

# Power Yoga

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Tuesday, 20 June 2006  
Last Updated Saturday, 29 July 2006

The value of yoga as an activity that increases flexibility, provides toning, and connects the act of exercise with mediation has long been known. But when people think of a more rigorous workout or an exercise program for weight loss, yoga may not always be what comes to mind. With power yoga, though, it should be.

Power yoga involves performing a series of yoga poses without breaks or stopping. It is a form of rigorous and intense exercise that focuses on breathing techniques as a person transitions rapidly from pose to pose. Like other forms of intense exercise, power yoga can increase endurance and physical strength. Just as classical yoga is more than a good cardiovascular workout, power yoga is the same. It focuses on both physical and mental power and aims to connect the body and the mind. Many people feel very strongly that without yoga they feel unbalanced in every part of their body. Because of the impact this form of yoga has on improving stamina, flexibility and muscle imbalances, it is often used in aerobics courses as a transition from warm-up to aerobic activity. Many athletes incorporate power yoga into their training regimen for various competitive sports. What Westerners call "power yoga" is actually transitioned from Ashtanga yoga, and was given the new name by an Ashtanga yoga instructor. Power yoga is to be done in a heated room and provides a much more rigorous cardiovascular workout than classical yoga. Because of its rigorous and demanding nature, it should not be done by those who have injuries or chronic illnesses. This stamina-building form of exercise is designed for those who are already at a relatively high level of physical fitness. Those interested in learning more about this activity should inquire about courses or introductory sessions at their local gym. Even those who are already at a high level of physical fitness should be familiar with and have some experience doing classical yoga poses and breathing exercises before taking the leap into this more advanced form. Those considering power yoga should also have an interest in more than a vigorous workout, as the focus on the connection of mind, body and spirit is a critical element of this activity. For those with some experience who would like to make it a part of their workout regimen but do not have the time or interest in going to the gym, there are exercise videos and DVDs available. Traditional yoga attire and equipment, such as a yoga mat, are required for those interested in doing power yoga at home.