

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Yoga Poses

A Beginner's Guide to Asanas

Standing and seated poses, how to hold them safely,
and a gentle 20-minute sequence

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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 an asana is

Asana is the Sanskrit word for a yoga posture. In the Yoga Sutras, asana is described as a steady and comfortable seat. Over time, many more poses were developed, and modern classes use dozens.

For beginners, a handful of simple standing and seated poses is enough. The goal is steadiness and ease, not an impressive shape. Everyone's body is different, so poses look different too.

The short answer

Asanas are yoga postures. Begin with simple standing and seated poses, hold each for a few breaths, keep the breath smooth and stop if anything hurts. Use props to make poses easier.

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.

Move within comfort

Do not push into pain, numbness or dizziness. If you are pregnant, have an injury, joint problem, high or low blood pressure, osteoporosis or any other condition, check with your doctor before starting, and tell your teacher.

3. Standing poses

Pose	Key points	Easier version
Mountain (Tadasana)	Feet hip-width, spine tall, shoulders relaxed.	Stand with your back near a wall.
Forward fold	Hinge at the hips, keep knees soft.	Hands on a chair.
Warrior II	Wide stance, front knee over ankle, arms long.	Shorter stance.
Triangle	Long side body, hand on shin or block.	Hand on a chair.
Tree	Stand on one leg, foot on calf or thigh, not on the knee.	Toes on the floor.

4. Seated and floor poses

Pose	Key points	Easier version
Easy pose	Sit with legs crossed, spine tall.	Sit on a cushion.
Staff pose	Legs long, spine tall.	Bend the knees.
Seated forward fold	Hinge from the hips.	Strap or bent knees.
Cat and cow	Arch and round with the breath.	Smaller range.
Child's pose	Rest the forehead down, hips back.	Bolster under the chest.
Final relaxation	Lie still and breathe.	Knees supported.

5. A 20-minute gentle sequence

Time	Practice	Notes
2 min	Easy pose, three slow breaths	Settle.
3 min	Cat and cow	Slow.
4 min	Mountain, forward fold, mountain	Soft knees.
4 min	Warrior II both sides	Hold 5 breaths.
3 min	Tree both sides	Use a wall.
2 min	Child's pose	Rest.
2 min	Final relaxation	Breathe naturally.

6. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Mountain, forward fold, cat and cow	10 min	Is the breath smooth?
2	Add warrior II and child's pose	15 min	Are knees comfortable?
3	Add tree and easy pose	18 min	Where is balance harder?
4	The full 20-minute sequence	20 min	Practise 3 times a week.

7. Choosing a class or teacher

A beginner class teaches these poses with options. A good teacher watches alignment, offers props, and says pain is a signal to stop. You can always rest in child's pose.

- Ask which translation or commentary the teacher uses.
- Notice whether ideas are presented as tradition or as proven fact.
- If a teacher dismisses your questions or health needs, find another class.

8. Practising at home

At home, practise on a non-slip mat or carpet, use a wall or chair for balance, and keep your phone away. Follow a beginner video at a slow pace, and pause when you need to.

9. Honest expectations

Asanas can improve flexibility and comfort in movement for many people. They are exercise, not a treatment for illness. Claims that particular poses cure a condition are not supported.

10. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Locking the knees	Keep a soft bend.
Forcing the stretch	Stop where it feels mild.
Holding the breath	Breathe smoothly.
Copying a photo exactly	Your body is different.
Skipping warm-up	Start with easy movement.

11. Questions people ask

How long should I hold a pose?

Start with 3 to 5 breaths and increase slowly if it feels comfortable.

How many poses do I need to know?

A handful is enough to begin.

Do I need to be flexible?

No. Use props and keep poses gentle.

What if a pose hurts?

Come out gently and skip it. If pain persists, see a doctor.

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
Asana	A yoga posture.
Tadasana	Mountain pose.
Props	Blocks, straps, blankets.
Hinge	Fold from the hips.

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				