

Is Yoga For Me?

A Guide to Yoga

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focusonuk.co.uk/isyogaforme

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Introduction

Everyone seems to be doing yoga these days, there's **Hilaria Baldwin** contorting herself into all sorts of shapes in glamorous places and **Gisele Bundchen** striking a pose. There are also millions of ordinary men and women around the globe learning the art of yoga and incorporating elements of its moral code into their lives. In this booklet I hope to show you how yoga can benefit you, explain the different yoga types, help you identify which one might suit you, provide you with information about online yoga videos and how you can locate your nearest yoga class.



Background

There are somewhere around 300,000 to 460,000 people who practise yoga in the UK. It is one of the fastest growing areas in the natural health industry. Whilst most people have heard of some yoga poses and that breathing is somehow involved they don't necessarily know that yoga was initially intended to be an entire lifestyle and way of living. Moreover what you might practise in your yoga class may not have ever been developed by the originator.

Yoga originally came from the Vedas (ancient Hindu scriptures) which date back some 4000 to 5000 years. The vedic knowledge was passed down from teacher to student through memorising verses and poems. In the second century BC the sage Patanjali outlined what is now known as the **8 limbs of yoga**.

In 'Am I Good Enough?' Santosha, the Second Niyamas of **Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga**, is discussed as well as how to accept ourselves from minute to minute, day by day – which can be applied to the yoga mat.

In my opinion the excellent book 'The Wisdom of Groundhog Day' by Paul Hannam (which I own and turn to) bases its theory on the concept of Santosha – 'not to seek happiness outside of ourselves, but to recognise that peace and happiness lies within.'



Why should I take up Yoga

What are the benefits?

You've heard people talk about how awesome yoga is, how it can benefit your body, your mind, your whole life in fact. You scratch your head and wonder if you're really the right person to be doing yoga. Well yes, yes you are! Yoga is for everybody, young, old, pregnant, all sizes, all genders, everyone.

Teacher Shams Abu-Tayeh has met many people who on finding out she is a yoga teacher say to her 'Oh, I can't do yoga, I'm not flexible' to which she more often than not replies 'Well, you're talking to someone who couldn't reach past her knees since the age of 12. **If I can do it, anyone can.**' And that is the truth of the matter. Anyone can do it, and they will see the benefits.



Think you have to go to the gym to get a flexible toned body, well think again. As **Iain Marshall-Clarke of Olcote Wellbeing** explains 'You don't just give your body a workout you give your mind and your respiratory system a workout too when you practise yoga' and points out that 'Yoga remains one of the oldest surviving practices of holistic health and fitness in the world.'

So now I have persuaded you to begin thinking that this could be for you and you can do it, I hear you ask 'What's in it for me?' 'What exactly are the benefits I'm going to get from donning leggings and contorting myself (or not)?'

On a more introspective level Rachael McGill describes, in her article '**Yoga from the inside out**', how yoga helps you develop a physical awareness of your body that bypasses the brain like a form of **meditation**.

The excellent infographic on pg8 lists some of the benefits you might experience.

This list is not exhaustive and if you look around the internet you will find that many other benefits are attributed to practising yoga.

Such as:

- The 12 Benefits of Yoga (pg9)
- **How Yoga transforms your body**

As soon as you start practising yoga you will notice the benefits in both your body and mind. With **regular practice** come more benefits.

Now you can see how you will benefit from incorporating yoga practice into your life what's the next step?

If you're nervous about joining a class there are many online classes that you can check out first (and they're free).

Or perhaps you want to learn about the types of yoga and figure out which one will suit you first.

On pg10 you can find out about free online classes if you're nervous about joining a class

On pg14 you can learn about types of yoga and find out which one will suit you.

The 12 Benefits of Yoga

For Body

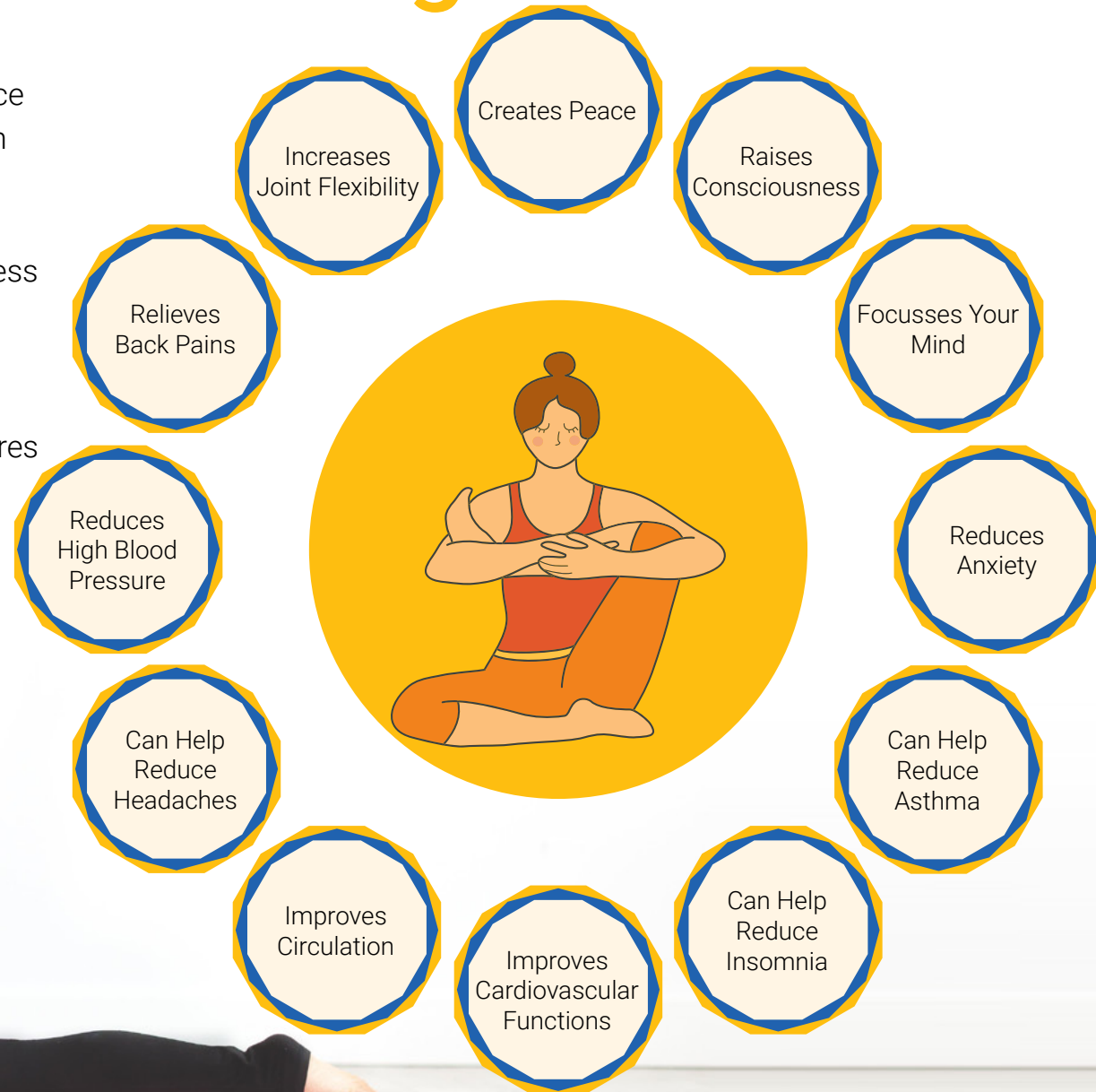
Increased Core Strength
Lowers Blood Pressure
Weight Management
Improved Digestion
Improved Circulation
Body Detoxification
Pain and Tension Relief
Increased Flexibility
Improved Posture
Increased Immunity

For Mind

Improved Intuition
Increased Self-Acceptance
Improved Concentration
Neutralised Stress
Improved Memory
Increases Mental Awareness
Focus On the Present
Increased Confidence
Unlocked Energy Flow
Balanced Brain Hemispheres



Benefits of Yoga



I'm nervous about joining a class.

Are there any online classes I can check out first?

I've shown you the benefits to be gained from practising yoga but you're feeling a little unsure about buying a mat and joining a yoga class or don't want to be completely clueless as to what a downward dog or a [sun salutation](#) is.

You will find that there are numerous websites offering yoga videos online – often for a subscription. Here at FocusOn Health & Wellbeing we set out to find some great websites that offer free yoga videos to get you started.

Our favourite is this one 'Do Yoga with Me' but we've also put together our 'Top 5 Great Websites' offering free videos all in one place for you. Try them out, have some fun and start feeling a little more comfortable about practising yoga.

What's my next step?

- Go to [pg14](#) if you're ready to learn more about the types of yoga out there
- Go to [pg16](#) if you're keen to find out about current trends in yoga
- To find your nearest class go to [pg18](#)



Whats your yoga?



How do I figure out which type of yoga will suit me?

You may or may not be aware that there are many different types of yoga practice out there and more appearing all the time.

To get you started take the brilliant quiz we found on the previous page.

OK, I hear you say, but these yoga types mean nothing to me. The quiz told me which yoga type suits me but what do I do with that information?



The answer: you take a peek at the **knowledgebase** we have put together to help guide you on your yoga journey.

Let me give you an example. I tried out the quiz and my result was: Ananda yoga. The image shown below is what the knowledgebase reveals about this type of yoga practice.

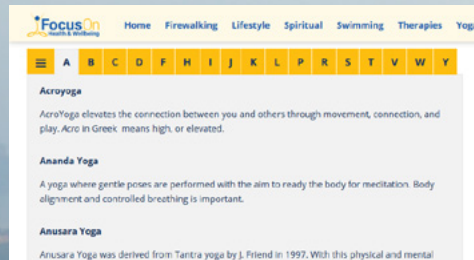
To navigate the **knowledgebase** choose the tab your yoga type sits under to learn more about a particular type of yoga.

If you want to try out a fun quiz that aims to figure out your 'Yoga Personality' have a look at the questionnaire on the **Very Well Fit** website.

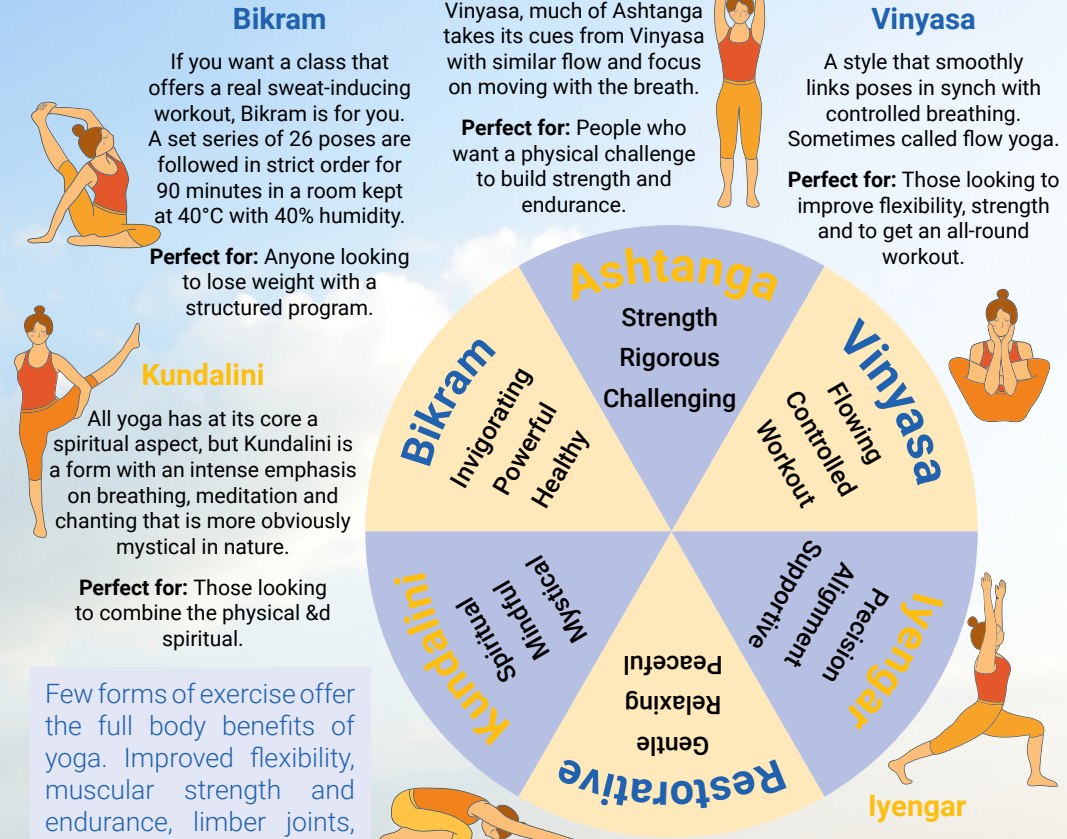
Take a look at the very simple infographic overleaf that details 6 yoga types:

It includes who each of the 6 types of yoga are perfect for and the main elements of the yoga practice - you may find drawn to one or another type of yoga practice. Alternatively try out different classes near you and see which yoga type fits you in that manner.

- **Bikram**
- **Ashtanga**
- **Vinyasa**
- **Kundalini**
- **Restorative**
- **Iyengar**



Which Yoga Style Suits You?



Few forms of exercise offer the full body benefits of yoga. Improved flexibility, muscular strength and endurance, limber joints, a supple spine and lower blood pressure are just a few of the proven health boosts. And that's before we get onto the effects on the mind and stress. However, you need a style that suits your body and life to reap those benefits. Choose carefully and start your journey today.

Restorative
If you need a yoga style that will relax you and ease away stress, tensions and troublesome aches then go for a Restorative class. Props are used to support the body in mainly seated and supine poses so you can stay in position for long periods of time.
Perfect for: Allowing the body and mind to gently unwind and open up.

Are there any modern takes on yoga now?

Whilst yoga is firmly based in ancient practice and wisdom it hasn't stopped western practitioners from making it their own and putting their own twist on things.

Let me give you some examples that might appeal to you.

- Do you have a small dog that you love spending time with? Yes, why not try Doga! yoga with your dog



- Love being in, on the water? **Shine Om** takes fitness and yoga to the water. Paddleboarding has become the 'must do' water sport of late and Shine Om (and no doubt others) offer a beginner friendly activity practising yoga on a paddleboard. What's there not to love!

- Then we've got **BoxingYoga** – there's no fighting involved but the Ashtanga postures are merged with technical aspects and strengthening exercises from a boxer's training regime.

- Lick Yoga have introduced the 'pay as you feel' yoga initiative – this is becoming more and more popular here in Brighton with several 'pay as you feel' initiatives e.g **Real Junk Food Project Brighton** – Feed Bellies not Bins!
- Think yoga is all about silence and introspection. Well you can think again. Here in Brighton at Lick Yoga you can try out a new yoga concept – **Yoga Disco**.



- Ever fancied yourself as an Acrobat? Yes? Well then **Acroyoga** will be perfect for you.

- How about yoga poses whilst suspended in loops of fabric? **Aerial Yoga** focuses on spinal relief whilst suspended in the air.

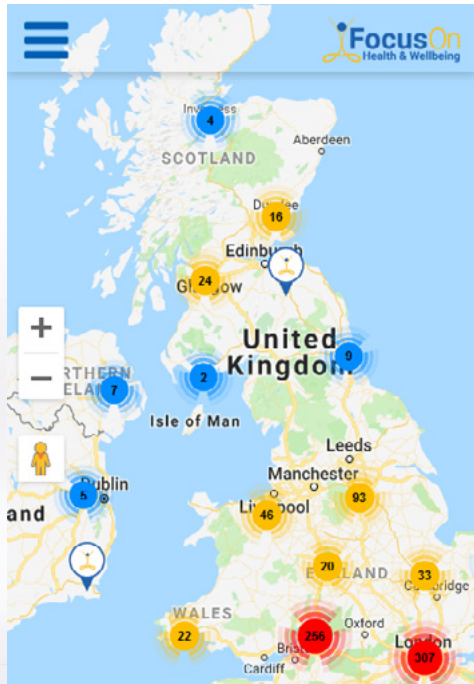
- They always say 'laughter is the best medicine', with this in mind why not try Laughter Yoga.

There are bound to be more out there I've not come across, or heard of or were even designed this very day.

How can I find yoga classes near me?

Well now you know the benefits that are in it for you and you've narrowed down the type of yoga you think might suit you, how do you find a class near you?

Well I have the solution to that. Focus On Health & Wellbeing run a free to use Directory (foyht.co.uk) for all businesses associated with health & wellbeing, yoga, nutrition, holistic therapies,



empowerment and more. There are two directories, one for business listings and the other for events local to you. So hop on over to foyht.co.uk and see what classes you can find that are near you. New businesses and events are continually being added to the directory so if you can't find what you're looking for on your first visit please try again.

If you're wondering how to keep up with regular practice at home read the personal stories in the next section for some helpful hints and tips.

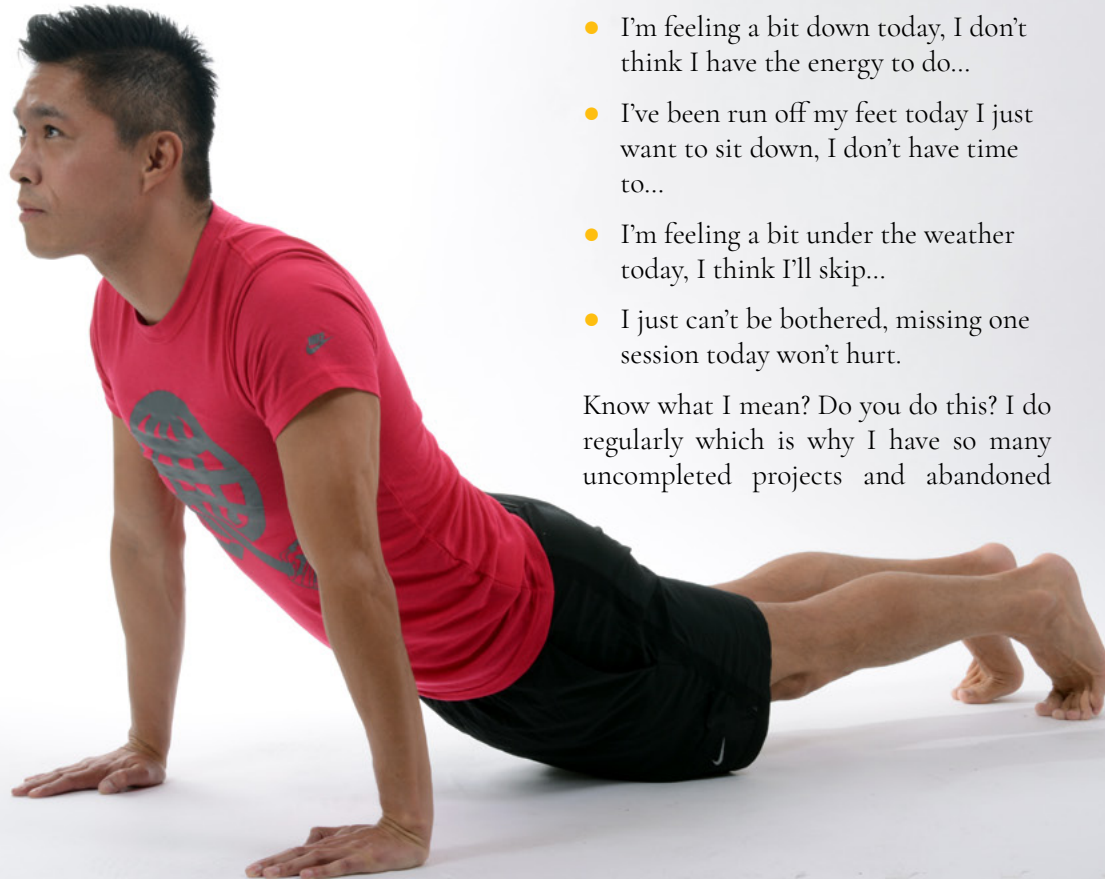


Photo courtesy of pixabay.com

I'm struggling with keeping up regular practice at home

We all know that feeling, we've started a new hobby, a new routine, a new something that we think is good for us but then we just stop doing it. It starts with these sorts of thoughts:

- I'm feeling a bit down today, I don't think I have the energy to do...
- I've been run off my feet today I just want to sit down, I don't have time to...
- I'm feeling a bit under the weather today, I think I'll skip...
- I just can't be bothered, missing one session today won't hurt.

Know what I mean? Do you do this? I do regularly which is why I have so many uncompleted projects and abandoned

hobbies at home. Something else always gets in the way. So how can we help ourselves to prevent these self-sabotaging thoughts...

Several yoga teachers have shared articles on our website about 'regular yoga practice', have a look at some of their ideas and habits.

- Sinnead Ali writes about '[Maintaining your Home Practice](#)' where she offers some of her own hints and tips to setting up and maintaining your yoga practice as she is well aware how daunting this can be for a yoga beginner.

- Holistic Health Coach, Yoga Teacher and Nutritionist Chantal believes '[Miracles Happen on your Mat](#)' and she wants you to experience this. Her article offers you 8 steps to take which will help create these miracles not only on your mat but in your everyday life.

- In her article '[The Benefits of Regular Yoga Practice](#)', Izzy Cave outlines a section about 'Selfcare and honouring the self and the practice'. In this section she outlines some of the self-sabotaging thoughts we might have which disrupt regular yoga practice and counteracts these thoughts with all the very good reasons why we should practise yoga if we are feeling a certain way.

Personal yoga journeys by our guest authors

I'd like to leave you with some uplifting personal journeys our guest authors have shared with us. You may find inspiration from them to help you on your yoga journey.

My favourite article is that written by Karen which details her journey which started back in the 1970's when practising yoga was 'radical'. [My Yoga Adventure so far...](#)

Different types of yoga resonate with different people. Gabriella Ozi found

that she needed to slow down and feel her yoga practice to benefit from her classes. In ['The Awakening of the Feeling Body'](#) you can learn how she came to understand this and how she incorporated this knowledge into her own yoga classes after she qualified as a yoga teacher.

[Kevin Mitchell](#) went from excessively working out to discovering yoga and slowing right down before deciding to train as a yoga teacher.

Shams Abu-Tayeh had a terrible time with injuries when she started training more seriously and was advised by her Physio to attend yoga classes. After initially finding the poses, pace and stillness a challenge she began to see and feel the benefits. She believes ['If I can do it, anyone can'](#). She means you!

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