

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Advanced Poses, Safely

Backbends, Arm Balances, Inversions

Injury-aware preparation for harder poses,
and honest advice on when to wait

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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 an advanced pose is

Advanced poses include deep backbends, arm balances such as crow, and inversions such as headstand and shoulderstand. They look impressive, but they ask a lot of the wrists, neck, shoulders and spine.

Many people never need them, and nothing about yoga requires them. If you want to explore them, prepare with strength and mobility over months, learn with a qualified teacher, and treat each as optional.

The short answer

Learn the basics first. Work up to advanced poses over months with a teacher, use props and walls, and skip any pose that strains your neck or wrists. Many people do well without them.

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.

Higher-risk poses

Headstand and shoulderstand put load on the neck. Inversions are not advised with glaucoma or eye pressure problems, high blood pressure, heart disease, neck injury, or in pregnancy unless your doctor and a specialist teacher say otherwise. Arm balances load the wrists. Stop for pain, dizziness or numbness.

3. Prepare before you try

Pose	Prepare with	Wait if...
Crow	Plank holds, wrist warm-up, squats.	Wrists hurt in plank.
Headstand	Dolphin pose, core strength, a trained teacher.	You have neck or eye problems.
Shoulderstand	Bridge, legs up the wall.	You have neck pain.
Wheel	Bridge, shoulder and hip opening.	Your back or shoulders are stiff or painful.
Handstand	Plank, downward dog, wall drills.	Shoulders or wrists are weak.

4. Gentler alternatives

- Legs up the wall instead of shoulderstand.
- Dolphin pose instead of headstand.
- Bridge instead of wheel.
- Plank with bent knees instead of crow.

5. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Build core, wrist and shoulder strength	20 min	Any wrist or neck pain?
2	Practise prep poses for one advanced pose	20 min	Can you hold them steady?
3	Try the pose near a wall with a teacher	30 min	How does the neck feel?
4	Decide if you want to continue	30 min	No need to rush.

6. Choosing a class or teacher

Learn advanced poses in a small class or one-to-one with an experienced teacher who offers spotting, props and alternatives, and who does not pressure you.

- Ask about the teacher's training in inversions.
- Tell the teacher about any neck, eye, blood pressure or wrist problems.
- Choose a wall or props for first attempts.

7. Practising at home

Avoid trying headstand or handstand alone at home without experience. Falls and neck strain are real risks. Use a wall and a soft area, and stop if you feel pain.

8. Honest expectations

Advanced poses are not a sign of progress in yoga and do not give extra health benefits. Claims about special effects of inversions are not supported. Skipping them is a fine choice.

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Rushing to inversions	Build strength over months.
Putting weight on the neck	Keep the load on the shoulders and arms.
Ignoring wrist pain	Rest and see a professional.
Practising alone too soon	Learn with a teacher.
Comparing yourself with photos	Progress differs.

10. Questions people ask

Is headstand safe?

It carries risk for the neck and is not advised for everyone. Learn with a teacher and check with your doctor.

Do I need advanced poses?

No. Many people practise for life without them.

How long to learn crow?

It varies from weeks to months, depending on strength and wrists.

Can inversions cure anything?

No. There is no good evidence for that.

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
Inversion	A pose with the head below the heart.
Arm balance	A pose supported on the hands.
Spotter	A person who helps for safety.

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