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# WORKING OUT ON WATER

Want to add a new twist to your yoga practice? Try stand-up paddleboard yoga.

By Karen Asp

You may not be able to walk on water, but you can do yoga there. Just put a stand-up paddleboard, or SUP, underneath you, and you have SUP yoga, one of the latest fitness crazes.

Think it sounds crazy? Perhaps, especially when you consider that yoga on firm ground can be challenging enough. Now add the instability of balancing on a paddleboard, and the challenge may seem even greater. But there's every reason to practice SUP yoga. "When you're on the water, you connect to nature," says Gillian Gibree, owner of Paddle into Fitness, a company in San Diego, CA, that offers SUP yoga classes and workshops. "You get to be outside in the sunshine and enjoy the marine life."

Fortunately, you don't need any special skills to do SUP yoga. In fact, you don't even have to have

done yoga or stand-up paddleboarding, for that matter. "For beginners, we modify poses and keep it simple," Gibree says. Poses, for instance, might include seated twist or seated half moon. "SUP yoga is all about getting people outside in nature practicing yoga."

Extremely popular now at spas, most classes provide a board and paddle. You'll need to do a little paddling, but classes like Gibree's usually start with an intro on paddle technique before doing a warm-up paddle. If the water is glassy, she'll then try to do the entire class on the water, but if there are any balancing poses she wants to incorporate, she'll often move the class to the beach.

You can wear regular yoga attire or a bathing suit to SUP yoga. Just leave that fear of falling in





## WHERE TO TRY IT

"SUP Yoga beautifully partners the balance of moving on the ocean, core strength development and the mindful awareness of yoga," says Sierra Shores, director of Nalu Kinetic Spa at Turtle Bay Resort, in Kahuku, HI. "It is a physically spiritual connection." Grab a board at these spas and resorts:

### Turtle Bay Resort

*Kahuku, Hawaii*

Turtle Bay offers free SUP daily demos by Hans Hedemann Surf School; SUP yoga classes by Sierra Shore; private, semi-private and group SUP sessions; multi-day programs, private coaching and camps by North Shore Guides Club and Hans Hedemann Surf Center. [turtlebayresort.com](http://turtlebayresort.com)

### Ritz-Carlton Toronto

*Toronto, Ontario*

The Ritz-Carlton Toronto features SUP yoga retreats (Summer 2014: Ontario); SUP yoga lessons on Lake Ontario in summer and in a private studio with simulated board, in winter; a dedicated clothing line, [yogagurl.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Toronto](http://yogagurl.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Toronto)

### Travaasa Hana

*Maui, Hawaii*

At Travaasa Hana, offerings include lessons for adults and children (over 9), on-land introduction and demo for smooth in-water transition, and instructors focused on individual needs. [travaasa.com/hana](http://travaasa.com/hana)

### Lake Austin Spa

*Austin, Texas*

Take advantage of individual SUP lessons by fitness instructors; ABSolutely Paddleboarding: an abs and core workout while floating on Lake Austin; Paddle Fit: an overall body workout with squats, pushups and lunges; On "Board" with Yoga: warriors, planks, boat, triangle and more to challenge stability, balance and strength. [lakeaustin.com](http://lakeaustin.com)

—Piper Stull-Lane

En route to a stand-up paddleboard yoga session at Lake Austin Spa Resort in Austin, Texas.

the water at home. "We use wide, stable boards and keep the class simple so most people stay dry," Gibree says, adding that people who fall in are usually attempting advanced poses like a headstand.

Because SUP by itself engages numerous core muscles, Gibree recommends doing exercises like plank before you take a class to strengthen those muscles. Once you get in class, though, during which you'll build balance, coordination, endurance and strength, just have fun — and don't be surprised if you like it more than land-based yoga classes. "Yoga in studios can sometimes be competitive," Gibree says. "Yet SUP yoga is so much more laid back."