

If you want to succeed in your yoga practice, you need to fuel your body with the proper nutrients. Yoga will give you overall body strength, but without protein, your muscles will not develop and you will feel weak throughout your practice and daily life. To get the most of your practice and feel strong and healthy, follow these **“Do’s and Don’ts”** on what to eat and drink before and after yoga.

What To Drink Before You Practice

DO drink at least 8 ounces of water 30 minutes before class. If you are attending an evening class, try to drink half your body weight in water throughout the day prior to your class. For example, if you weigh 120 lbs, drink 60 ounces of water during the day. Make sure 8 ounces of that is within 30 minutes of your class. If morning yoga is your thing, try to drink 8-16 ounces before class. If it’s hard for you to drink that much water, try tea or adding fruit to your water to give it more flavor. I keep boxes of Yogi tea at my desk and drink that throughout the day.

DON’T drink a lot of caffeine prior to class

If you’ve had a cup or two of coffee throughout the day, you will have some boosted energy that can assist in a successful yoga practice. However, coffee is dehydrating, and if hot yoga is your preference, you need to focus on hydrating your body.

What To Eat Before You Practice

DO eat a small snack 60-90 minutes before class if you are attending an evening class. Make sure you’ve eaten throughout the day, but this small snack will sustain you and give you the energy you need to push through after a long day. If you are going to a morning class, eat half a banana or a handful of berries at least 30+ minutes prior. If you are looking for a quick and easy pre-yoga breakfast, a protein shake is a good option: mix 8 ounces of milk with a scoop of your favorite protein powder, one tablespoon of hemp seeds, ½ cup of frozen berries and a handful of fresh spinach. If you don’t have time to eat before your morning class, drink a glass of almond milk or juice to give you some sugar and calories for energy.

DON’T eat a large meal prior to class. If your stomach is full, you will have a hard time engaging your core, poses will be harder to get into, and you risk getting an upset stomach. Make sure your last meal was at least an hour prior to class so your body has had a chance to digest, and choose something easy to digest, such as grilled chicken and leafy greens. I like to keep deviled eggs in my fridge so I can eat a few before class for quick protein that doesn’t strain my body to digest.

What to Drink After Class

DO drink 8-16 ounces of electrolyte water or coconut water to replenish your body, especially if you just spent 60 minutes sweating in a hot yoga class. The sodium and potassium will help you avoid dehydration and its effects, such as a headache or muscle cramps.

DON’T uncork a bottle of wine or head to happy hour. You just spent at least 60 minutes sweating out ounces of water in your hot yoga class, and your body is dehydrated. Not only will you become intoxicated extremely fast if you indulge immediately after class, but you will suffer the consequences of a headache and some jitters if you don’t properly rehydrate your body first. Hangovers are much worse when dehydration is a factor.

What to Eat After Class

DO eat a nutritious meal after class. If it was a morning session, whip yourself up a two-egg omelet with fresh veggies like tomatoes and spinach and a side of turkey bacon and fresh fruit. If it was an evening class, try grilled salmon and sautéed veggies for a delicious dinner of lean protein. Make sure you are getting enough protein throughout the day so your muscles can repair and grow.

DON’T reach right into the cookie jar! While sugar is actually an important thing to consume after working out (insulin aids in repairing muscles), you want to make sure you are consuming unrefined sugars, such as oatmeal. If you have a sugar craving, try a bowl of oatmeal with a drizzle of pure maple syrup, a handful of blueberries and a dash of cinnamon.

Treating your body well will guarantee you get the most of out your yoga practice. A healthy mind and a healthy body go hand-in-hand, so give it the nutrients it needs to focus and you will continue to have a happy and successful yoga practice that your body will thank you for!