

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Prenatal Yoga

A Beginner's Guide (Doctor First)

Gentle yoga during and after pregnancy:
safety rules, ideas to discuss and when to stop

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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 Prenatal yoga is

Prenatal yoga is yoga adapted for pregnancy, usually with gentle movement, breathing and relaxation. Postnatal yoga is adapted for the weeks and months after birth. Both are taught by teachers with specific training.

Many pregnant people enjoy gentle movement and relaxation. But pregnancy is a medical situation. This guide gives general information only, and your own doctor or midwife should decide whether yoga is suitable for you.

The short answer

Check with your doctor or midwife before starting any yoga in pregnancy or after birth. Choose a qualified prenatal teacher. Stop and seek advice if you have pain, bleeding, dizziness or anything unusual.

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, every time

Ask your doctor or midwife whether yoga is right for you and what to avoid. Yoga may not be advised in some pregnancies, such as those with certain complications. Avoid hot rooms, deep twists, lying flat on the back for long periods in later pregnancy, and strong abdominal work unless your doctor says it is fine.

Stop and call your doctor if you notice:

- vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking;
- regular painful contractions;
- dizziness, chest pain, headache or shortness of breath;
- calf pain or swelling, or reduced baby movement.

3. General ideas often used in prenatal classes

Idea	Why	Note
Gentle cat and cow	Eases the back and hips.	Move slowly.
Wide-legged poses with support	Makes room for the belly.	Keep knees comfortable.
Supported side-lying rest	Avoids lying flat on the back.	Use pillows.
Easy seated breathing	Calms and builds breath awareness.	No breath holds.
Gentle pelvic movements	May ease the lower back.	Stay pain-free.

4. After birth

Wait for your doctor or midwife to clear you for exercise, usually after a check-up. Begin with breathing, gentle pelvic floor awareness and short walks, and build slowly. Recovery after a caesarean or complications takes longer.

5. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Talk to your doctor or midwife	Visit	What should I avoid?
2	Find a trained prenatal teacher	Search	Does the teacher have prenatal training?
3	Try a gentle class	45 min	Did anything feel wrong?
4	Practise short sessions	15-20 min	Rest when tired.

6. Choosing a class or teacher

Look for classes labelled prenatal or pregnancy yoga. A good teacher asks how far along you are, checks in with you, offers props and does not push stretches. Tell the teacher about any complication.

- Tell the teacher how many weeks pregnant you are.
- Ask about their prenatal training.
- Skip any pose that does not feel right.

7. Practising at home

Home practice is fine only if your doctor agrees. Use cushions, a wall for balance and a stable floor. Keep water nearby and avoid heat. Stop if you feel unwell.

8. Honest expectations

Many people find gentle yoga relaxing in pregnancy, but claims that it guarantees an easy birth are not supported. Every pregnancy differs. Follow your doctor or midwife.

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Starting without medical clearance	Ask your doctor or midwife first.
Overstretching	Pregnancy hormones can loosen joints. Keep stretches mild.
Lying flat on the back late in pregnancy	Use pillows or lie on your side.
Practising in the heat	Use a cool, well-aired room.
Returning too soon after birth	Wait for clearance.

10. Questions people ask

Is yoga safe during pregnancy?

Gentle prenatal yoga is considered suitable for many healthy pregnancies, but you must check with your doctor or midwife first.

When can I start after birth?

It depends on your birth and recovery. Ask your doctor or midwife.

Can I do hot yoga when pregnant?

Heated rooms are generally not advised in pregnancy. Ask your doctor.

Which poses should I avoid?

Your doctor can advise. Common cautions include deep twists, strong abdominal work and lying flat on your back later 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
Prenatal	Before birth.
Postnatal	After birth.
Midwife	A trained birth professional.

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