

What's SUP?

Yoga on a Stand Up Paddleboard, that's What!

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Try writing your name with your opposite hand. Unless you're ambidextrous, this may be difficult and require you to slow down and think to do one simple thing that the other hand does every day.

My guess is your brows will be crossed, your lips pursed or your tongue will stick – you know, those signs of deep concentration. And, most likely, your handwriting won't

look as nice as it does when done by the other hand either.

Well, that's also one way of thinking while doing your yoga practice on a stand up paddle board, or "SUP" as it's also called.

Same Name, Different Style

The poses are the same, just like your name, and so is your body, but the

way we perceive and practice changes because the brain focus changes. Not from left to right, but from solid to floating, in addition to other elements like wind and current that make your environment changeable at all moments. And just like your handwriting changes, so might your style of practice.

So, if you thought balancing on a yoga mat on a hardwood floor was difficult, try your balance on a SUP board. This tends to humble the most practiced of yogis. Yoga on a SUP board for experienced, or even novice yogis, could either sound odd, or like a way to find a new challenge in a practice.

The Keys to Balance Are Mindfulness and the Breath

SUP and yoga is a great for developing more mindfulness, focus, balance and breath skills because it takes all of those skills to be present during this type of practice.

The best part is that the consequences of losing focus or balance only ends up as a refreshing splash in the water, rather than a fall on a hard floor.

The key is mindfulness of everything around you (wind, current, waves), as well as paying close attention to your breath to stay calm and let go of your fear of falling off the board.

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10 Reasons to try SUP Yoga

For those interested in trying SUP and yoga, or might be on the fence, here are a few good reasons to try yoga on a stand up paddle board.

1. SUP and yoga keeps you in the present.

You have no choice but to “be here now” when it comes to practicing yoga on your floating yoga mat.

2. A greater sense of mindfulness will develop.

Paying attention to every breath and body movement, every placement of a foot, leg, or arm is key to keeping balance.

3. You don't have to be an advanced yoga student.

Less is more on a stand up paddle board. Simple yoga poses are all you need to develop body awareness – taking them on the board just enhances that awareness.

4. Advanced students can bring another level of challenge to their practice.

For those who find most poses like Warrior 1 or 2 to be effortless, taking them on to a SUP board will humble you quickly. Bringing your mindfulness back to the basics of just doing Virabradrasana 1 on a SUP board will add a different level of awareness to the practice.

5. The pace of your practice will slow down.

Many times we hurry to get from one pose to the next and forget to pay attention to how we move, how we focus and the quality of our breath. Yoga on a stand up paddle board forces you to slow down your pace and gain more focus on your practice.

6. The same muscles are challenged, but in a different way.

You use most of those same skills and muscles when you're doing stand up paddling as in yoga. However, SUP Yoga tends to give a greater challenge to the quadriceps, shoulders, arms, and knees – and especially the core area – because of the modifications to create balance in the pose.

“The key is mindfulness of everything around you.”

7. It's like Hot yoga with instant refreshment.

If you like your yoga hot, practicing outdoors in the summer heat will create the same sweat. However, instead of leaving pools of sweat on your mat, you can cool down with an unlimited supply of cool water just beneath you.

8. No practice will ever be the same.

You can experience a different practice every time you go out on a stand up paddle board, because the wind and water conditions are always changing.

9. A chance to experience the beauty of the outdoors.

Everyone could use a change of scenery every now and then, and what better way to get that than in combination with your love of yoga?

10. SUP and yoga is fun and challenging.

Before trying stand up paddling and yoga, be sure you are comfortable on a stand up paddle board. Lessons are helpful.

SUP and yoga is a great practice for developing mindfulness, focus, balance and breath skills because it takes all of those skills to be present during this type of practice – although the consequence of losing focus or balance is only ending up with a refreshing splash in the water, rather than a fall on a hard floor.