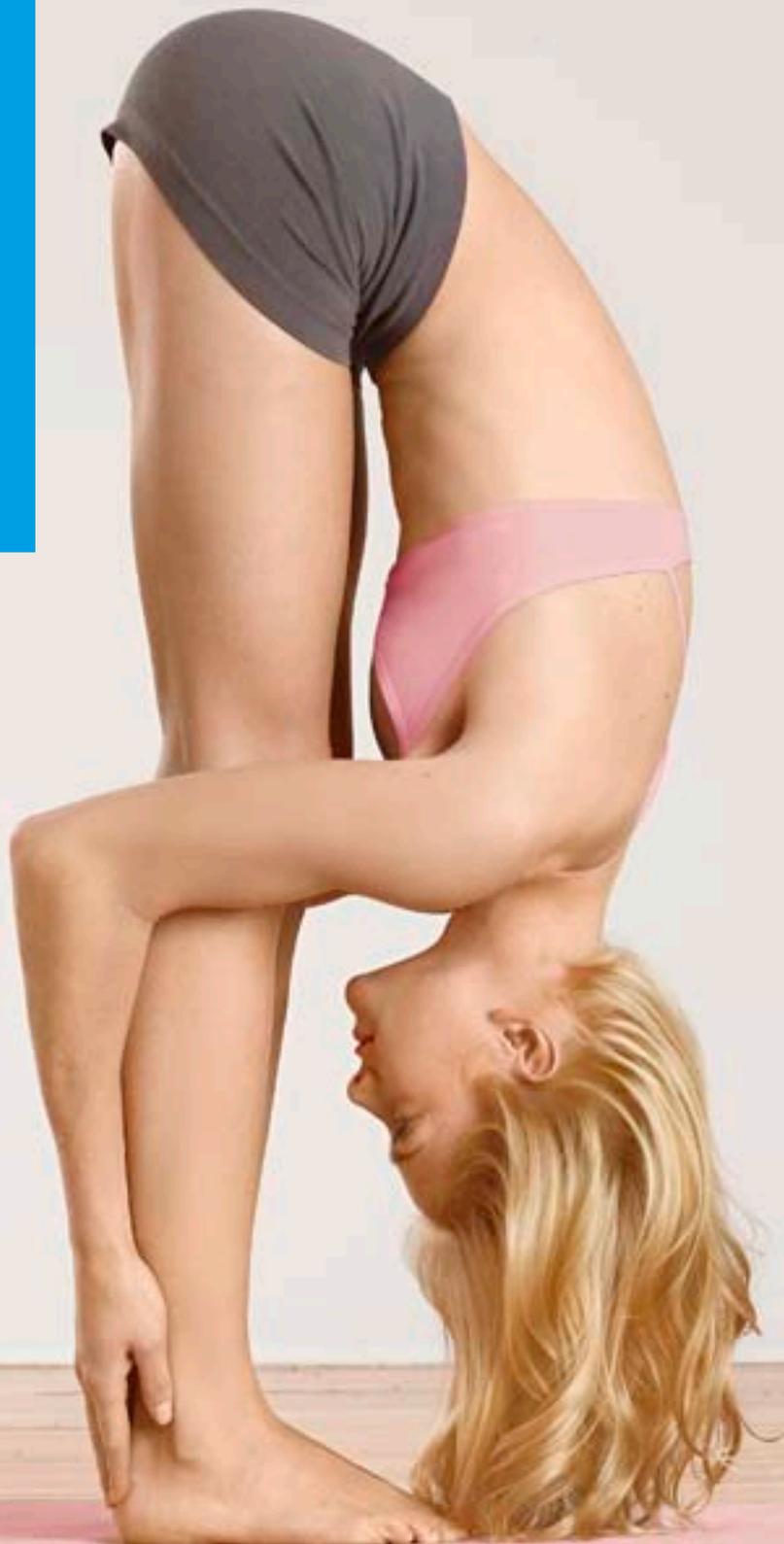


YOUR TIME

*Stories to inspire a
ridiculously happy self*



Be a poser

Not fluent in Sanskrit?
No worries. Our guide
will help you choose the
best yoga style for you



●
Take a
stand

Whether it was Jennifer Aniston's perpetually toned body or a colleague's Zen-like serenity on a deadline, something has convinced you to try yoga. Well, you've come to the right place – we've put together a primer on styles that blast kJs, promote relaxation and increase flexibility. Soon you too will be reaping the om-azing benefits of this ancient form of exercise.

You want to
GET A CARDIO-STYLE
ENDORPHIN RUSH
Pick BIKRAM

Pack water and a towel – most Bikram studios have a tropical climate, with temps around 40°C with 40 per cent humidity. “Heat promotes sweating and warms up the body, making muscles more flexible so they stretch with less risk of injury,” says Bikram instructor Jennifer Lobo. This workout is like a typical fitness class: a warm-up, 20 minutes of cardio (through a series of heart-revving poses) and a cool-down.

→ **Signature pose** Standing Head to Knee (stretches and strengthens legs). Stand on right leg with knee straight, lift left leg and clasp hands beneath your left foot. Straighten left leg in front then lower forehead

towards your left knee. Hold for a few breaths, repeat with other leg.

You want to
REDUCE STRESS LEVELS
Pick RESTORATIVE

Can't drop everything and *Eat, Pray, Love* it off to an ashram? Try restorative yoga. Props such as bolsters, blankets and blocks support your body so you can feel a deep release, poses are often held for 15 minutes, and snoozing is completely OK. "Letting go physically will encourage the mind to do the same," says Dr Judith Hanson Lasater, author of *Relax and Renew: Restful Yoga for Stressful Times* (amazon.com). "When we give the body support, that feeling can spill over into our emotional wellbeing," she says.

→ **Signature pose** Back Release (eases mental and physical tension). Sit on the floor facing a chair or couch, then lie back and place your lower legs on the seat. Your knees and hips will be bent. Support your head with a pillow, cover your eyes with a small cloth or towel and let your body sink into the floor.

You want to
DROP A FEW KILOS
Pick VINYASA FLOW

This flab-melting workout gets you moving continuously (but not effortlessly) from pose to pose. Because each class is different (the pace, poses and sequences vary), your muscles will constantly be challenged in new ways, which burns extra kJs. And there's a bonus for drinkers: "The twisting poses are great for detoxifying internal organs, including your liver," explains *WH* yoga expert Nicole Goodwin, owner of Body MindLife yoga studio. So if you've had a big night, think of yourself as a sponge getting wrung out. Sort of.
→ **Signature pose** Chaturanga (works core, shoulders and arms). Get into a push-up position, wrists under shoulders. Gaze forward and slowly lower yourself halfway, keeping your

shoulders over your wrists and squeezing elbows close to your body.

You want to
BOOST YOUR SPIRITS
Pick ANUSARA

Think of it as Prozac in a pose. This method unwinds your body while lifting your mood. Each class focuses on an inspirational idea (like feeling grounded or embodying confidence), which the style's founder, John Friend, calls a "heart theme". Expect some chanting and oms (but feel free to just sit quietly) and lots of classic moves such as lunges and planks. You'll probably partner up with a classmate for a pose or two to experience "the joy of community" and for some extra stretching you wouldn't be able to do on your own.

→ **Signature pose** Downward-Facing Dog (stretches arms, shoulders and legs). Get into a push-up position. Push your hips back while keeping your arms and legs straight so your body forms an upside-down V. Slide your shoulder blades back, allowing your neck and chest to relax.

You want to
BUILD STRENGTH
INSIDE AND OUT
Pick POWER YOGA

This style may sound hardcore, but its name was actually inspired by the inner strength it develops. "Power yoga incorporates a lot of arm balance and head stands, which can force you to face your fears – ultimately building confidence," says Goodwin. That's not to say your lower muscles get off scot-free. Hardly. There's plenty of toning and lean muscle building for your core, legs and glutes, too.

→ **Signature pose** King Dancer (boosts strength and balance). Stand on left leg and bend right knee to grab the front of your right foot with your right hand. Extend left arm in front and press your right leg behind you, leaning your torso forwards slightly. Allow your right hand to grasp your ankle. Hold a few breaths; switch sides.



Gone with the wind

Apanasana
(wind relieving pose)
Got tummy troubles? Try Apanasana, says yoga instructor Charlotte Dodson. "This is a simple move usually found in a Hatha, Restorative or Power (Vinyasa) yoga class," she explains. "The title says it all – it releases any unwanted gases [yep, you'll fart], massages your abdominal organs and aids digestion. It also helps your stomach if

you've eaten too much. Lay flat on your back and draw your legs in towards your belly, keeping your lower back on the ground. Place each hand lightly on top of each knee, and as you inhale, gently press your knees away from your belly (until your arms are straight), and on every exhale, squeeze your legs into your front, massaging your abdomen. Allow your breath to move you, rather than your mind."

You want to
UNLEASH HIDDEN ENERGY
Pick KUNDALINI

First introduced by an Indian yogi, Bhajan, in the '60s, this intense style focuses on uncoiling the energy kept at the base of your spine. Each class is comprised of sets of exercises that target a specific meridian (energy area in your body). Combined with the "breath of fire" (rhythmical, short, sharp breaths with equal inhalations and exhalations through the nose), Kundalini claims to have a cleansing effect on the body. "It helps you fulfill your potential," says Patty Kikos, a Sydney-based Kundalini teacher. While the class is often done with eyes closed, at your own pace, it can be physically demanding – with lots of squatting, jumping and core work.

→ **Signature pose** Stretch Pose, which, ironically, doesn't involve any stretching. With bum and lower back on the floor, lift your upper body and legs just off the floor and practise the breath of fire: Every time you exhale, draw in your naval quickly. Feel better? We thought so. *wh*

FEELING TIGHT? FOR A POST-SPORT YOGA ROUTINE HEAD TO THE YOGA SECTION AT womenshealthmag.com.au.

32 hours LENGTH OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST YOGA MARATHON BY A FEMALE SOURCE: GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS