

Sun A to Sun Z

How to Take Your Yoga To The Next Level

Like any physical activity, yoga has plateaus. Luckily, there are ways to advance your practice and take your yoga workout to the next level. The tips below will help you step up your yoga game (quite literally) and experience more of the physical benefits yoga offers.

Practice with your Eyes Closed

Practicing with your eyes closed might sound silly, and even easy. As soon as you close your eyes though, balance becomes much harder, forcing you to use deep stabilizing muscles to stay upright. With eyes closed, you'll be 100% more focused and aware of every muscle engaged in your body.

Pay Attention to your Breath and Bandhas

Any yoga class becomes more challenging with conscious, deep breathing.

- Ujjayi pranayama breath (victorious breath) builds internal heat, counteracts migraines, clear sinuses, builds a positive attitude, plus it gives a great core and diaphragm workout. Try maintaining ujjayi pranayama during your entire class.
- In addition, engaging your bandhas (deep muscular body locks) works core muscles. Try keeping engaging your bandhas the entire class to build endurance.



Increase Muscular Engagement

Yoga postures can be practiced with an emphasis on flexibility or strength. To break a plateau in your yoga practice, begin incorporating isometric contractions to create more strength. With isometric contractions, you will focus on contracting muscle groups and holding them in place. Some great postures to incorporate isometric contractions are plank, crescent lunge, and mountain pose.

- In plank pose (top of a push-up), pull your palms toward your feet. Don't actually move your hands or feet, just engage your muscles as if you were trying to pull them towards each other. If you feel your lower abs begin to burn, you're doing it right.
- In crescent lunge, pull your front heel back and pull your back foot forward. This will help you square your hips to the front of your mat and straighten your back leg.
- In mountain pose, it's so easy to stand normally. Instead, stand confident and strong. Engage your muscles so much that your kneecaps lift, you grow taller, and your tailbone points towards your heels. This should feel exhausting!



Add Binds

Binding your arms together behind your back while in poses can make them much more intense. A bind in side angle pose is common, but did you know you can also bind while in triangle, half-moon and twisted crescent lunge? Give them a try and notice how challenging they become.

Try Acroyoga

Acroyoga is a fun partner acrobatic style of yoga that requires a lot of strength and balance. While difficult at first, your body will become much stronger and the practice will become easier, making it fun and challenging.

Hold Poses Longer

Often times fast-paced yoga is considered more challenging. However, holding postures for extended periods of time can be much more effective for building strength, stamina and mental concentration. Next time you're moving through standing postures, slow down and play with long holds. Be in the postures for longer than you'd like. Warrior 3 is specifically good for this exercise.



Look to the Classics

A lot of the poses we do in yoga class are simply preparation for a more advanced traditional pose. If you've reached a plateau in your practice, try switching to a more classical style like dharma yoga, anusara or ashtanga that involves more challenging postures.

Try Meditation

While not physically challenging, meditation is one of the most difficult facets of yoga. If you think you've mastered the physical practice, try mastering the mental practice of yoga next. Start with simple meditation exercises like guided visualizations, breath work, and a longer savasana.



There are many ways to explore and enhance your practice. If you feel like you've hit a plateau or are bored, try a new yoga style or teacher, or incorporate some of the tips above. There are always ways to advance your yoga practice. The learning is never ending!



ROCKSTAR FIT PRO TOUR

Connect with us



www.globalfit.com

GlobalFit®