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# BETTER HEALTH

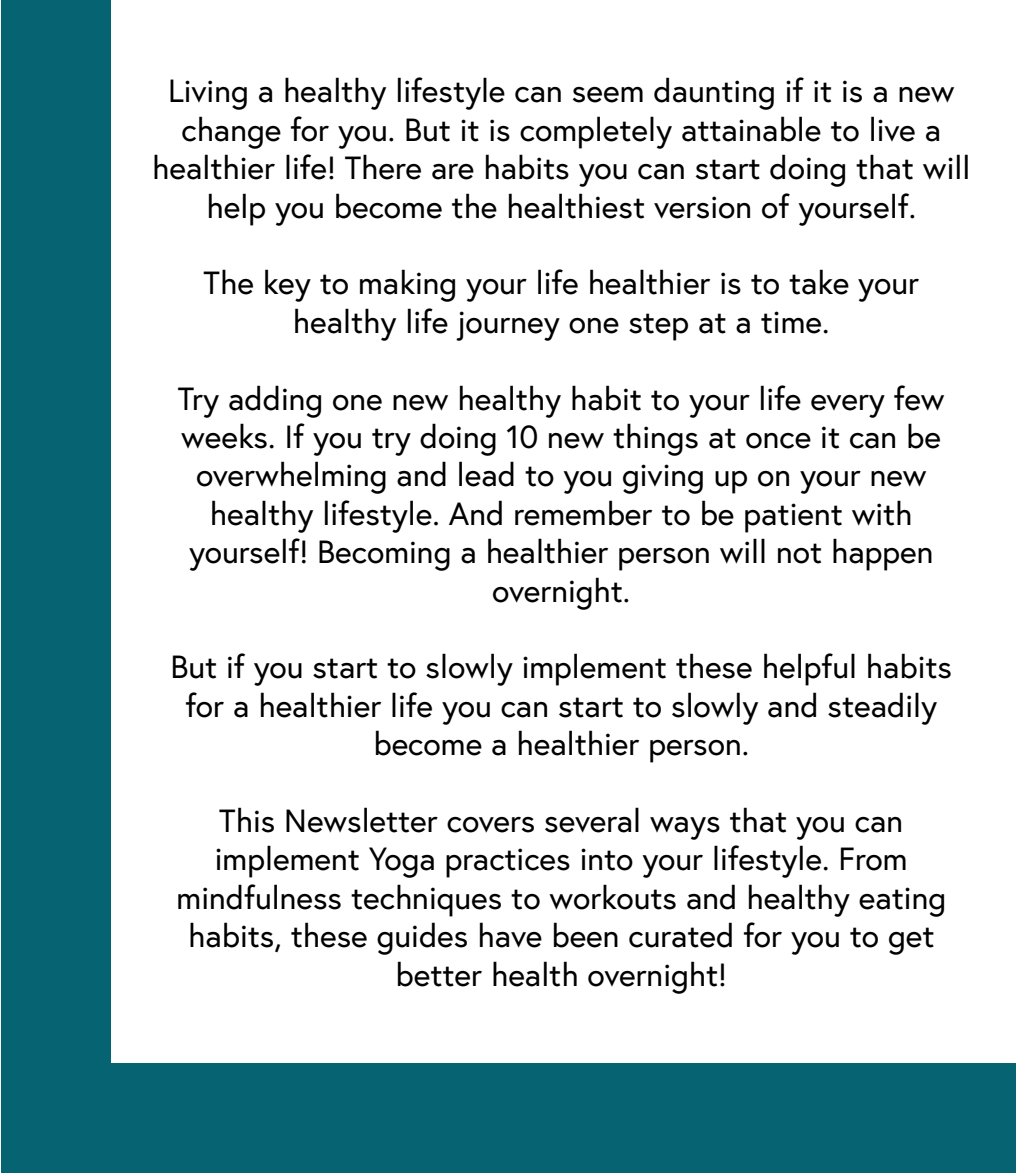
OVERNIGHT

## The New Mindfulness

*easy moves to wake up your body and mind*

**instant  
calm**

22 WAYS TO  
DECLUTTER  
YOUR MIND  
AND SPACE



Living a healthy lifestyle can seem daunting if it is a new change for you. But it is completely attainable to live a healthier life! There are habits you can start doing that will help you become the healthiest version of yourself.

The key to making your life healthier is to take your healthy life journey one step at a time.

Try adding one new healthy habit to your life every few weeks. If you try doing 10 new things at once it can be overwhelming and lead to you giving up on your new healthy lifestyle. And remember to be patient with yourself! Becoming a healthier person will not happen overnight.

But if you start to slowly implement these helpful habits for a healthier life you can start to slowly and steadily become a healthier person.

This Newsletter covers several ways that you can implement Yoga practices into your lifestyle. From mindfulness techniques to workouts and healthy eating habits, these guides have been curated for you to get better health overnight!

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# 7 Best Stretching Exercises to Increase flexibility

## 1. *Double Hamstring Stretch*

Stand with your feet hip-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Your arms should be at your side. Exhale and bend forward at the hips, lowering your head toward the floor, and keeping your head, neck and shoulders relaxed. Wrap your hands around the back of your legs and hold from 30 seconds to two minutes.

## 2. *Butterfly Stretch*

The butterfly stretch loosens up your hips, glutes, back and thighs. Sit tall with the soles of your feet together and your knees bent out to the sides. Hold onto your ankles and slowly lower your body toward your feet while pressing your knees toward the floor. If you're too tight to bend over in the beginning, press your knees down for a nice stretch. Hold for 30 seconds to two minutes.

## 3. *Lunging Hip Flexor Stretch*

This stretch stretches your hips, quads and glutes. Kneel on your left knee and place your right foot flat on the floor in front of you, with your knee bent. Lean forward, stretching your left hip toward the floor. Squeeze your bum (this will stretch your hip flexor even more). Hold for 30 seconds to two minutes, switch sides and repeat.

## 4. *Tricep Stretch*

Stand up tall and bend your right elbow above your head. Use your left hand to gently pull the right elbow in until you feel a stretch in your tricep.

Keep your shoulders relaxed and reach your fingertips down your spine. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds then switch sides, repeating one to three times.

## 5. *Shoulder Stretch*

This stretch is amazing for your shoulders. It relieves tightness from poor posture and releases tension in the upper back. Sit on the floor with your legs crossed and your back up straight. Clasp your hands behind your lower back, straightening and extending your arms and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Hold for three seconds and release. Repeat five to 10 times.

## 6. *Knee to Chest Stretch*

This exercise stretches your lower back, hips and hamstrings. Lie on your back with both legs extended, then pull your right knee into your chest. Your left leg should be straight and your back flat on the ground. Hold for 30 seconds to two minutes, then repeat on the other side.

## 7. *Seated Side Stretch*

Sit down on a chair or other flat surface and clasp your hands straight above your head with your palms facing the ceiling. Keep your hips square and your shoulders down away from your ears. Stretch up and over to the right, feeling the stretch down your left side. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then switch sides, repeating one to three times.

# How to Increase Flexibility Fast: 3 Tips

*Do these stretching exercises and you'll love how flexible you become!*

## *1. Get Active*

The more active and less sedentary your life is, the more flexible you will be. As we mentioned above, inactivity is one of the main reasons why your muscles and joints become stiff. Living a healthy, active lifestyle will help with mobility and flexibility!

## *2. Be Consistent*

You're not going to increase flexibility by doing a few stretches every now and then. Make stretching part of your daily routine – even 10 to 15 minutes per day can make a world of a difference!

## *3. Stretching Exercises and Flexibility Workouts*

If you want to increase flexibility fast, make sure to do stretching exercises and workouts that foster flexibility, such as yoga and pilates. We've compiled a list of 7 of the best stretches to increase flexibility below!

# Why Practice Yoga

Chronic lower back pain has affected millions of people worldwide and is increasing in recent years. It's often associated with pain or injury but can also increase the chances of disability, psychological symptoms, and reduced quality of living. People suffering from long-term back pain may come across other associated problems like anxiety, depression, and dysfunction of other body parts. In the last decade, yoga intervention has become a popular and effective approach for low back pain relief.

Practicing yoga for back pain is about a harmonious relationship between your body, mind, and feelings. Yoga exercises for back pain involve a process of physical and mental training to help stretch and strengthen your spine and back muscles. It's a practice of tuning in to your body, your mind, and your emotions, achieved through positioning, breathing, concentration, and meditation. The practice of yoga encourages a positive self-image which also enhances one's confidence, mood, and posture (one of the largest causes of lower back pain). Practicing yoga should be an added part of everyone's health and fitness routine. People practice yoga to stay fit, healthy and to reduce stress. That's probably why a large number of people have been leaning towards yoga for pain therapy. According to recent studies, yoga can significantly reduce agony and improve function in people suffering from chronic backache. Yoga is not a one-time treatment, the practice of yoga on a regular basis, ideally, 3-5 times a week is definitely a more sustainable, long-term alternative.

Yoga is a popular and safe form of exercise that is accessible to almost everyone. It's considered a very effective remedy for stress and tension relief; it's no wonder it can also help with back pain relief. Yoga helps maintain a healthy spine by stretching and strengthening very crucial back muscles that allow the body to stay relaxed, calm, and free of tension. It also encourages proper circulation in the body helping with blood flow. The motive behind yoga therapy for backache is not solely about bending and forcing your body into specific positions. Instead, yoga for back pain teaches you proper alignment such as how to maintain good posture. This makes the body more flexible and maintains the balance of your body. Poses can be done by standing, sitting, and lying down. In these poses one should feel comfortable and relaxed, it is important not to push the body past its limits but to listen to what feels right for you at that time. Before moving forward with more complex poses, it's advisable to practice the simpler versions of the poses.

## for Back Pain?



## *The final verdict*

Yoga trains us to have a better insight into the limitations of our bodies. The more aware one is of their bodily needs, the better preventative measures can be taken. Yoga poses shouldn't cause any pain, numbness, tingling, or dizziness. If they do, you are pushing yourself too hard. While suffering from back pain, the last thing in your mind is probably exercising.

For people suffering from chronic backache, stretching exercises can do wonders for you. They can not only prevent back pain but may also help in reducing future episodes of pain and injury. When practicing stretches and poses, ensuring the correct technique is essential. The appropriate poses can help you relax and strengthen your body, but poor technique without listening to your body can be damaging. Make sure to start slow and ease into each position with the best posture, having a mirror or instructor around is helpful.

Just by incorporating the following 5 easy poses into your daily routine, you can reap the benefits of yoga therapy for lower back pain. Through constant practice and regular application, you can achieve an improved posture. Ultimately, this gives you a complete sense of balancing your body from head to toe in proper alignment. Additionally, yoga exercises stretch and strengthen both sides of the body rationally – this will help you maintain the natural curvature of the spine which is quite significant to eliminating lower back pain long term.

# 5 Yoga Poses to Relieve Back Pain

## 1. *Cat/cow stretch:*

It starts on your hands and knees. The hands and knees should be shoulder-distance apart from one another. Knees should be hip-distant from each other. Inhale as you drop your belly towards the ground and lift your chin to the sky, this is called cow pose. Next, exhale slowly and draw your navel towards the spine rounding your back upwards into an arch. Align your breath with your movement and repeat the stretch 5 to 10 times daily. This is a gentle warm-up that enhances mobility and relieves any tension along the spine and in the lower back.

## 2. *Bridge Pose:*

Begin lying on your back with the flat feet and knees on the ground. Your feet must be hip-distant apart. Arms should be straight by the sides of the body. Slowly lift your hips from the ground, upwards. Hold this for at least 3 seconds. Try to repeat this stretch 3 to 5 times a day. This stretch is great for correcting your posture while standing or sitting by strengthening the muscles in your back.

## 3. *Child's Pose:*

Kneel with your knees and hips width apart and feet together behind you. Take a deep breath to inhale and then exhale simultaneously and lay your torso over your thighs. Try to lengthen the neck and spine by drawing your ribs away from the tailbone. Your head should be drawn away from your shoulders. The forehead can rest on the mat while allowing your arms to extend out before you. This posture takes off the pressure from your lower back elongating and thus, aligning the spine. This decompresses it and gives your body a nice stretch.

## 4. *Extended Triangle Pose:*

Stand on your feet around 4 to 5 feet apart. Turn your right foot to point forward. The left foot should be around a 45-degree angle, pointing open towards the top of your mat. Lift your arms in the air with the palms facing down, parallel to the yoga mat. Pull your hips to the right and bring your left hand down toward the ground while extending the left arm in the air. Keep your gaze up, and repeat the same on the opposite side. This aligns your spine, back, and hips, and is best known for alleviating back pain.

## 5. *Happy Baby Pose:*

Lie on your back and bend your knees towards your stomach. Grab the feet with the hands and open your knees upwards towards the armpits. Ensure your ankles are over your knees and heels. Pull your hands down so that you create pressure and resistance. Repeat this for 1 minute and do it daily. This pose allows your muscles to ease and relax, stretching out your hips, neck, and shoulders.

Numerous yoga exercises for back pain are focused on relaxation and calmness, but the intensity of various positions ranges from gentle and soft to strenuous and hard. Yoga's versatility is probably why its popularity has tremendously increased over the past few years.



# Meditation Tips for Beginners

## *1. Start small.*

When you first start building your meditation habit, start small! Don't try to meditate for 20 minutes at a time. But try by starting with just 5 minutes. Over the course of time and with consistent practice, you can add more time to your routine. By starting small, you will be able to keep up the meditation habit until it feels like a natural part of your day.

## *2. Be comfortable.*

You don't need to meditate in the traditional cross-legged meditation pose. Getting on the floor is completely optional! You can just sit up in a chair or lay in bed, what's important is that you're comfortable and relaxed! As an added benefit, it'll help you ease into the habit since it'll feel more familiar.

## *3. Track your progress.*

Like building any new habit, you need reminders to keep going. Use an app (like the free Insight Timer) to track your progress. You'll get the most benefit by doing the practice regularly. Like exercising your body, one large session won't have as big of an impact as many shorter sessions done regularly.

## *4. You're doing it right.*

So many meditators quit soon after they begin since they think they're doing it wrong. There's no wrong way to meditate! If your mind keeps wandering, that's totally normal. Don't give up!

# 20 ways to get rid of clutter in your life once and for all.

Clutter is stressful and distracting. It's almost impossible to find items when you need them. And, it occupies your mind from getting stuff done. How can you focus on your work when that stack of paper is screaming for your attention? Studies shows a link between clutter and procrastination, while numerous other studies have also found that clutter increases stress, decreases productivity, and makes it difficult to unwind. Moreover, clutter can encourage bad habits, such as unhealthy eating and sleep problems. Too much clutter can signal a lack of control and negatively influence your health, work performance, and possibly even your relationships.

Here are some are some simple and effective ways to reduce clutter in your life —

## 1. *Create a decluttering checklist.*

Decluttering is a problem for most of us, because of fear. What if I throw away that pair of pants and regret that decision — even though they were uncomfortable? What if I need to troubleshoot a problem someday, but I tossed the manual? One way to alleviate fear is to realize that removing the clutter from your life doesn't mean living a life without any possessions you cherish. You'll be reducing the number of things you own. For example, do you need to have a closet full of blankets? You probably only need a lighter one for when it's warm and thicker one for the colder months. But you probably don't need more than that. Creating a decluttering checklist can help make this process less frustrating and give you a visual representation of what needs to be reduced.

## 2. *Don't overwhelm yourself; start small.*

How likely are you going to clean and organize your entire home, office, or life in one day? That would be so ambitious it would overwhelm you, and likely prevent you from ever getting started. Instead, take baby steps. Set aside five minutes each day to straighten up a small area like a desk drawer or your car. After building up some momentum, set aside more time. Dedicate a Friday afternoon to get your office back in order. Use this Saturday to declutter your kitchen, then next weekend work on a different home project.

## 3. *Does it bring you joy?*

If you're familiar with Marie Kondo, then you already know this tip. Whenever you're cleaning your home or workplace, physically hold or touch the item that you're deciding about and ask yourself, "does it spark joy?" The idea here is to consider how you feel as you hold the object. If the object doesn't invoke such feelings? Toss it — part ways with it.

## 4. *Reconsider your routine.*

Routines provide structure to your life. In turn, this reduces stress and makes your days less chaotic. Establish a morning and evening routine. Jot down all of your daily and weekly obligations and add them to your calendar. Batch similar tasks together. And, only commit to what you can realistically achieve in a day. It will help you become more productive and prevents you from muddling your day with unimportant activities.

### 5. *Adopt a no-freebies policy.*

We've all been here before. You attend a conference or festival and come home with a ton of free swag. It may seem like a good idea at first. But, in reality, it's just more stuff adding to your clutter — and it's stuff you really don't need. While this definitely takes some will power, stop stockpiling on all these freebies.

### 7. *Unsubscribe and remove.*

Struggling to keep up with your inbox isn't just a serious waste of time — it's a distraction that's impairing your productivity and cutting into your enjoyment of life. With that in mind, one of the easiest ways to address your inbox is to unsubscribe from the emails that you never read. The same concept applies to newspapers or magazines that you never opened. Speaking of digital distractions, remove any unused apps from your phone. You may want to uninstall apps like Facebook or Twitter. The reason is that this will prevent you from looking at your phone every time you receive a notification.

### 9. *Use the four-box method.*

The four-box method is an effective and painless way to help you conquer clutter. Just find four boxes and label them with the following categories:

#### *Trash:*

These are items that you no longer need or want. But, they're also not worthy of donating or selling.

#### *Give away/sell:*

For the things that may have value to others, donate or sell them.

#### *Store:*

Seasonal clothing is a perfect example of this. There's no need to keep your Tommy Bahama shirt hanging in your closet when it's 30 degrees outside.

#### *Keep and put away:*

For the things that you use regularly, designate a home for them and put them away when not in use.

### 6. *Shred, recycle or trash anything outdated.*

Do you have receipts from a decade ago? Is there a jacket in your closet that no longer fits you? Are there outdated medications eating up space in your bathroom cabinet? If so, don't hesitate to shred, recycle, take to good-will, or trash these outdated items.

### 8. *Don't get sentimental.*

We all have items that we have an emotional connection to. You don't necessarily have to throw away all of these items. But, again, the goal is to reduce them. If you're having difficulty with this, there is a simple solution. Just take a picture of the item and put it on the cloud. Not only will this help you let go, but it will also preserve the memory and not the possession.

### 10. *Simplify your goals.*

There's nothing wrong with setting goals. Goals give you focus, aid in motivation, and allow you to measure your progress. However, targets are only possible if you've established a small number of specific goals and objectives. Review your goals to make sure that they're not too broad or unrealistic. From there, develop an action plan on how you'll follow through with them. Write all of your steps if you need to do that.

## 12. Declutter Your Physical Environment.

Physical clutter leads to mental clutter. First of all, clutter bombards the mind with excessive stimuli, which forces the brain to work overtime. Secondly, physical clutter signals to the brain that there's always something else that needs to be done, which is mentally exhausting. As you declutter your physical space you'll discover that your mind is also decluttered.

## 12. Write It Down.

You don't need to keep everything stored in your brain. Choose a tool—it can be an online tool, an app, or even a pad of paper—and think of it as a storage device for all those bits and pieces of information that you need to remember. This can include appointments, phone numbers, ideas for future projects, and so on.

## 13. Keep a Journal.

Keeping a journal is similar to the previous point, "write it down", but with more depth. A journal allows you to download the inner chatter that's constantly interrupting your thought process when you're trying to get important things done.

# Most of us have a mind full of clutter.

## 14. Let Go of the Past.

Mind clutter is often related to the past. Most people keep a large cabinet of mental drawers stored in the back of their minds. These drawers are filled with mistakes they've made, opportunities they've missed, people they've hurt, past grievances, and so on. Take the time to go through those mental drawers and discard memories of the past that are not serving you well and are just cluttering up your current life.

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## 15. Stop Multi-Tasking.

If your house is a mess and you need to organize and declutter it, how would you begin? You would probably start by choosing one important area—for example, the kitchen table—and clearing it of all clutter.

The mental equivalent of clearing off the kitchen table is to choose a certain amount of time which you're going to devote exclusively to one important task. During that time push all mental clutter to the side and focus all of your attention on the task at hand.

Visualize a table that is clear of all items, except for the one task which you're going to be working on. Make sure that the table stays clear of all other items during the entire chunk of time that you've devoted to this task. If anything else tries to work its way onto the table, mentally push it off.

### *16. Limit the Amount of Information Coming In.*

Too much information can clog up the brain. This includes the information that you take in each day by reading newspapers, blogs, and magazines; watching TV; participating in social media; surfing the web on your smart phone; and so on.

Limit the amount of information that comes into your life—and create space in your brain—by setting a limit on the amount of time that you're going to spend on social media sites or browsing the internet.

### *17. Be Decisive.*

If your in-box is filled with documents, but you fail to make decisions on what to do with each one, what will happen? Soon, your in-box will be overflowing with letters, bills, requests from prospective clients, and so on. The best way to clear your in-box is by making a decision about what to do with each piece of paper that's in there. The same thing applies to your brain. If you put off making decisions, your brain will soon be overflowing with all of the decisions that you need to make. The solution is to be decisive. For simple decisions, follow an approach such as the one recommended by Benjamin Franklin: create a pros-and-cons list. When you need to make more important and complex decisions, apply a more thorough approach. Although this might expend more brain power, you will have already decluttered the lesser decisions, and made room for the more important ones.

### *19. Prioritize.*

Nothing creates as much brain clutter as an endless to-do list. Accept that you can't do it all, and choose to focus on the things which are most important to you. Make a short list of your top priorities, and make sure that the bulk of your brain space is devoted to the things on that list.

### *18. Put Routine Decisions on Auto-Pilot.*

Small, routine tasks can occupy a lot of brain space. This can include things such as the following: Deciding what to have for breakfast each morning; Deciding what you're going to wear each day; Making a decision on what to eat for lunch; and so on.

You can reduce the amount of brain space that's taken up by these routine tasks by putting them on auto-pilot.

### *20. Learn to Meditate.*

In essence, meditation is learning to focus the mind completely on the present moment. When you learn how to place all of your attention on one thing—such as your breath—, all other thoughts disappear. It's almost the equivalent of taking your mind through a car wash, and having useless and unnecessary thoughts washed away.



# What Is A Yoga Diet?

## Here Are 5 Things To Consider

As yogis look to find ways to bring principles of yoga to their life off the mat, they often turn to their eating habits to see how they can make lifestyle adjustments—it is a great place for a yogi to start if they want to make changes in their daily life. Yoga has been found to encourage healthy eating and more mindful habits when it comes to consuming food. Yoga practitioners often eat more fruit and vegetables, as well as less processed foods, and are also more likely to follow a vegetarian diet. While these habits are a part of the diet, a true yogic diet does require that you follow more specific guidelines that you need to be consciously aware of. Sometimes it can be tricky to figure out what exactly that entails, but the following guidelines can help you get specific on what changes you can make in order to practice and adopt a yoga diet.

Ayurvedic tradition outlines three primary qualities, also known as gunas, that occur in nature: sattva, rajas, and tamas. Tamas is defined by heaviness and darkness that dulls the mind. It is associated with attachment and ignorance. Rajas is the quality of activity and transformation, but can cause the mind to become restless and promotes a lack of stability. Finally, sattva is a state of harmony and balance, bringing mental clarity. These qualities fluctuate in our life, but we can take steps in order to work towards a more sattvic life. One of the essential actions to take is to adjust your diet to eat according to the gunas. Each quality has certain foods associated with them, which tells us how those foods will affect our mind and physical body.

### *Rajasic food includes:*

- Spicy foods
- Caffeine
- Sugary foods
- Chocolate
- Onion and garlic
- Deep fried foods

### *A heavily tamasic diet can be characterized by overeating, as well as consuming any of the following foods:*

- Alcohol
- Meat
- Fish
- Poultry
- Eggs
- Heavily processed foods
- Reheated and stale food

### *Sattvic food includes:*

- Fresh fruits
- Vegetables, especially dark leafy greens
- Whole grains
- Nuts, seeds, and legumes
- Honey and molasses
- Herbal tea
- Basil, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, mint, turmeric, cumin, coriander, and fennel
- Cold pressed plant-based oils (olive oil, sesame oil, flaxseed oil, sunflower oil)
- Dairy products, with the condition that it was freshly sourced and that the animal providing the product was treated with care

It is important to note that, while you will want to focus primarily on sattvic food, you can still include rajasic food in your typical diet, while limiting or fully eliminating the amount of tamasic food. It is necessary to find a balance that works well for both your physical body and mind.

### *Keep Timing in Mind*

The time that you eat your meals is equally as important as the quality of food you put in your body. Eating at roughly the same time each day helps your body maintain its weight, as well as cholesterol and insulin levels.

It's best to avoid food two hours before your asana practice (or any other physical workout), and leave ample amount of time between your last meal of the day and sleep—preferably three to four hours.

### *Bring Mindfulness to the Table*

Yogis bring mindfulness to their mat, so it makes sense that the same principle should apply when eating. When eating a meal, ensure that you pay attention to the food you are eating, and how it benefits you. Mindless eating can play a huge part in the decline of our overall health, so ensure you are only eating what you actually need to be full, satisfied, and energized.

When you are out buying food, be mindful of what you are buying, where it came from, and if it was produced using sustainable practices. Also ensure that you are making smart choices that serve to nourish and energize you, rather than negatively affect your physical health and mind.

### *Follow a Vegetarian Diet*

The Sanskrit word ahimsa means non-violence and kindness to all living things. You'll notice that a sattvic diet doesn't include meat. A true yoga diet practices the principle of ahimsa, meaning the follower wouldn't want to create more violence or pain to living creatures in the world by eating meat.

There are many benefits to following a vegetarian diet. A vegetarian diet has been found to help prevent heart disease, lower blood pressure, prevent diabetes, and more.

A transition to a vegetarian diet can be tricky—many people worry about not getting enough protein or iron. However, as long as you make conscious and informed food choices, you can ensure you are getting the right nutrients. Even

if it doesn't work with your lifestyle to go fully vegetarian, try limiting the amount of meat you eat. Consider designating a certain day of the week that you go meat free, or try the vegetarian or vegan option on the menu when you go out to eat.

### *Seek Out Fresh Food*

As noted above, tamasic food includes anything that is stale, has been reheated, or is heavily processed. Try your best to incorporate freshly prepared food into your diet, as well as food that is both seasonal and local.

### *Avoid Chemicals and Stimulants*

Try your best to choose organic when possible, in order to avoid introducing chemicals into your body. It is also advised to try to limit stimulants like caffeine. Caffeine is listed in the rajasic category, as it gives a temporary boost of energy and focus, but ultimately leads to a crash, putting the mind and body out of balance.

The idea of fully eliminating coffee is difficult for many, so try to make adjustments to limit the amount you consume. Look for decaf coffees if you simply like the ritual of waking up to a warm beverage in the morning. If you do need that energy boost, try switching to a black or green tea in order to lessen the amount of caffeine you consume.

Remember that you don't need to make all of these changes at once. Pick a few actionable items that you can start with and grow from there. If you try to make drastic changes all at once, you are more likely to crash and burn, so take things slowly as you adjust to a new diet.

Finally, keep in mind that you know your body best. If some of these diet guidelines don't fit your body's needs, make the necessary adjustments so that this lifestyle switch can work best for you.

# How to Incorporate Yoga Philosophy Into Your Life Today

*Did you know that yoga has its own day? Since 2015, there has officially been an annual International Yoga Day! This is a day that is solely dedicated to celebrating the beautiful practice of yoga that has changed so many lives in so many different ways. First proposed by the Prime Minister of India, International Yoga Day was unanimously declared by the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate yearly on June 21st. How can we honor and celebrate yoga and all of its deep teachings?*

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Yoga philosophy is incredibly rich and widely varied. However, there are a few key principles that seem to transcend school and lineage. So, here are just a few ways that you can incorporate yoga philosophy into your everyday life:

### *1. Honor All Life*

Ahimsa is a practice that is prevalent throughout most schools of yoga philosophy. Roughly translating to 'non-harming' or 'non-violence', ahimsa can be observed by honoring all life around us. This can be as simple as sparing the mosquito that's buzzing through your house or cutting back on eating meat so that no animal needs to suffer to satiate your hunger. But it could also mean honoring and offering gratitude for that animal that sacrificed itself for your gain. However you choose to interpret ahimsa, it can be applied by simply honoring all that lives in some small way.

### *2. Look Within*

Meditation is at the heart of all yoga philosophy and traditions. The word yoga itself means "to yoke" or "to unite." And this is often interpreted to mean a union of mind, body, and soul or even a union of all things with a higher power. Essentially, meditation is yoga and yoga is meditation. And we can honor the beautiful yoga philosophy by practicing meditation earnestly. By drawing our awareness inside and striving to better understand ourselves, we ultimately strive to better the world.

### *3. Follow Your Dharma*

Dharma is such a crucial element of all yogic teachings. This word has so many different translations and interpretations, but one is that your dharma is your path or your purpose in this

lifetime. By following whatever it is that you believe you were put on this earth for, you can honor yoga philosophy and live your life as if you have a higher purpose. And, honestly, don't we all want to believe that there's some bigger reason why we're here? Dharma isn't just a yogic concept – it's Buddhist too!

### *4. Breathe*

While yoga's branches run far and wide, few schools don't acknowledge the breath as a crucial element to a deeper understanding. Our breath is our life-force (our prana) and, without it, we literally wouldn't survive. We can learn so much from our own breath and even the pauses between our breaths. By simply taking the time to breathe (and really deeply connecting with our breath), we can treat each day as a yogic holiday and each breath as an opportunity to dive deeper within.

### *5. Recognize That We Are All Connected*

The very core teachings of yoga philosophy all seem to point to one thing: a higher power that connects us all. Some schools of yoga believe that we are one with this power and this power is one with us. Others believe that we are separate from this power but should ultimately strive to reach toward it. The core teachings of yoga philosophy all point to one thing: a higher power that connects us all. Whatever your belief is, you can honor this ideology by acknowledging and recognizing yourself in others and vice versa. The typical closing to a yoga class, the word "namaste," can be translated as "I bow to that in you which is also in me."

# 9 Best Foods To Power Your Workouts!

As we all know, a regular workout is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle and is extremely critical for both your physical and mental wellbeing. There is a huge variety of food you can eat that will help you to fuel your workouts, and in this post, we uncover some of the greats!

## Eggs

These are the most readily available food items that are packed with protein. Eggs play a key role in regulating the amount of testosterone in the body as well as strengthening the muscular cell membranes. Research has also confirmed that a person who consumes about three eggs a day develops muscular mass and strength twice as much as those who consume no eggs.

## Apples

So we all know that eating fruit is good for your health. But Apples? Yes, apples are a great source of fuel that can really help you to invigorate your workout. Apples are brimming with "Quercetin" which significantly uplifts the metabolism and improves longevity and endurance. If you develop a good stamina, you will be able to exercise more regularly and effectively.

## Wheat Germ

Is another essential you must include on your shopping list. It's full of zinc, potassium, and iron and consists of essential fibres that can help decelerate the digestion of carbohydrates. It is rich in "octacosanol" which enhances both muscle strength and endurance and also improves reaction time in runners.

## Bananas

These yellow gems have proven their worth and are highly beneficial for keeping your nutrient levels high, as well as helping to keep the body calm. Bananas, however, work best when consumed before a workout session because the body is unable to store potassium for any prolonged period of time. Bananas are also enriched with anti-oxidants which help in minimising free radical damage. Although not essential for fuelling workouts, this is for your added reassurance that Bananas are good!



# Watermelon

Watermelon is rich in amino acid citrulline which raises the quantity of arginine. A Higher quantity of arginine increases the level of Nitric Oxide. Nitric Oxide is crucial to uplift the flow of blood flow to muscles that help the muscles to grow effectively and boost their recovery. Watermelons are rapidly digested as well, which raises the amount of insulin. They are best to be consumed after a workout.

# Spinach

Spinach is another item that has made it on our list! It is high in glutamine and anti-oxidants, both of which help with the development of the muscles, improve the metabolic rate and boost your immune function.

# Oats

Another fibre-rich food that is prime to help you fuel your workouts, and are able to slowly release carbohydrates in the body. They promote a consistent flow of carbohydrates rather than a spike, which helps in stabilising the energy levels during the workout session.

# Organic Beef

As with eggs, Organic Beef is another extremely effective source of abundant protein that also helps to boost growth and strength.

# Salmon

This is a vital source of essential Omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA. It improves insulin responsiveness which amplifies protein synthesis and enhances the uptake of amino acids and glucose. Omega-3s also helps in reserving glycogen to enlarge the muscles. Another vital aspect about this almighty food is that Salmon is a significant source of anti-inflammatory compounds that are required to help the muscles to recover after a rigorous workout session. Simply put, Salmon is one of the best foods to consume to fuel your workout, and if not already in your stores, you should be buying this in on a regular basis.

*These are just 9 of the finest foods that will leave you fuelled-up beyond belief for your workouts. Not only will you feel like you have an abundance of energy, your muscle performance and recovery will also be substantially affected as well.*

# 6 Effective Sleeping Habits To Help You Stay Healthy

*Unfortunately, many people regularly get a poor night's sleep. Practising good sleep hygiene is key but there are other things you can do too. Here are some sleeping tips to help you sleep better and wake up feeling healthier and more refreshed.*

### *Prepare for an early night*

You can't expect to go to bed early with an active mind and sleep well. Your preparation for a good night's sleep should be made well in advance. Why not relax with a warm (not hot) bath and try some lavender drops which can help promote peace and well being. You could even sprinkle some lavender essential oil on your pillow to help you unwind and to get to sleep. Or try lighting some scented candles to soothe your mind – but just make sure you blow them out before you go to sleep. Meditation can help you to get in the right frame of mind to sleep too, as this will help you to release tension and emotion from the day. All of which is key to helping you relax well enough to get some proper sleep.

### *Aim for 8 hours of sleep per night*

Next, make sure you have enough time to sleep. The optimum amount of sleep for a human is around eight hours. However, experts believe that having an hour of sleep before midnight has the same effect of having two hours sleep after midnight. So that's why you're likely to feel tired after a late night, even if you have a lie in the next day. Your body needs time to replenish energy – it's not called beauty sleep for nothing. Try to get to bed an hour or two before midnight whenever possible.

### *Prepare your space*

You'll also want to ensure your bed is comfortable enough. In fact, this is one of the most effective sleeping habits you can practise, and you won't go far wrong with a classic oak wooden bed.\* Experts also recommend changing your mattress every few years. But you can turn it over in the meantime as well, to avoid it sagging and becoming uncomfortable. Make sure that you have a comfortable blanket and pillow, and that the room is the right temperature for you. Too hot or too cold and you'll most likely find yourself waking up in the night.

### *Eliminate blue light*

It's a good idea to eliminate blue light from your bedroom as this disturbs your sleep pattern by making your brain think that it's daytime. And it won't produce enough sleep hormones to help you get a restful night's sleep. So remove all electronic devices such as your i-Pad, Kindle, or mobile phone from your bedroom. And if you want to read before you go to sleep, choose some soft LED lighting to read a traditional book by rather than an e-Reader device.

### *Consider the use of sleep aids*

There are many sleep aids you can use to help improve the quality of your sleep. For example, a sleep mask or a made to measure window blind can help to block out the light and lull you into a deeper slumber. If you find that snoring disturbs you, look for anti-snoring devices. Some people have even started taping their mouths at night. This increases the amount of nitric oxide circulating in your blood and helps you to breathe through your nose properly. And this in turn helps increase your heart function and reduce snoring for a better night's sleep. You may also opt for some natural and organic sleep aid options too, such as a calming sleep tonic to help relax both body and mind at the end of the day. Thanks to Dragonfruit and Acerola, both packed with antioxidant-rich Vitamin C, it's the perfect way to wind down, reset, and make the most of your beauty sleep.

### *Regular exercise*

Regular exercise has many health benefits, and one of these is that it promotes a good night's sleep. But it's best not to exercise too late in the evening. Try going for an early evening work out to help you to relax and unwind after a hard day's work. Exercise will also increase your heart and lung capacity, which will help promote a more restful night's sleep too.