

7 REASONS YOU SHOULD START DOING YOGA IMMEDIATELY

By Chris Haigh

Yoga is an ancient practice with origins stretching back thousands of years in India. It is designed to help achieve a more positive outlook on life and a focused, permanent sense of serenity and peace. The word 'yoga' itself means 'union' and 'union with the divine'; however, many people have stripped away the spirituality and focus of yoga so that most think of it as a group of intensely athletic people putting their legs behind their heads and curling up into jaw-dropping positions.

While that certainly happens—I've actually done the leg behind the head thing a few times, but only after years of careful stretches and practice—yoga has so much more to offer than flexibility and the idea of garnering a strong body. People of all shapes, sizes, ages and abilities can do yoga and adapt it to suit their individual tastes and needs.

If you think yoga might not be for you, I urge you to reconsider. Here are seven of my top reasons why you should start doing yoga as soon as you

1. It's a great workout.

First of all and most obviously, yoga is a fantastic workout for your body. You can adapt the practices to your own speed and level of comfort. No matter which yoga exercises you choose, the practices will always be part of a great workout routine. There are some fantastic series of movements out there that are perfect for every kind of day and for every kind of person, meaning there's no reason not to start doing some yoga as soon as you can.

2. It gets you in touch with your body.

Yoga stretches and exercises are designed around the idea of moving your body to increase its strength and durability. Therefore, doing yoga on a regular basis will really get you to be much more in tune with your body and know when something is really working and when it isn't.

Of course, this isn't always a good thing, as it can be discouraging when certain exercises aren't working for your body the way they were the day before; however, it does have its benefits, and it makes improvements in your physical state that are much more pronounced and noticeable.

3. It can help your breathing technique.

A big part of yoga is the breathing exercises—or the pranayama—which are incorporated into positions and then on their own. The exercises encourage a more focused and centered way of breathing, and while they might not be something you'll do consciously every day, they're absolutely sure to provide methods of effective stress-management and generally make you feel much better.

Plus, as someone with asthma, it really helps to open your lungs and explore what it means to breath consciously. Trust me: do those pranayamas for a few weeks, and you'll feel the benefits.



4. It can improve your sleep.

Another minor but pleasant benefit is that doing yoga can actually help you get better sleep. This might be due to the fact that a few sequences of poses and movements are intended to be done right before sleep, but regardless, studies have shown that doing some light physical activity before our heads hit the hay can help us get off to sleep more quickly, which usually leads to a much better quality of sleep.

It also might be due to the fact that if you have problems getting to sleep, working on problem-areas through yoga can help alleviate pain symptoms and increase the likelihood of better sleep. Another possibility is that most yoga sessions have a cool-down sequence at the end, which can definitely induce some easy slumber. As someone who's fallen asleep in class many a time—to the point where my mat neighbor and I have a buddy system in case one of us starts snoring—believe me, this really works and should be done at home.

5. It will improve your posture.

Yoga is pretty effective at helping you develop some premium, proper posture, since a lot of the breathing and seated positions require a straight back for proper effect. Good posture is definitely going to develop during yoga practice.

You'll start off slouching and slumped, reflecting the figure of someone who spends most of the day at their desk—believe me, I've been there—and yoga will help sculpt your back into the kind of poised posture that'll make you walk taller and feel immensely better about it.

6. It can develop your physical and mental strength.

Another side effect of yoga is that it will help you develop some truly incredible mental and physical strength. The whole point of yoga is to work on your body's strength so that you can sit for longer in meditation, and the physical investment in the stretches and positions ensures that you'll experience plenty of physical strength benefits as a result.

The breathing exercises can improve your lung capacity, and lunges and stretches can increase your core strength as well as every muscle you can think of; meanwhile, the exercises force you to focus on the moment, and during meditation, to clear your mind, which helps alleviate stress and improve your mental health.

7. Meditation can change your life for the better.

Meditation, meditation, meditation. It's really the key to all things yoga. Even if you can do every kind of complicated pose under the sun, it loses all of its true meaning if it's not done with focus and thought. Meditation has been shown time and time again to be a beneficial practice that everyone should implement into their daily routine.

Meditation isn't necessarily sitting with a bowl of incense and working your way through a book of Tibetan chants in a darkened, candlelit room—rather, you can meditate anywhere quiet and at absolutely any time you like. All it takes is five minutes with some alone time and peace and quiet. Meditation improves your quality of life by allowing your mind some time to process everything that goes on in your life. It's a hugely important and integral part of yoga practice and something that can really change your life, allowing you to embrace calmness and serenity with ease.



Healthy Living: **YOGA FOR KIDS**

Poses for Partners



Double Tree



Warrior Friends



Twin Dragons



Sailboat



Double Pretzel



Seesaw



Double Boat



Elevator



Double Dancer



Lean on Me



Huddle Pose



Back-to-Back Twist



Back-to Back Chair



Open Heart



Double Dog



How to do Parsvottanasana



How to do Bridge Pose

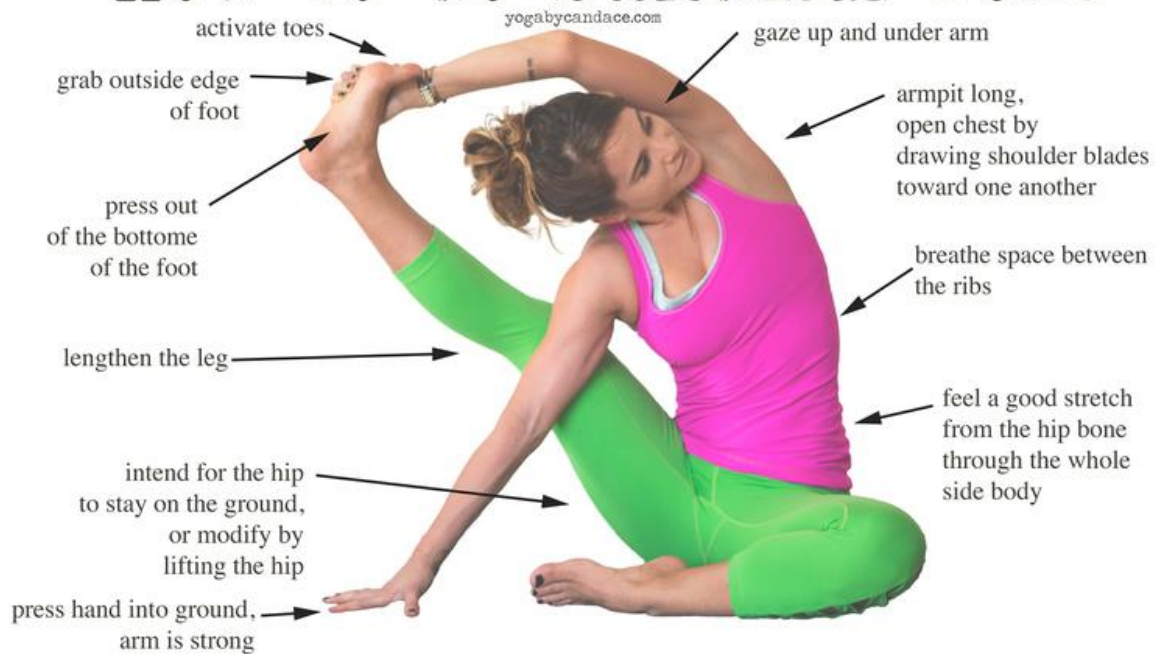


How to do Prasarita Padottanasana C yogabycandace.com



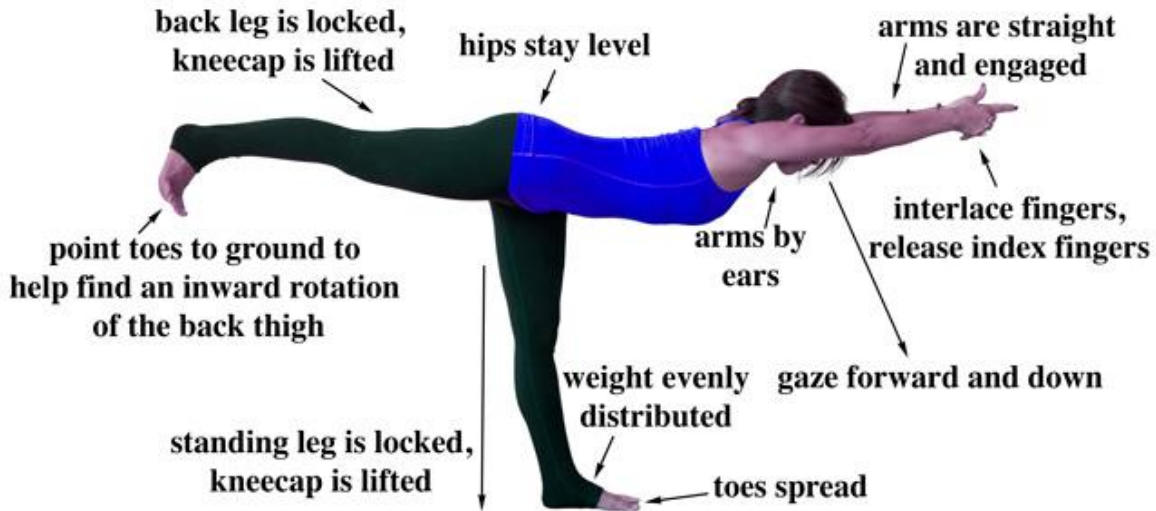
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How to do Sundial Pose



Tuladandasana

{BALANCING STICK POSE}



Eagle Pose

(garudasana)

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Tree Pose



How to do Tripod Headstand

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the spot on your head that goes on the mat is where the tip of the middle finger is when you place base of palm just above eyebrows and lay hand flat.

Common Mistakes in Warrior 2

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How to do Grasshopper Pose

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