

do yoga, more often



You love yoga, so why is it sometimes so hard to motivate yourself to go to a class or roll out the mat at home? Follow these 8 tips to help you get more time on the mat. *By Molly Furzer*

1 just do it

Ryoho yoga teacher Louisa Kolega, founder of Lunge Yoga & Health in Sydney, says that when you really don't feel like going to yoga class, it really is the best time to go. "When you are flat, when you are down, when your body is tired and your mind is fatigued... yoga will re-energise you to facilitate you feeling better. It will help you deal with what is going on in your life, physically and emotionally."

2 class benefits

Yoga classes are where friends can be made and communities formed, says Swami Atma, acharya at Satyananda Yoga Rocklyn Ashram in Victoria. "You are mixing with people on the same path, and there is inspiration coming from others. Practising together heightens the aspect of a spiritual understanding, sharing the knowledge that yoga is for wellbeing," she says. "And when you go to a class, it is in a controlled environment and you get your practice, no matter what's going on at home," she adds.

3 prepare yourself

A little preparation can help you on days when motivation wanes. "Make it easy by choosing the class, packing your bag, visualising how good you will feel once there, and leaving work on time," advises Nicky Pullen from Yoga in Daily Life in Kensington, Sydney. For a morning home practice, she suggests setting up your area the night before (see Set the scene, opposite). "Go to bed happy, knowing that all you need to do is slip into your fabulous inviting space, light a candle or incense, say a prayer or mantra and move into your blissful practice that will bring you into the present and set you up for the day."

4 be regular

Choose a time to practise and do it regularly. "This means not practising for one hour one day, 15 minutes the next day and nothing the next. It means setting up something that fits into your lifestyle," says Swami Atma. "If you have a routine that takes one hour and you only have 15 minutes, you're going to get tension. Sometimes 15 minutes a day is the best because it is regular—when something is constant it makes an impression, you get the benefits from it." Louisa Kolega agrees, saying a 15-minute daily practice can make a big difference in your life. "It's the consistency of practice that brings the changes and life balance. Daily yoga, even if it's four to five times a week, reaffirms within the body and mind in very simple terms that all is OK."

5 set the scene

Be inspired by your favourite yoga studio and make a space in your home dedicated to your yoga practice. What reminds you of yoga class? Is it the incense burning, a statue of an Indian deity or the music playing in the background? Recreate the feeling at home with a small shrine or a pretty meditation cushion and a candle. Melanie Champion, a yoga student building her own home practice, created a "yoga nook" in her home. She uses music to set the mood. "There are some really fantastic yoga tunes around that will suit every fancy," she says.

6 get disciplined

Develop your self-discipline, the ability to stay on the path of yoga. Just going to a yoga class regularly will build self-discipline that you can later transfer to the mat at home. And when you're feeling more like a sloth than a yogi, "it helps with your energy levels to leave the house and go to a class," says Swami Atma. This can boost your motivation and change your habitual patterns that you have formed at home, she explains.

7 feel grateful

"I think of how lucky I am to even have the opportunity to attend yoga classes. I think about the joy and gratitude that I will feel afterwards from learning from an experienced and caring teacher, and sharing that experience with other people in our class," says Kim Pendreigh, who attended her first yoga class at a retreat as a 49-year-old. Now, five years later, she practises at home, attends a weekly Satyananda Yoga class and is training to be a vinyasa flow yoga teacher.

8 spice it up

Is your home practice becoming a little boring? Then get yourself to a variety of yoga classes, finding new inspiration with different teachers and yoga styles. "It's very hard to challenge yourself when you practise at home unless you are highly motivated," says Swami Atma. "You can slip into a fairly ordinary routine and just get by with what you know is easy for your body to do, so there is very little personal expansion," she cautions. Aside from inspiration, attending classes can provide a good check-up on your alignment, and you can ask your teacher for help with a home practice sequence.

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