



## **Guidelines For Attending Pregnancy Yoga Classes**

### **When to start**

You can start from 14-16 weeks of pregnancy and continue until your baby is due. Take it easy in the first trimester until you feel well enough to start your yoga practice. Some women who already have a regular yoga practice may choose to continue with their practice in early pregnancy, but always take advice from your yoga teacher about modifying your practice. All the exercises in the pregnancy sessions have been specifically designed to be safe for pregnancy and avoid certain practices that are unsuitable for pregnancy, such as strong backbends or twists.

You don't need to have practised yoga before. Classes are gentle and aimed at beginners level. If you have practised Yoga before you may be used to a stronger practice, so be prepared for a much gentler approach.

### **A typical class**

We will introduce ourselves at the beginning of each class to allow us get to know each other. Classes will start with a breathing practice and then move on to a sequence of gentle postures which will involve kneeling, sitting, postures on all fours and standing. We may also practice pelvic floor exercises and we will finish with a deep relaxation. Classes are designed to help you focus on your pregnancy and to prepare for labour.

### **The benefits of practising Yoga in pregnancy**

Practising yoga during pregnancy will help you to feel better prepared for labour and birth. Keeping mobile through gentle stretching and breathing plus relaxing may help with pregnancy-related problems such as backache, sciatica, swollen limbs, constipation and insomnia. Yoga will also increase your strength, flexibility and breath awareness in preparation for childbirth. During the classes we will explore Pelvic floor exercises., Breathing to help with anxiety and pain, Optimal foetal positioning for birth and some positions which may help during labour. Breathing and relaxation exercises will help you develop a sense of calm and well-being and will give you a chance to focus on your pregnancy and provide some wonderful time to connect with your baby.

### **Class "rules"**

- Arrive BEFORE the published start time of the class with plenty of time to change and set up. Late arrivals disturb other students and the energy and flow of the class. We also do an introduction at the beginning, which it would be a shame to miss.
- Remove your shoes before entering the yoga room.
- Ensure your mobile phone is not just turned to silent but is switched off.
- Please remove your socks and work barefoot during asana practice. You can keep your socks on during the breathing exercises at the beginning or for relaxation at the end
- Please come with money to pay for your class. Believe it or not, we have had experiences of allowing people to give us an IOU and trusting them to pay the next week and then they don't! We accept cheques too!



### **Personal Comfort**

- Listen to your body. Practise at your own pace and in the way that feels right for you. If any movement or posture doesn't feel right or is uncomfortable then stop and change to a position that is comfortable.
- Working in pairs: We may do some practices in twos which can be a fun and useful way to practice but if you don't feel happy about working in pairs then please let me know.
- Rest whenever you need to. Short periods of rest are built into the classes but do rest more often or for longer if you feel the need.
- Because pregnancy can affect the bladder please feel free to go out to the toilet whenever you need to. You don't need to ask.

### **Fees**

Fees are payable at the beginning of the block of lessons. The cost is £55 for the six weeks which includes a one-off £5 admin fee to cover the cost of leaflets and handouts. You may pay per class (£9 plus the admin fee) if your due date comes before the end of the block.

### **Food and drink**

Hydrate well before class and bring water to drink. Don't have a substantial meal for at least a couple of hours before class but you may wish to have a carbohydrate- rich snack to keep you going until afterwards. You may also wish to bring a sugary snack with you if you have low blood sugar.

### **What to wear**

Wear loose comfortable clothing that you can stretch in e.g. leggings, track pants and a T shirt or vest top. There are special yoga clothes, but there is no need to spend lots of money on these. Yoga is practised in bare feet but you may wish to wear socks for relaxation at the end to keep your feet warm. It's also worthwhile bringing a jumper or fleece that you can put on at the end of class.

### **Equipment**

You will need a yoga mat and 2-3 cushions. Bring as many cushions as you think you will need, especially to keep you comfortable in relaxation at the end. Toward the end of your pregnancy you may find that you need more cushions. Bring a blanket or something warm to cover yourself up with during relaxation.

### **Practising Yoga after 37 weeks**

You can keep practising until your baby is due but as your pregnancy progresses we will probably modify some postures to accommodate your growing baby and your stage of pregnancy. You may also wish to bring more cushions for comfort. At this time, it is inadvisable to practice deep squats, although you can come back to them during labour. You should probably also avoid inverted postures, although the teacher may be able to give you postures to help the baby turn if s/he is breech. You should also avoid lying on your back for prolonged periods after 30 weeks. For relaxation you should lie on your left side supported by cushions.

*And if there is anything else you need to know... please ask!  
Enjoy your yoga.*