



Beginner's Lesson 1

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(One yoga posture)



Begin by sitting on the floor- and however is comfortable to sit
If you have a yoga mat that's great, though not necessary until lesson 2
You can always sit on a cushion, a book/books, or a yoga block
If it's too much to sit on the floor, sit on a chair or stool to start with
Keeping the face relaxed, gently bring your awareness to your breath
Feel the body breath and the sensation of inhalation and exhalation
It's a simple instruction but can you keep your attention on the breath?
How many breaths can you take before the mind starts wandering?
The challenge in a yoga practice is to remain in this quieter place
Additionally stay tuned into the sensations throughout the entire body
Be patient and stay here with the focus on the breath for 5 minutes or so

Yoga, as it is traditionally practiced in India, and the East, comes primarily from a place of awareness, or mindfulness. It is a way of life which is integrated into each daily routine, beyond the physical yoga practice itself

One of the reasons yoga was originally practised was to ultimately enable the practitioner to comfortably sit still for longer periods of time, to essentially meditate. And in addition to this, all of the benefits of keeping the physical body strong and supple

You could think of any yoga practice as a short series of meditations: once still in the posture (some which might be more challenging) the idea is to match the stillness of the posture with a still steady and alert quality to the mind

This meditation (awareness, mindfulness) is important, because there is nothing more important than your mind- it's all you have! It's the mechanism of how you experience absolutely everything in this world, and therefore it is worth taking a little time to make sure this "consciousness" we have is in a good, healthy state

It actually doesn't matter how flexible you are (how "good" you are, or think you are at yoga, or at any physical activity), how much money you have, how big your house is, how many friends you have- you're potentially not going to enjoy any of it if you are constantly distracted by a continuous, non stop stream of thinking. A mind that simply can't stop moving from one (neurotic, worrying) thought to another, a mind that is essentially a voice in our head that we seem spellbound to listen too without question

So your first yoga lesson is to explore this quieter quality to the mind sitting in one easy posture. To let this stream of incessant thinking become a little more like background noise while you tune in to the sensation of breath. You could repeat this yoga posture every day for a few days- see if you can sit for 5 minutes at a time, remembering you can always adjust your seated posture if you need to

This sets us up to move on to lesson 2 when you feel you are ready. We do more postures, but the most important thing we do is to stay alert to this quieter, more peaceful place