

Benefits of Yoga for Runners

Striking Balance. Asanas (yoga poses) for runners correct muscle imbalances resulting from strenuous muscle training. A more balanced body can handle more stress and run without stressing the body. Many runners suffer from chronic pain or injury as a result of imbalance the running introduces.

Relaxation. Asanas and Pranayama (breathing) fine tunes our nervous systems and provides the body with much needed relaxation after a run. Pranayama practice slows the heartbeat and reduces blood pressure, producing calm and a sense of stability. End your yoga practice with ten to fifteen minutes of deep relaxation in shavasana to relax muscle tension and recover your poise and energy.

Self Awareness. While running, you can aim for perfect coordination of body, mind and breathing. Make your mind quiet and focus on your body. This self awareness and breath control is possible through yoga. You can concentrate on a rhythm between your running, your body and your breath rather than worrying about the outcome of the race. This will be especially useful for marathon runners.

Flexibility. You can start yoga even if your body is not flexible. Regular yoga practice will make your body more flexible over a period of time.

Reduces Chances of Injury. A regular yoga practice can reduce your chances of injury by improving your mental health, flexibility and relaxing of muscles. Yoga increases flexibility and it helps to prevent injury. In case you are suffering from injuries due to your running (feet, ankles, knees, hips), yoga can help you to recover faster. I know how frustrated you may feel if you are denied your daily run.

Pranayama Increases Your Oxygen Capacity. Most of us are shallow breathers, not utilizing the full capacity of our lungs; thereby less oxygen is absorbed by our lungs in a single breath. A regular practice with pranayama can increase your breathing capacity resulting in more oxygen supply to your blood. This oxygen rich blood can boost performance and endurance for runners. A yoga practice will make your breath more deep and rhythmic. By focusing on your breath while running, this will help you to have a convenient breathing pattern to support your running.

Conserve Your Energy. Proper relaxation, concentration and quieting the mind of undue fluctuation results in conserving your energy. Yoga also enables you a level of awareness whereby you can let go of things not important and conserve even more energy. As your endurance builds and your lung capacity increases, the body becomes more efficient.

Stretching and Breathing. Stretching is best done after your run as it removes stiffness of muscles, tones the body and stimulates circulation. Deep breathing along with stretching are essential components of yoga for runners. This helps you to maintain strength and flexibility. For a warm up before the run, be sure to walk briskly.

"Running is the greatest metaphor for life because you get out of it what you put into it." Oprah Winfrey

**Come see what yoga can do for your running regimen! Find that “edge” that will take you to the next level in your training and race results!
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