



Yoga: frequently asked questions

What should I wear?

- Something comfortable so you can move freely – leggings/jogging bottoms and a couple of layers on top.
- Bring socks and a warm top as you'll cool down during the breathing, meditation and relaxation sections.
- We practice in bare feet or some people like to use yoga socks.

What should I bring?

- Water
- A yoga mat – if you need help choosing one, let me know. I prefer a mat that is relatively thin and doesn't let my hands slip
- A blanket – honestly, everyone gets tucked up at the end!
- Any blocks, bricks, strap you usually use. I am not loaning equipment due to the current hygiene concerns but we can make use of things you have at home, e.g. books, towels, belts. If you would like your own props, I have access to some great discounts and can point you in the right direction.

Should I eat?

- It can be uncomfortable practicing on a full stomach so try not to eat anything substantial for two hours before class. You might struggle to concentrate if you're hungry, so have something light, like a banana.

I'm not flexible, can I do yoga?

- Yes! You really don't have to be flexible and over time you will probably find that your flexibility improves.
- Each posture has different approaches and variations to suit individual body types.
- Everyday life creates stiffness so this is a great way to relieve tension and let your body move more freely.

I've got an injury or health condition, can I do yoga?

- There are very few health considerations that prevent someone practicing yoga entirely.
- Most postures have an alternative approach that I can show you or I can suggest a different posture entirely. This is why it is important to give lots of detail in your health questionnaire.
- If you've recently had surgery or have a significant health consideration, then you should consult your GP or medical team before starting yoga.

Do you teach Yoga for Pregnancy?

- No, but I know local, reputable teachers who specialise in this type of yoga. It is important that you have a teacher that is properly trained to teach yoga for pregnancy and I can help you find the right class for you.

Is there anywhere to park?

- Yes, for face-to-face classes, each venue I teach at has plenty of parking space.



What happens in a class?

- We begin with a short period of quiet to allow our minds and breath to settle. We call this **centring**.
- We then **warm up** for 5 – 10 minutes depending on what we are going to be doing in the class.
- It's then time for the **āsanas (postures)** which vary and take around 45 minutes. I will demonstrate each posture and then guide you through it with options to suit your body, mind and breath. Sometimes we move from one static āsana to another, sometimes we work them into a flowing sequence. If you're not sure, just give me a wave and I'll come and help.
- Then we settle down for some **breathing practice** or **pranayama** (breath and energy practice).
- We finish with an accessible **meditation** or **relaxation** and occasionally both. This is your chance to recharge your batteries and bring stillness to your body, breath, mind and emotions.
- The whole class lasts approximately an hour and a half.

Am I'm doing it right?

- Because our bodies, bone and muscle structures are all very different, there isn't a 'right' way to do yoga. A lot of what you see on YouTube and Instagram is not what I consider to be real yoga.
- Yoga is approached from a perspective of sensitive exploration rather than attainment – the steps into and out of a posture are just as important as the final position.
- **It should never hurt.** Any restriction or pain is a signal to stop – the signal can be mental or physical. Often a small change of position, or introducing a prop is all that is needed to help you access the posture or I might suggest an alternative posture entirely. I will always be happy to come over and help you.

What if I fall asleep during the relaxation?

- Many of us do occasionally – me included – and nobody minds in the slightest.
- If you're that tired, then a short nap will probably do you good. And I'll make sure you wake up gently at the end of the relaxation. If you're worried about snoring, there are different lying positions that can help.

Is yoga a religion?

- No, yoga is a philosophical practice for your body and mind.
- Yoga stems from a culture with a strong Hindu faith system as well as other sources, such as Buddhism but in itself it is not a religion. While I may tell you the story behind a pose of a god or goddess, it will not conflict with any belief system you may hold.
- My lessons respect all religions (including non-belief) and many people find yoga enhances their belief.

Do I have to chant?

- No, you only need to do what you feel comfortable with. Some classes involve chanting, some don't.
- Chanting isn't singing. In fact some of the most beautiful chanters I know can't sing a note!
- Sometimes I chant on my own to the class and other times I will invite you to chant in your head or out loud. It is said that chanting softly is a thousand times more powerful than chanting out loud. And chanting silently is a thousand times more powerful still.
- I am respectful of all religions so I always explain what the chant means and how I interpret it as I would never expect anyone to chant something they don't understand.



What type of yoga do you teach?

- I teach Haṭha, Yin and Restorative yoga but there are lots of different styles of yoga to try – each with their own merit. There are also lots of yoga-inspired classes that have varying degrees of connection with actual yoga!
- My classes focus on you finding your own yoga journey by increasing your awareness of your body, mind, breath, energy and your emotions. We practise to find balance.

Why should I practice yoga?

There are lots of conditions that can be aided by yoga, including:

- Stress and anxiety
- Tension
- Concentration
- Energy and stamina
- Posture
- Strength
- Mobility
- Balance
- Insomnia
- IBS and other digestive disorders
- Menstrual issues
- Joint problems
- Headaches
- Back problems

Do I need to book or can I just turn up?

- Please book as I will need you to fill in a health questionnaire before your start so that I can look after you.
- Also, some classes get full and I would hate to disappoint you by not having enough room.

What does it cost?

- Classes are £8 each, payable in advance in terms of six or seven weeks, to align with the Leicestershire school holidays.
- Each term I will confirm the dates and payment details for you.
- You can pay by BACS or online – whichever is easiest for you. When you have submitted your health questionnaire, you will receive an email with all the information.

Will the teacher touch me?

- It is unlikely that I need to touch you to make an adjustment as more often than not I can achieve the same effect with words and gestures or by doing the posture with you.
- Some of my students that have been coming for a while prefer to be adjusted physically but I will always ask permission first and it is absolutely everyone's right to not be touched.

I am overweight - can I practice yoga and will it help me lose weight?

- Yes, you can practice yoga at any weight, size and fitness level. I speak from personal experience: this class is inclusive and all body types, abilities and fitness levels are welcomed with open arms.
- My classes tend not to be fast-paced but any exercise is good for you and will complement your health.
- As you gain in confidence you will be able to hold the postures for longer or try different levels of intensity to suit you – without any judgment and with my full support.
- Stress can be a huge contributing factor in weight gain and yoga can make a big difference to this.



Can I do yoga when I am menstruating?

- There is no reason why you have to stop. Yoga was created by men in a time where there was little understanding about women's bodies and cycles which is where the myth about avoiding certain postures, such as inversions, when menstruating comes from.
- Throughout your cycle there may be times when certain postures suit you more than others. You will learn to listen to your body as you practice and will be able to draw back when something doesn't feel right and sink in when it does. You are the best person to decide how you want to practice on any given day.

I'm a complete beginner and am a bit nervous

- I distinctly remember feeling exactly the same in my first class but you will receive a warm welcome.
- I am extremely fortunate that all my classes are super friendly and everyone supports each other.
- Your mat is your island and your practice is your own. I would encourage you to ignore anything anyone else is doing on a mat near you.
- Come with an open mind and I'll look after you. I will help you as much as you need.
- It's good to arrive ten minutes' early the first time so we can have a chat.

I don't know how to meditate.

- We don't meditate in every class and it is always optional.
- I make sure it is accessible for everyone. We don't sit for an hour with our ankles wrapped around our necks staring at an acorn! We try moving meditations, sometimes we use chocolate or a candle, all sorts.

Will I be the only man/young/older person or any other label society like to use?

- Possibly. All sorts of people walk through the door and every single person is welcome.
- My classes are a place of acceptance and respect, with a healthy dose of humour.

Help, what do I do?

- Relax, we all make mistakes and we all get lost – me included.
- I actively encourage questions – email me or arrive a bit early so we can chat while I set up but don't be afraid to ask questions during the class – we don't have to be silent.