

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Yoga and Mood

A Beginner's Guide (Doctor First)

How gentle practice may support well-being,
and why it does not replace care

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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 mental well-being is

Mental health problems such as anxiety and depression are medical conditions. They are common and treatable, and professional care matters. Yoga is not a treatment for them.

Some people find that gentle movement, breathing and relaxation help them feel more settled, and studies suggest it may be useful alongside treatment for some people. Individual experiences vary.

The short answer

Yoga may support well-being as an addition to care from your doctor or therapist. It does not replace therapy or medicines. If you are struggling, please reach out to a professional.

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 live with anxiety, depression, trauma or another mental health condition, speak to your doctor or therapist before starting, and do not stop any medicines or treatment. Some breathing and stillness practices can bring up strong feelings.

Stop and get medical advice if you notice:

- thoughts of harming yourself or others: contact local emergency services or a crisis line now;
- panic, a racing heart or feeling detached during practice;
- feeling worse after practice that does not ease.

3. Gentle practices that may help

Practice	How	Note
Slow breathing	Easy breath, longer exhale.	No breath holds.
Gentle movement	Cat and cow, shoulder rolls.	Comfortable range.
Grounding	Feel the feet or hands on the floor.	Opens eyes if you need.
Walking	Slow, aware walking outdoors.	Often helpful.
Short rest	Lie still for a few minutes.	Stop if uncomfortable.

4. A 12-minute grounding routine

Time	Practice	Notes
3 min	Feel your feet, slow breathing	Open eyes if needed.
3 min	Gentle movement	Slow.
3 min	Supported rest	Comfortable.
3 min	Sit quietly or walk	Notice surroundings.

5. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Grounding and breathing	5 min	How do you feel, 1 to 10?
2	Add gentle movement	10 min	What helped?
3	Full routine	12 min	Share notes with your therapist.
4	Practise most days	12 min	Keep your care team informed.

6. Choosing a class or teacher

Look for trauma-informed or gentle classes. A good teacher offers choices, does not force closed eyes or touch, and respects your limits.

- 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.

7. Practising at home

At home, keep it short and choose what feels safe. Stop if feelings become overwhelming.

8. Honest expectations

Studies on yoga and mood are mixed in quality, with modest benefits for some people. Yoga is not a cure, and claims that it fixes depression or anxiety are not supported. Professional help is important.

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Stopping treatment	Never stop medicines without your doctor.
Forcing stillness	Open eyes and move if uncomfortable.
Practising alone through a crisis	Reach out for help.
Expecting a cure	Use it as support.
Comparing yourself	Everyone differs.

10. Questions people ask

Can yoga treat depression or anxiety?

No. It may support well-being alongside care.

Is meditation safe?

Usually, but some people feel distressed. Stop and ask a professional.

Which class is best?

Gentle, trauma-informed classes with a trained teacher.

Should I tell my therapist?

Yes. They can help you choose.

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
Anxiety	Persistent worry or fear.
Grounding	Focusing on the present through the senses.
Trauma-informed	Teaching that respects safety and choice.

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