

## The Healing Power of Yoga

Medical research has shown that 90 percent of illnesses and diseases are stress related.

There are many types of yoga, from the gentle style of traditional Hatha to more high-intensity forms such as Bikram. The most commonly practiced style of yoga is Hatha. This type of yoga involves the body and breath, and can help with relaxation, increased flexibility, strength, vitality, improved concentration and the immune system's functions. Hatha yoga is also used as a therapy for healing musculo-skeletal problems.

Viniyoga  
Iyengar  
Satyananda  
Hatha  
Ashtanga  
Bikram



There are many styles of yoga. The most popular are:

**Ashtanga Yoga**—a fast-flowing, aerobic yoga workout.

**Iyengar Yoga**—a strong, precise style of yoga for the fitness-conscious practitioner.

**Viniyoga Yoga**—a gentler style with an emphasis on healing.

**Satyananda Yoga**—a gentle style of traditional Hatha Yoga.

**Bikram Yoga**—a scientifically designed, 26-pose series, constructed to enhance physical strength and balance, providing an energizing workout. This dynamic style of yoga, practiced in a heated room, increases flexibility and accelerates detoxification.

# Yoga Basics

STRONG BODY—HEALTHY MIND

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Yoga can help you stay flexible and strong without putting added stress on your joints.

You get the added benefit of a mind-body approach that can help you relax and energize. Below are eight common yoga poses you can try at home. More yoga poses and information are available on [www.verywell.com](http://www.verywell.com)



Forward Bend



Tree Pose



Warrior



Seated Twist



Balancing Cat



Downward Dog



Low Lunge



Bridge

**1 Forward Bend**—Standing with feet parallel and separated hip-width apart, place your hands on your hips and inhale. Exhale and begin to hinge at the hips and fold forward over the legs, bringing the torso to flow over the legs like a waterfall. Bend your knees as you need to take tension off the lower back, allowing the head to hang heavy. Let the arms softly hang or take hold of opposite elbows to deepen the sensation.

**2 Tree Pose**—Stand with arms at sides. Shift weight onto left leg and place sole of right foot inside left thigh, keeping hips facing forward. Once balanced, bring hands in front of you in prayer position, palms together. On an inhalation, extend arms over shoulders, palms separated and facing each other. Stay for 30 seconds. Lower and repeat on the opposite side.

**3 Warrior**—Stand with legs three to four-feet apart, turning right foot out 90 degrees and left foot in slightly. Bring your hands to your hips and relax your shoulders, then extend arms out to the sides, palms down. Bend right knee 90 degrees, keeping knee over ankle; gaze out over right hand.

**4 Seated Twist**—Sit on the floor with your legs extended. Cross right foot over outside of left thigh; bend left knee. Keep right knee pointed toward ceiling. Place left elbow to the outside of right knee and right hand on the floor behind you. Twist right as far as you can, moving from your abdomen; keep both sides of your buttocks on the floor. Stay for one minute. Switch sides and repeat.

**5 Balancing Cat**—On your hands and knees, place your arms straight down from your shoulders and your knees straight down from your hips. Inhale and slowly lift your right arm and left leg so they're in line with your spine; tighten your abdominal muscles to keep your balance. Look straight ahead at your outstretched arm.

**6 Downward Dog**—Start on all fours with hands directly under shoulders, knees under hips. Walk hands a few inches forward and spread fingers wide, pressing palms into mat. Curl toes under and slowly press hips toward ceiling, bringing your body into an inverted V, pressing shoulders away from ears. Feet should be hip-width apart, knees slightly bent. Hold for three full breaths.

**7 Low Lunge**—From Downward Dog exhale and step your right foot forward between your hands, aligning the right knee over the heel. Lower your left knee to the floor and keeping the right knee fixed in place, slide the left leg back until you feel a comfortable stretch in the left front thigh and groin. Turn the top of your left foot to the floor. Inhale and lift your torso upright.

**8 Bridge**—Lie on the floor with your knees bent and feet hip-width apart. Inhale and lift your hips off the floor. Allow your arms to rest by your sides. Your body should form a line from the knees to your shoulders. Exhale, lift your chin slightly away from the sternum. Firm the outer arms and clasp your hands beneath you, if you can. Stay in this position for a minute, then exhale and lower your hips back to the floor.

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