

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Yoga for Stress

A Beginner's Guide (Doctor First)

Calming practices you can try, what research says, and when to ask for help

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General education only. Not medical advice. Speak with your doctor before starting any new practice.

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1. What stress relief is

Stress is the body and mind responding to demands. Short-term stress is normal. Long-lasting stress can affect sleep, mood and health, and it deserves attention from a doctor or counsellor.

Many people find slow breathing, gentle movement and rest calming. Studies suggest modest benefits for stress for some people. Yoga is a self-care tool, not a treatment.

The short answer

Yoga can be one of several things that help you feel calmer. It does not replace professional care if stress is affecting your daily life.

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.

Doctor first

If stress feels overwhelming, or comes with panic, constant low mood, or sleeplessness, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional. Yoga is a supplement, not a replacement.

Stop and get medical advice if you notice:

- thoughts of harming yourself (seek urgent help now);
- chest pain or severe breathlessness;
- panic that does not settle, or dizziness during breathing practice.

3. Calming practices to try

Practice	How	Time
Slow belly breathing	Hand on the belly, breathe in gently, out a little longer.	3-5 min
Cat and cow	Move slowly with the breath.	2-3 min
Forward fold, supported	Rest the head on a chair or bolster.	2 min
Legs up the wall	Rest, breathe naturally.	5 min
Final relaxation	Lie still, eyes closed.	5 min

4. A 15-minute calming routine

Time	Practice	Notes
3 min	Seated slow breathing	Longer exhale.
3 min	Cat and cow, neck and shoulder rolls	Slow.
3 min	Supported forward fold	Let go.
5 min	Legs up the wall or final relaxation	Rest.

5. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Slow breathing	5 min	How is your stress, 1 to 10?
2	Add gentle movement	10 min	Which part helps most?
3	Full routine	15 min	Any change in sleep?
4	Practise most days	15 min	Review your notes.

6. Choosing a class or teacher

A calm, quiet class is best. Avoid fast, intense classes if you are already wound up, and skip forceful breathing.

- Tell the teacher about your condition, medicines, injuries and pregnancy before class.
- Ask about their training for your situation.
- Avoid anyone who says yoga can replace your treatment.

7. Practising at home

At home, practise at a regular time, such as before bed. A short regular routine beats occasional long ones.

8. Honest expectations

Studies report modest reductions in stress for some people, but results vary and study quality differs. Yoga does not treat anxiety disorders or depression. If you feel unwell, see a doctor.

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Expecting instant calm	Give it a few weeks.
Forcing the breath	Keep it easy.
Using yoga to avoid help	Seek care if stress is heavy.
Pushing a hard workout	Choose gentle.
Practising only when stressed	Build a routine.

10. Questions people ask

Does yoga reduce stress?

Many people feel calmer, and some studies show modest benefit. Results vary.

Which style is best?

Gentle styles such as Hatha, Restorative and Nidra suit most people.

How often?

Short daily sessions are fine.

Can yoga replace therapy?

No. It can complement it.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Stress	The body and mind's response to demands.
Exhale	Breathing out.
Restorative	Supported rest.

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	Stress score	How it felt	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				