



What is yoga?

The Sanskrit word yoga means union, or the blending and integration of the body, mind and inner spirit. Yoga is not a religion, or a sport. Although physical exercise is a part of yoga, it involves much more.

Yoga is an ancient integrated system of education that teaches us the "art of living right," which includes

- Proper exercise (*asana*)
- Proper breathing (*pranayama*)
- Proper relaxation (*savasana*)
- Proper diet (*traditional yoga philosophy would say vegetarian. Your diet should support and nourish you, so practice eating with your full awareness of what your body needs.*)
- Positive thinking & behavior (*non-harming, non-greed, non-lying, discipline, self study... how do you affect the world around you?*)
- Meditation (*dhyana*)

You can make everything you do all day your yoga practice.

Yoga also means acting in such a way that all of our attention is directed toward the activity which we are currently engaged in (*mindfulness*) and requires us to be attentive to our actions. This observation will enable us to discover something new, whether it be a better spiritual understanding, greater contentment with what is or a less bumpy road to a new goal. It is completely personal. Everyone discovers their own transformations, which may not be like anyone else's.

Another meaning of the word yoga is "to attain what was previously unattainable." The starting point for this thought is that there is something that we are today unable to do; when we find the means for bringing that desire into action, that step is yoga. In fact, every change is yoga. When we learn something new (*physically, mentally or emotionally*), we have reached a point we have never been before. Each of these movements and changes is yoga.

These definitions of yoga have one thing in common... the idea that something changes. One of the basic reasons someone takes up yoga is to change something about themselves (*maybe to think more clearly, to feel better, or to be able to act better than before, in all areas of life*). We sense we do not always do what's best for ourselves or others. We "instinctively" want to do better. This change that comes about must bring us to a point where we have never been before. In other words, that which was impossible becomes possible; that which was unattainable becomes attainable, that which was invisible can now be seen.

What's great is that there are no pre-requisites (*no belief system required*). We all begin and proceed at our own individual pace, and we can begin exactly where we are (*which is very individual and personal*).