

# BEST of YOGA

## Melbourne

*Circle*

CITY CIRCLE TRAN

*Come on, hop on!*

*...are you ready to find your perfect yoga class?*



*'find your  
perfect class'*

\*\*\*

THE **ULTIMATE**  
GUIDE TO YOGA  
IN **MELBOURNE!**



BREW YOURSELF A  
CHAI AT ASHTANGA  
YOGA MELBOURNE



GET YOUR JUICES  
FLOWING AT BODY  
FLOW IN WINDSOR



ENJOY A SINGING  
BOWL MEDITATION  
AT OHANA YOGA

# BEST of YOGA



*Go to your perfect class, then grab a coffee in one of Melbourne's quirky cafés*

## *How do you find your perfect class?*

The yoga world is just so complex. Some studios offer more than 300 classes every week, some others 20 different yoga styles. We know from choosing mobile network operators and cereal brands: The more choice, the trickier it gets. And yes, it's annoying. Frustrating, exhausting.

Because there's hardly anything as rewarding as a perfect yoga practice. A practice that meets you where you are, challenges you without being too demanding, that leaves you refreshed, energised and ready to seize life. That's what a perfect practice does: Accompany you off the mat.

*Some studios offer more than 300 classes a week, some others more than 20 different yoga styles. How do you find your perfect class?*

***So you want this “yoga glow” - but how and where can you find the class that will make it happen?***

## BEST of YOGA *guides*

Our guides will tell you about yoga classes, chanting, meditation, wherever you are. So that you can *‘find your perfect class’* - **the class that is perfect for you**. We save you the 5am wake up call, we save you the trouble of trying out dozens of studios. We’ve done it all for you. We’ve reviewed hundreds of classes, emptied an equal number of water bottles, finished two body sprays and paid three parking tickets. We chatted with hundreds of committed local yogis to find out about their perfect yoga spots. We only survived all those early wake up calls thanks to an endless supply of coconut water - but we’ve done it!

We **didn’t accept any freebies** for positive reviews. We checked out every studio in person. We simply **tell it as we see it** - in our BEST of YOGA **Melbourne**.

If you want to get an overview of studios in your home town, you are travelling and don’t know the local yoga scene, or you’re looking for something in particular, such as kids classes, chanting, vigorous and physically demanding classes, yoga philosophy lectures - we’ve got you covered.

You can find your class by looking for a particular *yoga style*, or you can simply check out some of the fun categories, such as *location, location!, most authentic, great beginners choice, or life-long learning*. Make sure to have a look at Melbourne’s **most unusual yoga experiences** in our **10 TOP PICKS**.

You can find studio profile pages with contact details and directions at the end of this guide (all links are active).

We hope you enjoy your BEST of YOGA **Melbourne**.

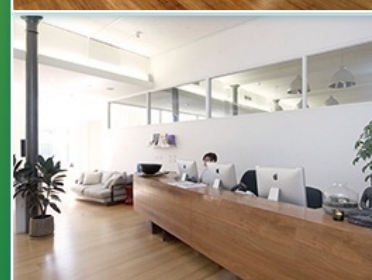
If you have any editorial comments or would like to learn more about our guides and how to market your studio, get in touch!

For more **yoga inspiration**, check out **andreaheber.com** - and **join thousands of other followers!**

*Andrea Yvonne Leber*

Journalist & Yoga Instructor

*In this guide:  
6 months research,  
countless classes,  
2 body sprays &  
3 parking tickets*



We were sweating at *Grass Roots* before taking one of their Yin classes; we felt like entering an Indian *shala* at *Ashtanga Yoga Melbourne*; we checked out *Australian Yoga Academy*’s newest studio and had a fresh brew of tea at *Breathe Wellbeing* (from top)

**Our 10 TOP PICKS**

*A list of unusual yoga experiences - we believe that if something is extraordinarily different it deserves mentioning. Use this list as a starting point and keep exploring!*

- Listen to *talks by visiting saints* and discuss their pearls of wisdom over a complimentary veggie dinner at **Urban Yoga**
- Salute *iconic Luna Park* every time you stretch up your arms and look through the panoramic windows at **Ihana Yoga**
- Practice at a studio that *has no sticky mats* but a history stretching back almost 50 years, at **Mangala Studios**
- Immerse yourself in a *singing bowl meditation* at **Ohana Yoga**
- Float through your practice like you've never done it before, following *the innovative fusion of styles* at **SomaChi**
- Finish up your last postures while looking forward to *sharing the chai* that's brewing - every morning at the **Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne**
- Soak up the playful vibe and roll out your mat *between retro furniture* at the innovative and quirky **The Yoga Lab**
- Watch the world upside down while *suspended in gorgeous silks* at the airy and spacious **Body Flow Yoga**
- Practice *within the serenity of a church yard*, immersed in light that's seeping through multicoloured windows at **Yoga Dance of Life**
- Be *taught by a cheerful Swami* in an orange robe and enjoy the satisfaction of supporting a global non for profit organisation at **Yoga in Daily Life**



## *What's in this BEST of YOGA guide:*

***'find your perfect class'*** by **Yoga Style** \* Page 6

BEST of YOGA **research** - **Studio Reviews (A-Z)** \* Page 9

***'find your perfect class'*** by **Personal Preference** \* Page 41

---

Yoga styles explained \* Page 42

Yoga studio profiles and contact details \* Page 44

About BEST of YOGA / Impressum \* Page 53

## *'find your perfect class'* *by Yoga Style*

### **\*Ashtanga\***

Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne (page 10)

Ashtanga Yoga Melbourne (page 11)

Studio Cirq (page 31)

### **\*Hatha\***

A.K.A Studio (page 9)

Australian Yoga Academy (page 12)

Body Flow Yoga (page 14)

Breathe Wellbeing (page 15)

Breathing Space (page 17)

Dance of Life (page 19)

Gertrude Street Yoga (page 20)

Mangala Studios (page 23)

Ohana Yoga (page 25)

Summer Healing Yoga (page 32)

The Yoga Lab (page 33)

Urban Yoga (page 35)

Yoga Flame (page 37)

Yoga in Daily Life (page 38)

### **\*Iyengar\***

Breathe Wellbeing (page 15)

Clifton Hill Yoga Studio (page 18)

Yarraville Yoga Centre (page 36)

Yoga Jivana (page 39)

Yogaville (page 40)



We were joining the crowds at *Yoga Flame*; enjoyed a delicious complimentary veggie meal after our class at *Urban Yoga* while chatting with fellow yogis; and then we finally sweated it all out during our dynamic vinyasa practice at *Ihana Yoga*

(from top)





**\*Meditation/Nidra\***

A.K.A Studio (page 9)

Australian Yoga Academy (page 12)

Breathing Space (page 17)

Dance of Life (page 19)

Gertrude Street Yoga (page 20)

Moksha Yoga (page 24)

Ohana Yoga (page 25)

SomaChi (page 29)

Summer Healing Yoga (page 32)

The Yoga Lab (page 33)

Yoga in Daily Life (page 38)

**\*Pre/Postnatal\***

Australian Yoga Academy (page 12)

Breathe Wellbeing (page 15)

Gertrude Street Yoga (page 20)

Moksha Yoga (page 24)

Yoga in Daily Life (page 38)

**\*Vinyasa/Dynamic\***

A.K.A Studio (page 9)

Body Flow Yoga (page 14)

Breathe Wellbeing (page 15)

Breathing Space (page 17)

Dance of Life (page 19)

Gertrude Street Yoga (page 20)

Ihana Yoga (page 22)

Ohana Yoga (page 25)

Power Living (page 27)

SomaChi (page 29)

Studio Cirq (page 31)



We got inspired by *SomaChi's* wonderfully quiet, dedicated meditation room; were impressed by everything that's going on at *The Yoga Lab*; and then we finally completely chilled out during a singing bowl meditation at *Ohana Yoga*

(from top)



The Yoga Lab (page 33)

Urban Yoga (page 35)

Yoga Flame (page 37)

Yoga in Daily Life (page 38)

**\*Vinyasa (warm-hot)\***

Australian Yoga Academy (page 12)

Body Flow Yoga (page 14)

Grass Roots Yoga (page 21)

Moksha Yoga (page 24)

Power Living (page 27)

Summer Healing Yoga (page 32)

Yoga Flame (page 37)

**\*Yin\***

Australian Yoga Academy (page 12)

Breathe Wellbeing (page 15)

Gertrude Street Yoga (page 20)

Grass Roots Yoga (page 21)

Ohana Yoga (page 25)

Power Living (page 27)

Studio Cirq (page 31)

Summer Healing Yoga (page 32)

Yoga Flame (page 37)



We loved the vinyasa classes at *Body Flow Yoga's* new, fresh and breezy Windsor studio; and we marvelled at *Urban Yoga's* schedule of visiting saints

(from top)





# BEST of YOGA *Research: Studio Reviews*

## A.K.A Studio

### Why go?

Enjoy the **intimate space** and the great **variety of A.K.A's offering**, including Capoeira, Pilates and Pranayama (yogic breathing) classes

### What's the vibe?

Entering this intimate space right at the back of a house at the very end of the 96 tram in Fitzroy feels like *'stepping out of the city and right into India'*. And in many ways, this studio is just what a practice room in India would look like, with whitewashed walls and wooden floors; *'I love the simplicity, there is no unnecessary clutter or decoration; the focus is on the practice'*, students comment. Apart from the yoga room, there's a prop wall and bathrooms - that's it.

Everything here is straightforward, and owner Lindsay Cox will instantly make you feel welcome, asking about your yoga background in a calm, soothing voice. The studio attracts a very particular crowd that is fond of trying new things such as Capoeira, next to established classes.

Among the studio's most popular ones is Thursday night's Hatha yoga with Deanne Howard, and students love Shoshannah Orenstein's *'physically challenging and very nourishing'* class that delivers a *'great integration of breath and posture'*. Shoshannah *'adopts a holistic perspective'* and *'knows how to keep the energy flowing'*. Also popular is the *'detail-oriented and exact'* Bryan Rogers who *'helped me manage the pain in my body and get relief'*, says one student. Practitioners who come here to practise *'love that this is not a hot studio'*.



*The soothing simplicity of A.K.A Studio*

**What's on offer?** Hatha, Vinyasa, Pranayama, Prenatal, Capoeira, Pilates

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "Most relaxing"

# Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne

## Why go?

Practise at a studio that focuses **purely on traditional Ashtanga yoga**; enjoy the **shala-like** atmosphere; dive deeper into the world of Ashtanga; get a proper foundation with one of the **Ashtanga introduction courses**; connect with other Ashtangis over a cup of **post-practice chai**

## What's the vibe?

First opened in Fitzroy in '94 (back then one of the very few places where one could practise Ashtanga in Melbourne), this studio is now in its third location, boasting '*a beautiful space*' of 450 square metres, and still attracting a crowd that's been faithful to the centre from the very beginning, cherishing the '*great overall vibe*'.

Don't be fooled by the small, easily overlooked sign in Argyle street: Upstairs awaits a huge space with polished wooden floors, separated in a kitchen area where chai is brewing every morning (fuelling the Mysore yogis who start practising at 5.30am), a lounge area, two large yoga studios and changing rooms decorated in a welcoming style, reverberating the warm studio vibe. Most students come regularly, praising '*the traditional approach*' that '*allows you to get into the right state of mind - there is no music or other distractions*'. The larger studio can hold up to 60 students, however, owner Greg and Tracey Cooper prefer smaller classes to leave room for walking around and giving adjustments.

Overall, the focus is on practising mindfully: The centre also offers beginners courses that '*give a really solid foundation and thorough introduction*', say students and the studio is rated as '*the best place to learn the fundamentals of Ashtanga*'. If you're unsure, you won't need to commit to the entire course to find out what Ashtanga is all about; you can simply drop in. It's not only a studio for sincere and dedicated practitioners, but also a haven for those who need to modify the Ashtanga series to suit their body's needs. The studio is one of the few places coupling a traditional approach with room for modification, maybe stemming from the fact that many teachers here have originally been trained in the Iyengar system. '*They know what they are talking about, I trust them*', confirm practitioners.

Greg Cooper is very concerned about each student's abilities and keen to find out where they are in their practice to be able to recommend a suitable class; he's '*relaxed and funny but always very attentive*' and students love the '*very holistic nature of his teaching - he's vibrating wisdom and he's great at getting the philosophy across*'. Amanda Stead '*really knows what she's doing*', is '*teaching a hard class*' but is also '*very careful with beginners*', and the 'very knowledgeable' Eoin McCarthy is rated for his '*great hands-on adjustments*' and his '*eye for corrections*'.

Students rate the practice here as '*hard, both mentally and physically*', but '*love the structured approach*'. The Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne is a '*beautiful sanctuary amidst the bustle of Fitzroy*' and '*one of the few studios with soul that remains true to the meaning of yoga*'. The teachers are '*incredible, take the practice very seriously but also see the light side and are always keen to share their insights and experience*'; there '*aren't many studios like this around*'.

**What's on offer?** Ashtanga led classes, Mysore, introduction courses and intro drop-in

**Listed in:** Ashtanga, "Great beginners choice", "A community"



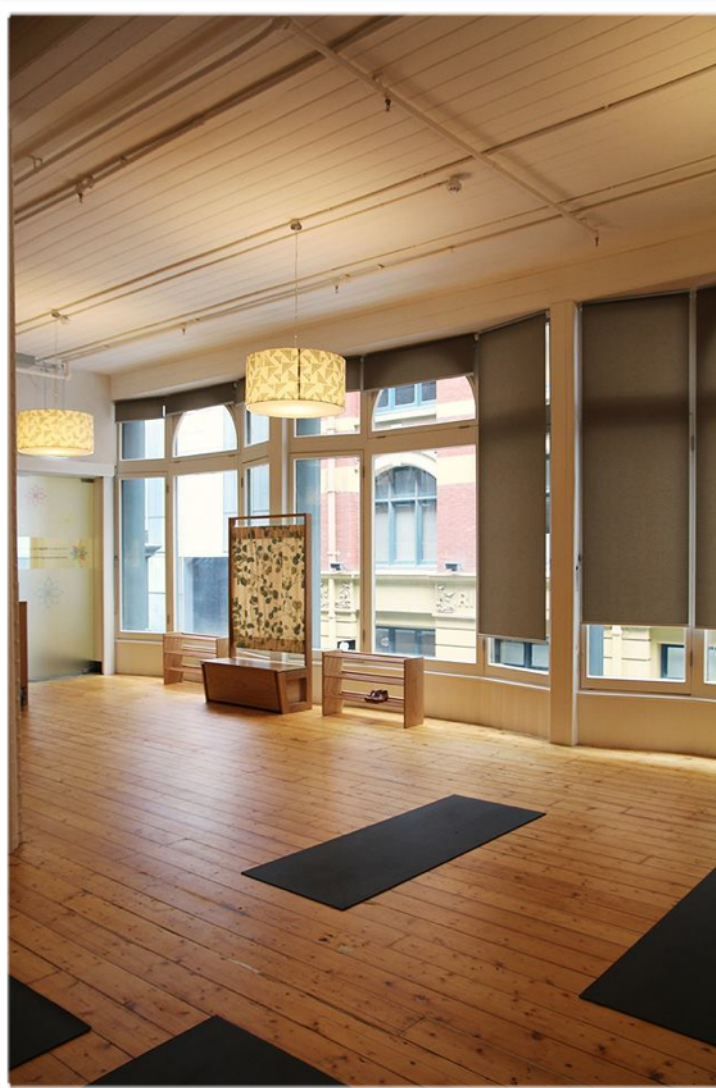
# Ashtanga Yoga Melbourne

## Why go?

Want to squeeze in an **early Mysore practice** before heading to your office in the CBD? This new studio is for you! Practise Ashtanga or try a beginners course in a **central Flinders Lane location**

## What's the vibe?

This brand new studio has been opened end of 2013 but its teachers have been around for a while. Owner Karyn Grenfell has previously been operating out of Studio Cirq (as Blue Lotus Ashtanga), but has then decided to set up shop in a gorgeous studio in buzzing Flinders Lane. And how could this be more convenient for your early morning Mysore practice before heading to the office in the CBD? Indeed, Mysore is what students rave about: *'I've been doing Mysore for 10 years in various cities and I love it here!'* Some note that *'there aren't many Mysore classes in Melbourne - I'm really happy I found this studio!'*



*Focusing on your drishti, with view on Flinders Lane*

Just look out for the small sign at 167 Flinders Lane, the studio space is on the 1st floor. Upon entering, you'll find a *'lovely, beautiful, clean'* and decluttered space with gorgeous wooden floors and a huge window front. *'The atmosphere here always puts me in a good mood'*, summarises one student. Mat storage is available, there's a small reception desk and changing rooms - but the rest of the space is dedicated to the practice. If you work up a sweat there's free purified water.

If you enjoy a community vibe, Sunday mornings are particularly busy, while Friday lunchtime classes are quieter. Both Karyn Grenfell and Amanda are *'solid, well-trained teachers'* and students *'have a lot of trust'* in them. Tina is *'a great guide and instructor, but not in a dictating way'* and *'notices stuff going on in my body'*; students value her *'great personal attention'*; *'each week, she makes you do a tiny bit more'*.

Be aware that there is no Mysore practice on moon days (check the calendar on the website).

**What's on offer?** Ashtanga led classes, Mysore, beginners courses

**Listed in:** Ashtanga, "Location, location!"

# Australian Yoga Academy

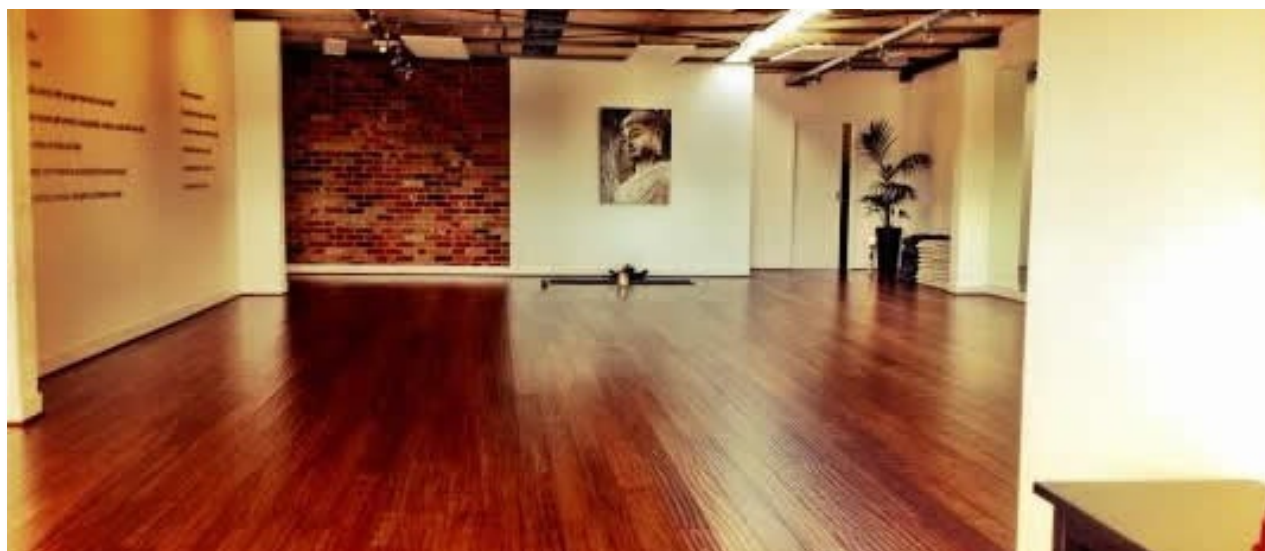
## Why go?

This is probably as **large and diversified** as it gets, and one of AYA's **three locations** is bound to be near you; apart from the usual classes, try out the much praised **pre- and postnatal courses**; rock up to a **disco yoga class**; keep an eye on the extensive list of **workshops and visiting teachers**

## What's the vibe?

If you can't find your class here, you're too picky and students *'love that they have lots of classes and time slots to choose from'*. Not only does AYA offer dozens of different class types in its three locations (Abbotsford, Seddon, Prahran) but also an extensive list of workshops with both resident and visiting teachers. At the time of writing, coming up were an autumn intensive, a hip hop hooray workshop and a conscious birthing workshop - to name just a few.

Founders Dominique and Anthony Salerno managed to attract a wide range of *'very dedicated'* teachers who *'always keep it safe'* and are *'very mindful of any concerns you might have'*. The *'very energetic and extremely charismatic'* Dominique teaches with *'great care of duty'* and her *'energy in class draws people in'*. Students value her *'phenomenal knowledge'*; she *'knows when and how to push you and when to encourage you to back off'* and achieves a *'great balance of flow, sweat and meditation'* in her classes.



*AYA's wonderfully intimate Seddon studio*

We particularly loved Melanie Mackintosh's Vinyasa classes: She's also a fountain of knowledge when it comes to pre- and postnatal yoga (no matter what's the shape of your pelvis, she knows how to modify the practice for you) and her thought-through and determined adjustments will keep you safe. However, classes are powerful and flowing as she's able to quickly come up with modifications to keep the class moving. Practising with her is *'like having your personal mentor, no question is too silly'* and she creates a *'very caring environment and empowers you to do your best'*.

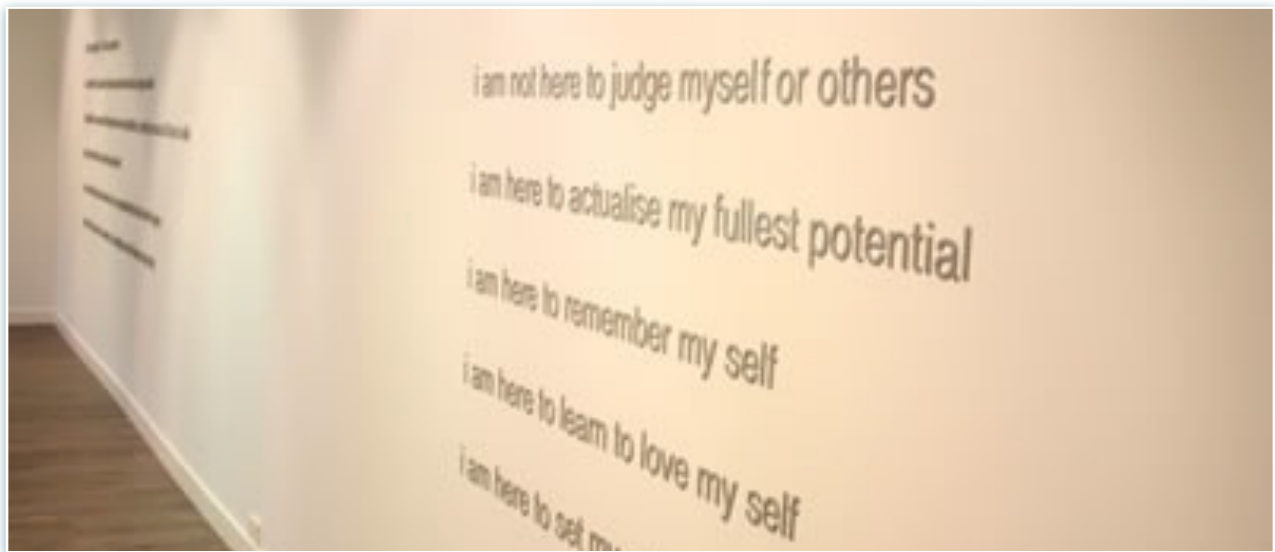
Jen Lowe's classes are expertly taught without the need of demonstrating thanks to her crystal clear verbal instructions. She has a keen eye for what's going on even in the back row, is very considerate and aware of a student's levels and always able to offer appropriate support. Jen



would go the extra mile to ensure that you do postures correctly to get the most out of class, and she's always happy to chat and address every single question in detail.

*'Energising and enthusiastic'* Alice Hobday is a popular teacher thanks to her *'very positive personality'*; she *'makes classes exciting'* and *'moves fast if the class goes well but would always stop if she sees that some students need more guidance'*. Nickie Hanley also has a huge following and draws on her background as a dancer in her *'active'* and *'well choreographed'* classes; *'She's full of heart, and her teaching is both strong and kind'*; *'she makes it easy to ask questions'*.

AYA's very welcoming Prahran studio is clean and spacious and there's one upstairs and one large downstairs studio (which is mostly used for teacher training courses or quieter practices such as meditation). Even though the centre is just off busy High Street in Prahran it's very quiet; however, evenings can be busy: *'It's a gorgeous studio, but very popular'*.



*The writing on the wall, at AYA Prahran*

The brand new and clean, spacious Abbotsford studio is thoughtfully decorated, warm and welcoming. It's located in a brand new apartment complex just opposite IKEA and there's reduced parking rates in the building's car park if you attend a class. Students *'love this clean, new and modern'* studio.

The first floor Seddon studio is located in a quiet area close to public transport and free parking. White and wood dominate, facilities are very clean and the design mirrors the appearance of the other AYA locations. It's smallness creates a very harmonious atmosphere and students love the *'easy-going vibe'*. *'This place resonated with me as soon as I walked in'*.

All classes at AYA are taught in a room heated to 26-29 degrees and students *'love the challenging classes, but you do sweat a lot'*. It's a good idea to bring a non-slippery mat (you can also borrow one at the studio). Classes will leave you with *'the sense that you've found some balance'* and regular practitioners also enjoy the studio's community: *'It's not about competing, it's about the community'*. *'I started practising here and never looked back'*.

**What's on offer?** Hatha, Yin, Vinyasa Flow, Pre/Postnatal, Meditation, workshops

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Pre/Postnatal, Vinyasa (warm-hot), Yin, "Largest offering", "Kids, Mums & Bubs"

# Body Flow Yoga

## Why go?

To finally try out what Aerial Yoga is all about at [Australia's largest Aerial Yoga Studio](#); to find a [bright and airy yoga sanctuary](#) a stone's throw away from busy Chapel Street; wind down after a busy day with a restore or align class in a [white, light filled studio](#) environment

## What's the vibe?

This super airy, new Windsor studio (opened in June 2013) simply is a gorgeous, soothing space. It's non-cluttered, overwhelmingly white and owner Sophie Lefevre Bunn's smile lights up the entire room. The positively huge windows let in lots of natural light, and the location just off Chapel Street in a quiet backyard is close to everything you may want before or after practice (there's another, smaller studio in Port Melbourne). Students love the *'great variety'* of classes, including Aerial, Flow and Restore Yoga and the focus is more on *'going at your own pace rather than pushing you to other people's limits'*.



We particularly loved Sophie's Restore class that does exactly what it says on the tin: It's relaxing and restorative but also deeply working the muscles (expect some muscle aches the following day!). Sophie also finds innovative and creative ways of incorporating the high quality aerial yoga silks above every mat and will never tire of imparting more insightful information about the body, muscle tissues and physical structure while you're in the pose - so you're not only doing poses, you know why you're doing them and how they work on your body. Sophie also has an eagle eye for students who need modifications and *'even if it's a bigger group she's always next to you to assist'*. From every word she says it's clear that she lives her yoga - and students greatly benefit from this. She's amassed a wealth of knowledge over the past decades of teaching and students rate her as *'always very prepared and knowledgeable'*.



The studio attracts a nice crowd of yogis looking to practice in a calm atmosphere, great quality mats are provided and the facilities are impressive (down to nice touches such as toiletries in the female changing rooms), dominated by wood, white and turquoise; a lot of thought went into absolutely every detail and the clear and clean space promotes the insightful class vibe. *'I'm so happy I've found this place, I've been looking for this type of studio for a long time'*, summarises one student.

**What's on offer?** Flow, Warm Flow, Align, Restore, Aerial, Community Flow (by donation)

**Listed in:** Hatha, Vinyasa/Dynamic, Vinyasa (warm-hot), "Most unusual classes"

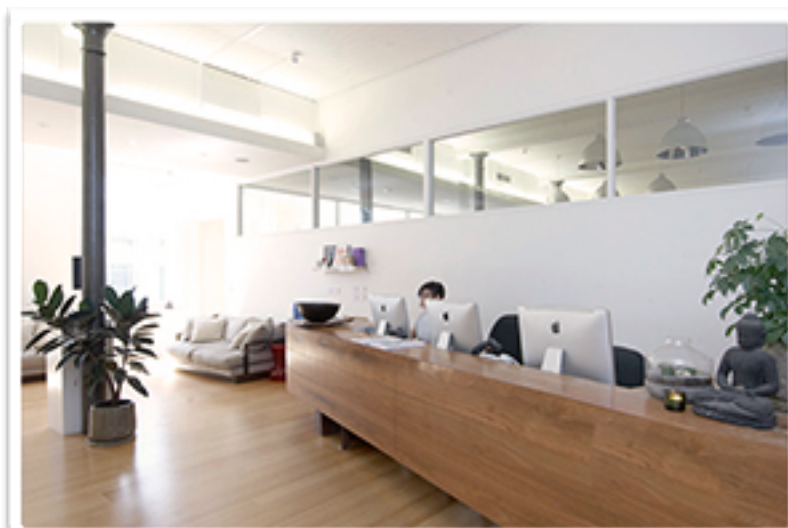
# Breathe Wellbeing

## Why go?

Amazing choice of yoga class times and styles; fantastic Little Collins street location; extensive Pilates and fitness offering; enjoy a complimentary cup of tea, nibble on fruits and browse yoga magazines after your class in the studio's cozy lounge

## What's the vibe?

It's just so convenient: Take the elevator up to the first floor, away from buzzing Little Collins street, and enjoy the 'amazing front desk and customer service'. Reception is always happy to chat, or you can simply do a quick self check-in and walk right through to the spacious changing rooms that come with large mirrors. Regular students enjoy the choice of classes that 'are at great times for people who work full time' and the 'huge Pilates offering, so I can do Yoga and Pilates in the same place'.



*Welcome! Tea facilities to your left...*

Unsurprisingly, Breathe Wellbeing is a busy place, however, yogis rave about 'the good community, even though they have so many people passing through'.

The studio features wooden floors and feels very airy and spacious. Breathe is spread onto two floors, with Pilates on the first floor and the yoga room with high ceilings on the second floor, complete with showers and bathroom facilities. High quality mats and all props are provided.

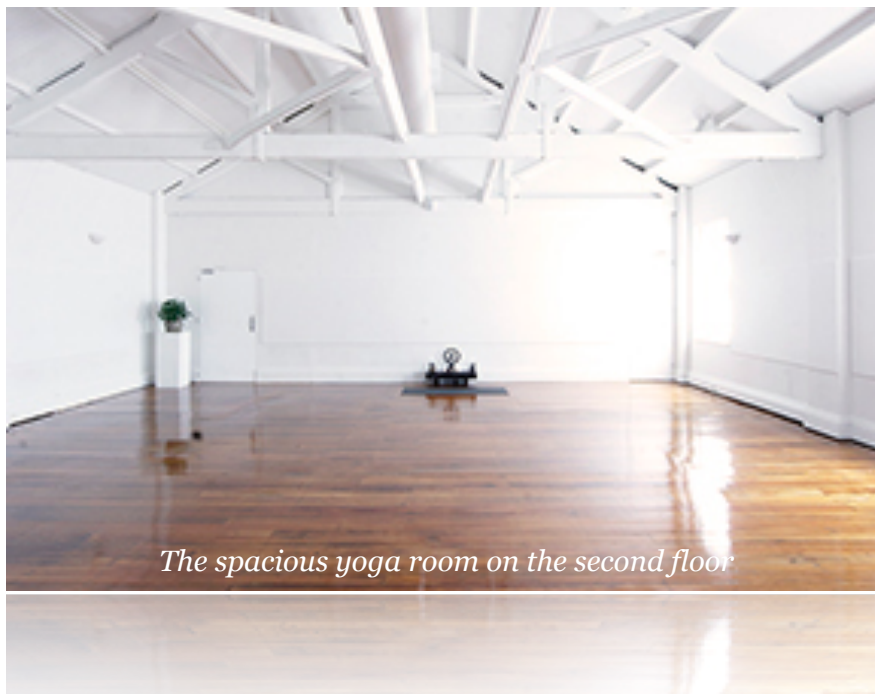
We loved Natasja Fox' Hatha class: Natasja knows what she's talking about, breaks down postures in accessible parts and makes you work on seemingly obvious aspects until even familiar asanas gain an entire new dimension. She takes the practice seriously but remains very accessible and adopts an at times playful approach.

Ambika Chadwick is passionate about making yoga accessible and bringing it to people who would not normally consider themselves yogis and who come from a variety of backgrounds. If you take her class, be prepared: Ambika might lull you into a seemingly dull sequence and then suddenly add challenging elements when you didn't expect them - always optional, of course. She might also surprise you by putting on jazzy grooves while you float through your asanas. However, Ambika has recently opened up her own CBD studio "The Yoga Social", so you may also find her there.

In her classes, Olivia Bryant 'achieves a great balance of the spiritual and the physical'. Each class starts with a mantra, her teaching is highly valued as 'heart opening and healing' and classes always have a 'dedicated introduction and theme'. Olivia integrates some yogic philosophy



in every class and *'encourages you to think about things'*. If you're more leaning towards the physical side of things, try out Natalie Ball's classes: She will *'work you hard'* and packs a lot into each class. Students love her *'vibrant personality'* and her verbal adjustments via *'subtle but precise comments that let you know what's going on'*.



*The spacious yoga room on the second floor*

Finish up your Breathe experience with a cup of freshly brewed tea in the lounge (there's a different brew every day) while browsing through magazines, relaxing on the huge sofas, and nibbling some complimentary pieces of fruit. If you're early for class, there's more yogic reading material upstairs in the comfy waiting area in front of the yoga room.

The newest Breathe Wellbeing location, Goldie Place just off Little Bourke Street in the CBD, offers Functional Fitness and Pilates classes.

***What's on offer?*** Dynamic Hatha, Vinyasa, Yin, Iyengar, Power Vinyasa, Prenatal, Pilates

***Listed in:*** Hatha, Iyengar, Pre/Postnatal, Vinyasa/Dynamic, Yin, "Location, location!", "Largest offering", "Kids, Mums & Bubs"

# Breathing Space

## Why go?

Practise with Deepa Ebeli, **arguably the most experienced teacher** in Melbourne; take a class in a truly **non-competitive and nurturing environment** that attracts an incredible **variety of students**

## What's the vibe?

The '*terrific*' Deepa Ebeli is possibly the most experienced teacher in the entire city. Students describe her as '*non-dogmatic, always helping you along the way*'. Some say that she's '*the original hatha yoga teacher*' and given that's she's got over 40 years of experience under her belt they may have a point: After four decades of yoga immersion she's able to deliver a safe, bespoke and rewarding practice to anyone who walks through her door, making students '*leave every class in a thoughtful state of mind*'.

Breathing Space is a '*very accepting and open space*' to do yoga, and yogis range from beginning of their 20s up to well over 70 years old - everyone gets something out of Deepa's classes and no matter what's your condition, she's most likely seen it already. It's a very wholesome, inclusive studio but don't be deceived by the relaxed, laid-back vibe - you'll deeply work through the postures to ensure you'll get the benefit.

Classes include detailed instructions and explanations as to why things are done in a particular way and how the yoga works with your body and mind. Bits of yoga philosophy are woven into the class for students to directly connect and apply them to the physical practice: You'll '*really work on connecting the different aspects of yoga*'.

We loved the surprising insights even seasoned yogis can gain into familiar postures. Verbal cues were extremely precise, enlightening and also fun, adjustments subtle but precise, each class '*shifting the energy in my body*', say students. Deepa is a fountain of knowledge and a great choice, particularly if you are facing physical challenges in your practice and found that some teachers are unable to meet you where you are. Deepa also runs a dedicated class for students recovering from injuries who would otherwise not be able to attend regular classes. Postures have never felt better and classes are '*very much about being centred and letting go, rather than rushing through fast sequences*'.

The huge yoga room will make you feel like you're in India. You'll practise surrounded by shimmering tissues, statues, devotional articles and in a space flooded with warm, carefully placed lightning. Students '*love the spaciousness and the great, established group - you really feel part of it*'. Some have been coming for over five years and appreciate the '*balance between the physical and spiritual path of yoga*'.

The studio is right above Chapel Street Bazaar and there's a second location in Richmond. All mats and props are provided. '*Definitely worth checking out!*'

**What's on offer?** Hatha, Vinyasa, Gentle Yoga, Meditation

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "Most relaxing", "Great beginners choice"

# Clifton Hill Yoga Studio

## Why go?

Practise at what arguably is **Melbourne's largest Iyengar studio**, boasting 20 years of history; get a great Iyengar foundation with one of the **thorough beginners courses**

## What's the vibe?

This dedicated '*calming and spacious*' Iyengar studio sees a lot of regulars and is rated as '*a great place to start yoga*', continuously attracting new students who '*love the very warm and welcoming reception*' and feel that '*even if you arrive here as a complete beginner, you won't feel intimidated*'. Teachers cater to students of all levels, have '*amazing attention to detail*' and '*really know their stuff*'. There's a wide range of classes, class times and teachers to choose from, beginners courses start every few weeks and prenatal classes are '*absolutely outstanding*'.



*The main studio with ropes, hallmarks of the Iyengar style, on the left*

Students find it hard to single out particular teachers, noting that '*all their teachers are really good*': Patrick Costello '*uses very clear language and teaches a very nurturing class*' and his background as a naturopath '*really benefits the yoga classes*'; The '*extremely knowledgeable*' Vaughan Allan comes across as '*very personable and calm*' but also '*cracks a joke from time to time*'; Rosie Hallinan is '*very accessible in her knowledge*' and '*very attentive, even in large classes*'; Michelle Lee has a '*very keen eye*' and is a '*great beginners teacher*', giving adjustments that are '*mindful, but determined, and feel great*'.

It's a very '*meditative place*' with '*a lot of spirituality*'; '*I've tried others but I always come back.*'

**What's on offer?** Iyengar, Beginners courses, Prenatal, workshops

**Listed in:** Iyengar, "Great beginners choice"



# Dance of Life

## Why go?

Practise within the **serene setting of a churchyard**; try out the **yoga playground** class to play with new postures; choose from an **amazing range of classes** among them **chanting** and free classes offered to women from refugee backgrounds; catch the sun on the **church lawn** prior to class

## What's the vibe?

Expect a non-pretentious, informal and welcoming setting in the '*gorgeous old church yard*' of St Marks in Fitzroy. The huge yoga room receives ample light through the colourful windows set high in the walls and features statues of Hindu gods and an altar with an image of Amma (once a year there's a yoga fest with all proceeds going to her ashram in India). It's a unique, calming and serene setting that '*makes you feel amazingly calm and more relaxed than anywhere else where I've tried classes*'. Students also love the '*amazing variety of classes*', among them pranayama, a monthly kirtan (yogic chanting) and free yoga for women from refugee backgrounds.

We loved Nina Alferts' nurturing and intense class. There's a clear focus on the breath and hands-on adjustments are determined, gentle and effective. She's able to hold the energy in class, watching everyone with eagle eyes, and is an advanced practitioner who knows how to put herself in the shoes of a beginner. While you sweat, her cute dog waits patiently on a pillow in the corner, doing a down dog once in a while. Nina also offers the informal 'yoga playground' every Thursday (yes, for adults!) if you'd like to play with some of the more advanced postures under the guidance of a teacher.



Johannes Mochayedí is rated as '*extremely experienced*' and teaches '*physically intense*' classes with long held postures that are '*very corrective and instructive*'. Johannes believes that even a class size of 15 warrants two assistants to give everyone proper attention; he teaches a slow vinyasa class to be able to adjust.

Felicity Steel delivers '*new perspectives on familiar postures*' and students can tell by her explanations '*that she's gone deep into the postures in her mind*'. Felicity is also '*very specific in terms of alignment*' and highly valued as '*a fantastic teacher for beginners*'.

Overall students love the '*amazing community*' and the '*nice, spirited yogic feel that allows for all levels and all sorts of people*'. The atmosphere is '*the opposite of a gym, very nurturing and spiritual*'. Some students have been coming for seven years and '*love that each teacher offers different levels within each class and knows how to take you through to the more difficult postures*'. '*I feel like Dance of Life is 'the last stop' - after you've tried everything else*'.

**What's on offer?** Vinyasa, Hatha, Power, Restorative, Kirtan, Mums & Bubs, Yoga Playground

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "For advanced yogis and teachers", "Most unusual classes"

# Gertrude Street Yoga

## Why go?

Check out one of the **much praised beginners courses**; connect with the **philosophy aspects** of yoga without cutting short on the physically demanding aspects of the practice

## What's the vibe?

Students practising here love the *'openness of the architecture and the light-filled rooms'* and find the old building that houses Gertrude Street Yoga *'creates a great atmosphere'*. The two huge yoga rooms feature polished wooden floor and walls of raw brick, giving the studio an edgy, warehouse-style, but warm feeling - that's really cool at the same time.

High ceilings give breathing space and in these spacious rooms you won't ever have your neighbour's sweat dripping on your mat. There are more props and mats than you could possibly use (no fight over belts or bricks), and the reception area features a well-stocked yoga library, yoga magazines, free drinking water and comfy sofas from which you'll never want to get up - except for one of the studio's yoga classes! Overall, a *'warm and welcoming'* atmosphere.

The crowd here is truly eclectic, from the girl with the latest gear to guys who simply get straight on the mat in their shorts and t-shirt without changing. No matter what type of yogi you are, you won't stick out as it's simply too versatile here!

We loved Mei Lai Swan's fabulously wholesome vinyasa class that included breath work (pranayama), meditative exercises and slow, flowing movements, before peaking in strong, long-held postures followed by a long relaxation that leaves you time to properly unwind - be prepared to chant OM.

Classes at Gertrude Street Yoga generally incorporate all these elements, a distinct feature of the studio's philosophy; students love that the studio *'doesn't cut on the philosophy in favour of the exercise'*. The wholesome approach means that if you enjoy one class, you'll most likely enjoy other teachers as well. It's a great place to get acquainted with yoga beyond its physical aspects but at the same time work hard physically. The *'amazing'* beginners courses get raving reviews and students find that *'there's probably no better place to learn the foundations of yoga'*.

Ingrid Jolley has a *'positive, honest energy'* and being in Jedda Davis' class is *'very comforting'*; she *'creates a nice atmosphere and has great presence'*, and she's also *'very hands-on even if the class is very full'*. Jedda would *'adapt the class according to who shows up'*, however, a big proportion of her students are committed regulars.

Jess Neave's classes incorporate yoga philosophy *'in a way that is relevant to our busy lives'* and that is *'easy to take with you from the mat into the rest of the day'*. Jess' classes are *'wonderfully varied'*, but *'always challenging, inspiring and nurturing'*. She teaches with a *'deep respect'* for her students, and a *'lightness and joy that helps you smile through difficult asanas'*. *'Her classes helped me through a difficult period and have inspired me to develop a regular practice'*.

**What's on offer?** Beginners courses, Dynamic Hatha, Vinyasa, Pranayama, Meditation (also run as courses), Yin, Pre/Postnatal, Mums & Bubs

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Pre/Postnatal, Vinyasa/Dynamic, Yin, "Great beginners choice", "Kids, Mums & Bubs"

# Grass Roots Yoga

## Why go?

If you love a **hot or warm, flowing practice** look no further; then try a highly recommended **Ying Yang class** to wind down; enjoy a space worthy of being featured in a **design magazine**

## What's the vibe?

As the name says, Grass Roots Yoga is a vibrant studio and green colours dominate; *'you walk in and it feels fresh'*, crucial for a place where you're meant to sweat. The team is extremely

approachable and welcoming, and the super clean space is peppered with small design touches. The interior design has been thoroughly thought through and even the bin looks pretty.

The entrance area is stuffed with beautiful things to look at, among them photos and items from the small but well-stocked shop, and copies of Yoga Journal you can browse. Should you decide to linger, the lovely resident cat (who loves back strokes!) will shamelessly take advantage of you.

We particularly enjoyed Jennifer Crescenzo's Ying Yang class which gives even Yin newbies a good foundation and is a great mix of clear explanation, easy to digest knowledge and individual assistance. Jennifer is a warm, welcoming teacher who handles a very diverse group of practitioners with

ease and caters for all levels. Students love her *'calming, soothing personality'* and say she has *'more knowledge about Yin than most others'*.

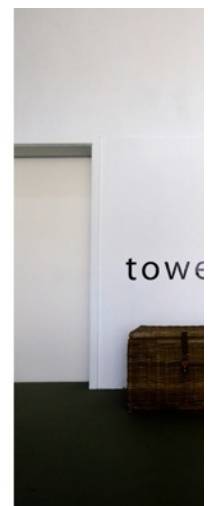
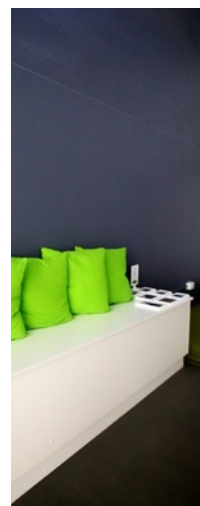
Students also love sweating it out with studio owner and *'amazing teacher'* Shannon Barry who's *'got the heart in the right place; he does a lot of community work'*; in his teaching, he's *'thorough and precise, the perfect combination of being stern whilst being spiritual'*. *'He's pretty funny too'* and has managed to create a studio where *'everyone shares the same vibe; it's just a lovely place to be'* and *'I felt comfortable as soon as I entered'*.

*'Dynamic personality'* Shelley Rillstone is rated as *'very patient with students, particularly beginners'* and gives *'very clear instructions'*, and Jody Murray's Vinyasa classes *'simply cannot be missed'*.

The studio facilities are spick and span, all toiletry products are supplied and there's free parking.

**What's on offer?** Hot Yoga, Hot Flow, Vinyasa Flow, Slow Flow, Ying Yang

**Listed in:** Vinyasa (warm-hot), Yin, "Sporty class"





# Ihana Yoga

## Why go?

Develop your practice with a teacher who **may be as knowledgeable as your physio**; deepen your **understanding of anatomy and asana**; check out the **Teach 'n' Learn Clinic** for yoga teachers

## What's the vibe?

The focus here is clearly on the yoga - the yoga room is the heart of both the Hampton and St Kilda studios, only complemented by a small reception area at the front and bathrooms at the back.



Owner Jenni Morrison-Jack also knows how to create a vibe matching the location; in Hampton, the atmosphere is warm, with different light sources, while St Kilda simply is a really cool studio, with graffiti on the wall and views on Luna Park thanks to its gorgeous panoramic windows. Both Ihana Yoga studios are spacious and decluttered, setting the tone for a centred, mind-focused practice. Students love the *'very intimate and personal'* atmosphere and find that *'the space itself shows that here, they really get what yoga is all about'*.

Jenni is being frequently described as a *'very charismatic'* teacher who *'teaches intelligently'*; students value the classes as *'always well-planned in terms of developing students'* and praise her as *'a true teacher, not just someone demonstrating postures'*. In her *'both very gentle and powerful'* classes Jenni is *'very perceptive and gives adjustments only to those students who want them'*.

However, most students come to class precisely for the assistance and adjustments, raving about Jenni's *'exceptional understanding of anatomy'*: *'She has helped me with a bad injury and has retrained me completely. I can implement what she teaches into any yoga style - it's almost like*



*Say hi to Nalle (that's Finnish and means teddy bear)!*

*doing yoga with a physiotherapist'*, says one student, while another states that Jenni *'has completely changed my body and my yoga practice'*.

Others come for the spiritual side of yoga, leaving *'glowing, feeling better in my body and my mind'* while becoming *'more aware of myself'*. *'I have practised with many teachers, but her perfect mix of practicality and spirituality is completely unique'*,

a student says. The studio's *'authenticity and deeper sense of what yoga is'* is highly valued, and students also love Michele New's *'strong passion for teaching'* and her *'very explanatory'* classes.

The Strengthen & Lengthen classes make for an easily accessible start to yoga - and if you're already a teacher or teacher trainee, make sure you check out the weekly Teach 'n' Learn Clinic.

**What's on offer?** Vinyasa, Teach 'n' Learn Clinic (for teachers), workshops

**Listed in:** Vinyasa/Dynamic, "For advanced yogis and teachers"

# Mangala Studios

## Why go?

Expect the unexpected; Mats are optional but you may use sticks in class; practice at a studio boasting 50 years of history; try Ink Brush, Creative Dance, Infant and Kids Yoga or Tai Chi

## What's the vibe?

Three gorgeous, large, sunlit yoga and dance studios on two floors await you, creating a somehow old-fashioned, rustic feel, but in a very cozy way. The changing room's back wall is stacked with dance accessories, and you get the sense that this place is all about expression and self-inquiry through movement. Most teachers are dual qualified in dance and yoga, while three teach yoga only. All dance classes have yoga elements and most yoga classes contain flowing, dance like motions. This well-established studio has been around for over four decades and the tradition is now being continued by the family of founder Dorotea Mangiamiele.



*The beginnings...*

Mangala Studio's Hatha classes rank among the most unusual we've ever come across. You can bring your mat - but most people practise without (teacher Peter Hockey will shrewdly point out that there are no mats in India, just rugs, and that without sticky mat you really know if you can hold a posture). However, there are blankets and pillows for support in seated postures and Savasana.

A fair amount of class is happening internally; you'll be working with the breath and the mind, through the body, performing slow, mindful movements following clear instructions. It sounds easy, but it's not - a basic understanding of yoga philosophy (such as what is prana and how does the breath affect the mind) is helpful. Students say that *'every class feels like a massage'* and love the *'depth of the teaching; it's meaningful and always relates back to something within yourself'*.

In this particular class we used sticks as arm extensions to train alignment in postures. If you're usually practising a very fast, physical style of yoga you'll gain a totally new perspective on the practice! Peter has a wealth of knowledge not only of the physical aspects of the practice, but also of how yoga can be applied to every day life. His calm, serene manner is simply infectious and the 1.5hrs class was over within the blink of an eye. *'I feel so balanced after every class'*, say students.



*Expression through movement*

Every class is a little bit different, but even if the yoga room is full *'it always feels very personal'* and *'the yoga always feels therapeutic'*. Teachers draw on a variety of other skills: Anita is a yoga and specialist disabled teacher, Fran focuses on yoga and dance therapy, and Helen on Prenatal yoga. Richard Liddicut teaches Ink Brush and Yoga. It's definitely worthwhile exploring what the centre has to offer, such as Tai Chi, Ink Brush, Creative Dance, and there's an extensive Children's class schedule, from toddlers to teenagers.

**What's on offer?** Hatha, Prenatal, Yoga Philosophy, Calligraphy, Tai Chi, Infants and Children's classes, Ink Brush, Creative Dance

**Listed in:** Hatha, "Most unusual classes", "Kids, Mums & Bubs"

# Moksha Yoga

## Why go?

Looking for a **wide range of things** apart from Vinyasa? Come here for Prenatal, Meditation, Mums & Bubs classes, introductory courses, Teacher Training, intensives and Master Classes

## What's the vibe?

Moksha Yoga in Bentleigh is one of the few places where you feel that while you work hard physically, you never lose sight of yoga being a spiritual practice. The walls are dotted with quotes from the scriptures and statues and candles add a nice touch to create a cosy vibe.



When you first visit, the teacher will be keen to find out about any previous injuries, medical conditions or treatments you may have had. Every detail will be noted in your file and read by every teacher you subsequently sign in with; consistency is key.

We enjoyed the Vinyasa classes taught by studio owner Emma Palmer. Emma really makes you work and packs the class with information about physical and spiritual benefits of postures - and oh dear, the long-held postures do give her time to talk you through the details!

She hardly demonstrates but instructions are so clear that you really can't go wrong. Emma places emphasis on starting and finishing class on a quiet note, with an

insightful comment, quote or invitation to ponder, and isn't afraid of chanting OM. Safety is paramount and she will never lose sight of you, no matter where you've put your mat. Her keen eye spots instantly who needs modifications and who would be able to do advanced variations of a posture. However, she will always encourage everyone to go at their own pace, offering easier versions of each posture or sequence. Be aware that Emma likes a toasty room - it's not hot yoga, but be prepared to sweat. Her students love the '*strong heated practice*' that makes them '*feel amazing afterwards*'. She '*makes you work hard and develop strength*' and is rated as a great choice if you '*want to work consistently on your practice, both physically and spiritually*'.

The '*very thorough*' Teacher Training lasts one year and is being described as a '*challenging yet rewarding experience, thanks to the wonderful lecturers*'. Staff at the centre overall are rated as '*exceptionally talented and knowledgeable*'; '*their love of teaching and sharing this ancient practice continues to inspire me*', says one student.

**What's on offer?** Vinyasa, Intro to Vinyasa, Pre/Postnatal, Kids & Teenager classes, Meditation

**Listed in:** Meditation/Nidra, Pre/Postnatal, Vinyasa (warm-hot), "Life-long learning", "Sporty class"



## Ohana Yoga

### Why go?

Try out a **blissful singing bowl meditation**; practise with **inspiring owner Gena Kenny** who won't fail to surprise you in class; come here for **a sprinkle of Hawaii** in the midst of busy Melbourne

### What's the vibe?

Enjoy a taste of Hawaii, right next to Albert Park. Ohana Yoga founder Gena Kenny and declared Hawaii fan has managed to infuse this intimate studio space with a fresh tropical breath; if that's not enough for you, Gena also hosts popular Hawaii and Fiji retreats once a year.

If you can't leave Melbourne, Ohana Yoga has plenty of classes to choose from: There's Yin, Hatha, Restorative and Kundalini Yoga, or try Feldenkrais or Yoga Nidra. Of course there's also



*Get ready for your 'soul massage'...*

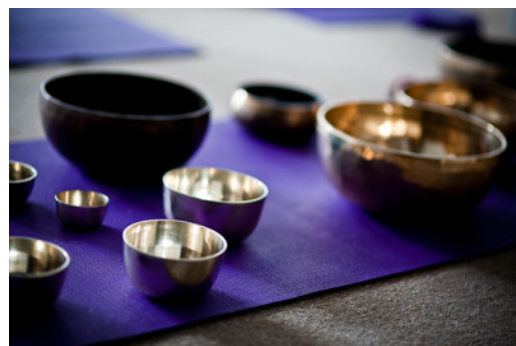
Gena's much-loved Tibetan Singing Bowl meditation, *'very different to any class I've taken before'*, say students, who describe the experience as *'better than a massage; it's like a soul massage!'*

Ohana means "community of connected people" and students describe the studio as *'a great place to relax, where everyone can go at their own pace'*, appreciating Gena's *'energy, how she connects with people'*, and how she manages to add *'a personal touch to every class'*.

Indeed, there's an amazing mix of people of all ages and backgrounds that form a fantastic community composed to a big part of regulars. The studio doesn't have a booking system: Gena wants to keep it as open as possible, without the need to pre-book. And thanks to her warm and welcoming personality, it won't even feel like your first class at a new studio.

Gena will surprise you with her imaginative use of props even if you have decades of yoga practice under your belt (we particularly loved her rolled up wash cloth, used along the spine to work with the fluids and vertebrae), she has a keen eye and provides bespoke adjustments. Her classes are peppered with wisdom from the scriptures, recited by memory rather than read out. Class will start with long, deep stretches, working through the tissue, followed by a long Yoga Nidra with Singing Bowls.

Chelsea Watson *'creates a good vibe in class'* and teaches a safe, yet flowing style using creative sequences. Students love her extremely positive and radiant personality and that classes *'always feel different, not as if she's using the same formula all the time'*. Chelsea *'explains well, gives options and there's no pressure'*; *'It's all about you and how you practise'*, say students.





*Aloha! Want to stay in a tree house? Check the next Hawaiian retreat coming up...*

With her soothing voice, Kundalini teacher Mahan Shrestha will transport you to a different sphere within minutes. You'll work hard (using Kundalini kryas) and relax deeply. Mahan is extremely approachable, happy to answer questions after class and *'creates a great atmosphere, even if you're new you'll feel included'*. The extremely experienced Jennifer Crescenzo teaches the studio's Yin classes.

Overall, Ohana Yoga is a *'very wholesome wellness centre'* that also offers treatments by practitioners. Choose from Maya Abdominal Therapy, Pregnancy Massage, Reiki, Reflexology, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Acupuncture, Feldenkrais, Physiotherapy and - of course! - Hawaiian Lomi Lomi massage.

*'I wish they had more classes'* was indeed the only criticism we heard.

***What's on offer?*** Restorative, Flow, Kundalini, Yoga & Singing Bowls, Feldenkrais, Yin

***Listed in:*** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa/Dynamic, Yin, "Most relaxing"



# Power Living

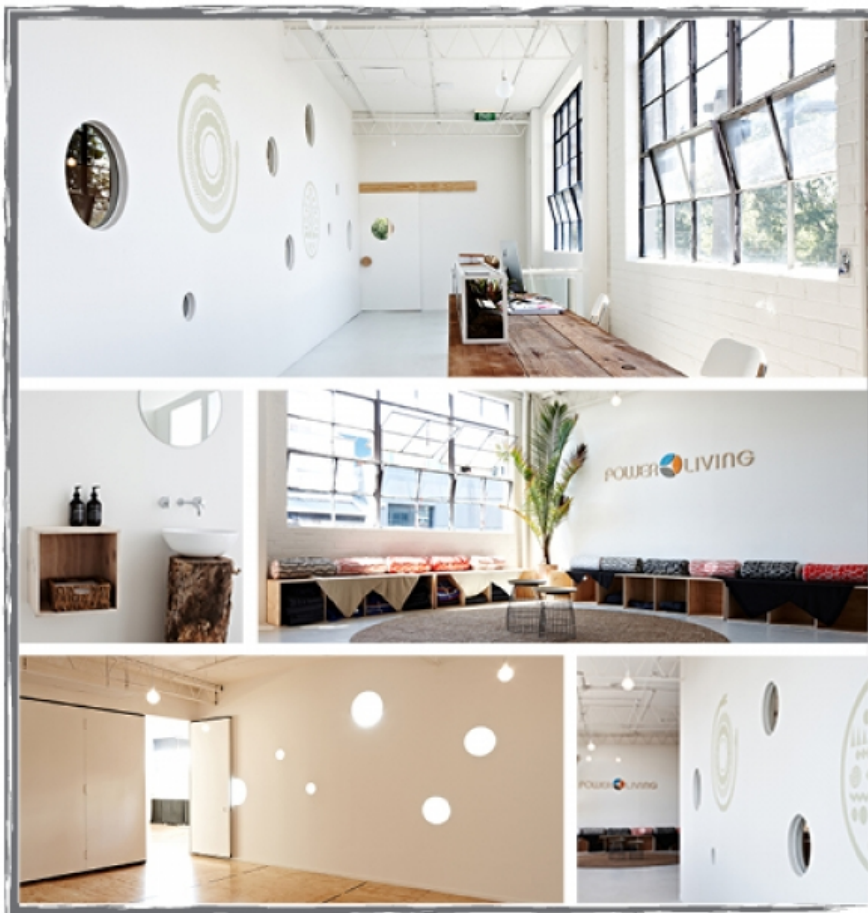
## Why go?

If you're looking to **make some major changes in your life**; if you want to **sweat and be challenged** as well as inspired; ideal to combine **power yoga classes** with a cooling, soothing Yin practice

## What's the vibe?

Personal development and transformation are keywords at Power Living, with three studios in Sydney and two in Melbourne. The extremely popular founder Duncan Peak and Power Living's teacher crew continue to inspire yogis, beyond their practice on the mat. Power Vinyasa is the studio's signature style, but there's a class for every level of fitness and every taste - choose from Power Align, Power Revive (Yin) and Power Basics, to name just a few.

The team does a fabulous job keeping students motivated and inspired, and when we visited the Fitzroy location, an entire wall had been covered with pics and notes of students who had just completed their 40 day challenge. Yogis here love the *'great range of classes'* and the *'relaxed atmosphere'*. There's a comprehensive medical form to fill upon your first visit and no one will be pushed to do a class they're not ready for: *'They really take care of new students, I had a great introduction'*, says one regular student. Classes come in a wide variety and are *'always different, always challenging but with the same underlying intention: calming the mind'*. Teachers would *'encourage you to go at your own pace'*, and students find that *'Power Living calms my day'*.



We loved Deborah Langley's Power Align class, a great mix of challenging postures and easier, flowing sequences. The overall dynamic practice finished off on a very cooling note with ample opportunity to relax and time for Savasana. Deborah is approachable and *'non-pretentious'* and won't let you go without a piece of wisdom to chew on. Students find that *'she challenges you and makes you work hard'* but at the same time is *'very aware of student's levels and caters for everyone'*. Her regular students rate her as *'simply amazing'*.

*Power Living Fitzroy - let the sun tickle your nose*



Michelle Jayne is a *'very passionate teacher'*, and the studio's Yin classes are taught by the extremely experienced Jennifer Crescenzo, valued for being *'real, not scripted'*; she *'doesn't just read the yoga philosophy from a book'*.

Chris Wilson's *'huge passion for the practice and the teaching shines through in everything he does'*, and students *'love the intentions he sets at the beginning of class'*, the *'very detailed cues'* and feel *'very present when he teaches'*; Brooke Eddey teaches a *'tough class with clear and easy to follow instructions'* and students who have come back after a long break from yoga say that *'with her, it's easy to pick up the practice!'*



The Fitzroy location features a huge communal space with metre-long benches with lots of pillows where you can chill out, lockers for your valuables and plenty of sunshine coming in through the mind-boggling windows. Check out the little stone garden, integrated into the reception desk, when you sign in before making your way to showers and changing rooms that provide all you could ask for. Overall, it's a quiet upstairs space just off busy Nicholson Street, however, the two studios combined can hold more than 100 students as the connecting wall can be opened completely - great for workshops and visiting teachers. Students *'love the studio's light design and the big windows'*; it's a *'great space with lots of light coming in'*, simply *'lovely'*.

Compared to Fitzroy, the South Melbourne studio is *'smaller, but cosier and has an intimate atmosphere'*. Indeed, the vibe is different: You open the door, leave your shoes by the entrance and walk right into the yoga room. Earthy, wooden colours are nicely blending in with the whitewashed brick walls and the high ceiling covered with straw. There's a small, well-stocked shop and under the roof you'll find changing rooms with showers, sinks and all the toiletries you could possibly want. Here again, wood predominates, next to clean, fresh white; quirky and modern at the same time. Inspirational quotes meet your eye at every corner, written on black boards, t-shirts or posters. It's straight down the road from South Melbourne market, with parking space and a wealth of wonderful cafes next door for the after class latte with fellow yogis.

In spite of all the fabulous-looking yogis on Power Living's website, there's absolutely nothing intimidating about the first visit to one of their studios - no matter if you're a yoga newbie or an old hand.

**What's on offer?** Power Vinyasa, Power Align, Power Revive/Yin, Power Basics, Power Groove, Power Therapy (Pre/Postnatal), classes for teachers

**Listed in:** Vinyasa/Dynamic, Vinyasa (warm-hot), Yin, "Sporty class"

# SomaChi Yoga

## Why go?

Try out the **innovative fusion of yoga styles**, incorporating Tai Chi elements; take one of the studio's **Buddhist Teaching** workshops; enjoy the serenity of a **designated meditation studio**

## What's the vibe?

SomaChi's South Yarra studio boasts a dedicated meditation room on a separate floor and a spacious reception area with a huge table and plenty of yoga magazines to browse. The upstairs meditation space is simply gorgeous, complete with an altar and a buddha statue that has been formally blessed by the Buddhist community - it's a room with a very special energy, perfect to dive into one of the studio's meditation classes. The downstairs studio has its own little altar and earthy colours predominate throughout.



*Focus on 'being present' during one of SomaChi's Vipassana meditation sessions*

The word most often used to describe SomaChi is '*different*', something that'll be apparent immediately if you take one of their signature classes. We enjoyed the Open SomaChi class taught by Donna Finch: The style could generally be described as Vinyasa, but the very flowing class will still be completely different from any Vinyasa class you've experienced. You'll move slowly and work your muscles hard while focusing on the wider aspects of yoga philosophy. Even if you're not familiar with the SomaChi style it's reasonably easy to pick up thanks to clear instructions and demonstrations. Expect to incorporate unusual elements, some of them borrowed from Tai Chi, into your Vinyasa practice. It's truly challenging and will open new pathways for energy to flow - we loved the modified, flowing transitions between warrior 1 & 2 (even if you've done a lot of Vinyasa over the past years expect to feel sore in, well, unusual places!).

Overall, classes are '*very accessible*' and students describe the style as '*calming, with strong elements that flow*'. Donna has a radiant personality and instills positive energy into every one of her students. Listening to her voice is pure bliss and her adjustments feel great. Students also love practising with owner Lianne Metcalf who teaches a '*dynamic, strong class*'.

SomaChi's new Collingwood studio, opened February 2014, has a very different vibe to it - make sure you try out both locations! The multilevel space in open design has polished wooden floors

throughout, and after you enter through the reception area the actual yoga space is raised half a floor. At the back wall, large glass doors open onto into a beautiful backyard, perfect for after class tea and chats; another staircase leads to the changing room. It's brand new, gorgeously minimalistic and instantly calming.

No matter which location you go for, you'll receive a warm welcome and there's a strong community (most students know each other by name) which is more than happy to embrace newcomers. Regulars confess that *'this studio made me love yoga'* and frequently rave about *'the Tai Chi element of the classes'*.

If you're interested in deepening your Buddhist meditation practice try out one of the studio's dedicated meditation sessions, held twice weekly at its South Yarra location.

Shamatha/Vipashyana (Vipassana) Meditation is all about learning to watch the mind, from moment to moment, through the breath. Its roots go back to 2,500 years ago and the style is considered a traditional foundation practice for meditation. Attendance is free if you have a studio class pass.

**What's on offer?** Vinyasa, SomaChi style Vinyasa, (Vipassana) Meditation, Pilates, workshops

**Listed in:** Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "Most unusual classes"





## Studio Cirq

### Why go?

Enjoy some time out at this little CBD oasis; try the studio's wide range of Dynamic Yoga classes; join the early morning yoga programme before work; add a Pilates class to your schedule

### What's the vibe?

You'll instantly feel comfortable in this little oasis just off Bourke Street where studio owner Lindsay van Niekerk will warmly welcome you. She's not teaching any classes and purely focuses on advising and guiding students, aiming at giving you the best yoga experience possible. She knows her stuff and, ironically, continuously grows her own competition with teachers walking off to start their own studios - which attests to the consistently high quality of her crew. She's a great resource of information and within the blink of an eye would send a student to another studio if she thinks a style that she doesn't offer is needed.



...a CBD oasis, just off Bourke Street...

However, given that the studio boasts 22 regular teachers, there won't be much reason to look elsewhere. Try out a few classes - even the ones labelled Dynamic vary in terms of vibe and level - it's best to chat with Lindsay who can advise you.

Sarah Joan Peard teaches the studio's Yin classes; she's *'great when you're low in energy'* and her class *'will give you a boost - fantastic for a Monday!'* Students also rave about Camilla Allen's Dynamic classes: *'I love that you never know what you'll get, every class has a different theme and she always works on something different'*. However, a bit of yoga experience is helpful as her classes are very dynamic and flow-based (think primary series with a balance element added).

Jamie O Loughlin's teaching is appreciated for his *'choreographic style'* and how he *'gets students to move into the postures'*; expect lots of hip work in a slower class with long-held postures - *'you'll only notice the following day how hard you've worked'*, say students, who also value his *'exceptionally kind personality'*.

There's no unnecessary clutter in this thoughtfully decorated space featuring two yoga rooms on the first floor of an old warehouse; here you'll find fresh flowers, clean mats, free drinking water - and the only studio offering to reserve a space in class online without paying upfront. Many students at this *'very yogic studio'* are regulars: *'I come three times a week to Dynamic Yoga; all teachers have a different approach and every one of them is challenging in a different way'*. Others just *'kept on adding classes over the years'* and *'love the friendly vibe - it feels like home'*.

**What's on offer?** Ashtanga, Dynamic, Yin, Pilates, early morning yoga programmes, courses

**Listed in:** Ashtanga, Vinyasa/Dynamic, Yin, "Location, location!"

# Summer Healing Yoga

## Why go?

Come here for a **holistic approach** to yoga and for classes peppered with wisdom; choose between **heated and non-heated** classes; practice **meditation and pranayama** in a calm environment

## What's the vibe?

You enter and the soothing atmosphere with Indian pillows, healing crystals, radiating colours and terracotta coloured walls will give you a warm, fuzzy feeling. The reception “desk” is on a low table with plush pillows all around, the yoga room itself is spacious and has a polished wooden floor. *‘You step inside, and you step into India’*, say students.



*The welcoming reception area in Glen Waverley*

You'll instantly feel welcome at the small, intimate Glen Waverley studio and the student crowd is so diverse that no one will feel out of place. The approachable owner Aimee Bracks underlines that yoga is a life philosophy - and that therefore anyone can do yoga. Students rave about the *‘very sound teaching’* at this *‘wonderful centre’* that is rated as *‘great in terms of variety and choice’*.

We loved Aimee's Yin & Pranayama class, a wonderful practice with in-

depth Pranayama and posture instructions that were easy to follow and offered modifications. Aimee adopts a safe, sound teaching style and *‘lets you practise in a way that is right for you and supports you’* - challenging some, while working with some other student's injuries. No matter where you are in your practice, Aimee will be able to accommodate. Her classes are peppered with wisdom that never feels overly educational but is accessible, often funny and always insightful; she's *‘great for imparting philosophy and anecdotal things’* and students feel that *‘you can always tell her what you've got on your mind’*. She finished class with singing bowls and a guided visualisation - it's pure bliss and you'll leave feeling mentally refreshed. Melody Jansz teaches *‘wonderful meditation and slow flow classes’* and *‘shares her beautiful approach to life powerfully in class’*; Surya Vedant is valued for his Ashtanga teachings that place *‘great emphasis on tradition’*.

**What's on offer?** Hatha, Power, Vinyasa, Yin, Meditation, Prana Shakti Flow, Movie nights

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa (warm-hot), Yin, “Sporty class”



*New Carnegie location - May 2014*



# The Yoga Lab

## Why go?

Get **creative with your Vinyasa** and move in a completely new way; practice your headstand in the midst of quirky retro furniture at this **funky studio**; deepen **body awareness through movement**

## What's the vibe?

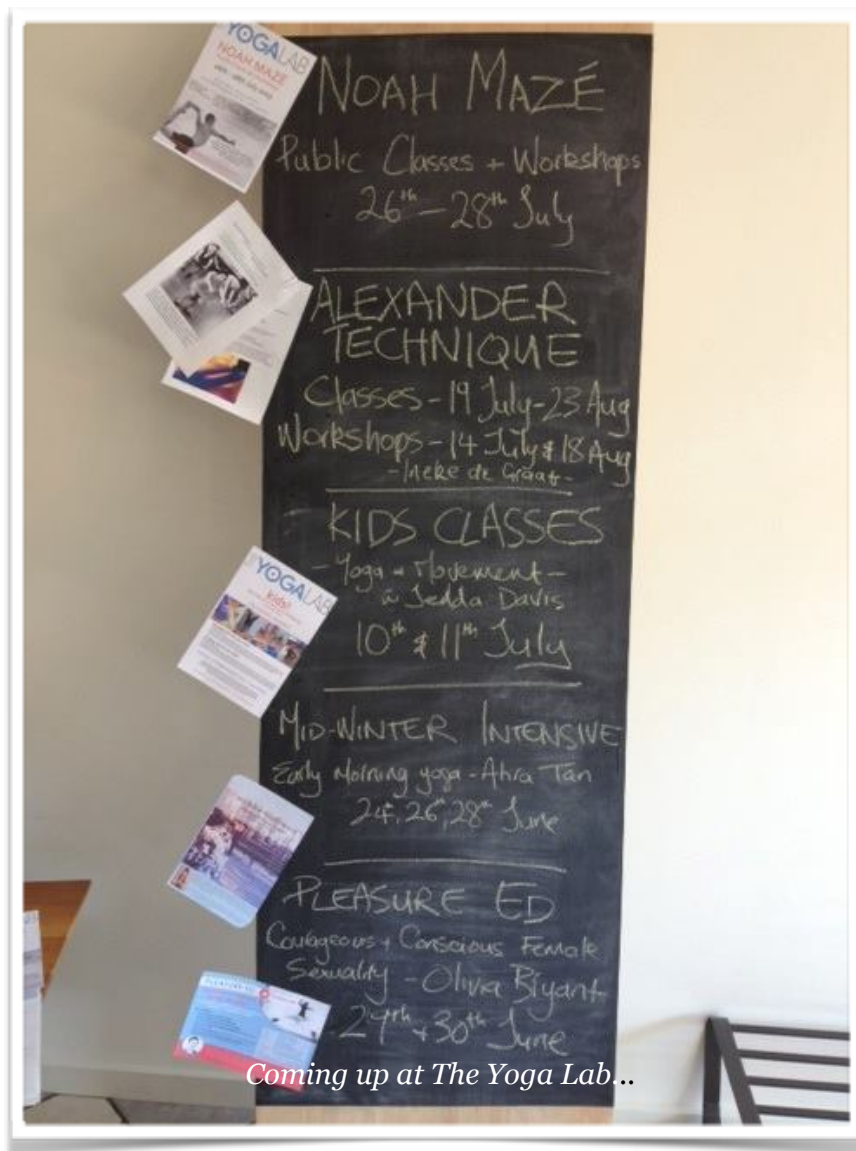
Expect the unexpected. Think vintage furniture, fluffy carpets in the reception area, plants, a huge chalk board announcing courses in bright colours, candles, and right in the middle of it all: a red espresso machine. Entering The Yoga Lab feels like stepping into someone's home - and probably that's why it feels like home and why students '*felt incredibly warmly welcomed*' upon their first visit.

Unsurprisingly, the studio attracts an eclectic mix of students looking for this little something that's just a little bit, well, different.

We loved Camilla Maling's Vinyasa class. Being told before that '*with her, it's all about movement*', we found ourselves practising like we had never done it before. And it's not only about what you do on the mat (and beyond!), but how you do it:

Students rave about Camilla's '*wonderfully playful approach to yoga*', and her ability to '*guide you to places and postures that take you by surprise*'. Expect to 'OM', to move in new ways, to challenge yourself - while at the same time feeling like it's all just fun, play and exploration.

Camilla also has '*a great knack for reading the room and spontaneously changing the class to fit what the group needs*'. Like a magician, she is able to create a wonderful energy; just being in her presence and feeling her boundless energy is uplifting! If you're a bit of an anatomy geek you'll appreciate her '*amazing biomechanics knowledge*' and ability to '*explain details of a posture in a way that improves your practice and helps you understand the pose in a new way*'. The studio's intermediate classes are among the few where you're given the opportunity to explore challenging postures such as arm balances - while being expertly guided through them.





From the moment you enter this studio, Camilla will remember your name, previous injuries, operations, special conditions - and she'll go around the room like a wizard during class, adjusting and keeping everyone safe - while keeping it playful and light. Students *'walk away from every class with new insights about my body, and how profound realisations can be accessed through movement'*.



Also hugely popular is Olivia Bryant who *'incorporates life lessons into the practice and brings them onto the mat'*; her classes are *'a great spiritual practice that feels very genuine'*; at the same time she'll *'make you move a lot but is also very thorough about alignment'*.

Overall, students come here for *'so much more than yoga'* and value the *'inspiring, welcoming vibe with lots of friendly faces'*. This studio is *'a dash of creativity, a touch of dance, and offers always new and thought-provoking ideas to contemplate and explore through movement'*, one student summarises. Camilla brings a *'steady, loving and creative leadership'* to the studio and ensures the vibe remains how students describe it: *'warm, open and supremely creative'*.

Another feature that *'sets this studio apart'* is the range of workshops and activities on offer, which have given students *'a chance to explore dance, movement, and voice in a safe and supportive environment'*; *'It's an incredibly creative place to be'*, one student says. At the time of writing, scheduled were an "Archetypal Yoga Dance Workshop", a "Your Core - Reconsidered" seminar, a "Chi Walking Masterclass" and a "Saturday night flow - Yoga to Live Music". Under the heading "Mini Motion Adventures" you'll find a wide range of activities for kids and there's the "WonderLab Project", an inter-disciplinary movement laboratory.

A huge plus are the high quality mats provided - you won't need to bring your own equipment to practise on a mat with superb grip and just the right thickness. Oh, and if you're looking for the female changing rooms, just follow the Audrey Hepburn signs; it's these small, thought-through, personal and quirky touches you'll discover one by one that make this place *'so very special'*.

This studio in Brunswick East is *'definitely one to check out'*.

**What's on offer?** Hatha, Vinyasa, Restorative, Yoga & Life Music, Chi Walking Masterclass, retreats, Dance workshops, Somatic Movement class, Kids classes

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "Most unusual classes"

# Urban Yoga

## Why go?

This place is for you if you're looking for **more than movement**: Join a **Bhagavad Gita** lesson, **Philosophy class**, listen to **visiting saints**, attend a **vegetarian cooking** class, **dine** with fellow yogis

## What's the vibe?

This yoga studio couldn't be more central: Located right above Crossways restaurant on Swanston Walk, the yoga room is tastefully decorated to give a warm welcome, complete with crystals, photographs of India and a small square of concrete in one corner for puja ceremonies with fire. The studio feels authentic and sincere - this isn't just a space to perform asanas on your mat, but to attend Kirtan (devotional chanting) sessions, Philosophy classes, Bhagavad Gita lessons, listen to visiting saints, or take part in a vegetarian cooking class.



*Stretch out your vocal cords: Kirtan with Gaura Mantra*

The Hatha Yoga classes are *'very open for all levels'* and are *'taught at an individual pace'*, with teachers taking more advanced students through to complex postures. Classes with Gaura Mantra include Pranayama and meditation, however, some prior knowledge is helpful. Students say her teaching has *'a wonderful, constant flow'* and she frequently goes around the room and adjusts; she *'really wants everyone to do the poses correctly'*.

Students love the *'peaceful vibe and great community'* and you'll find yourself chatting with complete strangers over the complementary veggie dinner (*'they really go to great lengths to create a nice meal'*) after class; it's a very sociable place that makes students *'feel comfortable'*.

Teachers *'always include a meditation'* and teach a *'very spiritual practice'* in a *'calming atmosphere'*. *'This place is very special to me, if for some reason I can't come I miss it'*, says a regular student, and others appreciate the studio as *'such an amazing escape - right in the CBD'*.

**What's on offer?** Hatha yoga, Kirtan, Philosophy, Bhagavad Gita lessons, talks by visiting saints, vegetarian cooking classes

**Listed in:** Hatha, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "Most authentic", "Life-long learning", "A community"

# Yarraville Yoga Centre

## Why go?

Dive deep into the **Iyengar Yoga system** at this **huge Yarraville studio**; try one of the much praised **beginners courses**; join a student crowd that's been stretching out here for almost **one decade**

## What's the vibe?

Expect a warm, caring atmosphere at this studio purely focusing on Iyengar Yoga. Even if you show up here not being able to spell the word Iyengar, the *'wonderful staff'* will *'make you feel home immediately'* - no wonder the studio's beginners courses are so popular. The centre also benefits from a tight-knit, friendly local community, with many students coming here for almost a decade - it's a Yarraville institution.

The studio is occupying extremely spacious first floor premises and the separating walls between the two huge and light-filled studios can be removed for workshops. Even in a class of 30 students you'd have more space around your mat than at most other studios. Don't be stunned by the ample supply of high quality yoga props, piling up against one entire wall - they're actually manufactured by the studio that also operates a buzzing props trading business.



We loved George King's extremely approachable, determined and caring teaching style. Regular students say she *'always brings in new ideas'* and her classes *'never feel stale and repetitive'*; the *'fantastic'* Amanda Hood *'always has a pose for you, no matter what are your limitations'* and is rated as *'very patient and encouraging'* and would *'always approach you if she sees that something isn't going right'*, taking *'time to work with you through the finer aspects of postures'*; Peter Harley's classes are both *'a great rest for the mind and workout for the body'* and while he's *'adopting a very athletic approach, he's also very conscious of and mindful regarding student's injuries'*; *'Even in a full class with 30 participants Peter will notice everything that is going on with individual students'*.

The student base is very varied, and no matter where you are in your practice, safety in class is guaranteed: *'If they hadn't helped me with my various physical challenges I would have stopped yoga altogether'*, says one student, while others state to have been *'so lucky to have found this place seven years ago - I never looked back'*.

Regulars value the *'very democratic feel about this centre'* and see it as a *'sanctuary where you work hard, but in a very friendly and supportive atmosphere'*. Small touches such as a food donation box next to reception for people in need confirm this image. Keep an eye on the website for special workshops such as "Trauma Sensitive Yoga" for survivors of trauma.

**What's on offer?** Iyengar, Prenatal, Men's Yoga, Trauma-Sensitive Yoga, Movie nights

**Listed in:** Iyengar, "Great beginners choice"



# Yoga Flame

## Why go?

Combine your **Hot Yoga** practice with a sound and **comprehensive offering of other styles** such as Basics, Yin, Power Yoga and non-heated Vinyasa classes - in a **spick and span, spacious studio**

## What's the vibe?

Don't let the studio name mislead you: Owners Emma Moulday and Gabor Bukovinszky have created a Hot Yoga studio that's so much more than that, with students repeatedly stating how much they *'love the variety of styles and teachers'* and that *'anyone can find a class here'*. Indeed, apart from Hot Yoga the studio offers warm Power Yoga classes, Vinyasa classes in a non-heated room, and if you're new to yoga try out one of the (non-heated) Basics classes - they're ideal to work on your foundations. The Yin classes are taught by the experienced Yin expert Jennifer Crescenzo. One of the major assets of this studio are the two separate rooms for Hot Yoga and non-heated classes, so your Vinyasa, Basics or Yin class won't ever be too steamy just because it's scheduled right after a heated class.



The spacious studio boasts polished wooden floors and a clear and clean design that's easy on the eyes. The fantastic facilities consist of spick and span showers, spacious changing rooms and ample storage space for your bags. The welcoming white and wooden tones throughout will make you want to linger and pour over the stacks of magazines supplied, and the shop stocks books, props, clothes, mats, and body care products.



We loved Tamblyn Lord's Vinyasa class: He's a charming teacher personality who knows how to challenge students with tricky postures - and how to make them laugh at the same time. Classes feel light and fun - but you'll work hard. He's sincere in his teaching approach without appearing

dogmatic and he's not afraid of teaching Pranayama and making you chant. His holistic approach to yoga doesn't feel stuffy and is described by his regular students as *'spiritual, but in a very accessible way'*. It comes as no surprise that he capitalised on his *'fantastically soothing voice'* to develop a guided meditation app.

Students also praise Hot Yoga classes with Gabor, who *'brings both humour and seriousness to his classes'* and is able to *'spontaneously adapt the sequence according to the energy in class'*; *'You really learn a lot from him'*. Hot Yoga with Karina Smith is generally *'slower, with longer held postures'* and she's rated as *'a great teacher to get started with Hot Yoga'*. Or try out Susan Mould's Basics class: *'Even as an experienced yogi you really do get something out of every single class with her'*.

**What's on offer?** Vinyasa, Hot, Power, Yin, Basics (intro) classes

**Listed in:** Hatha, Vinyasa/Dynamic, Vinyasa (warm-hot), Yin, "Sporty class"

# Yoga in Daily Life

## Why go?

Be part of a **global yoga community**; attend classes taught by a **Swami**; make a contribution to a **non for profit organisation**; learn about the **wider aspects of yoga** - beyond your asana practice

## What's the vibe?

The Melbourne studio of this impressive international non for profit is located in a very quiet part of Richmond, managed by local head teachers Swami Gopal and Gita. Students rate the vibe as *'more relaxing, traditional and spiritual than most other studios'* and rave about how *'authentic'* the space feels and about the classes that *'work on many levels for me - spiritually, physically and mentally'*. The extremely warm and welcoming centre is uncluttered, and obviously designed as a space to withdraw and devote yourself to the spiritual practice. There's a very holistic feel to it and the community is very inclusive.



*Learn how to use the infamous neti pot...*

are white and earthy brown. Climbing up the stairs to the yoga studio feels like entering an ashram; everyone instinctively lowers their voice, there are smiles all over and after a few minutes you'll feel your heart rate drop - and as if you've been practising here forever.

We loved Swami Gopal's Hatha Yoga class: A slow, but flowing practice with clear instructions, with students pointing out how much they love *'the wonderful rhythm of the teaching'*. Swami Gopal is all you'd expect: warm, welcoming, with a soothing voice and a vibrant nature; he simply never stops smiling and is incredibly positive. He'll instantly make you feel comfortable in class and, unsurprisingly, classes attract a huge variety of regular students. Poses are never rushed, however, they're instructed in a continuous flow. There isn't any pressure to push beyond your abilities and class finishes with a long relaxation.



*... and pranayama techniques*

Apart from asana classes the studio hosts fundraising film & dinner evenings, wellness cooking workshops, there are lectures and meditation sessions with Swamis, dedicated beginners yoga and meditation courses - make sure you check out the website - the initiatives and programmes are too numerous to list!

*'I just love how Swami Gopal and Gita modulate the classes'*, says one student, while others value the wider aspects of the organisation the studio is part of: *'It all feels very genuine, the yoga philosophy flows like a river from a vast sea'*.

**What's on offer?** Hatha (beginners and advanced), courses/retreats, Prenatal, Meditation

**Listed in:** Hatha, Meditation/Nidra, Pre/Postnatal, Vinyasa/Dynamic, "Great beginners choice", "Most relaxing", "Most authentic", "Life-long learning", "Kids, Mums & Bubs"

# Yoga Jivana

## Why go?

Learn from the **arguably most experienced Iyengar teacher** in Australia; get a **solid foundation** in your practice; learn how to **work with and recover from injuries** in a safe, accessible environment

## What's the vibe?

The vast knowledge of Yoga Jivana's founders Sue and Peter Scott is hard to beat, and the 'extremely experienced' Peter Scott is rated as 'one of Australia's main Iyengar teachers'.



Indeed, his Level 3 classes are often described as 'simply amazing', are a 'great recommendation for advanced yogis' and his understanding of postures is 'outstanding'; 'even though I'm a teacher myself I take classes with him'.

We loved Peter's Slow-Paced Tuesday class - no matter what are your pre-existing conditions, Peter knows how to handle them. It's not just that he knows a lot - indeed, many teachers do - but he will be able to quickly determine which part of his knowledge is relevant and of use to which student at this very point in their practice - you can feel his 30 years of teaching experience shining through.

*'I tried a lot of schools around and this one is simply the best',* summarises one student, while others love that Peter and Sue 'really tap into what's beyond the superficiality of yoga'.

The student crowd here is very diverse, and 'they all get different things out of the class', points out one regular student, because Peter 'knows what kind of yoga to give to each of them'. Students feel that teachers here are 'very good at addressing where you are' and will 'give you the yoga medicine you need' - Peter is 'like a medicine man', maybe also partly due to his background as a Naturopath and Herbalist.

Expect a tastefully decorated space with a bit of an edgy feel to it. There's a props wall, a small altar, a cozy sofa area - really, all you need, but not more - and the building creates a wonderful atmosphere; it's a mixture of an old barn and a warehouse, with polished wooden floors, high ceilings and whitewashed walls.

**What's on offer?** Iyengar, dedicated beginners and intro classes, Pranayama, Kids and Teenager classes, Slow-Paced class for recovery from injuries

**Listed in:** Iyengar, "Great beginners choice", "Kids, Mums & Bubs"



*The shiny yoga room...*



# Yogaville

## Why go?

Take a **course over several weeks**, come with a mind like a sponge and be prepared to **take the yoga off the mat**; track your progress, week by week; book in for one of the studio's **intensives**

## What's the vibe?

This very welcoming studio is rated for its '*collaborative vibe*' and the '*very supportive community*'; students say that '*there's a lot of trust - and you never feel silly if you can't do something*'. This feeling may partly stem from the particular set up: Owner Bronwyn Rust encourages students to take a course, rather than just pop in for one class, so most yogis here know each other from their weekly yoga meet-ups.

Students '*love that the courses are set up as term so you can really track your progress*' and appreciate the regularly scheduled intensives to deepen their knowledge; '*It feels like you're part of something bigger than just this one yoga class*', summarises one student.



We loved Bronwyn's classes: She adopts a holistic approach and her teaching is peppered with philosophy that's not just showered randomly onto students, but '*always put into context*', directly relating to the posture you're in. You'll leave class feeling you have understood something about yoga as a whole system, rather than just worked on physical postures; '*she wants you to take yoga off the mat*'.

Bron is '*both very exacting and compassionate*' and '*very good at focusing individually on students and teaches you to move so that you feel the progression within your movements*'; be prepared to take your yoga seriously and come with a mind like a sponge. Also excellent reviews get the '*very soothing teacher*' Abe Faulkner and the '*relaxed and gregarious*' Natalie Murphy.

Students are encouraged to take courses so that teachers can elaborate on the different aspects of yoga, however, it's possible to pop in for a casual class (check the clearly labelled timetable).

If you want to practise in an exotic setting, the studio's next Bali retreat is coming up in May 2015.

**What's on offer?** Iyengar, beginners classes and intro courses, dedicated women's classes (restorative), regularly scheduled intensives and Bali retreats

**Listed in:** Iyengar, "Great beginners choice"

## *'find your perfect class' by Personal Preference*

***These are just some suggestions to get you started - keep exploring!***

**Most relaxing** \* Looking for a relaxed vibe rather than a studio with +300 classes/week, corporate feel and high student turnover?

**Try:** A.K.A Studio, Breathing Space, Ohana Yoga, Yoga in Daily Life

**Most authentic** \* Reconnect to yoga's fundamental teachings - beyond your asana practice?

**Try:** Yoga in Daily Life, Urban Yoga

**For advanced yogis and teachers** \* Regular classes leave you frustrated and you're looking for a challenge/the chance to work on tricky postures?

**Try:** Ihana Yoga's "Teach 'n' Learn Clinic" for teachers, Dance of Life's "Yoga Playground"

**Great beginners choice** \* Intimidated by the choice around and the super bendy old hands who practise regularly? These are your studios.

**Try:** Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne (for an Ashtanga intro), Breathing Space, Gertrude Street Yoga, Yoga in Daily Life, or try any of the recommended Iyengar studios (for an Iyengar Yoga introduction)

**Location, location!** \* Need to squeeze in that lunch time/after work/early morning class close to the CBD? **Try:** Ashtanga Yoga Melbourne, Breathe Wellbeing, Studio Cirq

**Largest offering** \* Want to be spoilt for choice? If you can't find a class here, you're too picky!

**Try:** Australian Yoga Academy, Breathe Wellbeing

**Most unusual classes** \* You've seen it all? Looking for something that tickles the spirit?

**Try:** Body Flow Yoga (for Aerial Yoga), Dance of Life, Mangala Studios, SomaChi, The Yoga Lab

**Life-long learning** \* Interested in the broader philosophical aspects of yoga?

**Try:** Moksha Yoga, Urban Yoga, Yoga in Daily Life

**A community** \* Searching for the coziness of an established, like-minded community?

**Try:** Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne, Urban Yoga

**Sporty class** \* Looking to work up a sweat?

**Try:** Grass Roots Yoga, Moksha Yoga, Power Living, Summer Healing Yoga, Yoga Flame

**Kids, Mums & Bubs** \* Relax, relax, and energise!

**Try:** Australian Yoga Academy, Breathe Wellbeing, Gertrude Street Yoga, Mangala Studios (for Kids classes), Yoga in Daily Life, Yoga Jivana

## Yoga Styles *explained...*

### *Ashtanga*

Expect a considerably fast-paced series of postures. It's a system based on several series of asanas (you'll begin with the primary series) that become more difficult with each series as you progress. The teacher will lead you through the sequence with clear instructions for breathing while you move from pose to pose. Be prepared to sweat. You may also come across a class labelled 'Mysore' - it's a self-practice under supervision of an experienced teacher. However, you'll need to have memorised the sequence before getting started (tip: buy a sequence poster)! The practice is based on the teachings of yoga master K. Pattabhi Jois who lived in Mysore, India, and the K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute remains the only institution that can certify teachers of this style.

Read on here: [kpjayi.org](http://kpjayi.org).

### *Hatha*

Hatha is not really a particular style of yoga but rather a term that refers to the physical aspects of the yoga practice as a whole. It encompasses asanas (postures) and pranayama (breathing exercises) and is meant to purify the body for the higher stages of yoga, such as meditation. If a studio labels classes as 'Hatha' try to find out which style the teacher has been studying to get a sense of what to expect.

### *Iyengar*

Based in Pune, India, B.K.S. Iyengar remains one of the most influential yogis globally and at the age of well over 90 maintains an impressive travel and teaching schedule.

One of the hallmarks of this style is the intense focus on the subtleties of each posture, and you'll hold postures much longer than in most other styles. You will also make use of a range of props, among them belts, chairs, blocks, and blankets, to modify and customise postures. The teacher training and certification process is rigorous and lengthy - expect your teacher to possess in-depth knowledge and a class that is as much focused on the physical as on the spiritual aspects of yoga.



Look for the black and white trade mark certification logo (pictured above) on the studio website.

Read on here: [bksiyengar.com](http://bksiyengar.com).



## ***Meditation/Nidra***

Yoga Nidra, also called “Yogic Sleep” is a state of mind entered through the practice of meditation. It is considered one of the deepest possible states of relaxation while still being fully conscious. Teachers trained in the technique will guide you through a meditation that can last up to 30 minutes, before slowly “waking” you up again.

Meditation is a practice that focuses the mind, provides relaxation and eventually enables the practitioner to enter higher states of mind. It is used in a variety of religions and medical contexts - before attending class it's worth finding out what type of meditation a studio offers.

## ***Pre/Postnatal***

Maybe you've never tried yoga and decided to start, now that you're pregnant. Pregnancy Yoga is meant to help you prepare for birth, keep you healthy and mobile throughout your pregnancy and allow you to connect with your baby on a deeper level through breathing and meditation exercises - however, always check with your doctor first if you have any concerns.

Postnatal classes mostly address key areas such as the pelvic floor, the abdominals, tension in the neck and shoulders - and also baby massage techniques, so bring your little one along!

## ***Vinyasa/Dynamic (heated / non-heated)***

If a studio labels a class “Vinyasa” the style will still depend largely on where and how the teacher was trained. What you'll get for sure is a style of yoga that combines a series of flowing postures with breathing that is matching your movements - often the teacher will tell you when to in- and exhale. Generally you'll find that these classes are dynamic in nature and will make you sweat. However, to find out about the precise style and other components the teacher might include - such as meditation or breathing exercises - call ahead or read the teacher's bio to get an idea.

Some studios will offer the same type of practice in a warm room, with the temperature varying between 26 and 34 degrees. The warmth is meant to prepare the body for practice, allowing easier range of movement in the joints and muscles and therefore prevent injuries. Again, try out which temperature you're most comfortable with and remember to tell the studio about any health concerns you may have, such as high blood pressure, injuries, operations - or if you're pregnant.

## ***Yin***

Expect a slow-paced class with longer held postures, sometimes up to five minutes. Yin Yoga is based on the Taoist concepts of opposite principles in nature, yin and yang. For the purpose of the practice, connective tissues such as tendons are considered yin, while more mobile parts of the body such as blood and muscles are yang. Equally, passive asanas are considered yin, and more dynamic asanas yang. If you're familiar with certain postures you'll find that often in Yin Yoga they're performed passively, with the aim being an increasing circulation, flexibility and flow of *qi*, the subtle energy running through the body's pathways. Cultivating awareness will always be a topic in a Yin class.

## Yoga Studio Profiles & Contact Details

{All links active}

### A.K.A Studio



A.K.A Studio is located at the last stop of the 96 tram right near the intersection of Blyth and Nicholson Sts in Brunswick East.

**Address:** 130C Nicholson St, Brunswick East

**Phone:** 0416 386 269

**Email:** [info@akastudio.com.au](mailto:info@akastudio.com.au) // **Web:** [akastudio.com.au](http://akastudio.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [akastudio.com.au/aka-studio-schedule](http://akastudio.com.au/aka-studio-schedule)

### Ashtanga Yoga Centre of Melbourne



To get to the centre, take the 112 tram along Brunswick St, 86 tram along Smith St, 96 tram along Nicholson St or Bus Routes 200, 208, 207, 210 along Johnson St.

**Address:** Level 1, 110 - 112 Argyle St, Fitzroy

**Phone:** 03 9419 1598

**Email:** [info@ashtangamelbourne.com.au](mailto:info@ashtangamelbourne.com.au) //

**Web:** [ashtangamelbourne.com.au](http://ashtangamelbourne.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [ashtangamelbourne.com.au/classes-timetables-general.aspx](http://ashtangamelbourne.com.au/classes-timetables-general.aspx)

### Ashtanga Yoga Melbourne

(Almost) all roads lead to the CBD...

**Address:** Level 1, 167 Flinders Lane

**Phone:** N/A

**Email:** [info@ashtangayogamelbourne.com.au](mailto:info@ashtangayogamelbourne.com.au) // **Web:** [ashtangayogamelbourne.com.au](http://ashtangayogamelbourne.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [ashtangayogamelbourne.com.au/timetable](http://ashtangayogamelbourne.com.au/timetable)

### **Australian Yoga Academy**

AYA's Prahran studio is a short walk from both Prahran train station and Chapel St, the Abbotsford studio is located in the 'Sanctuary on the River' complex opposite IKEA (reduced parking rates for students), and Seddon is a short walk from the local train station.



A U S T R A L I A N  
yoga academy

**Address:** 1b St. Edmonds Rd / Prahran, 677-679 Victoria St / Abbotsford, 77 Charles St, Seddon

**Phone:** 03 9510 7474

**Email:** info@australianyogaacademy.com // **Web:** [australianyogaacademy.com](http://australianyogaacademy.com)

**Straight to the timetables:** All Locations

---

### **Body Flow Yoga**

Take the train to Windsor station or any tram along Chapel St for the Windsor studio; for Port Melbourne take the 109 tram or, if you feel like a ten minutes walk, take the tram 1 towards the sea.

**Address:** 5 Eastbourne St, Windsor / 147 Liardet St, Port Melbourne

**Phone:** 03 9016 9061

**Email:** hello@bodyflowyoga.com // **Web:** [bodyflowyoga.com](http://bodyflowyoga.com)

**Straight to the timetables:** [bodyflowyoga.com/timetable](http://bodyflowyoga.com/timetable)

---



### **Breathe Wellbeing**



Simply hop on any train or tram to the CBD...!

**Address:** Level 1, 289 Little Collins St, CBD / 8 Goldie Place, CBD

**Phone:** 03 9662 1500 / 03 9606 0110

**Email:** reception@breathewellbeing.com.au // **Web:** [breathewellbeing.com.au](http://breathewellbeing.com.au)

**Straight to the timetables:** [breathewellbeing.com.au/timetables](http://breathewellbeing.com.au/timetables)

---



## Breathing Space



For the Prahran location, take any tram along Chapel St and get off at Chapel Street Bazaar; for Richmond, take tram 78/79 along Church St or tram 48/75 along Bridge Rd.

**Address:** Level 1, 217 Chapel St, Prahran / 314 Church St, Richmond

**Phone:** 03 9818 4073 or 0407 567 452

**Email:** [deepa@breathingspace.com.au](mailto:deepa@breathingspace.com.au) // **Web:** [breathingspace.com.au](http://breathingspace.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [breathingspace.com.au/classes](http://breathingspace.com.au/classes)

---

## Clifton Hill Yoga Studio

Take the train to Clifton Hill station or the route 86 tram which travels up Bourke St from Spencer St Station and get off at stop #24.

**Address:** 129 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill

**Phone:** 03 9486 8044

**Email:** [info@iyoga.com.au](mailto:info@iyoga.com.au) // **Web:** [iyoga.com.au](http://iyoga.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [iyoga.com.au/timetable](http://iyoga.com.au/timetable)

---



## Dance of Life

Take tram 11 or 112 along Brunswick St or hop on tram 86 along Smith St.

**Address:** On the premises of St Marks Church, 250 George St, Fitzroy



**Phone:** 0438 832 000

**Email:** [info@yogadanceoflife.com](mailto:info@yogadanceoflife.com) //

**Web:** [yogadanceoflife.com](http://yogadanceoflife.com)

**Straight to the timetable:** [yogadanceoflife.com/index.php/yoga-timetable](http://yogadanceoflife.com/index.php/yoga-timetable)

---

### Gertrude Street Yoga

Catch tram 86 to - exactly - Gertrude Street.

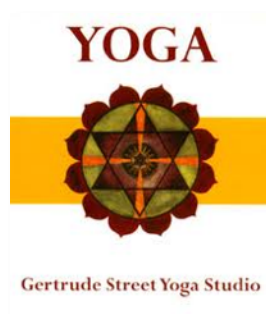
**Address:** Levels 1 & 2, 202 Gertrude St, Fitzroy

**Phone:** N/A

**Email:** gertrudestreetyoga@gmail.com //

**Web:** gertrudestreetyoga.com.au/index.php

**Straight to the timetable:** gertrudestreetyoga.com.au/timetable.php



### Grass Roots Yoga



Take tram 3 or 67 to Inkerman St for St Kilda; to get to the new Richmond studio, catch tram 48, 75, 78 or 79.

**Address:** Level 1, 84 Inkerman St, St Kilda / Level 1, 204-206 Bridge Rd, Richmond

**Phone:** 03 9534 9642

**Email:** stkilda@grassrootsyoga.com

**Web:** grassrootsyoga.com

**Straight to the timetables:** St Kilda / Richmond

### Ihana Yoga

Take the train to Hampton station, then walk up Hampton St, or hop on the 96 tram to St Kilda's buzzing Acland Street - either way it's less than a five minutes walk!

**Address:** 562 Hampton St, Hampton / 82 Acland St, St Kilda

**Phone:** 03 9598 9994

**Email:** info@ihanayoga.com.au // **Web:** ihanayoga.com.au

**Straight to the timetables:** ihanayoga.com.au/class-schedules



!H9U9λo8g

### ***Mangala Studios***

Catch any tram running along Swanston Street or the 96 along Nicholson Street, the studio is within walking distance from the Melbourne Museum, at the corner of Lygon Street.

**Address:** 73 Grattan St, Carlton



**Phone:** 03 9663 5603

**Email:** info@mangalastudios.com.au // **Web:** mangalastudios.com.au

**Straight to the timetable:** mangalastudios.com.au/times.html

### ***Moksha Yoga***

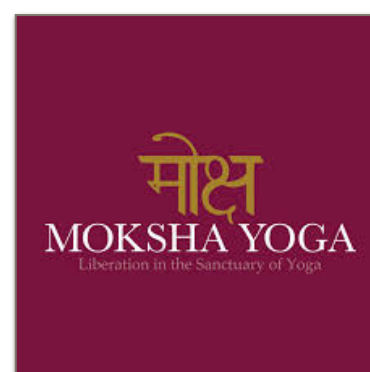
Take the train to Bentleigh station or drive and make use of the large car park which is located just behind the building.

**Address:** 437a Centre Rd, Bentleigh

**Phone:** 03 9557 5885

**Email:** info@mokshayoga.com.au // **Web:** mokshayoga.com.au

**Straight to the timetable:** mokshayoga.com.au/timetables



### ***Ohana Yoga***

Hop on tram 1 or 96 - the studio is a 2min walk from Albert Park.



**Address:** 82 Bridport St, Albert Park

**Phone:** 0421 047 956

**Email:** gena@ohanayoga.com.au // **Web:** ohanayoga.com.au

**Straight to the timetable:** ohanayoga.com.au/classes



### Power Living

The South Melbourne studio is literally 2min walking from the South Melbourne market (take tram 96 or 112), the Fitzroy location is just off Nicholson St (tram 11, 96 or 112 brings you there).



**Address:** 4 Union St, South Melbourne / Level 1, 260 Nicholson St, Fitzroy (enter via Argyle St)

**Phone:** 03 9699 3731 / 03 9419 1118

**Email:** unionstudio@powerliving.com.au / fitzroystudio@powerliving.com.au

**Web:** powerliving.com.au

**Straight to the timetables:** powerliving.com.au/class-schedules

### SomaChi

For South Yarra, take any tram along Chapel St / Toorak Rd, for Collingwood hop on the 86 tram.



**Address:** 15 Bedford St,  
Collingwood / 316-320 Toorak Rd,  
South Yarra

**Phone:** 03 8060 2178

**Email:** admin@somachi.com.au //

**Web:** somachi.com.au

**Straight to the timetables:**  
Collingwood / South Yarra

### Studio Cirq

Located in a quiet lane just off Bourke St - so any train or tram that'll get you to the CBD is perfect!

**Address:** Level 1, 19 Meyers Place, CBD

**Phone:** 03 9654 9994

**Email:** info@studiocirq.com.au

**Web:** studiocirq.com.au

**Straight to the timetable:** studiocirq.com.au/timetable.html



### **Summer Healing Yoga**

For Glen Waverley take the train to Glen Waverley station or drive (there's plenty of space to park!), and the new Carnegie studio is located just across Carnegie train station.



**Address:** 20-22 Kingsway, Glen Waverley / Suite 2, 61 Koornang Rd, Carnegie

**Phone:** 0432 293 294

**Email:** [info@summerhealingyoga.com.au](mailto:info@summerhealingyoga.com.au) // **Web:** [summerhealingyoga.com.au](http://summerhealingyoga.com.au)

**Straight to the timetables:** Glen Waverley / Carnegie

---

### **The Yoga Lab**

This studio is at the top of Lygon St, just opposite Organic Whole Foods (great for after practice shopping!). Tram 1 or 8 will drop you just outside, or catch tram 96 if you fancy a 10min walk.



**Address:** 494 Lygon St, East Brunswick

**Phone:** 0421 916 802

**Email:** [camilla@theyogalab.com.au](mailto:camilla@theyogalab.com.au) // **Web:** [theyogalab.com.au](http://theyogalab.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [theyogalab.com.au/schedule-courses](http://theyogalab.com.au/schedule-courses)

---

### **Urban Yoga**

Right in the heart of Melbourne - catch any tram or train to the CBD.

**Address:** Level 3, 123 Swanston St, CBD // **Phone:** N/A

**Email:** [urbanyogacentre@gmail.com](mailto:urbanyogacentre@gmail.com) // **Web:** [urbanyoga.com.au](http://urbanyoga.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [urbanyoga.com.au/yoga-sessions](http://urbanyoga.com.au/yoga-sessions)

---



### **Yarraville Yoga Centre**

Catch the train to Yarraville station - from there it's just a 5min walk.



**Address:** 36 Ballarat St, Yarraville

**Phone:** 03 9687 4418

**Email:** [info@yarravilleyoga.com.au](mailto:info@yarravilleyoga.com.au) // **Web:** [yarravilleyoga.com](http://yarravilleyoga.com)

**Straight to the timetable:** [yarravilleyoga.com/p/timetable.html](http://yarravilleyoga.com/p/timetable.html)

### **Yoga Flame**

Hop on the 59 or 82 tram - or get the train to Moonee Ponds station from the city. Either way, it's a short walk.

**Address:** 7 Moore St, Moonee Ponds

**Phone:** 03 9370 7979

**Email:** [info@yogaflame.com.au](mailto:info@yogaflame.com.au) // **Web:** [yogaflame.com.au](http://yogaflame.com.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [yogaflame.com.au/timetable](http://yogaflame.com.au/timetable)



### **Yoga in Daily Life**

Catch tram 70 along Swan St, or 48 or 75 along Bridge Rd. If you take the train to Burnley, it's a 15min walk.

**Address:** Level 1, 8 Corsair St, Richmond

**Phone:** 03 9427 0977

**Email:** [melbourne@yogaindailylife.org](mailto:melbourne@yogaindailylife.org) // **Web:** [yogaindailylife.org.au](http://yogaindailylife.org.au)

**Straight to the timetable:** [melbourne.yogaindailylife.org.au/pages/timetable](http://melbourne.yogaindailylife.org.au/pages/timetable)





### ***Yoga Jivana***

Catch the 86 tram travelling up High St or the train to Northcote station.



**Address:** 2b Elm St (just off High St), Northcote

**Phone:** 03 9481 1087

**Email:** admin@yogajivana.com.au

**Web:** yogajivana.com.au

***Straight to the timetable:*** [yogajivana.com.au/timetable](http://yogajivana.com.au/timetable)

---

### ***Yogaville***

The studio is at the Thornbury end of Gilbert Rd, near Miller St. There are bicycle racks just outside and the #37 tram stop for route 112 is right at the studio's doorstep.



**Address:** 21 Gilbert Rd, Preston West

**Phone:** 0407 811 148

**Email:** bron@yogaville.com.au // **Web:** yogaville.com.au

***Straight to the timetable:*** [yogaville.com.au/timetable](http://yogaville.com.au/timetable)

---

## About BEST of YOGA

Our guides were born out of a lack of resources. Moving from London to Melbourne, journalist and yoga teacher Andrea Leber found that while there existed guide books for about everything else on this planet, from travel to eating out, there was no such thing to help yogis through the maze of the (ever more complex!) yoga world. We searched book stores and the web, and finally realised that if there was to be such a guide, we had to write one!

After over six months and hundreds of classes, empty coconut water bottles, interviews with students and teachers and three parking tickets - Melbourne had its first independently researched, comprehensive yoga guide:

BEST of YOGA **Melbourne**

### *Disclaimer*

BEST of YOGA highlights a selection of classes, ***independently researched and written***.

BEST of YOGA is ***the only guide of its kind*** and a ***vital resource*** for yoga practitioners.

Positive editorial ***cannot be paid for in any way*** and is solely based on positive reviews by students and on our team's research. However, there is no such thing as "the best" yoga studio. Yoga is not a tangible good and its quality depends to a certain extent on the student's personal needs and situation. These lists are therefore expressions of thorough market evaluations, hundreds of interviews and countless classes taken. They are of great guidance but cannot replace a practitioner's own observations.

Copyright © 2014 by Andrea Yvonne Leber

All rights reserved. This ebook or portions thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without prior permission except for the use of brief quotations in reviews.

### *Photo Credits*

Cover image and image on page 2 © by Anthony de Palatis. For all other pages, the © remains exclusively with the respective studios and/or their contracted photographers. Iyengar Yoga certification logo on page 40 adopted from Yoga Jivana website.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband for his endless support, patience and creativity.

**Thanks for reading! For more **yoga inspiration** check **andreaheber.com** - and join thousands of other followers.**

We *love* comments: Please email [andrea@andreaheber.com](mailto:andrea@andreaheber.com).

*Andrea Yvonne Leber*

Journalist & Yoga Teacher

Melbourne, May 2014