

Types of Yoga

Yoga encompasses a variety of styles and approaches, each designed to cater to different physical, mental, and spiritual needs. While all yoga types aim to unite body, mind, and spirit, their emphasis varies. Here are some of the most prominent types of yoga:

1. Hatha Yoga

- **Focus:** Physical postures and breath control.
 - **Description:**
 - Often considered the foundation of physical yoga practice, Hatha Yoga involves a balanced combination of asanas (postures), pranayama (breathwork), and relaxation.
 - It's ideal for beginners due to its gentle pace and focus on basic poses.
 - **Goal:** Prepare the body for meditation by achieving balance and flexibility.
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2. Ashtanga Yoga

- **Focus:** Dynamic and structured sequences.
 - **Description:**
 - Known as the "Eight-Limbed Path" (as described in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras).
 - Involves a set series of postures performed in a flowing sequence (vinyasa), synchronised with breath.
 - Demands physical strength, flexibility, and endurance.
 - **Goal:** Build discipline, stamina, and inner focus.
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3. Vinyasa Yoga

- **Focus:** Fluid movement and breath coordination.
 - **Description:**
 - Often referred to as "Flow Yoga," this style emphasises linking breath to movement in a continuous sequence.
 - Each class can vary, as it allows creativity in designing sequences.
 - **Goal:** Promote strength, flexibility, and mindfulness through dynamic movement.
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4. Iyengar Yoga

- **Focus:** Precision and alignment.
 - **Description:**
 - Uses props like blocks, belts, and chairs to achieve proper alignment in poses.
 - Developed by B.K.S. Iyengar, it's meticulous and therapeutic, making it suitable for people with injuries or physical limitations.
 - **Goal:** Develop strength, stability, and awareness of body alignment.
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5. Kundalini Yoga

- **Focus:** Awakening spiritual energy (Kundalini).
 - **Description:**
 - Combines postures, breathwork, chanting (mantras), and meditation to activate the Kundalini energy at the base of the spine.
 - Emphasises spiritual growth and emotional balance.
 - **Goal:** Achieve higher states of consciousness and spiritual awakening.
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6. Bikram Yoga (Hot Yoga)

- **Focus:** Intense physical practice in a heated room.
 - **Description:**
 - Consists of 26 specific poses and 2 breathing exercises performed in a room heated to around 40°C (104°F).
 - Promotes detoxification and flexibility.
 - **Goal:** Build strength, improve flexibility, and release toxins through sweat.
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7. Yin Yoga

- **Focus:** Deep relaxation and stretching.
 - **Description:**
 - Involves holding passive poses for an extended period (3–5 minutes).
 - Targets deep connective tissues, improving flexibility and releasing tension.
 - **Goal:** Promote relaxation, mindfulness, and joint health.
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8. Restorative Yoga

- **Focus:** Rest and recovery.
 - **Description:**
 - A gentle practice involving supported poses with props to allow complete relaxation.
 - Suitable for stress relief, recovery, and healing.
 - **Goal:** Restore physical and mental balance.
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9. Bhakti Yoga

- **Focus:** Devotion and love for the divine.
 - **Description:**
 - A spiritual practice that involves chanting, singing, and rituals to cultivate devotion.
 - Emphasises surrender to a higher power.
 - **Goal:** Develop a loving connection with the divine.
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10. Karma Yoga

- **Focus:** Selfless action.
 - **Description:**
 - Centred around serving others without attachment to the outcome.
 - Encourages mindfulness in daily activities.
 - **Goal:** Purify the heart and cultivate humility.
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11. Jnana Yoga

- **Focus:** Knowledge and wisdom.
 - **Description:**
 - The path of intellect, involving deep study and reflection on spiritual texts and self-inquiry.
 - Suitable for those inclined toward philosophical exploration.
 - **Goal:** Realise one's true nature through knowledge.
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12. Tantra Yoga

- **Focus:** Rituals and energy work.
 - **Description:**
 - A holistic approach combining meditation, mantra, visualisation, and sacred rituals to channel energy.
 - Misunderstood in the West as being solely about sexuality; it encompasses spiritual and physical practices.
 - **Goal:** Achieve enlightenment through the integration of mind and body.
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Choosing the Right Yoga

The choice of yoga style depends on individual goals, whether they are physical fitness, mental clarity, stress relief, or spiritual growth.