

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Vinyasa Yoga

A Beginner's Flow Guide

How breath-linked flow works, a basic sun-salutation style flow, a 20-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 Vinyasa yoga is

Vinyasa is a style of yoga where poses are linked together by the breath, so the practice flows from one shape to the next. The word vinyasa is often explained as "placing in a special way". In a class it usually means a sequence of poses where each movement goes with an inhale or an exhale.

Compared with slower styles, there is more movement and less holding. That makes it feel more like exercise, which many people enjoy. It also means beginners need to go slowly and learn the basic shapes first.

The short answer

Vinyasa yoga links poses with the breath in a continuous flow. It is more active than Hatha or Yin, so beginners should learn the basic poses slowly, keep the breath easy, and rest whenever needed.

2. Before you begin: safety first

Flowing practice puts more load on the wrists, shoulders, lower back and knees than slow holds do.

Check with your doctor first if you:

- are pregnant or recently postnatal;
- have high blood pressure, a heart condition, or breathing problems;
- have wrist, shoulder, lower-back or knee problems, or osteoporosis;
- have had recent surgery or injury;
- have an eye condition such as glaucoma (avoid long head-below-heart poses).

Pause and rest if you feel:

- sharp pain, pinching or burning, especially in joints;
- dizziness, nausea or breathlessness;
- pain or numbness in the wrists or hands.

Three rules

1. Slow down. A slow flow done well beats a fast one done badly. 2. Bend the knees and keep the back safe whenever in doubt. 3. Rest in child's pose any time.

3. What you need

Item	Notes
Non-slip mat	Flow needs grip, especially for hands and feet.
Comfortable clothes	Stretchy and not too loose.
Two blocks	To bring the floor closer in folds and lunges.
A towel	For sweaty hands.
A clear floor space	About the length and a little more of your mat.

4. Breath and movement

The basic pattern in most flows is easy to remember.

Movement	Breath
Lifting, opening, expanding (arms up, chest forward)	Inhale
Folding, twisting, contracting (forward fold, plank down)	Exhale

Breathe through the nose, gently and evenly. If you have to gasp or rush, slow the flow down. The breath sets the speed, not the other way round.

5. The building blocks

Pose	Key points
Mountain	Stand tall, feet hip-width, arms by the sides.
Upward salute	Reach the arms overhead, lengthen the spine, do not arch the lower back.
Forward fold	Hinge from the hips, knees soft, let the head hang.
Plank	Wrists under shoulders, body one line. Drop the knees if needed.
Low push-up (Chaturanga) or knees-chest-chin	Keep elbows close. Beginners can lower the knees and then the chest to the floor.
Cobra or upward dog	Lift the chest gently. Cobra is safer for beginners.
Downward dog	Hips up and back, knees bent if hamstrings are tight, press the floor away.

Learn each one separately for a week or two before you string them together. Skipping this step is the usual cause of strain.

6. A beginner flow, step by step

This is a simple sun-salutation-style flow. Do 3 rounds slowly.

Step	Pose	Breath
1	Mountain	Breathe naturally
2	Upward salute	Inhale
3	Forward fold	Exhale
4	Half lift (flat back, hands on shins)	Inhale
5	Step back to plank (or knees down)	Exhale
6	Lower the knees, chest and chin to the floor	Exhale
7	Cobra	Inhale
8	Downward dog (hold 3 to 5 breaths)	Exhale
9	Step forward to a fold	Inhale

Step	Pose	Breath
10	Rise to upward salute, then mountain	Inhale, then exhale

If stepping the feet forward is hard, walk them forward in small steps. If the wrists are sensitive, stay on the forearms or do the standing version only.

7. A 20-minute sequence

Time	Practice	Notes
2 min	Mountain breathing and gentle warm-up	Roll the shoulders, circle the hips.
3 min	Cat and cow	Link each movement to the breath.
6 min	Beginner flow, 3 rounds	Move slowly. Rest in child's pose if needed.
3 min	Standing poses: warrior II, triangle	Hold 3 to 5 breaths each side.
3 min	Seated forward fold and twist	Gentle, no forcing.
3 min	Savasana	Lie still and breathe naturally.

8. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Learn the building blocks separately	10 min	Can you do each pose with easy breath?
2	Standing flow only (no plank or cobra)	15 min	Do the arms and breath move together?
3	Add plank, cobra, downward dog	15 min	Are the wrists comfortable?
4	Full 20-minute sequence	20 min	Which rounds feel smooth?

9. Vinyasa compared with other styles

Style	Pace	Best for
Vinyasa	Flowing, breath-led	Those who like movement
Hatha	Slow, held poses	Beginners learning alignment
Ashtanga	Fixed, set series	Disciplined, experienced practitioners
Yin	Very slow, long holds	Quiet stretching

10. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Rushing through poses	Slow down. Count three breaths per pose.
Sagging in plank	Drop the knees. Keep one line from head to knees.
Locking elbows	Keep a micro-bend.
Rounding the back in folds	Bend the knees and hinge from the hips.
Holding the breath	Ease off until the breath is easy again.

11. Questions people ask

Is Vinyasa good for beginners?

Yes, if you learn the basic poses first and move slowly. Many beginners start with Hatha and move to Vinyasa later.

How often should I practise?

Three times a week for 15 to 20 minutes is a good start. Rest days matter.

Will Vinyasa help me lose weight?

It is a moderately active form of exercise. Weight depends on many things including food and general activity. It is not a weight-loss programme by itself.

Can I do it with a wrist problem?

Speak with your doctor first. You can use forearms, a wall or stay on standing poses.

12. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Vinyasa	Linking poses with breath.
Chaturanga	Low plank. A common point of strain.
Surya Namaskar	Sun salutation, a classic flow.
Drishti	A soft gaze point to help focus.

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