



The Art of Yoga Practice

The heart of yoga is finding the middle ground between too little and too much. This may be a new experience for many people: learning to observe what you are doing and what your attitude is.

The ability to observe with detachment is a powerful skill, because it connects you with yourself at a deep level.



Why use Props ?

Having some basic equipment makes practicing with YogaAnywhere cards more accessible. Using a prop, like a mat, for instance delineates your space and gives you a surface with a firm footing. Props are especially good for stiff bodies or if you have any injuries. With a prop for support you can relax because your mind gets the message that you aren't doing it all on your own.

Buying a few key props could be considered an investment in your yoga future, giving you effective tools to work with.

Props can be found around your home. You can improvise with props such as: a straight-seat chair for twisting postures, the end of a bed or sofa for back-bending, any firm cushion to sit on, and a soft cloth to cover your eyes in the yoga relaxation.

What you'll need / Yoga tools

Here's a list of useful props that can be purchased, along with items you might find around the home to use instead:

1. **A yoga mat, 180cm x 60cm or any non skid surface**
2. **A soft strap, about 2m long + 5cm wide or a belt or tie**
3. **Two foam blocks, about 23cm x 13cm x 8cm, or a few paperback books of similar size and shape, bound together**
4. **One or two firm blankets, 20cm x 15cm or cushions**
5. **A bolster, 55cm x 17cm (diameter) or long cushion**
6. **A chair, with a flat seat**
7. **An eye bag, scarf or any soft cloth**



Guidelines for Practicing



1. Do exercise caution in taking up yoga practice if you have any health problems. The postures are not substitutes for professional advice or care. If you think or know you have a condition that needs treatment, see a medical practitioner for an okay before starting yoga.

2. If you experience pain while in a pose, consider it a warning. Don't just keep going if you get a sharp pain, especially if it is in the lower back, neck, hips or knees. It may be that you need to use a prop, or it may indicate you are pushing your body too far too fast and you need to back off. Use your intelligence to go with your body, not against it.

If pain persists in a particular pose, check that your alignment is correct and make sure that you are stretching both sides of the body evenly. Or, better still, check your poses with an experienced yoga teacher.

3. During menstruation, women are advised to do particular yoga poses that make up a menstrual sequence. Supta Baddha Konasana and the forward stretches, for instance, with your head resting a chair seat, are especially good for alleviating cramps and restoring vitality. Avoid inverted postures when menstruating.

Thirty to sixty minutes of restorative poses when menstruating can balance and energise the body and clarify the mind. These poses also help with the symptoms of premenstrual tension.

4. Pregnant women are encouraged to do yoga commensurate with their level of fitness. For women embarking on the yoga path for the first time at the outset of their pregnancy, they need to begin very slowly and introduce new postures gradually. It's a good idea to work with an experienced teacher to see

what poses are recommended for each trimester of pregnancy. Poses which involve strong abdominal exercises, strong twists, and intense back bending should be avoided.

5. Only do yoga on an empty stomach. That means you should not have eaten for about two hours before practice. An exception is if you have low blood sugar, in which case you may need a small snack about an hour before you start practising.

6. How long you hold a yoga pose depends on your strength and stamina. After a practice session, notice if you feel tired. It may be that you are staying in poses too long or are trying too hard. Ideally, you will feel rejuvenated after practice. The restorative (passive or reclining) poses, however, are usually held for longer timings.

7. Keep your eyes open in the poses so you can observe where to adjust your body. This helps you stay focused. On the other hand, when doing restorative postures or relaxation, have your eyes closed and perhaps covered with an eye bag or soft cloth.

8. Remember to breathe going into a pose, while you're in the pose, and as you come out. Always breathe through the nostrils, not through the mouth, if at all possible.

9. Time yourself when you do poses that require you to work on one side of the body and then the other, to ensure you give equal time to stretching both sides of the body evenly.

10. Approach your practice with equal measures of awareness and gentleness. Treat your body with the utmost respect. It doesn't work to be pushy with your body in yoga, but it is equally unhelpful to be slack or lazy.

Blessings on your practice