

Yoga for Hikers

AS MILLIONS OF AMERICANS discover the benefits yoga adds to their lives, they are increasingly finding ways to integrate it into other activities. As a result, hikers, bikers, paddlers, and climbers are adding yoga to their off-season workouts as well as their daily routines.

So the question is, “How can yoga make you a better hiker?”

Yoga improves flexibility, endurance, strength, and agility and helps condition the mind. It can transform a hiker’s tight and sore muscles into limber limbs that can climb faster and last longer. Regular practice can restore proper posture and improve the stability and balance needed to cross a stream on slippery rocks with a heavy pack.



SHUTTERSTOCK

Panayama, or yoga breathing exercises, increase lung capacity and the body’s ability to process oxygen—in turn helping you feel more energized to climb that last big hill. Yoga poses can help prevent pain and injury, in-

crease stamina and help you go the extra mile.

Whether you are venturing out for a few hours or planning a thru-hike, yoga can improve your body function and therefore increase your overall enjoyment. It can be used to keep muscles toned in the off season or practiced while on a hike to draw a deeper connection to the land. Practice a few simple poses before your hike to energize and motivate you, or after to relax and reflect. If you are plagued by tight muscles or a lagging spirit, yoga may be a great addition to your hiking regimen.

If you are interested in a “yoga for hikers” retreat, go to Appalachian Mountain Club’s web site, www.outdoors.org.

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