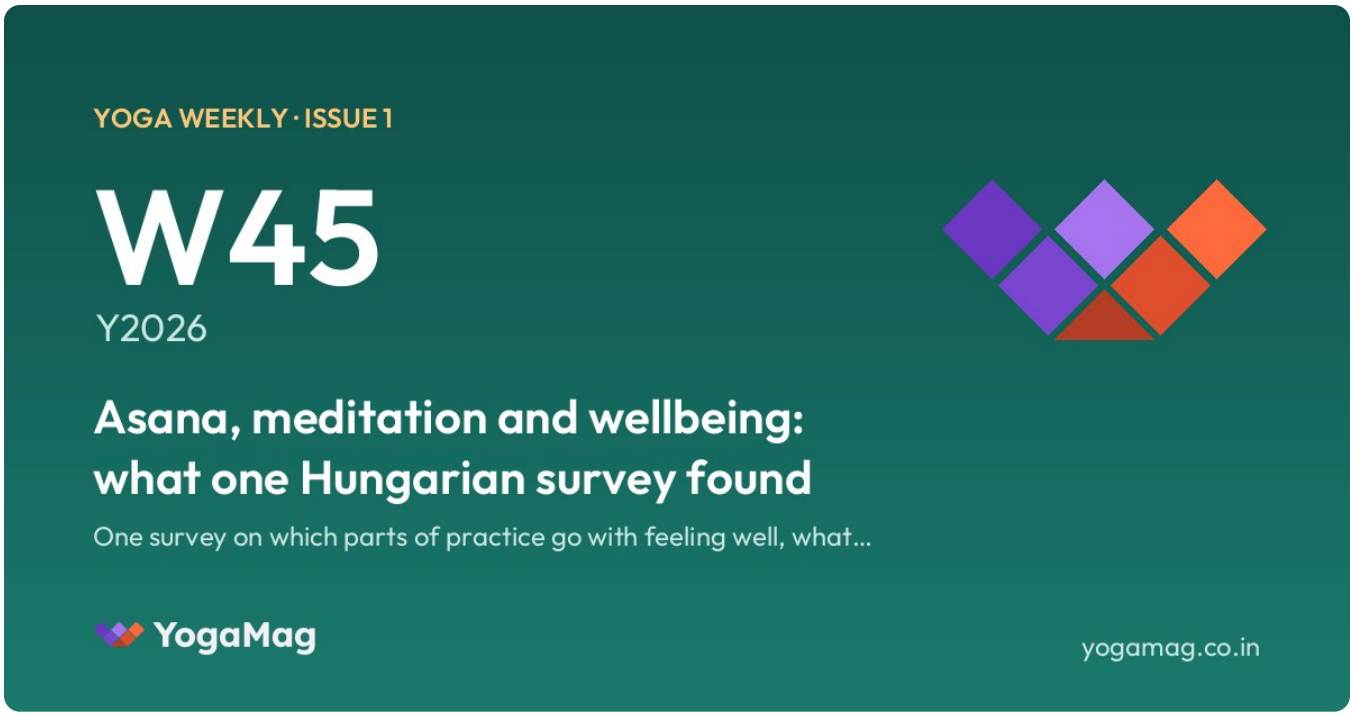


YOGA WEEKLY · ISSUE 1

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Asana, meditation and wellbeing: what one Hungarian survey found

One survey on which parts of practice go with feeling well, what is changing for teachers, and a fair look at headstand.

Picked and read by Monika Sharma

Good morning. Welcome to the first Yoga Weekly. Each Monday we share six to eight things from the yoga world that we think are worth your time, each with a short note on why.

This week we lead with a survey from Hungary that asks whether it matters which parts of practice you do. We also read a bladder study and a back pain review with care, look at the new Yoga Alliance rules and a plan in Rishikesh, and weigh a calm debate about headstand. Our editor reads every item before it goes out. Tell us what you would like more or less of.

YOUR WEEK IN 60 SECONDS

1. It is a snapshot, not proof: people who feel well may simply practise more, and the authors say so.
2. If your teacher is registered, this will shape their next year or two; for students, the useful part is that ethics and safety are now part of what is checked.
3. Both helped about equally, and a gentle group practice held its own against exercise.
4. Whichever side you lean to, you can always stay in a preparation while others go up.
5. It pairs gentle movement with a short stillness, in the spirit of this week's pick.

Pick of the week

FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY · 28 OCT 2026

Asana and meditation, practised often, went with higher wellbeing in a Hungarian survey ↗

https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1941678/full

Researchers asked 379 adults in Hungary who practise at least weekly how often they do asana, pranayama, relaxation and meditation, and scored their wellbeing on the WHO-5 scale. Each part went with higher scores, but when all four were looked at together only asana and meditation stayed linked, and daily practice scored highest. The survey ran in spring 2021, most people were women and about half were yoga teachers, so it describes a committed group at one moment in time.

Why it matters: It is a snapshot, not proof: people who feel well may simply practise more, and the authors say so. Still, it is a good prompt to notice which parts of your practice you enjoy most, and which you might like to try more.

Around the world

What happened in yoga this week.

YOGA ALLIANCE

Yoga Alliance sets out a new path for its teacher credentials ↗

https://yogaalliance.org/credential-path/

Yoga Alliance, a teacher registry, will ask its registered teachers to take a 40-question assessment from January 2027, on teaching and leadership, ethics, safety, and multicultural diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, with a 75% pass mark and two attempts. RYT and E-RYT stay as the main titles, and RCYT, RPYT and YACEP become specialty designations. Teachers have until 31 December 2027, after which a credential lapses, and from the 2030 cycle continuing education becomes 30 hours (RYT) or 40 hours (E-RYT) every three years.

Why it matters: If your teacher is registered, this will shape their next year or two; for students, the useful part is that ethics and safety are now part of what is checked. A credential is one sign of a careful teacher, not the only one.

AMAR UJALA (HINDI) · 28 OCT 2026

Yoga and naturopathy may join de-addiction programmes, an official says after a visit near Rishikesh ↗

https://www.amarujala.com/uttarakhand/rishikesh/yoga-to-be-included-in-de-addiction-and-rehabilitation-programs-rishikesh-news-c-38-1-rks1010-148252-2026-10-28

An Additional Secretary at India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment visited the government de-addiction centre at Raiwala, near Rishikesh, and said efforts will be made to include yoga and naturopathy in de-addiction and rehabilitation programmes, alongside medicines and counselling. She plans to approach the Ministry of Ayush and to develop a model programme that other centres across the country could adopt. For now this is a stated plan, not a launched programme.

Why it matters: The framing is the part we like: yoga as one support next to medical care and counselling, not a replacement for them. It is a plan, not evidence that it works, and anyone struggling with alcohol or drug use should talk to a doctor or a local helpline.

New research

What the studies found, and what they did not.

INTERNATIONAL UROGYNECOLOGY JOURNAL (VIA PUBMED) · 21 OCT 2026

Pelvic floor yoga and an exercise programme both eased overactive bladder symptoms in women ↗

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42905160/

In a planned subgroup of a US multisite trial, 140 women with overactive bladder and urge leakage did 12 weeks of either pelvic floor yoga or a time-matched general conditioning programme. Leakage episodes fell by a similar amount in both groups, about 1.9 versus 1.6 a day, and the difference between them was not statistically significant. Yoga did a little better on a questionnaire about urinary distress and, by a narrow margin, on daytime trips to the toilet.

Why it matters: Both helped about equally, and a gentle group practice held its own against exercise. There was no untreated group, so if this is part of your life, a doctor or pelvic health physiotherapist can tell you what fits you.

PLOS MEDICINE · 27 OCT 2026

Yoga is among back pain treatments that may save money, on one study ↗

https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1005273

An Australian and UK team reviewed 20 economic studies of recommended low back pain treatments, all from nine high-income countries, most often the UK. Most non-drug, non-surgical options gave good value against usual care, and yoga was one of six single treatments, alongside acupuncture, cognitive behavioural therapy, self-management support, fear-reduction education and mindfulness-based stress reduction, found more effective and less costly than usual care from at least one cost perspective. The yoga result rests on one UK trial-based study from 2012, and treatments were compared only with usual care, not with each other.

Why it matters: Cost studies do not show that yoga treats back pain, and one study is a start, not a settled case. The practical point is small: gentle yoga is among the options worth discussing with a clinician if back pain keeps coming back.

One debate

Two sides, sourced, and what is still unknown.

JOURNAL OF INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE (VIA PUBMED) · 4 JUL 2026

Should headstand be taught in general, mixed-level classes? ↗

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42471295/

A systematic review of case reports and case series gathered 84 yoga-related adverse events, 15 of them linked to headstand, and recommends screening before practice and better teacher training; it cannot say how common such harms are, because case reports count them but not the many people who practise without one. One side, in a 2015 Yoga International opinion essay by Matthew Remski that gathers several teachers' views, says most people have not built up the neck to carry weight and a teacher cannot know every drop-in student's history. The other side, from teachers quoted in the same essay and Arhanta Yoga's 2019 guide by Dr Ram Jain, says that with time spent in careful preparation and an experienced teacher it can be practised safely by some students.

Why it matters: Whichever side you lean to, you can always stay in a preparation while others go up. Tell your teacher before class about any neck or shoulder injury, glaucoma, high blood pressure, a heart condition, migraine or osteoporosis, or if you are pregnant; this is not medical advice.

Practice to try

Something to do this week, from YogaMag.

YOGAMAG

A 10-minute seated relaxation routine

https://yogamag.co.in/routines/relaxation-seated-10

Nine short steps on a chair: slow breathing, shoulder rolls, gentle neck, spine and side stretches, a seated twist, humming Bee Breath (bhramari) and a two-minute body scan. Each step has a time and a breath cue, and you need no mat or floor space.

Why it matters: It pairs gentle movement with a short stillness, in the spirit of this week's pick. Read the page's "Check first" notes, skip the humming with ear pain or an ear infection, and stop if you feel lightheaded.

Quick links

Short and worth a look.

JOURNAL OF PEDIATRIC NURSING (VIA PUBMED) · 27 OCT 2026

Laughter yoga with health education did not reliably lower teen stress ↗

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42946625/

A small trial in Türkiye randomised 84 adolescents into four groups to test one health education session plus 12 laughter yoga sessions over six weeks. It found no consistent effect on stress, mixed results on digital gaming habits, and could not separate the effect of the two parts, though students were more satisfied with it.

Why it matters: Careful studies that find little are as useful as ones that find a lot, and the teenagers liked taking part. Laughter yoga is also quite different from what most classes call yoga.

How this issue was made. Each week we gather the yoga world's news, research and video, with help from research tools. Monika Sharma chooses what goes in, checks every source and writes or edits each summary and view. Summaries are in our own words; the sources keep their rights. Nothing here is medical advice. Tell the editor what you think: https://yogamag.co.in/weekly/2026-w45#feedback