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Will I lose weight?

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What Do I Need to Know For My First Class

How much water is enough?

Who is Bikram?

“Bikram is doing a great service to yoga”

Deepak Chopra

Bikram Choudhury began learning hatha yoga in his native India at the age of three. At five, he began studying with Bishnu Ghosh, the younger brother of Paramahansa Yogananda (author of *Autobiography of a Yogi* and founder of the Self Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles). At age 11 Bikram was the youngest ever-National yoga champion of India, holding the title three consecutive years. At 14, Swami Shivananda declared him 'Yogi Raj' (King of the Yogi's).

Bikram went on to become an Olympic-caliber weight-lifter, until the age of 18 when a weightlifting accident crushed his knee, severely crippling him. Doctors told him that he would never walk again. Not accepting their prognosis, Bikram carried himself back to Bishnu Ghosh and together they worked to create a yoga system to restore health and wellbeing. Bikram then spent three years working with western doctors and scientists at Tokyo University Hospital. He combined western medical science with traditional eastern doctrine to perfect his comprehensive system of 26 postures suitable for all ages and levels of fitness. Bikram helped doctors prove that yoga regenerates tissues and heals chronic ailments.

Bikram arrived in the United States in 1973 at the invitation of President Nixon and the urging of Shirley Maclaine. Since that time he has been teaching thousands of students at his school in Los Angeles and travelling the world extensively, bringing the benefits of Bikram Yoga to millions of students worldwide.

"Yoga is for everyone. There are always some postures that will improve your health, mind and soul. It's never too late, it's never too bad, you're never too old, you're never too sick to start from scratch once again".

Bikram Choudhury

To learn more about Bikram visit www.bikramyoga.com

What's unique about Bikram Yoga?

Bikram Yoga has been **systematically designed** in consultation with doctors and scientists to deliver total health through the balancing and strengthening of every system in the human body.

Bikram Yoga will heal and **prevent illness and injury, promote weight loss and limit the effects of aging.**

The series is **dynamic and exhilarating**, combining physical and mental challenges to support total health and well-being.

- Bikram's beginning yoga class is a series of 26 postures completed twice in a heated room for 90 minutes.
- Classes are suited for all ages and levels of ability.
- Each posture stretches and strengthens specific muscles, ligaments and joints, and stimulates the organs, glands and nerves to move fresh oxygenated blood to 100% of the body.
- With regular practice, the Bikram Yoga system will improve health, increase energy, help prevent illness and injury, promote weight loss and limit the effects of aging.
- As a physical challenge, the Bikram Yoga method will change the body's shape, helping to develop muscle tone and lose inches.
- As a mental challenge, the Bikram Yoga method employs the skills of concentration, patience and self-control to improve mental clarity and reduce stress.

"In time you learn to focus your mind and control your breath, leading you to work harder, deeper and yet calmer. As you improve this relationship, you come to realise the true nature of hatha yoga: the union of body, mind and spirit."

Why the Heat?

“I found the heat intimidating at first, but after a few classes I realised what it was doing for my body. I soon felt like I never wanted to exercise in any other environment. It was exhilarating!”

- Muscles, fascia and connective tissue become more elastic allowing for greater flexibility with less chance of injury.
- Promotes sweating which assists the detoxification process using the body's largest eliminating organ - the skin.
- Blood becomes thinner which clears the circulatory system.
- When the body is warm, T-cell output from the thymus gland is multiplied 20 times. T-cells fight infection which in turn enables the immune system to function effectively.
- Warmer temperatures produce a fluid like stretch that allows for greater range of motion in the joints.
- Heart rate becomes elevated which improves the cardiovascular system (heart and lungs).
- Warm muscles burn fat more effectively. When we stretch, the fat has no room to sit so it redistributes to the blood stream, which we then use as energy.
- Capillaries respond to heat by dilating. This allows more oxygen to muscles, tissues, glands and organs helping in the removal of waste products.
- Higher temperatures improve the function of the nervous system, meaning that messages are carried more rapidly to and from the brain or spinal cord (you think clearer).
- Improves strength because proteins can be utilised more effectively.
- Speeds up the breakdown of glucose and fatty acids.
- Provides strengthening of willpower, self control and determination through the challenging environment.

What Are the Benefits?

It has been said of Bikram that his greatest gift to the world is “the idea that *biography becomes biology*, that the *way* you live your life determines ultimately, how long and how well you get to continue your search for truth, beauty, symmetry, and perfection.”

Bikram Yoga Improves the quality of your life!

There is a growing body of scientific evidence to support the benefits of yoga as a preventive and therapeutic medicine. Sufferers of conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, insomnia, high/low blood pressure, obesity, depression and other problems report significant improvements rapidly.

Specifically, Bikram Yoga will help you:

- Learn to **breathe fully** and correctly.
- Build **strength, flexibility, balance**, and tremendous **endurance**.
- **Prevent chronic illness** and injury.
- Develop a deep **sense of well being**, vibrant health, and a peaceful mind.
- **Lose weight** and tone-up.
- Improve your **posture**.
- Maintain a **youthful appearance**, as the oxygenation and cleansing improves skin tone.
- Work **every system** of the body: cardiovascular, nervous, lymphatic, endocrine, immune, digestive, reproductive, muscular, and skeletal.
- **Reduce stress** & improve sleep.
- Improve your **heart and lung** capacity.
- **Eliminate back pain**.
- Develop greater flexibility of your **spine in its full range of motion**, allowing the central **nervous system** to **function optimally**, resulting in high levels of energy and well-being.
- Integrate the left and right hemispheres of your brain, which helps to improve **memory, learning, coordination and balance**.
- Build **mental strength** by holding your mind in a focused meditative state.

What happens to my body when I practice Bikram Yoga?

- **Muscles** are contracted, **developing strength at a cellular and biochemical level**. When the muscles increase in strength, they become balanced. This then **returns the skeleton to its original balanced position**. We all lose this through age, bad posture, injury or sports.
- Lipids and proteins are re-organised optimally in stretching, promoting **better circulation**.
- Joint mobility is increased, **reducing the risk of arthritis, aches and pains**.
- Blood and calcium are brought to the **bones**; by working against gravity they become **strengthened**, without additional weight and stress.
- Lymph nodes are massaged, pumping lymph into the body and helping the **lymphatic system to work more efficiently**.
- Organs of the **immune system** are **boosted**.
- Circulation to the **nervous system** is **improved**.
- Endocrine glands are encouraged to secrete **appropriate hormones**.
- **Communication of hormones** amongst various glands and systems of the body are enhanced.
- The **thymus gland, spleen, appendix and intestines** are massaged through compression and extension.
- **Toxins** are **flushed out** and waste excreted.
- Lungs, heart and arteries are flushed out by **increased blood circulation**.
- The **brain** is **stimulated** by increased circulation and varying blood pressure.
- **Nerves** are **stimulated** by compression and extension, supplying **fresh blood, oxygen and nutrients** to the body.
- **Strength develops** as the body's own resistance is used against gravity.

How does it work?

- The heat in the room helps ignite our body's own heating system.
- Breathing exercises in the beginning of class coupled with the heat in the room, begin to warm the body from the inside out.
- The metabolism starts to speed up, preparing all systems to start working.
- As the lungs fully expand and take in more oxygen, the heart starts to pump oxygen-rich red blood cells.
- The 26 postures are sequentially designed to isolate portions of the body a section at a time by closing off circulation to a group of muscles, organs, and glands for a few seconds.
- Once released from the posture, oxygen-rich blood returns at a high speed to the closed part of the body, sending in nutrients and flushing out waste.
- By this method of stretching and contracting, circulation is improved and we open up blocked areas of the body.
- By the end of 90 minutes, Bikram Yoga has given you a full body work-out: every cell has been re-vitalized, the spine is strengthened, and all systems are restored to their intended 100% working order, giving you an energized body and a relaxed mind.

Why is it important to practice yoga with a Certified Instructor?

I have an associate who—upon learning that I had subjected my old and brittle bones to a yoga routine best termed "demanding"—commented: "I tried yoga once. I almost broke my neck, standing on my head." Obviously, my friend had run across a teacher who didn't have a clue.

When it comes to personally integrating the benefits of a two thousand year-old system of mental, physical, and spiritual health, there can be no substitute for practice under the guidance of a qualified teacher.

Our studio:

Is directly affiliated with Bikram Choudhury

Honours Bikram and his methods

Preserves the integrity of Bikram's yoga

Draws from all of the resources Bikram's training centre has to offer

Our Teachers:

Are personally trained and certified by Bikram

Re-certify regularly

Maintain an ongoing connection to Bikram Choudhury and his training staff

Our Assurance:

Your yoga experience will be authentic to Bikram's design

What If I have Never Done Yoga before?

Do any of these apply to you?

I'm not flexible enough for yoga

I'm too unfit for yoga

I need to lose more weight before I start yoga

I need to fix my knee / my shoulder / my back before I start yoga

Then Bikram yoga is for you!

*Avoiding yoga because you are unfit or inflexible is similar to not getting your learner drivers permit because you can't drive! The Bikram Yoga room is **precisely where** we heal injury & build flexibility, strength & fitness.*

In our studio:

- Every class is a beginner class.
- **Everyone is welcome.**
- As long as you try 100% the right way, you will achieve the benefits for your body.
- There are no pre-requisites and no experience necessary.
- There is **no judgment** about your performance, and **no competition** among students.
- Bring your smiling happy face and your open mind. We'll take care of the rest of you.

If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.

Mahatma Gandhi

What if I'm not flexible?

Bikram did not intend his series to be performed by rubber-jointed yoga adepts.

Bikram Yoga welcomes ordinary people of all shapes, sizes, and abilities.

The need for flexibility is the most common misconception that prevents people from attending yoga class.

Yoga is not about how flexible you are. It is about stretching your body and spine in all directions.

If you try the right way and go to your personal "edge" you will receive 100% of the benefits.

Will I get a cardiovascular workout?

Absolutely!

Exercising in the heat **increases the heart rate**. As you continue through the series, increasing demands are placed upon the heart. By the time you are 1/3 way through the class the heart rate will double for 5 seconds at a time, alternating with short intervals of rest. This process stretches the lower muscle of the heart, **increasing its capacity to pump blood around the body**. In time, your **heart becomes stronger** and in turn, you **increase your aerobic capacity**.

Will I lose weight?

A minimum of 10 classes per month is recommended to get the phenomenal benefits of Bikram Yoga, including **weight normalisation**. As a beginner, it takes three classes for your body to understand the proper approach to the posture, and ten classes for your body to begin to work with the postures. You will then start to realise optimisation of all your body systems. Digestion and respiration, as well as endocrine, lymphatic and elimination systems will begin to work harmoniously. Your appetite will normalise, and your unhealthy cravings will diminish. All of these results will help to normalise your weight if you devote yourself to a regular practice. It is estimated that between 1400 to 2000 kilojoules are burned in a Bikram Yoga class. The range depends on your size, amount of muscle mass and effort in class.

Is there anyone who cannot do Bikram Yoga?

Bikram Yoga is suitable for all ages and levels of ability above 12 years old (the ability to sweat is essential to prevent overheating). It may be more challenging to some and certain modifications may be required in a small number of cases.

Always check with your doctor if you have any concerns and inform the instructor prior to class.

It is not recommended to practice Bikram Yoga:

- If you are **fasting**
- If you are on, an **extreme diet** or are consuming only minimal calories through diet shakes.
- If you have a **fever**
- If you are already doing an **intense detoxification**
- If you are **pregnant** and have less than 6 months of regular practice of Bikram Yoga (Unfortunately it is not advised to do yoga in the heated studio, especially in the first trimester when the mother's core temperature should not be elevated. Bikram's wife Rajashree has produced a Pregnancy DVD specific to Bikram Yoga, which may be practiced at home).
- If you have had **recent chemotherapy**
- If you suffer from **epilepsy**, you will need to speak to your consultant, and have written consent from them, to confirm that it is safe for you to practice in 38 degree's heat.

What Do I Need to Know For My First Class?

It's Good to Note:

- For first-timers, arrive 15 minutes before class to complete your registration.
- Remember your goal is to stay in the room for the whole 90 minutes.
- Never be afraid to kneel down when you need to as a beginner, but know that your goal is to do all the postures for maximum benefit.
- Feeling dizzy, nauseous or light-headed is **normal** when you first get started.
- Don't feel self-conscious; it's helpful to realise that other people's focus is on themselves.
- Drink plenty of water before and after class.

Take your second class within 24 hours, although you may experience discomfort such as muscle aches.

Make Sure You Have:

- An empty stomach – don't eat 2 to 3 hours before the class.
- A clean body - no perfumes or aftershaves
- Proper hydration – drink plenty of water (1-2 LITRES) throughout the day before the class.
- 2 towels, one for class and one for showering after class
- A plastic bag for your wet clothes
- Bottle of water for class
- **An open mind and a positive attitude**

You Might Like to Wear:

- Something comfortable - remember you will be sweating quite a bit.
- For **women** – shorts/bike pants and a leotard/crop top.
- For **men** – shorts, and a T-shirt is optional.

How much water is enough?

DID YOU KNOW:

You can lose up to 2 ½ kg of water-weight during a Bikram class. (This is NOT a good weight to lose).

It is easy to get dehydrated; make sure you drink plenty of water the entire day before you arrive, and after class as well.

You are less likely to feel light-headed or dizzy during class if you've had enough to drink in the hours proceeding class.

As a rough guide, a minimum of 1 litre for every 30 kilograms of body weight should be consumed daily. Seem like a lot? Remember our bodies are mostly water. Being fully hydrated helps take pressure off the organs, enabling them to do their job and help flush the body and keep it running smoothly. The most common excuse for not drinking enough is the increased visits to the bathroom. Your body will adjust to the increased water intake. You may also find benefits of decreased body odour, smoother skin, and shinier hair.