Motivation for yoga: how to start and not give up

Every sunset carries a new beginning · Yoga Loznica · 20 October 2026

Motivation is not a trait we are born with, but something that is built, day by day, in small steps. Five simple ideas on how to start practising yoga, keep the habit and come back whenever the day pulls you elsewhere.



> **Note.** Everyone feels their own body best, and with practice that trust only grows firmer.

Anyone who has ever started yoga knows that moment: the mat is ready, and something in us looks for an excuse. The good news is that motivation is not something some people have and others do not. It is built: in small steps, by repetition and with gentleness towards ourselves.

A sunset is not an ending, but preparation for a new day

A day that ends does not leave emptiness, but a promise that the light will come again. It is the same with practice: a missed day is not a failure, but a sunset after which a sunrise follows. What matters is that we come back.

> ***It does not matter how many times we stopped, but whether we came back to the mat.***

1. Start small, so small that you cannot refuse

The most common mistake at the beginning is too big a plan. Five minutes every day is better than an hour once a week: five minutes of stretching or a few deep breaths by the window is yoga. When the threshold is low, it is easy to cross, and the practice lengthens by itself over time.

A study of 96 participants showed that a new habit becomes established on average after about 66 days, and in individuals after 18 to 254 days; a missed day did not significantly disturb progress [1]. Perfection is not needed, only repetition.

2. Tie the practice to something you already do

A habit is easier to learn if it has support in an existing routine: after the first morning drink, before dinner, right after coming home from work. The same place and the same time tell the body what comes next. We can leave the mat unrolled in a visible place, because what is within reach is used more often.

3. The breath is the easiest start

When the day is hard and the mat is far away, it is enough to stop and breathe in and out deeply three times. That is the first exercise. Later breathing exercises and pranayama can be added, step by step, slowly and without strain.

4. Listen to the body and do not compete

Yoga is not a competition, either with others or with ourselves of yesterday. The limit of comfort is enough. If something hurts, we stop and rest. Gentle exercises are useful for the back and posture, and they can be adapted: asanas for a healthy back and good posture.

5. Let company and support go with you

It is easier to stay consistent when we are not alone. Classes are held over the Internet, and recordings are on the YouTube channel; you can follow news and encouragement on the Facebook page and the Instagram account. It is enough that one person is waiting on the other side of the screen for the mat to be unrolled.

What you get when you keep going

Regular practice changes several systems of the body. The **nervous system** settles: after 12 weeks of yoga mood improved and anxiety fell more than after walking [3]. The **endocrine system**, which keeps all the others in step, responds with lower cortisol, the stress hormone of the adrenal glands, and blood pressure and pulse come down too [4]. So what you begin with five minutes by the window gradually reaches the whole body.

An ancient thought

In Patanjali's Yoga Sutras it is said that practice becomes firmly established when it is cultivated for a long time, without interruption and with devotion (I.14) [2]. It does not say that there must never be interruptions, but that we always come back. Patience, repetition and love for what we do build a habit that lasts.

In conclusion: five steps in one place

- Start with five minutes, not with an hour.
- Tie the practice to something you already do.
- When you have no will, start with three deep breaths.
- Listen to the body, with no competing and no pain.
- Missed a day? That is a sunset. Tomorrow comes the sunrise.

Start today, on the smallest scale, and allow yourself to come back after every interruption.

Photograph

Photograph: Snežana Petranović.

Sources

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