

# wee changes can make a **big difference** in helping you feel better

## Ever thought of taking up Yoga? Frequent questions people have about attending Yoga



### Why should I do yoga?

The practice of yoga is extremely beneficial for both your physical and mental wellbeing. Yoga can help reduce stress, anxiety and help with depression. A regular practice can help with asthma, sciatica, reduce blood pressure, control weight, help ease symptoms of PMS and back pain, amongst many other things.



### Can I do yoga if I am overweight?

Yes, the practice of yoga is suitable for individuals of all shapes and sizes. Individual postures will look different for everyone in class, depending on your height, shape, mobility, flexibility and experience.



### Can I do yoga if I have a health condition?

Yes, however you should make your teacher aware of any health conditions that you may have, so that they can help adjust your personal practice to ensure that you are not doing any postures which might not be suitable for you.

### Do I need to be flexible to do yoga?

Regular practice of yoga does help improve flexibility, which is why many images that you might see are of individuals in postures with great flexibility. You do not need to be flexible to start taking a yoga class as postures can be adapted to suit your body shape, mobility and flexibility.

### What kind of yoga class should I attend?

Different types of yoga class suit different people. If you are looking for something slower-paced and relaxing, look for a 'Hatha' or 'Yin' class, which are particularly beneficial if you are stressed or anxious. A 'Restorative' class is suitable for all levels and utilises props to ensure a comfortable and relaxed position. Restorative is very helpful if you are tired or unwell. If you would like to try a more energetic practice, look for a beginner's level 'Ashtanga', flow or power yoga class. These types of classes move into postures with 'vinyasa' (movement). Your heart rate is likely to be slightly more elevated.



### Can I do yoga if I am pregnant?

Yes, however make sure that your doctor has cleared you for physical activity and your yoga teacher is aware of your pregnancy, so that they can adjust your practice to ensure that you are practicing postures which are more beneficial for you.

### Do I need to spend money on an expensive yoga mat?

Most beginner classes will have spare mats available at classes. You don't need to go and spend money on an expensive mat although if you start to attend regularly, you may prefer to have your own. Speak to your teacher about the best type of mat to use as many cheaper mats are not helpful for practice.



## Why do I need to take my socks off?

In order to fully benefit from standing postures and especially postures which challenge the balance, we need to be able to feel the mat under our feet and grip with different parts of the sole of the foot, depending on the posture. If you are wearing socks, you will find it difficult and slippery in standing postures especially.

## When will I see the benefit of going to my yoga class?



A regular practice can have a profound impact on how you deal with day-to-day stress and it won't take long before you find yourself generally less anxious. Attendance at a single class will leave you feeling refreshed and relaxed straight away, and if you attend regularly, your sleep will start to improve that will lead to reduced stress and anxiety.

After only one or two classes, yoga will help with aches and pains, especially in the shoulders, neck, hips and lower back. You can even ask your teacher for specific postures which can help if you are experiencing any discomfort in those areas.

In terms of flexibility and mobility, all of our bodies are individual and unique. Both your joint mobility and flexibility will improve gradually over time. Attendance at regular classes over time can result in vastly improved mobility and flexibility.



## Can I do yoga if I can't get down on the mat?

Yes, you can use a chair for seated postures, using mainly your upper body and torso. If you are able to stand, you can use a wide range of standing postures, even supporting yourself with a chair, and still get benefit.

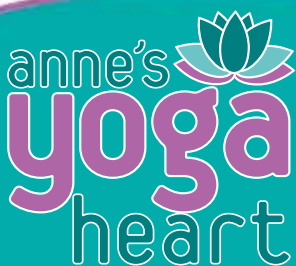
## Why should I use the breathing practice?

Your yoga teacher will demonstrate and explain how to breathe during practice. There are various breathing techniques, depending on your class. You may learn and experience. Most breathing practices aim to bring you into your 'rest and digest' or parasympathetic nervous system in order to improve your experience of postures, relax your mind and body, breathing is an important part of practice, especially when it comes to focus on your own body and reducing anxiety.



## How do you meditate?

If meditation is something you are interested in, your yoga teacher may demonstrate and explain how to meditate in class. If you do not attend a class that currently includes meditation (normally a more advanced practitioner class), you can attend specific sessions to learn the techniques.



To find out more about Yoga, contact Anne on the **Anne's Yoga Heart Facebook page**, email [anne@bounce-activity.co.uk](mailto:anne@bounce-activity.co.uk) or call **07794 935 547** for further information on classes in the area.

Information leaflet devised by Anne printed by COPE Scotland working in partnership to promote wellbeing and self-management for more information on COPE Scotland please visit: [www.cope-scotland.org](http://www.cope-scotland.org).

