

Yoga Position - What Does Each Type Do?

I often wondered what the value of each type of yoga position is, so I did some research to find out. All yoga positions help to develop strength and flexibility. Yet the type of yoga position that you do also offers some very specific benefits. Standing Poses

They are included in many poses and they help to align your feet and body. This type of yoga position is especially useful in improving your posture. Standing poses strengthen your legs while simultaneously increasing flexibility in your legs and hips. They add to the mobility of your neck and shoulders and they increase the flexibility in your pelvis and lower back. One of the most basic standing poses is Mountain Pose.

Seated Poses
These poses help increase flexibility in your hips and lower back, while also strengthening your back. They add suppleness to your spine and elasticity to your hips, knees, ankle and groin. They also encourage deeper breathing, which contributes to you feeling calm and peaceful.

Forward Bends
This type of yoga position helps stretch your lower back and hamstrings. Forward bends also release tension in your back, neck, shoulders, and increase the flexibility in your spine. They often promote a sense of calmness. I find forward bends particularly challenging since I have a considerable amount of stiffness in my neck due to an old gymnastics injury. This is the type of yoga position where I often use a prop such as a strap or block.

Back Bends
They open your chest, rib cage, and hips. They strengthen your arms and shoulders, while simultaneously increasing flexibility in your shoulders. They help relieve tension from the front of your body and hips and they also increase spinal stability. You should always do back bends as a complement to forward bends in order to maintain balance in your body.

Balance
Although balance poses can be challenging, I find them to be some of the most fun poses to do. They help you develop muscle tone and coordination and also strength and agility. They help improve your posture because you really need to elongate your spine in order to keep yourself from falling over. This type of yoga position helps train your mind to focus your attention; if your attention is not focused, you will not be able to do the pose.

Twists
I love to do twists. Twists release tension in your spine and increase shoulder and hip mobility. They also help relieve backaches by stretching and opening up your back muscles. I often experience tightness in my upper back and twists help me loosen up this area. It is important to always do twists on both sides of your body in order to ensure alignment and balance.

Supine and Prone Poses
Supine poses are done on your back. They help stretch your abdominal muscles, they open your hips, and increase your spinal mobility. They release tension and strengthen your back, arms and legs. Prone poses are done facing the floor. They strengthen your arms and back and open up your hips and groin. They relieve tension and increase flexibility in your spine. One of my favorite prone poses is Extended Seal because I find it very relaxing and it helps stretch out my shoulders and upper back.

Inversions
This type of yoga position develops strength and stamina, particularly in your upper body. It also increases circulation because since your legs are higher than your heart, it reverses the normal flow of blood. Inversions help pull fluid out of your feet and legs, so they are great to do after you have been standing up for a long time. Advanced inversion poses require a great deal of strength and alignment and should only be learned under the guidance of a certified teacher. People with glaucoma, pregnant women and those who are menstruating should avoid inversion poses.

Relaxation Poses
Relaxation poses are usually done at the end of a yoga practice. They calm your mind and body and encourage a deep feeling of relaxation. This type of yoga position is often one of the most challenging poses to do, particularly for Westerners who often have a difficult time letting go. One of the most well-known relaxation poses is Corpse Pose. There are hundreds of poses in yoga and they all provide wonderful benefits for your mind and body. By understanding each type of yoga position, you can choose a well rounded practice with asanas from each type or do those that meet your body's needs at any given time.

About the Author

Individualized exercise and nutrition programs by certified fitness trainers and registered.

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