlier. Also, your mind is usually not so busy first thing in the morning. And, after having started the day with yoga practice, you'll feel better going into your everyday activities.

After work or early in the evening is also a good time to practice. If you have a stiffer body, you will have loosened up during the day, to give you more ease in practising at night. Best not to do the more dynamic poses or breathing at this time, as they may disrupt your sleep. On the other hand, if you have insomnia or feel wired up, the more soothing poses can help you get a good night's sleep.

2. Even if you practice for 15 or 30 minutes, it's better to practice a shorter time and enjoy it than not to practice at all.

Obviously longer, sessions done more frequently will produce more benefits, but for a beginner doing short regular practices will build a solid habit and boost confidence. As you achieve your goal, then set new, more challenging goals that are also realisable.

3. If you choose to practice every day, consider giving yourself one day off. Sometimes complete rest can be good yoga practice too.

4. Practice in a clean, quiet, well-ventilated area - preferably out of direct sunlight.

5. Go as far as you can in each pose, but, most importantly, maintain proper alignment.

6. Sometimes students wonder if they should practice if they're not feeling well. If you have a fever, best to not practice. But if you are weak or tired, try doing a restorative, milder or shorter practice.

7. A good way for you to deepen your practice is asking yourself these questions:

- a. How am I feeling in this pose?
- b. How do I respond to this pose afterwards?
- c. Where in my body am I encountering some tightness or weakness?
- d. Does this pose elicit an emotional response?
- e. Does this pose teach me something about myself?