



## MAN UP!

### Yoga for Men

Once upon a time, when you spoke to men about **yoga**, they almost immediately had images of women chanting verses of Sanskrit while bending their bodies into impossible positions. For the rugby-playing, football-watching, sports-obsessed male species, the practice of yoga was about as appealing as watching a Julia Roberts romantic comedy – twice.

However, times - and old-standing stereotypes - have changed thanks, in part, to the evolution of male-specific sport versus female-specific sport. More women are tackling the football field while more men are doing the downward dog. Yoga has become the new cross-training for men looking to increase their flexibility and improve their muscle conditioning so the next time they hit the field or pitch, their bodies will bend into nearly impossible positions - willingly.

One great physical advantage of yoga for men is that specific poses can stimulate sexuality and enhance performance. By renewing oxygen and blood levels to the sex organ, sexual energy is uplifted and restored. Yoga also helps with improving flexibility and helps to boost cardiovascular activity as well as stamina. Evidence has shown that yoga can improve both his physical and mental strength, while revitalising energy levels.



Here are just some of the advantages of yoga and how men can benefit from it.

#### **Yoga works the entire body**

In sports such as rugby, tennis or football, you tend to utilise only 10 to 15 per cent of the body, whereas yoga provides **a workout** that covers every muscle, joint and organ. The practice oxygenates the blood, creating more energy when you finish the exercise as opposed to depleting the body of it. You work every system: cardiovascular, skeletal, muscular and endocrine.

#### **Yoga has benefits in the bedroom**

Guarasana, or Eagle Pose, is a posture that sends fresh blood and oxygen to the sexual organs, so this is a particularly beneficial exercise for men in revitalising their **bedroom prowess!** Trikonasana, or Triangle Pose, is a marriage of the heart and the lungs, two organs that don't usually interact. Not only does this posture increase cardiovascular endurance, but it is also the only known yoga posture that utilises every organ, muscle and joint in the body.

#### **Yoga works for every size**

It does not matter how you look, your size or your fitness levels when you practise yoga, it will push your personal boundaries by increasing your own flexibility, endurance and muscle strength.

### Yoga decreases muscle soreness

Yoga is hugely beneficial in working out **stiffness** from other sports. When muscles are fatigued, they build with lactic acid, and yoga, which stretches and releases tension, helps flush that away. **Runners** in particular find yoga the best activity after a long endurance jog.

### Yoga restores energy levels

Yoga practice doesn't deplete your body of all of your energy after a class -- like, say, a gym workout, where your body is entirely fatigued after your session. Instead, it actually increases your vigour, making you feel more aware and **revitalised**.

### Yoga trains your focus



Many athletes have heightened their performance levels through practising yoga. By combining **mental**, physical and emotional strength, they became better athletes at their chosen sport. Men can't seem to let their egos go and in yoga, you have to train your mind to shut down - to stop thinking about work, what you're going to have for dinner or whether Chelsea are going to win. Traditionally, men have a more difficult time doing that than women, although, once they do let go, their focus on the positions - and the difficulty in holding them - improves vastly.

### Yoga flushes your system

The practice of yoga is often can stimulate internal organs for example the liver and kidneys and improving digestion. When we stimulate the internal organs and improve digestion, detoxification of the body is inevitable. Just like a dirty dishrag, twisting the body through yoga wrings toxins and tension from the body. Twisting actions helps muscles to relax and increases blood flow to areas of the body involved in the pose, thereby allowing nutrients to flow more freely.

### Yoga balances the mind

Yoga has such a great sense of community to it and it really allows for mental clarity and focus. After you practise, you feel more grounded, less self-absorbed and calmer. This type of mental clarity really helps in sports or other daily activities you may be involved in.

Aside from positions that build strength and endurance, breathing techniques called Pranayama help to balance brain activity and drastically reduce anxiety levels from daily pressures. Not many would expect it but even psychiatric problems like depression can be alleviated by practicing yoga. The ultimate proof of yoga's effects is how it is becoming more popular worldwide. From everyday people to successful male athletes and celebrities, more are practicing yoga. Especially for professional sports players, the rejuvenation and serenity offered by yoga can help to reduce stress and allow for better performance during the next game.

As well as eliminating strain from intense sports and stressful life-styles, yoga can also maintain a healthy balance of sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. From the time this form of therapy and fitness was created thousands of years ago until present day; yoga has exceeded the expectations of many.

So Man Up! And give yoga a try. You won't regret it!

