

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

# Types of Yoga

## A Beginner's Guide to Choosing a Style

A plain comparison of popular styles, how intense each is, and how to choose your first class

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## 1. What a yoga style is

There are many styles of yoga, and a new student can feel lost among the names. Some styles are slow and gentle, others are strong and fast. Some focus on alignment, others on breath, rest or meditation.

The best style is the one you will enjoy and can do safely. This guide compares the common styles so you can choose a first class with confidence.

### The short answer

Hatha, Yin and Restorative suit most beginners. Vinyasa, Ashtanga, Power and Hot are more demanding. Chair and Nidra are the gentlest. Try a beginner class of one style, then compare.

## 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.

Any style can be adapted, but the more vigorous ones carry a higher chance of strain. Tell your teacher about injuries, pregnancy and health conditions, and see your doctor first if you have any condition affecting your heart, blood pressure, joints or balance.

## 3. Styles at a glance

| Style        | Pace                  | Best for                                                 |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Hatha        | Slow                  | Learning the basic poses.                                |
| Vinyasa      | Flowing               | People who like movement linked to breath.               |
| Ashtanga     | Fast, fixed series    | People who like structure and effort.                    |
| Iyengar      | Slow, detailed        | Alignment and the use of props.                          |
| Yin          | Very slow             | Long, passive holds for the hips and back.               |
| Restorative  | Very slow             | Deep rest with props.                                    |
| Power        | Fast                  | A strength workout.                                      |
| Hot / Bikram | Moderate, heated room | People who tolerate heat and have checked with a doctor. |
| Kundalini    | Varied                | Breath, chanting and meditation.                         |
| Chair        | Slow                  | Limited mobility, desk breaks.                           |
| Yoga Nidra   | Lying still           | Guided rest.                                             |
| Aerial       | Varied                | Fun with a hammock, in a studio.                         |

## 4. How to choose

| If you want...        | Try...                                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A gentle start        | Hatha, Chair or Restorative                |
| A workout             | Vinyasa or Power, once you know the basics |
| Calm and rest         | Yin, Restorative or Nidra                  |
| Careful alignment     | Iyengar                                    |
| Breath and meditation | Kundalini or a meditation class            |
| An easy home practice | Hatha or a short video, at your own pace   |

## 5. Your four-week plan

| Week | Focus                               | Length    | What to notice            |
|------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1    | Try a beginner Hatha class or video | 30 min    | Was the pace comfortable? |
| 2    | Try a second style                  | 30 min    | Which one did you enjoy?  |
| 3    | Repeat the favourite                | 30-45 min | Notice energy after.      |
| 4    | Mix in one gentle style a week      | 45 min    | Balance effort and rest.  |

## 6. Choosing a class or teacher

Class names vary between studios. A "Vinyasa" class at one studio may be slow, and at another fast. Read the description, look for beginner labels, and ask the teacher what to expect.

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

## 7. Practising at home

For home practice, a simple video or one of our guides is a good start. Choose a style that fits your energy that day, and keep it easy.

## 8. Honest expectations

Style differences are real, but no style is superior for everyone. Claims that one style detoxifies the body or cures a condition are not supported. Choose what you enjoy.

## 9. Common mistakes and fixes

| Mistake                         | Fix                                          |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Starting with the hardest style | Begin with a beginner or fundamentals class. |
| Judging yoga on one class       | Try two or three before deciding.            |
| Ignoring pain                   | Back off or skip the pose.                   |
| Choosing by trend               | Choose by how it feels in your body.         |
| Skipping the basics             | Learn simple poses well first.               |

## 10. Questions people ask

### Which yoga is best for beginners?

Hatha or a beginner Vinyasa class is a common start. Gentle styles such as Restorative and Chair are also fine.

### What is the difference between Hatha and Vinyasa?

Hatha usually holds poses with pauses. Vinyasa links poses in a flow with the breath.

### Which style is best for stress?

Many people find slow styles such as Yin, Restorative and Nidra calming. They are not treatments, so talk to a doctor if stress is affecting your life.

### Can I mix styles?

Yes. Many people do.

## 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                          |
|---------|----------------------------------------|
| Hatha   | General term for physical yoga.        |
| Vinyasa | Flow linked with breath.               |
| Props   | Blocks, straps, blankets and bolsters. |
| Nidra   | Guided deep relaxation.                |

### 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 | Class tried | How it felt | Notes |
|-----|---------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| 1   |         |             |             |       |
| 2   |         |             |             |       |
| 3   |         |             |             |       |
| 4   |         |             |             |       |
| 5   |         |             |             |       |
| 6   |         |             |             |       |
| 7   |         |             |             |       |
| 8   |         |             |             |       |
| 9   |         |             |             |       |
| 10  |         |             |             |       |
| 11  |         |             |             |       |
| 12  |         |             |             |       |
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| 14  |         |             |             |       |