



Guide to Practice

What you can expect at your first Mysore-style class

Arrival

Joey and Rachel will be around to greet you, just give us a wave when you arrive. If you arrive very early we may still be doing our sitting meditation practice, in which case grab a mat and a bolster to sit on and relax for a while until we are up and about.

Checking-in

The environment will be quiet, but this doesn't mean no talking – we'll chat with you and find out what your level of experience is, take your contact details and payment and check-in about any injuries, etc. we need to know about.

Chanting

At the start of the class we'll chant the Ashtanga opening mantra (an expression of gratitude and our intention for yoga practice) – listen or join in, it's up to you.

Equipment

As well as mats, there'll be plenty of equipment ('props' in yoga-speak) for you to use - we may encourage you to use props in certain poses to help prevent injury or make a pose more accessible.

Breathing technique

If you're new to Mysore-style Ashtanga, we'll sit with you and talk you through the basics of the breath – firstly, observing your natural breathing; secondly, how to do the 'Ujjayi' breathing technique, which is a central part of the Ashtanga method.

Linking breath with movement

We'll get you to practise linking breathing with movement and demonstrate for you Surya Namaskara A (sun salutation A), repeat it with you a couple of times and then let you try it on your own. In some cases, we may teach you some gentler warm-ups first, if we feel this is more appropriate for your current ability.

Building up the sequence

Depending how easy you find it to remember Surya Namaskara A, we may add on the next part of the Ashtanga sequence. In the same way, we'll demonstrate, try it together and then you'll practise on your own. Each time you come to class we'll add on another pose or two if we feel you're ready to learn more.

Relaxation

Once you've done enough practice for your first session (this will differ from person to person), we'll ask you to lie down and rest for 10-15 minutes. If you need to leave by a specific time, then it's best to let us know when you arrive, so we can factor in adequate time for practice and rest.

Adjustments

We will sometimes give physical 'adjustments' in postures – these are usually to help make it clear how to position your body or to encourage you to relax in a pose. In busier classes, there may be assistants helping to give adjustments. If you don't want an adjustment from a teacher or assistant – for whatever reason – please tell us, we're here to help you!



What to bring to your first class

Loose or stretchy comfortable clothing that you can move around in easily. Typically, women wear leggings and a vest; men wear shorts and a vest.

You don't need to bring a mat or any equipment as these are provided for you, but if you prefer to bring your own mat, then you're most welcome!



Mysore-style etiquette

Our aim is to hold a non-judgemental space for everyone's yoga practice. We believe these guidelines will help us all get the most out of the class.

1. Silence in the main hall.
2. No phones by your mats (turn them off and leave them in your bag).
3. Bring your mat to the front two rows as soon as there is space. Use the back of the hall for the finishing sequence and taking rest.
4. Respect the teacher and learn the poses one-by-one; stop when your teacher advises.

5. Don't ask for new poses, they will be given when we feel you're ready.
6. If you need help or advice with modifications, ask the teacher – we're here to help.
7. Respect your limitations and be patient.
8. Please inform the teacher of any injuries, operations, pregnancy, etc.
9. If you are tired or menstruating, practise supine and restorative postures.
10. If you do not want hands-on adjustments let us know. Equally, if any adjustment feels too strong, don't be shy – tell us!
11. We chant the opening mantra at 6:30am (Leeds) or 7am (Mytholmroyd). If you start later you can chant before you begin or take 5 minutes to get focused and align with your intention for practice.
12. It's fine to simply sit or warm up for 15 minutes before practice, but once you begin stick to the sequence.
13. Do not use a 'cheat sheet'. We made one for you to refer to at home, but during class see what you can actually remember. It's fine to make mistakes, but if you continually forget the sequence this indicates you're doing too much and have not learned the postures one-by-one.
14. If you can make space for somebody else, please do.
15. If you must walk about during class, please do not step on other people's mats.
16. Try not to drink water during practice.
17. Put your mats and props away at the end of practice to keep the space clear.
18. Use the kitchen for socialising and making yourself a cup of tea, but keep your voices down.