



## Yoga practice tips

### Some pointers and considerations for getting the most from your yoga practice

- 1. Have a spirit of self acceptance in the present moment.**
2. Yoga is about learning to listen to the wisdom of your own body. Being present to what is actually happening. Not competing or striving to get into a particular position, but bringing awareness to body, breath and mind as you move and therefore receiving maximum benefit from the posture.
- 3. Be aware of any sensations you may be experiencing whilst moving or holding a posture. Feel what is tightening and what is stretching; what is contacting the floor and what is lifting away from the floor.**
4. Find a way of moving that feels good for your body. Enjoy the exercises. Enjoy moving and experiencing your body. Think of the yoga postures and breathing as nourishing your body, mind and spirit.
- 5. At any time in the class remember you can be aware of your body; aware of your breath; aware of the energy in your body and aware of something greater than yourself.**
6. Never push into pain. Pain means stop or make the movement smaller.
- 7. Build up strength and flexibility slowly. Start with the easy options and only when your body is ready for it move onto more challenging options.**

8. Once you become confident and comfortable with a particular posture you can begin to practice holding the posture and breathing. You might want to direct the breath to where you are feeling the stretch. When holding, relax the parts of the body that aren't directly involved in the movement. For example you can relax your face and jaw. Of course don't strain, but see if you can hold long enough to have a sense of letting go into the posture. If you find yourself struggling, remember to let go into your breathing. After time and practice you will start to notice where you are holding or bracing unnecessarily.
- 9. When holding a strong stretching asana you can go gently but more deeply into the stretch as you breathe out and ease off slightly with the in breathe and then the next out breath maybe move slightly more deeply into the stretch.**
10. Keep the breath relaxed and flowing smoothly, never strain or force the breath and don't compromise your breath for the movement.
- 11. Once you have been attending classes for a while, bring more focus to your breath and allow your breath to guide the movement. At times you might like to wrap the breath around the movement to make the class a moving meditation.**
12. As a general rule, you breathe in when stretching the front of the body and open the chest; and breathe out when contracting the front of the body and tighten the abdominal muscles. It is also preferable to breathe out as you move into a stretch.
- 13. Do exercises that balance the body. So after a strong backward bend do a gentle forward bend. After a strong forward bend do a gentle backward bend. Or alternate between a forward bend and backward bend.**
14. Preferably include a forward bend, backward bend, twist and lateral bend into your routine.
- 15. Rest every so often between postures and simply watch your natural breath. This is where your body integrates the postures into the nervous system and heals itself.**

**Find time to sit or lie quietly each day if you can and simply watch your breath at the belly.**