



Guidelines - Pregnancy Yoga Class

Your pregnancy is unique so the best thing you can do is listen to your body since it will tell you exactly what you can or can't do. It is therefore essential that you allow yourself be guided its rhythms...

Getting Started:

- Wear loose comfortable clothing
- Yoga is practised bare feet
- Have everything you need at hand (cushions, rug, mat etc)
- You should not practise yoga postures straight after a meal. Wait ½ hour for a drink or small snack and about 1. ½ for a light meal. However, relaxation after a meal is very soothing.

To be avoided at all time:

- Jumping (too much stress on the cervix)
- Double leg lifts (too much pressure on the abdominal muscles & lower back)
- Over-stretching (ligaments and tendons will not rebound which could cause uneven wearing of the cartilage later)
- Inverted postures (can cause compression of the placenta, which may interrupt the flow of oxygen to the baby)
- Breath retention (would also interrupt the flow of oxygen to the baby)
- Avoid anything that is putting pressure on the abdomen and cervix (for example lying on your front, bastrika and uddiyana bandha)
- Avoid fatigue and strain and all vigorous exercises (especially during first trimester). If you feel agitated, stop and rest until your breath and heartbeat have settled into a quiet, even rhythm before continuing with your practice

Always stop if you experience pain or feel light-headed.

The purpose of your yoga practise is to:

- Open the chest for deeper breathing
- Encourage exercises that open and strengthen the hip and pelvic area.
- Hold the spine erect to allow free flow of energy
- Tune in the deep relaxation that lie within you
- Steady the emotions
- Centre yourself to cope with change
- Let the deep relaxation that lies within you to take place

As your pregnancy progress, modify the posture accordingly to avoid putting pressure on the abdomen.

1st Trimester

- Rest as much as possible and allow your body to do its work (especially between 11 to 14 weeks).
- Practice breath awareness and learn to breathe in a full and relaxed way.
- Use relaxation and visualisation to begin doing pelvic-floor exercises.

Avoid:

- Twists (can aggravate nausea)
- Any poses that over stretches the lower abdomen (can prevent the fertilised egg from embedding in early stages)
- Standing still for too long (your lowered blood pressure can make you feel faint)

2nd Trimester

- Avoid lying on your back with your legs straight when the bump begins to grow as this could affect the blood return from the legs and restrict the blood flow to the baby.

3rd Trimester

- Use support when you can
- Avoid standing for long periods of time (can aggravate haemorrhoids and varicose veins) and anything strenuous
- Avoid lying on your back. Instead use more cushions to prop yourself up and support lower back.
- Avoid deep squats as they may affect the optimal foetal position and do not do any squats if the baby is breech.