

10 Yoga myths busted

1. MYTH: ☺ You have to be flexible to do yoga

REALITY: ☺ If you are not flexible and have restrictions in movement you should be doing yoga to free the body from discomfort and allowing improved range of movement to all joints and extending reach.

- If you are finding it increasingly difficult to leap out of bed in the morning,
- If getting up from a chair after a prolonged period sitting (at desk; at dining table; watching TV) is causing your joints to groan louder than ever
- If turning to look over the shoulder is getting harder to do (e.g. to see the road at a junction when driving or reversing the car).....

Then you would benefit from practicing yoga on a regular basis.

2. MYTH: ☺ Yoga is not for men

REALITY: ☺ Although attendance to yoga classes has been dominated by women, an increasing number of men are beginning to attend yoga classes. Men would benefit equally from practicing yoga on a regular basis. Men suffer with restricted joint movement, tight ham-strings, bad backs, poor posture, stress, etc. A lot of male athletes regularly include yoga as part of their training for strength, stretching recovering and to improve focus. Yoga is now accessible to the ordinary man on the street. There is a class nearby that would welcome you.

3. MYTH: ☺ I work out at a gym so I don't need Yoga

REALITY: ☺ Yoga covers a more extensive ground than gym exercises as it is not purely a work-out for the muscles. Yoga involves exercises for the mind as well as the body and stress-busting breathing techniques. It provides the same health benefits as do many other popular exercises. Yoga would be an excellent complementary activity for gym-goers.

4. MYTH: ☺ Yoga is slow and boring

REALITY: ☺ There is a wide variety of yoga classes and teaching styles (hot yoga, power yoga, alignment-based yoga, restorative yoga, etc.). You should look for a class that meets your needs and goals and this may mean trying out different yoga classes until you find the one that suits you. A general yoga class for beginners and intermediates is usually suitable for most beginners but offering an appropriate level of challenge to the more experienced.

5. MYTH: ☺ Yoga is a religion.

REALITY: ☺ Yoga is not a religion. It is practiced by people from many religious denominations and non-religious people and it is up to each individual to make of its spiritual component what they wish. Meditation is often confused with religion because many religions include a meditation element however yoga meditation is practiced in a non-religious way. Meditation often coming in a completely natural way as one is practicing the different poses.

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6. **MYTH:** ☺ Yoga is just another form of exercise
REALITY: ☺ While yoga delivers similar physical benefits of regular exercise it impacts not only on the body but also the mind and spirit. Healing our own mind, body and spirit is well within our capability we need only to remind ourselves how to do this. A regular yoga practice facilitates this by allowing us the time and space for thought, relaxation and the development of the physical poses.
7. **MYTH:** ☺ You can't get a good workout doing yoga.
REALITY: ☺ Yoga provides us with the same heart health benefits as do many other popular exercises. A study in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology stated that "the popular mind-body practice of yoga is beneficial in managing and improving the risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease. It reported that yoga could provide the same benefits in risk factor for the heart as "traditional physical activities such as biking or brisk walking". Yoga is not only good for the heart but it strengthens the entire body; every yoga class is a total body workout. Yoga is also one of the safest exercises because it is non-impact.
8. **MYTH:** ☺ Yoga is for young thin people.
REALITY: ☺ Yoga is for EVERYbody; no matter what age or shape. Poses can be adapted to people's specific requirements. It boils down to finding the class that suits you. Within a class setting there is always a wide range of individuals of different age, shape and state of health, there to practice yoga for themselves.
9. **MYTH:** ☺ I can't do yoga because of illness, injury or chronic pain.
REALITY: ☺ An increasing number of scientific studies demonstrate that yoga reduces or eliminates pain, eases symptoms of disease and releases stress. They show that there is no harm done by challenging the joints to improve their range of movement. Some people with specific illness or conditions would benefit more from attending a specialist class or in a one-to-one session.
10. **MYTH:** ☺ Yoga is expensive
REALITY: ☺ You do not need expensive kit to do yoga, just wear some lose stretchy clothes. In most classes there are mats and blocks to borrow; though if you practise regularly you may want to use your own mat. If you are looking for a class at a fair price please visit the website www.yogawithmaggie.co.uk for price details and deals.