

# Top 10 Reasons to Try Yoga

Give yoga a try and discover what it can do for body and mind.

A central premise in yoga is “everything is connected.” That’s clear when looking at the health and fitness benefits of yoga that have long been reported by practitioners and are now being confirmed by scientific research.

1. **STRESS RELIEF:** Yoga reduces the physical effects of stress on the body by encouraging relaxation and lowering the levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. Related benefits include lowering blood pressure and heart rate, improving digestion and boosting the immune system, as well as easing symptoms of conditions such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, asthma and insomnia.
2. **PAIN RELIEF:** Yoga can ease pain. Studies have demonstrated that practicing Yoga asanas (postures), meditation or a combination of the two, reduced pain for people with conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, auto-immune diseases and hypertension as well as arthritis, back and neck pain and other chronic conditions.
3. **BETTER BREATHING:** Yoga teaches people to take slower, deeper breaths. This helps to improve lung function and trigger the body’s relaxation response.
4. **FLEXIBILITY:** Yoga helps to improve flexibility and mobility, increasing range of movement and reducing aches and pains.
5. **INCREASED STRENGTH:** Yoga asanas (postures) use every muscle in the body, helping to increase strength literally from head to toe. Yoga also helps to relieve muscular tension.
6. **WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:** Yoga (even less vigorous styles) can aid weight control efforts by reducing the cortisol levels, as well as by burning excess calories and reducing stress. Yoga also encourages healthy eating habits and provides a heightened sense of well being and self-esteem.
7. **IMPROVED CIRCULATION:** Yoga helps to improve circulation and, as a result of various poses, more efficiently moves oxygenated blood to the body’s cells.
8. **CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONING:** Even gentle yoga practice can provide cardiovascular benefits by lowering resting heart rate, increasing endurance and improving oxygen uptake during exercise.
9. **BETTER BODY ALIGNMENT:** Yoga helps to improve body alignment, resulting in better posture and helping to relieve back, neck, joint and muscle problems.
10. **FOCUS ON THE PRESENT:** Yoga helps us to focus on the present, to become more aware and to help create mind body health. It opens the way to improved coordination, reaction time and memory.

For more information, please visit [www.yogaalliance.org](http://www.yogaalliance.org) and [www.yogadayusa.org](http://www.yogadayusa.org).

