



MAINTAIN YOUR YOGA PRACTICE OVER THE SUMMER

The summer is upon us, classes are stopping for 6 weeks and you're panicking about how you are going to keep your yoga practice up between now and September. Follow these simple guidelines to maintain your fitness, stay healthy, keep in shape and be relaxed over the summer period.

Prepare...



Put on your favourite music and if you have time, lie down in Savasana, your pose of tranquillity. This will help to clear the mind, connect to the breath and prepare the body for your yoga practice. It's also a great starting position to stretch out the body and to roll up to sitting to begin your warm up.

Warm-up...

It is important to warm up the body prior to stretching otherwise injury can occur when using unprepared muscles and joints. Choose some exercises of your choice, for example Cat Pose (Marjaryasana), which is great for stretching the back, torso and neck and provides a gentle massage to the spine and abdominal organs.



Sun Salutation...

Once you have gently warmed, you can now move into Sun Salutations (Surya Namaska). Choose a series that is suitable for you and do at least 4 rounds (2 or 3 if less advanced) and perhaps add in some twists, side plank and a high lunge. If possible, try and connect your movements to the breath to get the most of your practice. Performing your Sun Salutations daily will help improve strength and flexibility of the muscles and spinal column, warms up the body and tones the abdominal muscles.



Standing Postures...

Warrior 1, 2, 3 (Virabhadrasana) and Triangle Pose (Trikonasana) are great postures to build stamina, strengthen the body, open the hips, extend and send fresh oxygenated blood to your reproductive organs. Perform as a series or separately.



Twist...



A seated twist, like Ardha Matsyendrasana, is an excellent way to calm and cool down the body after your standing asanas. Take this time to close your eyes and slow the breath and really enjoy the benefits of this pose; stimulating and de-toxing the internal organs, stretching the shoulders, hips and neck and energising the spine.

Seated Postures...

There are many to choose from - Wide-Angle Seated Forward Bend (Upavistha Konasana), Tailors or Cobblers pose (Bhadrasana), head to knee forward bend (Janu Sirsasana) and seated forward bend (Paschimottanasana). Choose one depending if you need a hamstring and lower back stretch or fancy opening up the hips and stretching the inner thighs. You can mix it up into a sequence if you have time – always opening up the hips prior to Paschimottanasana. Also remember to keep the back flat and the chest open.... and breath.



Back Bends...

Again lot's to choose from. A gentle back bend could be Sphinx Pose or locust pose (Salabhasana) – raising and lowering with the breath. Perhaps try Camel Pose (Ustrasana) with either one or both hands reaching back. Remember, never force a back bend. Stick to a level that is suitable for you. Always rest in Childs Pose to bend the spine in the opposite direction.



Inversions...

Everyone's favourite inversion is the Shoulder Stand (Sarvangasana). A great way to calm the mind, relieve stress and also good for insomnia. The Shoulder Stand is also beneficial for reversing the effects of gravity, sending the flow of blood in the opposite direction. Be mindful not to load weight onto your neck and to be fully supported in the shoulders. If you have any neck injuries this asana should not be performed.



Savasana...



We close our practice with Savasana. Relax the body, clear the mind and take yourself on a journey to your favourite place. Enjoy the benefits of lying still and feeling calm, happy and energised after your practice. Try to give save a few minutes at the end of your practice to give yourself this tranquil treat...

IMPORTANT

It is advisable to follow these exercises under the guidance of a qualified yoga teacher. *Please also make sure you consult your doctor before trying yoga, and get advice on*

- *Any movements to avoid*
- *The most productive level of challenge*
- *Safety modifications.*
- *Effects of interaction between your medication and exercise*