

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Hot Yoga

A Beginner's Guide, Including Bikram

What heated classes are, who should avoid them,
how to prepare and how to stay safe

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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 hot yoga is

Hot yoga means yoga practised in a heated room, often between about 32 and 40 degrees Celsius. Bikram yoga is a specific style: a fixed sequence of 26 poses and two breathing exercises, practised in a heated room, created by Bikram Choudhury. Many studios now offer other hot classes, such as hot Vinyasa.

Heat makes you sweat and may make you feel looser, but it also raises the risk of overheating, dehydration and overstretching. This guide is mainly about doing it safely.

The short answer

Hot yoga is yoga in a heated room. It can feel intense and is not suitable for everyone. Beginners should go slowly, hydrate, rest often and speak with a doctor first if they have any health condition.

2. Before you begin: safety first

Heat adds real risks. Talk to your doctor before trying it if any of these apply.

- pregnancy, or trying to conceive;
- heart disease, high or low blood pressure, or a history of fainting;
- diabetes, kidney problems or a condition affecting how you sweat;
- eating disorders, or taking medicines that affect heat tolerance or fluids;
- a recent illness, fever or injury.

Leave the room and cool down if you feel:

- dizziness, nausea, a pounding heart or severe headache;
- confusion, chills or stopping sweating;
- cramps or extreme fatigue.

Your body, your pace

You can sit or lie down in a hot class at any time. Do not push through heat symptoms. If they continue after you cool down, seek medical advice.

3. Preparing

Do	Why
Drink water through the day before class	Start hydrated.
Eat lightly 2 to 3 hours before	A full stomach is uncomfortable in heat and twisting.
Bring a towel, a water bottle and a change of clothes	You will sweat a lot.
Wear light, breathable clothes	Cotton or synthetic activewear that you can move in.
Arrive early	Let your body get used to the temperature.
Skip alcohol before class	It affects hydration and balance.

4. In the room

- Place your mat near the door or a window for your first few classes.
- Sip small amounts of water through the class.
- Rest in child's pose whenever you need it.
- Do not stretch deeper just because you feel loose. Heat can hide strain.

- Stay for the relaxation at the end, then cool down slowly.

5. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	One short class (45 min) or a home practice with warm clothes	20-45 min	How did you feel in the heat?
2	Two classes, resting between	45-60 min	Did you stay hydrated?
3	Two or three classes	60 min	Which poses felt comfortable?
4	Choose the pace that suits you	60-90 min	Is the heat helping or draining you?

6. Choosing a class or teacher

Hot classes vary a lot. Ask the studio about the temperature and humidity, class length, and whether there is a beginner class. A good teacher reminds you to rest and drink, and does not criticise people who sit out.

- Ask about the room temperature before booking.
- Tell the teacher about health conditions and pregnancy.
- Choose a beginner or a lower-temperature class first.

7. Practising at home

You cannot safely recreate a heated studio at home. If you want to try, practise in a warm room, not a very hot one, with water at hand. A normal, comfortable-temperature practice is perfectly good yoga.

8. Honest expectations

Hot yoga can feel invigorating, and some people love the sweat. Other people dislike it. Claims that sweating detoxifies the body, or that heat guarantees weight loss or cures conditions, are not supported. A comfortable-temperature class is an equally good choice.

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Not drinking enough	Drink before and sip during class.
Pushing into deep stretches	Heat can mask strain. Stay at a mild stretch.
Skipping rest	Rest whenever you feel too hot.
Going on an empty or full stomach	Eat lightly two to three hours beforehand.
Ignoring dizziness	Leave the room and cool down.

10. Questions people ask

What is the difference between Bikram and hot yoga?

Bikram is a fixed 26-pose sequence in a heated room. Hot yoga is any yoga in a heated room.

Is hot yoga good for weight loss?

You will sweat, but sweat is water loss, not fat loss. It can be part of an active lifestyle.

How hot is too hot?

It varies by person. If you feel unwell, cool down and leave.

Should I try it if I am pregnant?

Please check with your doctor first. Many doctors advise against heated environments in pregnancy.

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
Hot yoga	Yoga in a heated room.
Bikram	A fixed 26-pose hot yoga sequence.
Hydration	Having enough fluid in the body.

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