

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Yin Yoga

A Beginner's Guide

How it works, eight floor poses with safe hold times, a 25-minute sequence, and safety notes

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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 Yin yoga is

Yin yoga is a slow, quiet style. You sit or lie on the floor in a pose and stay there for a few minutes with the muscles relaxed. Most poses are held for one to five minutes, often longer than in other styles.

The idea is to let the body soften gradually rather than to work the muscles hard. It is also an easy place to practise patience and breath awareness, because there is so little to do but stay.

The short answer

Yin yoga is a slow floor-based practice where you hold gentle stretches for one to five minutes with relaxed muscles. It is a calming complement to more active exercise, not a replacement for it.

What this guide gives you

- An honest explanation of how Yin works.
- Eight beginner poses with hold times and safety tips.
- A 25-minute sequence and a four-week plan.

- Guidance on when to back off, and who should check with a doctor first.

2. Before you begin: safety first

Long holds put steady pressure on the joints and connective tissue, so Yin needs more care than it looks.

Check with your doctor or physiotherapist first if you:

- have a joint condition, past joint injury, hypermobility or osteoporosis;
- are pregnant (many floor poses need changes);
- have had recent surgery;
- have knee, hip or lower-back problems;
- have a nerve condition or numbness in the legs or feet.

Come out of a pose slowly if you feel:

- sharp, pinching, burning or electric pain;
- numbness or pins and needles;
- pain in the joint itself, rather than a dull stretch in the muscle or tissue;
- dizziness when you come up.

Find your edge, not your limit

A good Yin pose feels like a mild to moderate stretch, a dull ache you can breathe through. If you would rate the sensation above five out of ten, ease off. Use props generously.

3. What you need

Item	Notes
Mat and blanket	Extra padding for knees and a layer to keep warm.
Bolster or firm cushions	To support the spine and legs. Pillows also work.
Two blocks or thick books	To lift the hips or support the head.
A strap or scarf	Reaches the feet without straining.
A timer	A soft phone alarm lets you stop watching the clock.

4. How Yin yoga works

- **Come into the pose gently.** Go to a mild stretch, not the maximum.
- **Be still.** Relax the muscles in the area as much as you can.
- **Breathe slowly.** Let the breath be natural and easy.
- **Set a timer.** Start with one minute and build up.

- **Come out slowly.** Rest in a neutral position for a minute afterwards.

You may notice that Yin can feel different from a regular stretch. That is normal. If something feels wrong, trust that feeling and come out.

5. Eight beginner poses

Pose	How to do it	Hold	Safety tip
Butterfly	Sit with soles of the feet together, knees wide, and fold forward gently over a bolster or blocks.	1 to 3 min	Support the knees with cushions. Keep the back long.
Caterpillar	Sit with legs stretched ahead. Fold over the legs with a rounded back, resting the head on a cushion.	1 to 3 min	Bend the knees. Do not pull on the back.
Child's pose	Kneel and sit back on the heels, knees wide, and rest the forehead on a block or cushion.	1 to 3 min	Place a blanket behind the knees if they are sensitive.
Sphinx	Lie on the belly, forearms on the floor, elbows under shoulders. Lift the chest gently.	1 to 3 min	Lift only a little. Skip if the lower back is sensitive or if pregnant.
Supported bridge	Lie on the back, knees bent. Lift the hips and rest a block or bolster under the pelvis.	2 to 4 min	Keep the block low first. Come down if the neck feels strained.
Reclined twist	Lie on the back. Drop both bent knees to one side, arms wide. Turn the head the other way only if the neck is comfortable.	1 to 3 min each	Support the knees with a cushion.
Reclined butterfly	Lie on the back, soles together, knees wide. Support each knee with a cushion.	2 to 4 min	Keep the lower back comfortable. Skip if pregnant.
Legs up the wall	Lie on the back and rest the legs up a wall, hips a hand or two from it.	3 to 5 min	Come out by bending the knees and rolling to one side. Skip with eye conditions or if directed otherwise.

6. A 25-minute sequence

Time	Pose	Notes
2 min	Settle in comfortable seat	Notice the breath.
3 min	Butterfly	Fold over a cushion.
3 min	Caterpillar	Bend the knees.
2 min	Sphinx	Gentle lift only.
2 min	Child's pose	Rest and breathe.
3 min	Supported bridge	Block low.
4 min	Reclined twist, 2 min each side	Support the knees.
3 min	Legs up the wall	Rest the arms.
3 min	Savasana	Lie still, cover up.

7. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Butterfly, child's pose, savasana	10 min	Where do you feel the stretch? Is it dull, not sharp?
2	Add caterpillar and reclined twist	15 min	Can you stay still for a minute?
3	Add sphinx and supported bridge	20 min	Does the breath stay easy?
4	Full 25-minute sequence	25 min	Which poses do you look forward to?

Two to three Yin sessions a week is enough. Do not do the full sequence before an intense workout.

8. Yin compared with other styles

Style	Pace	Focus
Yin	Very slow, long holds	Relaxed stretch and stillness
Restorative	Fully supported, little stretch	Rest
Hatha	Slow, shorter holds	Poses, breath and relaxation
Vinyasa	Flowing	Movement linked to breath

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Going too deep too quickly	Back off to a mild stretch. Depth comes with time.
Gripping the muscles	Relax them. If you cannot, use more props.
Holding through sharp pain	Come out immediately.
Coming up fast	Rest for a minute in a neutral position first.
Getting cold	Cover up. Body temperature drops when you are still.

10. Questions people ask

Is Yin yoga good for flexibility?

Many people find they move more easily over time. Results vary, and it is best treated as one part of a varied routine.

How long should I hold each pose?

Beginners should start with one minute and build gently up to three to five minutes.

Can I do Yin every day?

Two to three times a week is plenty for most beginners, since long holds are demanding on connective tissue.

Is Yin yoga a good way to relax?

Many people find the slow pace relaxing. It is a calming habit, not a treatment for stress or any other condition.

11. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Yin	The slow, passive, quiet side of practice.
Edge	The first point of mild stretch in a pose.
Prop	A support such as a bolster, block or blanket.
Savasana	Final resting 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				