



## Health Advice

# Yoga for everyone

While some people are already enthusiastically practising yoga, others are sceptical. But it's worth everyone's time to give yoga a try: "Yoga is a fantastic way to bring your body and breath into harmony and take time for yourself," explains yoga teacher Svenja Folkerts from BARMER. "We pay very little attention to our breathing and our bodies in our everyday lives. We simply 'function'. Yoga can help us to become more centred. In yoga, it doesn't matter how nicely you perform a movement or whether you need a break – yoga is always effective," Folkerts explains. Unlike fitness or cardiovascular training, where the body determines the breath, in yoga the body follows the breath: you inhale first and then move. "Doing yoga regularly helps you find more clarity, focus and balance," says Folkerts.

### Which type of yoga is right for me?

The most popular forms of yoga include vinyasa, hatha, Yin, ashtanga, kundalini and power yoga. Confused? Why not try out some beginners' courses in different types of yoga to find out which one suits you best. Hatha and vinyasa yoga are good types of yoga for beginners: "Hatha yoga focuses on holding the yoga poses for longer. Vinyasa yoga links the poses, the asanas, fluidly with each other; the yoga sequences alternate between dynamic, soft and creative," Folkerts explains.

By the way, yoga isn't just for women; it's a great way for men to take a relaxing break from day-to-day life, too. Svenja Folkerts recommends that men try vinyasa or power yoga: "In power yoga, the focus is on the physical practice, which tends to appeal more to men."

### 4 easy yoga exercises for the workplace

#### Shoulder salutation

Sit up straight. Inhale, bring your hands out to the sides and up over your head. Exhale, place your hands in front of your heart. Inhale,

open your arms out wide to the sides, push your chest forward and up. Exhale, grasp your forearms behind your back and lower your gaze. Inhale, hold the grip, lift your gaze and your chest. Exhale, fold your upper body forward over your thighs. Inhale, release your grip, bring your hands out to the sides and lift them up over your head, straightening your upper body again. Repeat 3 times.

#### Cat-cow

Sit comfortably. Rest your hands gently on your thighs, keep your back straight. Only your fingertips touch your thighs, your elbows are close to your waist. Inhale, push your shoulders back, lift your chest and your gaze. Your back may be gently arched (cow pose). Exhale, tilt your pelvis forward, consciously round your back, push your shoulders forward, rest your chin on your chest and gently stretch your arms to create a round back (cat pose). Repeat for 10 breaths.

#### Eye yoga

Sit with your eyes open, your neck straight and your head still. Let only your eyes glide up and down. Count to 10, looking up 5 times and down 5 times. Do the same from left to right. Then move your eyes in a large circle. 5 rounds in one direction and 5 in the other. Briefly close your eyes afterwards and see how they feel.

#### For those in a hurry

Rub your palms together until they feel warm. Then place them over your eyes, so it becomes dark. Close your eyes and see how they feel. Warmth and darkness relax the eyes. Stay in the position for as long as you like. Remove your hands from your face and keep your eyes closed for a little while longer to slowly get your eyes accustomed to the brightness.