

# YOGA

## GLOSSARY

**Y**oga, a holistic art and practice that originated some 5,000 years ago in India, aims to integrate mind, body and spirit. The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, meaning to yoke or unite, and refers to the joining of body with mind and mind with soul to achieve health, balance, tranquility and enlightenment.

Individuals of every age and physical condition can benefit from the regular practice of yoga, which has been proven to enhance flexibility, strength, stamina and concentration. Using a combination of *asanas*, or postures, and breathing techniques, yoga works to induce deep relaxation and reduce stress, tone the body and organs, increase vitality, and improve circulation and energy flow. Uplifting and meditative, yoga can be applied as a spiritual practice, as well.

Although many schools, or styles, of yoga exist, most differences derive from the primary focus of the practitioner's attention: precise alignment of the body; holding of the asanas; flow between the postures; breath and movement coordination; or inner awareness and meditation. No particular style is better than another, and many students practice more than one.

**Aerial:** Originated in California and now in several countries. Sometimes branded as AntiGravity Yoga, aerial incorporates traditional yoga asanas with the use of a hammock or sling and combines elements of Pilates and dance. This style is said to deliver benefits on emotional and psychological levels and has a fun component.

**Ananda:** A form of gentle hatha yoga with an emphasis on meditation. Ananda combines classic yoga postures with breathing and silent affirmations to attune with higher levels of body sense, energy and silent inner awareness. As an inner-directed practice, it has less appeal to those desiring a more athletic or aerobic experience.

**Anusara:** Anusara means “go with the flow,” and blends spirituality with inner/outer alignment and balanced energetic actions. Developed by John Friend in 1997, this style urges students to think of poses as artistic expressions of the heart. Individual abilities and limitations are deeply respected and honored, so Anusara yoga can be helpful for everyone and is good for beginners.

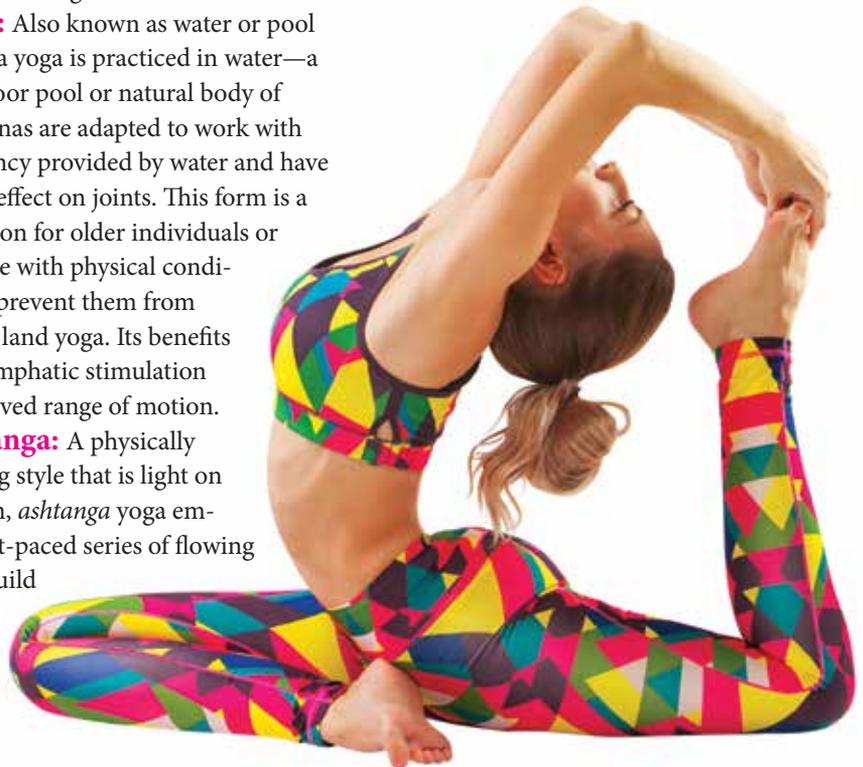
**Aqua:** Also known as water or pool yoga. Aqua yoga is practiced in water—a warm indoor pool or natural body of water. Asanas are adapted to work with the buoyancy provided by water and have a positive effect on joints. This form is a viable option for older individuals or anyone else with physical conditions that prevent them from practicing land yoga. Its benefits include lymphatic stimulation and improved range of motion.

**Ashtanga:** A physically demanding style that is light on meditation, *ashtanga* yoga employs a fast-paced series of flowing poses to build strength, flexibility and

stamina. Developed by Indian yoga master Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, ashtanga's progressively difficult postures are synchronized with a loud breath (called *ujjayi* breath in Sanskrit) and are designed to produce intense internal heat and purifying sweat in order to detoxify muscles and organs. The room is usually heated to warm muscles and increase flexibility. Preferred by many athletes, this style is too intense and demanding for most beginners.

**Chair:** Practiced sitting or standing, it uses a chair as a support/prop. Asanas are adapted from traditional hatha yoga. It benefits older individuals and those that are body-challenged. Flexibility is enhanced, as well as mind-body awareness.

**Hatha:** Hatha yoga is the foundational discipline on which nearly all other styles are based. In Sanskrit, *ha* represents the sun and *tha*, the moon—hence, the practice is designed to bring the yin and yang, light and dark, masculine and feminine aspects and polarities into balance. Essentially, hatha yoga brings all aspects of life together. A class described as hatha will likely include slow-paced stretching, asanas, or postures, that are not too difficult, simple breathing exercises and perhaps seated meditation. Hatha yoga classes provide a good starting point for beginners to learn basic poses and relaxation techniques.



**Hot Yoga:** Hot yoga is performed in a heated room using varying temperatures and yoga poses. A Bikram yoga room is set at a minimum of 105° Fahrenheit with about 40 percent humidity, performing 26 prescribed asanas. Both forms of heated yoga help to speed up metabolism and improve circulation.

**Integral:** A gentle style of yoga brought to this country in 1966 by Sri Swami Satchidananda. Classes are structured to balance physical effort with relaxation, and include breathing practices, chanting and both guided and silent meditation. Integral yoga is suitable for beginners and helpful for more advanced students that wish to deepen their physical and spiritual awareness.

**Iyengar:** Noted for precise alignment and symmetry of postures, the development of balance and the use of props such as blocks, balls and belts, the Iyengar style of yoga was developed by B.K.S. Iyengar, based on his exceptional understanding of how the body works. Poses are held longer than usual. Iyengar is a good style for beginners, but can challenge seasoned practitioners, as well.

**Kundalini:** A powerful, enlightening style that incorporates *mantras* (chanting), meditation, visualization, breathing and guided relaxation with precise postures. According to Hindu philosophy, kundalini is a concentrated form of *prana*, or life force, represented by a coiled, sleeping serpent said to reside at the base of the spine. When breath and movement awaken the serpent (energy), it moves up the spine through each of the seven *chakras* (energy centers) of the body, bringing energy and bliss. Once a closely guarded secret in India, kundalini yoga was first brought to the West in 1969, and has been known to help with addictions and releasing endorphins in the body. Kundalini will not appeal to everyone and should be practiced under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

**Prenatal:** This yoga style is specifically tailored for pregnant women during all stages of pregnancy. Its combination of stretching, focus and breathwork make it ideal for improving strength and decreasing stress levels in preparation for childbirth. It might also alleviate pregnancy-related headaches, nausea and back pain.

**Restorative:** Distinguished by the use of props, this form of yoga aims to relax the muscles, calm the mind and open up the body through slow movements and passive stretching. Maintaining balance and holding gentle stretches for up to 20 minutes is made easier through the use of blocks, bolsters and blankets that support deep relaxation.

**SUP:** An acronym for stand up paddleboard, SUP yoga can be practiced on a lake or other calm body of water. Hatha and vinyasa asanas are employed with the intention of challenging the practitioner to distribute their weight to maintain balance. Benefits include improved core strength, circulation and balance.

**Svaroopa:** A style that helps each student discover their bliss. The Sanskrit word *svaroopa* means “the true nature of being”, and Svaroopa yoga is sometimes called the yoga of alignment and compassion. Attention to alignment in specifically chosen poses helps to soften the body’s connective tissues and ease spinal tension. Blocks and bolsters may be used to allow for deeper muscle release. The style is suitable for beginners and useful for those recovering from injury.

**Viniyoga:** A transformative, slower and more individualized form of yoga that emphasizes gentle flow and coordinated breath with movement, Viniyoga is holistic in its approach and teaches the student how to apply the yoga tools of poses, chanting, breathing and meditation. Function is stressed over form in this style. Viniyoga is recommended for beginners and seniors, as well as those in chronic pain or healing from injury or disease.

**Vinyasa:** A challenging style that matches breath to movement. Vinyasa yoga poses incorporate alignment principles and are woven together in a flowing practice that is both intense and dance-like. Translated from Sanskrit, Vinyasa

means “without obstacle”. The style is best suited to energetic, physically fit students.

**Yin:** Developed by yoga teachers Paulie Zink and Paul Grilley to improve joint mobility and flexibility through holding asanas for up to five minutes or longer, yin yoga complements more intense practices such as Bikram, increases circulation in connective tissue and fosters inner stillness.

*Please note: The contents of this Yoga Glossary are for informational purposes only. The information is not intended to be used in place of a visit or consultation with a healthcare professional. Always seek out a licensed, certified or otherwise professionally qualified practitioner to conduct a selected treatment.*

