

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Yoga for Athletes

A Beginner's Guide

Mobility, recovery and breathing for sport,
and how to fit yoga into training

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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 athletic yoga is

Athletes often use yoga for mobility, recovery, body awareness and breath control. It can complement training, not replace sport-specific work or strength training.

Long static stretching right before a power or speed effort may reduce performance for some people, so use dynamic movement before and longer stretches after or on rest days.

The short answer

Use yoga on rest or recovery days for mobility and relaxation, and use short dynamic movement before sport. Listen to your body, and speak to a coach or sports physiotherapist about injuries.

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 you have an injury or a medical condition, check with a doctor or sports physiotherapist before changing your routine. Do not stretch into pain or on a fresh injury.

Stop and get medical advice if you notice:

- sharp pain, swelling or a joint that gives way;
- dizziness or chest pain during exercise;
- pain that lasts after sessions.

3. How yoga can fit training

When	What	Why
Before sport	Short dynamic warm-up: cat and cow, lunges, hip circles.	Prepare joints.
After sport	Gentle holds: lunge, pigeon (easy), forward fold.	Ease stiffness.
Rest day	Longer yoga session or Restorative.	Active recovery.
Before bed	Slow breathing, legs up the wall.	Wind down.

4. Common athlete focus areas

Area	Helpful movements
Hips	Low lunge, figure-four stretch.
Hamstrings	Gentle forward fold with bent knees.
Shoulders	Thread the needle, puppy pose.
Ankles and calves	Downward dog, calf stretch.
Core and balance	Plank, tree, boat.

Match the focus to your sport and ask your coach.

5. A 20-minute recovery routine

Time	Practice	Notes
3 min	Slow breathing, cat and cow	Settle.
5 min	Low lunge and hamstring fold, both sides	Mild stretch.
4 min	Figure-four and supine twist	Easy.
4 min	Legs up the wall	Rest.
4 min	Final relaxation	Breathe.

6. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	One recovery session a week	20 min	How does your body feel?
2	Add a pre-sport warm-up	10 min	Is performance steady?
3	Add balance and core	20 min	Any pain?
4	Review with your coach	Meeting	Adjust the plan.

7. Choosing a class or teacher

Look for yoga classes for athletes or sports mobility, and share your training schedule with the teacher.

- 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.

8. Practising at home

At home, do yoga on recovery days and after sessions. Keep stretches mild, and breathe slowly.

9. Honest expectations

Yoga may help mobility and recovery for some athletes, but the evidence on injury prevention and performance is mixed. It is one piece of training, alongside strength, skill and rest.

10. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Deep stretching before power work	Warm up dynamically.
Stretching injuries	Get them assessed.
Ignoring strength	Yoga does not replace strength training.
Overdoing heat	Stay cool and hydrated.
Skiping rest	Recovery is training.

11. Questions people ask

Does yoga improve performance?

It may help mobility and recovery. Evidence on performance is mixed.

Can yoga prevent injury?

It may help some people, but there is no guarantee.

When should I stretch?

Dynamic movement before, longer holds after or on rest days.

Is hot yoga good for athletes?

Heat adds risk. Check with a doctor and stay hydrated.

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
Dynamic warm-up	Moving stretches before sport.
Mobility	How freely joints move.
Recovery	Rest and repair after training.

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