

## Basic Yoga Props

These props help you achieve the proper alignment, balance and make the pose a bit easier. The use of props also minimizes the strain and supports your muscles, thus allowing you to save your energy by exerting less effort on a pose.

Yoga props help people with Medical Ailments and the Elderly to cross their limitations. The props provide support, enabling them to do the poses that their ailments or old age prevent them from doing.

As you might imagine, not much gear is needed for yoga. It is generally practiced in bare feet or socks. You might want to consider a comfortable pair of shoes. Clothing should be loose enough to allow for bending and stretching

Yoga also has its own small set of apparatus. Called "yoga props," they help make the yoga poses more comfortable, create resistance or give the body something to lean on or bend over.

But to start with yoga you can just have these basic equipments:

**Clothing:** Comfortable, breathable clothes are recommended for yoga. You probably want to wear a shirt that is a little bit form-fitting, since in many yoga poses your head comes below your hips and your shirt can slide down.

Any exercise pants or shorts will do, although it's best not to have super slick lycra-type pants since in some poses this may cause you to slip.

**Shoes:** Yoga is most often done barefoot, which is great news for those of us tired of carrying a bulky pair of athletic shoes around for after work trips to the gym.

Yoga studios will often request that you leave your shoes near the entrance.

**Mats:** In gyms and yoga studios, its commonplace to use a yoga mat, also called a

sticky mat. The mat helps define your personal space.

But more importantly, it creates traction for your hands and feet so you don't slip, especially as you get a little sweaty.

The mat also provides a bit of cushioning on a hard floor. If you are just getting started with yoga, you may not want to buy a mat right away. Most studios have mats for rent, usually for a dollar or two per class.

The disadvantage to these mats is that lots of people use them, and they can get smelly between washings. Yoga mats can be purchased for as little as \$20, and many studios will allow you to store your mat with them if you become a regular.

**Blankets:** Yoga studios often have stacks of blankets available for students to use during class. Grab yourself one or two blankets at the beginning of class.

The folded blankets are props to sit and lie on during class. For instance, when sitting in a cross-legged position, it's nice to put a blanket under your sit bones to elevate the hips above the knees.

They come in handy for all sorts of things during class, and if it's chilly you can use them to cover yourself during final relaxation at the end of class.

**Blocks:** Like blankets, blocks are props to make yourself more comfortable and improve your alignment. Blocks are great for standing poses in which your hand doesn't reach the floor.

**Straps:** Straps are particularly useful for bound poses if your hands do not reach each other, and for poses where you need to hold onto your feet but cannot reach them.