



MATter Natter!

Harneet Jayakar, Co-Founder, Kosha Yoga Co, helps you pick the perfect yoga mat for your workout.

“In your yoga journey, your mat is going to be your best friend on which you fall, slip, sweat and ultimately grow. It is therefore crucial to carefully choose your mat,” says Harneet Jayakar, certified yoga teacher and Co-Founder of Kosha Yoga Co, a yoga accessories brand. “Beyond finding a colour and design that suits your style, your mat needs to be comfortable, portable, storable and maybe even environmentally friendly.”

Use this guide to help you find your perfect “soulmat”!

MATERIAL:

Your yoga mat's material determines its grip, texture, feel, cushioning, durability, and eco-friendliness. Yoga mats are available in synthetic materials like polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polyurethane (PU) which are durable, but smelly. In addition, these chemical-based materials can also be allergenic and tend to lose grip after a few months. Newer, more earth-friendly materials are jute, cork, cotton and natural rubber; but these tend to be harsh on the skin. Natural rubber mats are for serious yogis as they offer the right mix of texture, cushioning, grip and eco-friendliness.

GRIP:

Grip or traction is supremely important as it has a direct bearing on how much you can push yourself during your practice. For example, you can go deeper into a downward dog and feel a more intense

stretch if your palms are firmly gripping your mat. In dynamic yoga styles like Vinyasa which comprise of quick transitions of complex asanas, grip can enhance your practice by providing stability, balance and leverage. Moisture causes most mats to lose some of their grip. However, microfibre mats with a towel-like top surface get even grippier during sweaty practices.

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THICKNESS:

The thickness of the mat determines how much joint cushioning it provides. Too thick a mat can make it difficult to feel a strong connection with the floor and you might feel wobbly in balancing asanas. Thickness also contributes to the weight of the mat. Too thin a thickness can be rough on your joints, especially the knees and elbows. Generally, a thickness of 3-4 mm provides a good balance of cushioning, stability and portability.

PORTABILITY:

Your mat should be easy to roll, unroll and store. Some brands provide a strap to hoist the rolled mat over your shoulder and carry around.

MAINTENANCE:

You may use your mat outdoors or sweat profusely on it which can lead to accumulation of dirt, mud, oil and sweat. It's important to understand how your mat can be cleaned. PVC foam mats can be machine-washed, rubber mats can be gently hand washed, while PU mats cannot be washed at all. An easy way of freshening up your mat is to sun-dry it, provided the colours or print won't fade.

Take all you've learnt here to find the perfect yoga mat and let the good times (un)roll...

i For more information about Kosha Yoga Co, log onto www.koshayoga.co

