

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Restorative Yoga

A Beginner's Guide to Supported Rest

Six supported poses, how to set up with props at home, and a 25-minute sequence

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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 Restorative yoga is

Restorative yoga is a practice of deep rest. You lie or sit in supported positions, using bolsters, blankets and blocks, so the muscles can let go. Poses are held for five to twenty minutes, and there is almost no stretching effort.

It is often recommended as a counterbalance to busy days or hard exercise. The aim is not to get anything done in the body but to give it permission to be still.

The short answer

Restorative yoga is a slow practice of supported rest in a few poses held for several minutes. It is relaxing and gentle, but it is not a treatment for any condition.

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.

Restorative poses are gentle, but long holds and lying positions are not right for everyone. Pregnant people should use side-lying or semi-reclined versions advised by their doctor. If you feel dizzy when lying flat, raise the head and chest with extra bolsters.

3. What you need

Item	Notes
Bolster or 2-3 firm pillows	Supports the back and legs.
Blankets (2 or 3)	Rolled, folded or covering you for warmth.
Blocks or thick books	Raise the head or support the knees.
Eye cover or cloth	Optional.
Quiet room, warm	Body temperature drops in stillness.

4. Six supported poses

Pose	Set-up	Time
Supported child's pose	Kneel with a bolster lengthwise between the knees, fold over it, turn the head to one side, and swap sides halfway.	5 min
Supported reclining bound angle	Lie back on a bolster, soles together, knees supported by blankets.	5-10 min
Legs up the wall	Hips near the wall, legs resting up the wall, blanket under the hips if comfortable.	5-10 min
Supported bridge	Lie back with a block or bolster under the pelvis.	3-5 min
Supported twist	Sit sideways to a bolster, twist and lie over it.	3 min each side
Final relaxation	Lie with knees supported and a blanket over the body.	5 min

Come out of each pose slowly, rolling to one side first, to avoid dizziness.

5. A 25-minute sequence

Time	Practice	Notes
2 min	Settle: lie down and breathe naturally	Cover up.
5 min	Supported child's pose	Switch head side halfway.
6 min	Legs up the wall	Rest the arms.
6 min	Supported reclining bound angle	Prop both knees.
6 min	Final relaxation	Eye cover if you like.

6. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Final relaxation and legs up the wall	10 min	How does your breath feel afterwards?
2	Add supported child's pose	15 min	Can you let the weight rest on the props?
3	Add reclining bound angle	20 min	Is any pose uncomfortable? Adjust props.
4	Full 25-minute sequence	25 min	When in the day does it suit you best?

7. Choosing a class or teacher

A restorative class is usually quiet, with dim light and plenty of props. A good teacher sets you up carefully, checks your comfort and does not push you into stretching. Studios that offer "gentle" or "restorative" classes often provide all props.

- Tell the teacher about any condition, especially pregnancy, back problems or blood pressure concerns.
- Ask whether props are provided.
- Wear warm layers; you will cool down in stillness.

8. Practising at home

Restorative yoga is one of the easiest practices to do at home. Use a spare room or bedroom, pillows, and a folded blanket. Choose two or three poses and stay in each as long as it feels comfortable. If your mind is busy, that is normal; let the breath be natural and stay still.

9. Honest expectations

Many people find restorative yoga deeply relaxing. Some find it hard to stay still at first, or feel emotional. If that happens, move gently, open your eyes and take a few slow breaths. It is not a treatment for any medical or mental health condition, and it does not replace medical care.

10. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Too few props	Add a blanket or bolster until you feel fully supported.
Getting cold	Cover up and warm the room.
Coming up fast	Roll to one side and pause before sitting.
Treating it as stretching	Reduce effort. The pose should feel like rest.
Checking the time	Use a soft timer so you do not watch the clock.

11. Questions people ask

Is restorative yoga good for stress?

Many people find it calming. It is a relaxation practice, not a treatment, so if stress is affecting your daily life, please talk to a doctor.

How is it different from Yin yoga?

Yin involves a mild stretch held for minutes. Restorative focuses on full support and rest, with little stretch.

How often can I practise?

Daily short sessions are fine for most people.

Can I fall asleep?

Yes. If you do, that likely means you were tired.

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
Bolster	A firm, long cushion.
Supported	Resting fully on props.
Savasana	Final relaxation pose.

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