

WELLBEING

And stretch...

Royal bride Meghan says yoga is in her blood, but what is her favourite class? We speak to royal commentator and one of London's top yoga gurus, Julie Montagu, to find out



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Growing up with a yoga instructor as a mother, Meghan Markle has been hitting the mat from a young age. "Yoga is my thing," Prince Harry's new wife has said. "There are so many benefits that come with the practice of yoga... increased flexibility and muscle strength, greater happiness, increased mental focus, a greater ability to relax, decreased anxiety and better sleep."

Meghan loves vinyasa flow, which Julie Montagu, who teaches at Triyoga's Chelsea outpost, describes as the most popular class in London. "I get up to 85 people turn up to my own Sunday evening vinyasa flow session," Julie says. "It's gone crazy. We've had to open up the adjoining studio, so I'm teaching these super classes. I'm hoping one day Meghan turns up, I think she would love it."

Julie says vinyasa flow differs from most people's perception of yoga. "It's about moving through the poses using your breath. There's not a lot of sitting down until you get to the very end, when you're doing some back bends and hip openers. This type of yoga really gets your heart rate up and you'll be sweating a lot – which I know Meghan likes. My classes are set to the likes of Coldplay, U2 and Eminem, they're very upbeat and high-spirited."

As well as the cardio aspect, vinyasa flow includes mindfulness and meditation. "If you're not being mindful or you forget to breathe, you fall out of the poses – you just can't hold them," says Julie. "And you can be in an almost meditative state by the time you come into Savasana [resting pose]."

FITNESS FIX

So how does yoga hone your physique? "A yoga class will tone and lengthen muscle," says Julie. "Whereas free weights make muscles bigger, you're only working against your own body weight when you're working through the poses. I have no idea how many calories you burn in a class, but I don't think that's what Meghan zooms in on at all. It's more of a lifestyle. I can totally tell she's a yogi though. She has those long, lean muscles."

Meghan has admitted that sometimes she struggles when it comes to finding the motivation to work out, but still believes it's worth making the effort. "I always remind myself of how good it will feel afterwards. Euphoric, almost," she has said.

Julie suggests practising yoga in a group to get the most out of sessions. "I like going into the class environment – when I'm not teaching – because I get the energy from the other yogis in the room," she says. "But when I can't make it, I do sun salutations [a sequence of poses] in the morning at home. That's the great thing, you can do yoga anywhere."

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