

### **Is it possible to be strong AND flexible?**

Yes, but it takes effort. You see, strength and flexibility are the yang and the yin of yoga. If you're an avid runner, for example, chances are good that your hamstrings and calves are really tight and probably your hips too.

Doesn't HAVE to be this way, but generally it is.

Here's why: we tend to over-emphasize yang exercises (running, strength training, cycling) or perhaps the opposite with too many yin exercises (deep stretching, meditation).

Balance is impossible, but it should be the aim.

Here's why I bring this up: Yoga students often ask if they should QUIT running or lifting or playing sports to improve their yoga practice.

Personally, I think that's crazy.

If you love yang sports, don't ever give them up. Physical activity is so powerful for your physical AND mental health; I'd never restrict yourself (unless you were getting injuries, of course) just because it might make your yoga classes easier.

But it's true. If you're a body builder, you're really going to struggle with flexibility. No way around that.

Lifting weights is the ultimate yang practice and you'd need to at least have a 2-to-1 match with lifting-to-stretching to balance that out.

So... balance is the aim, you like yang activities, so what do you do?

HERE YOU GO:

1. For every 60 minutes spent with yang practices, spend 15 minutes doing deep stretches ideally when your body is ultra warmed up.
2. Try to determine which area of your body is getting stiffer from the yang practice (shoulders in tennis, hamstrings from running, etc) and always consciously over-emphasize stretching those areas.
3. Make absolutely sure that you don't lose flexibility. Remember, unlike strength, flexibility doesn't just disappear on its own. Repetitive yang activities or lack of activities are what reverse your flexibility so you want to always keep it in check so you maintain or improve

your flexibility continuously.



4. Now you may ask are all types of Yoga equal and what should I look for. Even in Yoga you want to seek balance. You may want to do some strength building flow yoga, a fusion yoga which give you some power and some deep stretch. Then of course there is restorative Yoga to de-stress your body, that offers both movement, stretch, with a focus on supported poses to help the body uncurl and release itself rather organically. YIN Yoga works into the connective tissue which in turn makes for healthy joins and a deep physical release, mental and often emotional release.

Come to the mat and experience some newness in your physical activity. You may well be surprised, you will rejoice in new found places to stretch and release in your body, and amazement may follow as you mind slows down and your energy increases. No time like the present to try on this age old practice and discover a new you inside.

Need more information or to come and to try a FREE class.....

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