



**Naturally as a beginner of yoga you probably have a lot of questions.** Even though yoga is seen and referenced in tons of movies, written about in most popular magazines, and talked about among everyone from celebrities to the barista at the coffee shop, much of what yoga is truly about may be unknown to you. Really, what happens in a yoga class? I hope to answer this and more for you.

As the owner of a Barefoot Works Yoga I find that I get many of the same questions over and over. Which classes should I take? What should I wear? What do I need to bring? I'm not flexible, can I still do yoga? Are you going to hurt me? With this guidebook I hope to answer all those questions and more. It is my hope that this guidebook helps to inform and empower you on your journey to wellness. We all want enough energy to work, love, learn, and enjoy life. Yet more and more of us are tired, burnt out, and depleted of energy. Really, don't we all desire a fit and functional body, a focused mind, and a joyful heart? I think so. Shall we begin?!

**Step 1: Choose the classes and times that work best for you.** This should be determined both by your body's current needs and your schedule. We offer classes seven days a week at Barefoot Works. Not every class is suitable for beginners. Most of our classes are a style called Vinyasa Yoga. It's just a fancy word that means the yoga postures and movements are connected with the breath. This style of yoga is more vigorous than some other approaches to yoga.

Yoga is amazing. It's like strong medicine for the body, mind, and heart. As with any type of medicine we can use it improperly. When we do so we end up harming our self. The same is true of yoga. Doing the same things over and over in a manner that's not safe for your body can result in just as much harm than good. I say this not to scare you, but to inform you of the importance of starting where you need to and truly listening to your body when you begin.

Do you have any physical constraints? If so, it might be most beneficial for you to take a few private sessions so that you can work one on one with a teacher. This gives you an opportunity to ask questions and for us to adjust the postures so that they work with your body and needs. Unsure if you need a private session? Call or email and we can discuss more.

**Here is a list of our classes and suggestions:**

Class	Beginner	Advanced Beginner	Advanced
Yoga Basics	★		
Yin Yoga	★		
Yoga for Stress Relief	★		
Beyond Basics		★	
YinYasa		★	
All Levels		★	
Express Yoga		★	
Level 1			★
Mixed Level 1 & 2			★
Level 2			★

Taking even a couple of Yoga Basics classes can help prepare and educate you on a safe and sustainable practice. I understand that you must take your schedule into account when coming into class. Trust me; I want everyone to do yoga! However safety is super important. If you are having trouble finding a beginner class that works for your schedule then please send me an email at [barefootworks@hotmail.com](mailto:barefootworks@hotmail.com) or call me at 859-433-7787 so we can work together on a solution.

**Step 2: Getting ready for class.** Now that you know which classes will work for your schedule it's time to think about what you need for your class.

One of the great things about yoga is you don't need any fancy equipment to practice with. You just need yourself and a mat. We do have some extra mats that you can borrow at the studio. However, this should be a temporary mat. It's nice to have your own mat to call home. You can choose a color you like and feel good knowing you are the only one to sweat on it.

You can expect to spend anywhere from \$10 to \$60 on a yoga mat depending on where you purchase it from. Some mats are stickier than others. Some are thicker or thinner. Some are made from eco friendly materials, some aren't. When you first get started purchasing a mat can be hard. Some quickly discover that their yoga mat isn't so sticky and they find themselves sliding in yoga poses. Target sells the brand Gaiam that is affordable and works well for a lot of students. You can purchase a mat at many places these days including discount stores such as Marshall's and TJ Maxx. If you are prone to sweating a lot or easily you might like to bring a small hand towel to class to wipe your hands of sweat throughout the practice.

You should wear clothing that is comfortable and allows easy movement of the body. However, steer clear of oversize t-shirts as they can get in your way while practicing some postures. In the cooler months, you might want to dress in layers and have socks on hand to keep you warm during the relaxation session at the end of class. In the hotter months you might want to wear capri workout pants and tank tops. We practice yoga in our bare feet, so you don't need any expensive shoes.

**Step 3: Arriving for the first time.** Prior to arriving for your class please complete the new student registration form. You can access it online at [http://barefootworks.com/NEW\\_STUDENT\\_FORM.pdf](http://barefootworks.com/NEW_STUDENT_FORM.pdf)

Come in ten minutes early for your first class if possible. Our evening classes are only separated by 15 minutes. Please wait until the previous class is over before entering the studio as not to disturb the class. Once you come to know the relaxation that occurs at the end of class you'll understand why!

It's important to get to class on time. We spend five minutes at the beginning of each class centering, which means we're starting to unwind from the day, and starting the process of connecting to the breath and body. When students come in late it can be a disturbance. However, it happens to all of us at some time. I get it! If you come in late please do so quietly and have a seat in a chair by the door. Wait until centering (the part of relaxing and breathing) is over before joining class. Being late habitually robs you of your yoga practice and it's disrespectful to your fellow students.

Remove your shoes at the door and place them along with your other belongings in the cubbies on the wall. We also have coat hangers on this wall. For both sanitary reasons and respecting our sweet, sacred space, please do not walk on the floor with your shoes on. We have two restrooms available if you need to change clothes. Please silence your cell phone or even better take a retreat from your phone and leave it in the car.

Sign in and pay at the front desk. Your teacher can show you where to pick up the props you'll need for class. Get your props, roll your mat out, have a seat on a blanket, and give yourself a pat on the back for doing something good for yourself!

### **Important tips to enjoy your yoga class:**

**1. Hold off on the french fries and heavy food.** Try not to eat anything too heavy within 2-3 hours of your practice. A full belly will make you uncomfortable and tired during yoga. In the evening time you may have to eat before class. I suggest eating lighter foods if you eat prior to class. Think soup, salad, veggies, fruit, or a healthy power bar.

**2. Sweat & Scents:** You're probably going to sweat during your yoga class. We keep the studio between 75 and 80 degrees for a warm, safe, and detoxifying practice. Some of us sweat more than others. Some of us love to wear perfume or other scents. This can cause a problem to students that are sensitive to smells. Come to class clean and fragrance free please.

**3. Leave the lofty ambitions at the door.** Yoga is non-competitive. Try not to compare yourself to anyone else, let your focus remain with you. Simply be aware of your own abilities. Yoga is beneficial to all, regardless of age, level of fitness or state of health.

**4. Seek out the class that's most suitable for you.** There are many different ways to practice yoga. Some classes emphasize slow movements and long holds of poses while others emphasize vigorous and dynamic movements. If you are new to yoga, have a recent injury, or special concern, seek out a slower paced class. Even better, arrange for a private session to learn how to cater the poses to you and your needs!

**5. Remember, it's all about the breath.** Concentrate on your breathing throughout your yoga class. Your breath will help your muscles relax and will keep the mind focused. Breath awareness is important while practicing yoga and while living life.

**6. Listen to what's going on with your body.** Don't push or force yourself into postures that you aren't ready for. Be aware of the limitations of your own body - only you can take care of yourself. If you need a break, take a resting pose such as child's pose. Focus on evening your breath and resting your body.

**7. Be present.** You'll find that when you're not worrying about the past, nor anticipating the future, you're much more likely to be content and reap the most benefits from your time on the yoga mat.

**8. Ask for assistance.** If you're unsure whether a pose is right for you, ask the teacher for help. Before and after class are great times to speak with your yoga teacher.

**9. Give the teacher feedback.** In a yoga class you may get a hands on assist. At Barefoot Works we use gentle assists if we see that we can help better align you or

help you to feel the pose differently. If you prefer not to be adjusted, let the teacher know before class.

**10. Keep an open mind.** As you explore different classes and different teachers keep an open mind and notice which is a good fit for you. Not every class or every style of yoga is universally best for everyone. Your role is to seek out the best suited for yourself.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Where should I place my yoga mat during class?** You can roll your mat out anywhere in our big, spacious studio. As a beginner you might benefit by placing your mat in the middle of the room so you can see people around you. Yoga is unlike any other practice. You will be moving your body in new and different ways. Some of it will be confusing, but that's ok! It's all a process. It's all a practice, so you aren't expected to know everything or do everything. Your teacher will begin class seated on her mat, but once class starts she/he will be moving around the room observing and assisting students.

**Am I too \_\_\_\_\_ to do yoga?** (insert word out your choice...old, stiff, weak, out of shape, hyper, etc.) No you are not "too" any of those things. Yoga is practiced by millions of people, and all of them very different. If you have a true desire to do yoga, you can do yoga.

In fact when you walk into a yoga class you'll probably see a variety of shapes and sizes. If you peak around during a yoga pose you'll probably notice that everyone looks different. This is a good thing, we aren't meant to look the same! This includes our yoga poses. Your first inclination might be to say, "Oh I'm doing this all wrong. I don't look anything like the person next to me." Yes there are general guidelines to aligning oneself in a yoga pose, but even more importantly is accessing the pose in a way that works for you. This can be hard to know at first. But we'll be right alongside you helping you. We guarantee that if you give this yoga stuff a little time and effort, you will be amazed by how you feel.

**How often should I practice?** I get this question a lot and there isn't just one answer. As a total newbie, it's important that you begin with a beginner friendly class. We have classes that will work for beginners every day but Tuesday and Saturday. Again, if you can take two Yoga Basics classes first, that would be perfect. Then work up to two classes a week if you have the time in your schedule. Some people have time to practice once a week; some have time for four classes a week. You know your life (and body) better than I. I suggest that in addition to your group class you spend ten minutes each day doing some things you learned in class or sitting and watching your breath. Both of which will greatly benefit your body and mind.

**Can yoga help me to lose weight?** As a yoga teacher that's a question that I hear quite often. The most obvious benefits of a regular yoga practice include increased flexibility, strengthening of the muscles, better balance, proper posture, and overall toning and sculpting of the body.

Certain styles of yoga are more appropriate for students who have weight loss as an intention. Vinyasa Yoga (this is what we practice most of at Barefoot Works) is a style of yoga that links the movement with the breath. This type of yoga builds heat which can lead to an increase in calories being burned. This style of yoga is more vigorous than many other approaches to yoga. If you have not been physically active for a while you should seek out a good introductory vinyasa yoga class with a skilled and certified yoga teacher. I also recommend supplementing vinyasa yoga with other aerobic activities such as running, walking, biking, or swimming.

Weight gain presents not only physiological problems but psychological problems as well. It's a challenge to be comfortable in our own skin when carrying extra weight. We engage in negative self talk which is counter productive when trying to lose weight. As you begin to explore yoga poses you discover a renewed sense of gratitude for your body and all the things it allows you to do and be. I'm always reminding students to be appreciative of their poses and their body. Yoga is a challenging yet nurturing practice that can foster a renewed sense of control over our weight, our body and ultimately our life.

So, will yoga help you to lose weight? It's possible. Will it help to change your relationship with your body? Most definitely.

## Yoga Glossary – Commonly used words in class

Alignment	Ways of positioning the body in the pose to benefit and/or avoid injury.
Asana	Yoga pose or posture. All poses end in “asana” in Sanskrit, which is the language of yoga.
Assist	Hands on physical instruction by your instructor to help with the yoga pose.
Centering	This refers to the beginning of a yoga class. We begin in seated or supine, connecting to breath and body.
Chakra	Translated as wheel. Refers to the subtle nerve centers along the spine. In yoga we focus on seven from the base of the spine to the top of the head.
Hatha Yoga	Refers to the physical practice of Yoga.
Mantra	“Man” means mind and “tra” means instrument. Mantras are words and sounds used for meditation.
Mudra	Translated as seal or symbol. Mudras are postures for the hands.
Namaste	Stated at the end of class. It means the divine in me bows to the divine in you.
OM	The cosmic sound of the universe.
Prana	Vital energy or life force.
Pranayama	Breathing exercises
Sacrum	Triangular shaped bone at the base of the spine.
Sitting Bones	The “bones” under the flesh of your butt, the ischial tuberosities. In seated postures you want to sit directly atop your sitting bones for healthy positioning of the pelvis and spine.
Vinyasa	Type of Yoga. Meaning to connect breath and movement.