

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Kundalini Yoga

A Beginner's Guide

What a class involves, the breathing and chanting, who should take care, and a gentle home routine

By Ranjana Sinha | ranjanayogaclass.com

Contents

#	Section
1	What Kundalini yoga is
2	Before you begin: safety first
3	Parts of a class
4	Three simple practices to know
5	A 15-minute gentle home routine
6	Your four-week plan
7	Choosing a class or teacher
8	Practising at home
9	Honest expectations
10	Common mistakes and fixes
11	Questions people ask
12	A pre-session checklist
13	Your first week, day by day
14	Glossary
15	Practice log

1. What Kundalini yoga is

Kundalini yoga combines physical postures, fast or sustained breathing, chanting, meditation and relaxation in structured sets called kriyas. In yogic texts, kundalini is described as a latent energy at the base of the spine. In the modern style taught in many studios, the practice aims to awaken this energy. This is a traditional belief, not a scientifically measured phenomenon.

Classes usually begin with a chant, then warm-ups, a kriya, relaxation and a closing meditation. Many teachers wear white and cover the head. These are customs, not requirements for you.

The short answer

Kundalini yoga is a style that mixes movement, breathing, chanting and meditation. It can feel intense. Beginners should start gently, learn from a qualified teacher and stop any breathing practice that causes dizziness or distress.

2. Before you begin: safety first

General education only. Check with your doctor first if you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, a heart, lung, joint or spine condition, osteoporosis, an eye condition such as glaucoma, or have had recent surgery or injury.

Stop and rest if you feel:

- sharp, pinching or burning pain (a mild stretch is fine, pain is a stop sign);
- dizziness, nausea or breathlessness;
- numbness or tingling, or pressure in the head or neck.

Go gently with the breath

Fast breathing such as breath of fire and long breath holds can cause dizziness or tingling. Do not do them if you are pregnant, have heart or blood pressure problems, epilepsy, or a respiratory condition, unless your doctor agrees. Meditation can also bring up strong emotions. If you have a history of anxiety, trauma or mental health conditions, speak with your doctor or therapist first.

3. Parts of a class

Part	What happens	Typical length
Tuning in	A chant and a few breaths to settle.	3-5 min
Warm-up	Spinal flexes, stretches and gentle movement.	10 min
Kriya	A set of postures and breathing, often repeated rhythmically.	20-30 min
Relaxation	Lying still, often with gentle music.	5-10 min
Meditation	Sitting with breath, a mantra or sound.	5-15 min

4. Three simple practices to know

Practice	How	Beginner note
Long deep breathing	Fill the belly, ribs, then chest; release in reverse.	Safe for most; stay relaxed.
Spinal flex	Sit cross-legged, hold shins, arch and round the spine with the breath.	Move slowly.
Breath of fire	Rapid, rhythmic breathing through the nose with the belly pumping.	Skip if pregnant or unwell; start for 15-30 seconds only.

5. A 15-minute gentle home routine

Time	Practice	Notes
2 min	Sit comfortably, long deep breathing	Eyes closed or soft.
3 min	Spinal flex	Slow and smooth.
3 min	Shoulder shrugs and neck rolls	Gentle range.
2 min	Cat and cow	With the breath.
5 min	Lie down and relax, then sit quietly	No effort.

6. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Long deep breathing and spinal flex	10 min	Do you feel calm or dizzy?
2	Add shoulder and neck work	12 min	Is the pace comfortable?
3	Add a short seated meditation	15 min	What did you notice, without judging it?
4	Try a beginner class with a qualified teacher	60 min	Which parts do you like?

7. Choosing a class or teacher

Kundalini classes can include chanting in Gurmukhi, a sacred language of the Sikh tradition, and a spiritual framing. Many people enjoy this; you are free to take part in the ways that feel right. Look for classes labelled beginner or introductory, with a trained teacher.

- Tell the teacher about any injury, surgery, pregnancy or health condition before class.
- Ask which practices are optional; a good teacher says most are.
- If a teacher dismisses pain or distress as part of the process, find another class.

8. Practising at home

At home, stick to simple breathing and gentle movement before trying longer kriyas. Use a reliable source and a teacher where possible, and stop if you feel unwell. Avoid advanced sets or long breath holds without guidance.

9. Honest expectations

Some people find kundalini practice energising or calming. Research on yoga and breathing is still developing, and the effects on any condition are not established. Claims of awakening energy or healing are beliefs of the tradition, not medical facts. Practice does not replace medical or psychological care. There have also been public concerns about conduct by some past leaders of the movement; choose teachers and organisations carefully.

10. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Starting with advanced breathing	Learn long deep breathing first.
Pushing through dizziness	Stop, breathe normally and rest.
Doing intense sets late at night	Energising practices may disturb sleep for some.
Expecting dramatic experiences	Treat any sensation as information, not a goal.
Following any teacher blindly	Check training and ask questions.

11. Questions people ask

Is kundalini yoga safe for beginners?

Gentle practices are fine for most. Fast breathing and long holds need care, and a doctor check is wise if you have a health condition.

What does kundalini mean?

In yogic texts it describes a potential energy at the base of the spine. It is a traditional concept, not an anatomical structure.

Do I need to wear white or cover my head?

No. These are customs.

How is it different from Hatha yoga?

Kundalini emphasises breath, sound and repeated sets, while Hatha focuses on holding postures.

12. A pre-session checklist

- Have I eaten lightly, at least two hours ago, and had some water?
- Is my space clear, warm and free from interruptions?

- Do I know what I will practise, and how long I have?
- Is there anything in my body today (pain, tiredness, illness) that means I should do less?
- Do I know my stop signs: sharp pain, dizziness, breathlessness?

Running through these five questions takes less than a minute and prevents most beginner problems.

13. Your first week, day by day

Day	Suggestion
1	Read this guide. Try just the warm-up and the final rest.
2	Rest, or a five-minute walk.
3	Repeat day 1 and add one new pose or step.
4	Rest.
5	Practise a short version. Notice how you feel afterwards.
6	Write a few lines in the practice log.
7	Rest. Plan next week from what you noticed.

Three short sessions a week are a good start. Regular, gentle practice builds confidence, and rest days let the body adapt.

14. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Kriya	A set of postures, breath and sound.
Kundalini	Traditional term for latent energy at the spine base.
Mantra	A repeated sound or phrase.
Breath of fire	Rapid rhythmic nasal breathing.

Reminder

This guide is general education and not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat or cure any condition. If you have a health concern, speak with your doctor before starting a new practice.

Practice log

Print this page and keep a short record. Notes help you see patterns over time.

Day	Minutes	Practice done	How it felt	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				