

# How Often Should You Do Yoga to See Results?

By Leah Favela

## **Recap:**

Learn what questions to ask in order to decide how often you should do yoga to achieve desired results.

## **Introduction:**

A common question asked by people interested in the benefits of a yoga practice is how often should you do yoga to achieve results.

There's no single, correct answer to this question.

Of course, like any workout program, daily yoga sessions will give the most beneficial effects. But life is busy and not everyone has time to fit a daily practice into their schedule.

Yoga is unique to the yogi, and the results achieved will depend on factors such as lifestyle, goals, and the type of practice.

Defining your goals, knowing the benefit you want to receive, and figuring out how much time you can dedicate will help you decide how often to practice.

## **How Many Times Per Week Should I Practice Yoga?**

Your practice is something that's personal to you and the life you lead. Define your goal and have a clear idea of what you want to get out of your practice.

Listen to your body. If you start out doing four yoga classes a week and feel physically overstressed, take a pause and reassess. Pushing yourself to the point of exhaustion will only destroy your motivation and increase your chance of injuries.

Set achievable goals that enable you to feel confident and enjoy your practice. The best yoga practice is the one you *do*, and that could mean 20 minutes of yoga twice a week.

## **Find Your Frequency**

Consistent yoga practice is key.

The rule of thumb is yoga should be practiced between three to five times a week to get the most benefits. To see progress, daily practice is not necessary. Twice a week yoga sessions will show more results than practicing seven days one week and none the next.

Frequency can be a fluid thing. When you first start, your goal may be to practice two to three times per week. When you maintain a consistent practice, you may naturally increase the number of sessions you do.

Expert yogis say it only takes a short time for your body to lose many of the physical and mental benefits yoga provides. Taking a break for a month can negatively impact any progress you've made. A long break means when you begin again, you may be starting from scratch.

While the frequency is entirely up to you, consistency is what will eventually give the best results.

## **Do You Need Rest Days From Yoga?**

Yes and no.

Practicing yoga every day is possible. It's even encouraged. Because there are so many different yoga styles with varying degrees of difficulty, the time off you'll need depends upon your practice's intensity.

Ashtanga yoga is an athletic form of yoga that gives the body a dynamic workout. If this is what you regularly practice, then you'll need recovery time. Give yourself at least one to two days of rest a week from more vigorous forms of yoga.

Yoga isn't only the practice of intense asanas with constant movement. It also involves meditation, deep breathing, and contemplation. These aspects can be practiced every day in various ways; ujjayi breath, corpse pose, or child's pose, to name a few.

Doing the same workout every day, no matter the type of exercise, can result in RSI (repetitive strain injury). If you choose to practice yoga every day, make sure to change the style to keep from hurting yourself.

## **It's Good to Make Yoga a Healthy Habit**

Seasoned yogis might hit the mat every day, but a beginner will have a different practice. For yoga beginners, a single class per week is ideal. Once you've gained familiarity with the movement and postures, you can increase your number of practices, session length, and intensity level.

Try not to focus so much on the benefits as on forming a habit. Do yoga as much as your schedule allows. On a relaxing weekend, hour-long yoga classes might be doable. On a busy weekday, you may have to do a shorter session.

Going to a yoga class in the studio is not the only option. More and more yoga instructors are going online and there's a wide variety of courses to choose from differing in length, style, focus, and desired outcome.

Having a home practice can be a great way to ensure you practice consistently. Getting on the yoga mat in the living room to follow a teacher on-screen might sometimes fit your schedule a bit better than getting to the studio.

Remember, you don't always have to do sixty minutes of Vinyasa yoga. Five minutes of cycling through an asana or two or practicing some calming breathwork can sometimes give as much benefit as a high-intensity workout.

While going to the yoga studio isn't the only way to practice, an occasional studio class may be a good idea, especially for yoga beginners. While learning the proper way to do poses, it's good to have a yoga instructor nearby to help ensure you're doing the asanas correctly. A yoga teacher can also answer questions and offer valuable insight and tips in forming a practice that you benefit the most from.

## **Define Your Workout Goals**

One of the reasons yoga is so beneficial is that it's a holistic practice that improves physical, mental, and spiritual health. One month you may want to work on your flexibility while at a different time, a strenuous schedule may have you focused on keeping your mind calm and stress levels low. Life is constantly changing and so will your yoga routine.

Define your goals to help you decide when and how to hit the mat.

Know that these goals can, and will, change.

## **Yoga For a Calm Mind**

For many people, a main goal of yoga is relaxation and a clearer head.

Research has shown that yoga is effective in calming the mind (1). Further research found that physical activity positively impacted people's stress levels (2).

Some experts believe that even a few minutes of yoga a day can calm the mind and help with effective management of life's stresses.

Regular physical activity can help you gain a better night's sleep. And of course, a good sleep elevates the mood, lowers anxiety and increases your ability to be positive throughout the day.

For reduced anxiety and stress relief, try to practice daily and as often as necessary.

## **Yoga For Better Balance**

Researchers found that young adults who completed three 1-hour yoga sessions per week for five weeks showed better balance (3).

For significantly improved balance, incorporate yoga poses such as chair pose, tree pose, and eagle pose into your routine two to three times a week.

Remember that your balance isn't always the same. How tired you are, what you've done throughout the day, and your concentration can all affect your balance.

## **Yoga For Increased Flexibility**

One study showed that six weeks of a single yoga class per week significantly improved flexibility in the hamstrings and spinae erector, the muscle which aids in spinal rotation (4).

For flexibility, there's no restriction on how often to practice yoga. Listen to your body and practice as much as you feel the need. Flexibility helps with chronic pain, reduces the chance of injury, and helps your muscles to relax so it's important to get some good stretches in with regularity.

Flexibility training should always be paired with some form of strength training to avoid hypermobility and joint instability.

## **Yoga to Build Muscle and Get Stronger**

Certain yoga styles, such as ashtanga and vinyasa, are considered strength training. However, unlike exercises that use heavy weights, these styles of yoga use body mass to build muscles and improve strength.

If you're practicing yoga as the only form of strength training, five to six times a week is okay. Listen to your body. If you're feeling any sort of pain, that means you need to stop and take a break.

If weights and cardio training are being incorporated into an exercise program, more rest days are crucial. Muscles need recovery time to repair themselves and grow stronger. Look to give yourself at least two days off a week. On these days you can do a slower yoga, such as hatha, that incorporates gentle stretches to help combat muscle soreness and fatigue.

## **Yoga For Weight Loss**

The most important thing for weight loss is creating a calorie deficit. This means you have to eat fewer calories than your body burns.

Yoga burns fewer calories than high-intensity weight lifting or cardio, so this form of exercise might not aid in weight loss as quickly as others. However, studies say it is possible to lose weight with yoga alone (5,6). It'll just require a bit more patience and perseverance.

To burn fat, practice dynamic form, such as Vinyasa yoga, between three to six times a week for 45 minutes to an hour.

## **Take Into Account Your Mental Health and**

# Mood

As you form a routine, you'll learn to listen to your body and mind. You'll learn when you should work out for 10 minutes or push yourself past the 60-minute mark. The difference between "I don't feel like it" and "My body really can't today" will become clearer as you progress.

You might not want to do yoga one day but tell yourself to just get through five minutes. Exercise increases energy levels and releases endorphins so chances are you'll keep going after you hit the five-minute mark.

# The Takeaway

The answer to how often should you do yoga is not set in stone.

The key to a practice that yields the most results is unique to you and your lifestyle. Do your best to cultivate a regular practice, whether it be studio classes or following an instructor online.

Your yoga journey should be a pleasurable one. If you enjoy the exercise you do, you're more likely to do it regularly. And that's when you'll gain the most benefits.

Remember, the best yoga practice is the one you actually do.

## Meta Description:

Though consistency is key, how often you should do yoga depends on the goals you set, the type of yoga practiced, and your lifestyle.

(1) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17544857/>

(2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5709165/>

(3) <https://www.longdom.org/open-access/yoga-improves-upper-extremity-function-and-scapular-posturing-in-persons-with-hyperkyphosis-2157-7595.1000117.pdf>

(4) [https://www.bodyworkmovementtherapies.com/article/S1360-8592\(13\)00190-3/fulltext](https://www.bodyworkmovementtherapies.com/article/S1360-8592(13)00190-3/fulltext)

(5) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4995338/>

(6) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1559827613492097>

