

DANA'S INTRODUCTION



I'm so glad you're interested in creating a customized yoga practice. And I'm honored that you've decided to use my book as your guide!

This manual's simple instruction, clear illustrations and customizable format are intended to empower you to create an effective personal practice. Whether you've been doing yoga for years or have never set foot on a yoga mat, this book's 19 physical practice sections, covering more than 75 poses and modifications, offer you the means to devise any number of sequences to meet your needs.

Why Yoga Is Not One Size Fits All™

Every body is different, from height and weight to the size and shape of bones and joints. And, of course, the way people use their bodies to function within the context of their lives is different.

Unlike any other form of exercise, yoga cultivates a profound awareness of your own body. Yoga postures help you identify your strengths and weaknesses by exposing limitations, revealing areas of opportunity, and inciting intense sensation. But doing the same practice daily or going through the motions in a large class doesn't give you the opportunity to fully leverage that knowledge and realize your body's ultimate potential for health and performance.



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Consider the following examples of three individuals' unique fitness and lifestyle goals:

- An NBA guard with a recurring Achilles tendon issue wants to build strength and flexibility through his ankles and calves to decrease injury risk and increase agility on the court.
- A CEO who is trying to quit smoking would like to improve his overall health as well as reduce lower back pain and learn to minimize the effects of stress.
- A college student wants to increase her daily physical activity, improve her posture, and sharpen her ability to focus while studying.

All three can undeniably benefit from yoga. But none can truly realize the personalized benefits they desire without addressing their particular concerns in ways that also consider their distinct body types and current fitness levels. By combining an intimate knowledge of your own physicality with the demands of your lifestyle, you can customize the way you do yoga to correct imbalances, increase functional strength and flexibility, and make physical and mental gains that positively contribute to the quality of your life. All of that from a custom yoga practice? Absolutely.

Radius Yoga Conditioning

Radius Yoga Conditioning (RYC) is the style of yoga instruction offered in this book. Where certain types of yoga follow a set sequence of poses, RYC is based on the premise that Yoga Is Not One Size Fits All™. It's an approach to yoga that recognizes the physical individuality of each body as well as the unique goals of each person's life—whether a professional athlete, weekend golfer, 60-hour-per-week desk jockey, or stay-at-home parent.

RYC blends a variety of traditional yoga styles, but because of its concentration on linking breath and movement, it is considered a vinyasa flow—often recognized as “power yoga.” However, RYC also incorporates long holds to establish proper alignment, build muscular endurance, increase flexibility, cultivate body awareness, and develop greater body control.



Because safety is a major focus, RYC modifies some “standard” aspects of yoga postures. For instance, rather than the traditional feet-together style when standing in mountain pose, RYC promotes maintaining hip distance to stack the joints for optimum support and alignment: shoulders over hips, hips over knees, knees over ankles.

With the goal of breaking down pretense and making yoga accessible as a cross-training tool for all people, RYC generally uses common English names for poses rather than ancient Sanskrit and does not overemphasize the metaphysical. However, RYC is much more than an exercise routine; the mind, body, and breath connection is continually stressed as an integral part of the practice.

Radius Yoga Conditioning's key benefits are:

- Functional Strength
- Core Stability
- Balance & Flexibility
- Injury Prevention
- Mental Focus

How To Use This Book

Organizing the sections and understanding their content:

The pages in this book are color coded rather than numbered to enable you to customize the order. There are 19 physical practice sections made up of the Breathing & Warming Sequence, Sun Salutations, Final Relaxation & Closing Practice section, and eight body-focus categories divided into 16 sections. Each of the body focuses contains two sections: Part One and Part Two (i.e., Legs Part One and Legs Part Two). Part Two sections are denoted by vertical lines in the color strips at the tops of pages.

By moving the sections around in the binder, you can create whatever order you desire. However, the Breathing & Warming Sequence is NOT considered optional. We live in a fast-paced world where it's common to jump right into the work. That may be a valuable time saver in some respects, but it doesn't work with Radius Yoga Conditioning. I urge you to always begin with the



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Breathing & Warming Sequence to set the tone for the rest of your practice. I also strongly recommend ending with the Final Relaxation & Closing Practice section. Everything in between is up to you.

The order of the poses within each section is the intended order to ensure that each pose flows naturally to the next. Each section concludes in a primary pose, such as mountain, down dog, or all-fours position, to facilitate an easy transition from section to section, regardless of how you organize your practice. Primary poses are introduced in the book's first two sections: Breathing & Warming Sequence and Sun Salutations.

Although there are more than 155 color photos throughout the book, a primary pose may occasionally be referenced as a transition without being pictured. If an unillustrated pose is unfamiliar, refer back to the opening sections to find its photo and description. Note that two common poses, downward-facing dog and upward-facing dog, are often referenced by their abbreviated names, down dog and up dog.

And, as much I tried to keep the pose names simple, chaturanga dandasana is the Sanskrit name widely used to identify the low pushup pose found within Sun Salutations and Arms/Shoulders Part One; for consistency, I refer to it as "chaturanga."

Determining the focus and order of your practice:

How in tune are you with your body? What do you want to get out of your yoga practice? What are your goals?

At the beginning of each physical practice section, I've provided a synopsis of the benefits and focuses of the poses in that section. As you consider the sections to include in your practice, review the introductions to each one to evaluate its value for you.

If you're new to yoga, I recommend trying a total-body practice as a way to personally discover your areas of need. You can do this by following the original order of the book from start to finish, excluding the Part Two sections. If you've been doing yoga for a while, spend some time evaluating your current practice and try to focus on elements that will push you to your edge and help you explore new ways to experience your body.

Use the Suggested Sequences section at the back of the book for ideas on customizing your practice. I have also included an Especially for Athletes section that offers information on poses and focuses that benefit specific sports.



When sequencing your poses, keep in mind the following important considerations:

Personal Emphasis

The very nature of yoga poses is to build functional strength and flexibility by engaging multiple muscle groups and training them to work in unison. Therefore, in many of the poses selected for a specific body focus, it is often less about how the pose manipulates a particular area of your body and more about where you actively put the emphasis through mindful movement and internal awareness.

Counter Poses

Counter poses are important for maintaining balance in your body, so be sure to include them in your practice. For instance, within the twisting and backbending sections, I have included transition poses to neutralize the spine. But if you design a practice with an intense focus on backbending and/or twisting, you might want to consider incorporating Legs Part Two, which includes forward folding.

Common Sense

Try to establish a logical flow for your practice, building up to deeper stretches or more difficult positions. You shouldn't dive right into Hips Part One, which includes intense hip openers. Nor should you begin your practice in headstand. Use common sense and respect your body.

Establishing a timeframe:

Because the length of your practice is primarily determined by the speed of your own breath, the times listed below are only approximate. As your practice evolves you will likely find that it takes longer due to improvements in the efficiency of your breathing. Remember, stronger, deeper phases of breath equate to longer holds and more mindful, controlled movement.

Here are approximate times for each practice section:

- Breathing & Warming Sequence: 6-8 minutes
- Sun Salutations: 8-10 minutes
- Body-Focus Sections: 6-8 minutes each
- Final Relaxation & Closing Practice: 6-20 minutes



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Using the optional audio instruction CDs:

Sold separately, Dana Edison's Yoga Is Not One Size Fits All™ Guided Custom Practice two-CD set is the perfect companion to this book. To personally guide you through your yoga practice, I have recorded instructional tracks that correspond with each of the physical practice sections within this manual. Disc One features instruction for all the sections in this book with solid color strips at the tops of their pages. Disc Two includes the sections with vertical lines through the colors strips. For convenience, I've included a double-disc sleeve in the back of your journal to store your CDs! To purchase the CD set or for more information, visit www.radiusyoga.com.

Getting Started:

Once you've determined the order of your practice and dedicated enough time for yourself, you're ready to get started. Place your mat on a level floor in a quiet place that affords you enough space to move freely in all directions. A yoga mat prevents sliding and cushions your body. If you don't have one, you can buy one at most sporting goods stores or in the RYC store on my website: www.radiusyoga.com. To follow the instructions in the book as you practice, be sure that you've organized the pages in your chosen sequence. Keep your binder open at the top of your mat or spread the pages out on the floor, if you have room.

Remembering that it's your yoga practice:

Many people are visual learners, so the photography in this book is intended as an educational aid. I urge you not to imitate my images. Every body experiences yoga differently. Use the printed instruction and/or audio instruction to help you find your own way into poses. Worry less about how you look and more about how you feel. Avoid doing yoga in a mirrored room, if possible.

This manual is intentionally brief. I worked very hard to give simple and straightforward direction—just enough to guide you safely into postures without going into too much detail about what you should be feeling. My goal was to offer you enough guidance to discover the poses for yourself. And, ultimately, I hope that I've empowered you to create your own personal yoga practice and experience all of the benefits it will undoubtedly bring to your life.