

Simplified Speech #042 – Yoga

Episode description

Feeling tense? Yoga can help! Our yoga instructor Jeremy speaks with Andrew about the practice and benefits of the ancient art of yoga. Come loosen up and have a listen to this episode of Simplified Speech.

Fun fact

Yoga is a part-time activity for some. But if you want beat the world record for the longest yoga marathon, you would have to try for over 160 hours!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To loosen up
- Yogi
- Made-up term
- Analogy
- Fascinating
- Multilingual





Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Simplified Speech #042. Hi, Jeremy.

Jeremy: Hi, Andrew.

Andrew: How's it going?

Jeremy: I am doing very well. How are you?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty well, but, Jeremy, you know I'm feeling a little tight these days. And I have been thinking about doing some yoga to try and relax and **loosen up**.

Jeremy: **Loosen up**. So you want to get more flexible?

Andrew: I would love to get more flexible. I am a really stiff guy, I think.

Jeremy: Don't be so stiff, man.

Andrew: I know, I wanna be, you know, loose and flexible and be able to stretch but, yeah, it's difficult for me. But I've been thinking about starting to do yoga. And I thought, hmm, that might make for an interesting Simplified Speech episode topic. And so that's what we'll talk about today: yoga.

Jeremy: Perfect.

Andrew: Yeah, so just before we start, I'll let everyone know that Simplified Speech is our series for beginner- and intermediate-level English learners. We're gonna have a totally natural conversation today, everyone. The only difference between this and the English you'll hear outside on the street is that Jeremy and I will speak slightly slower than we do in our regular, everyday lives.

And one more thing before we get started, we have a study guide for this episode, and it is available to download from our website, Culips, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. So if you wanna study along with this study guide, hit up the website and give it a download.

Jeremy, yoga, it's yoga time.

Jeremy: Yoga. Well, it's funny you ask me, because I actually teach yoga.

Andrew: You're a yoga teacher?



- Jeremy: A yoga instructor, I prefer instructor.
- Andrew: Instructor? OK, yoga instructor. Could I also call you a **yogi**? What's a **yogi**? Who is a **yogi**?
- Jeremy: Very good question. **Yogi** is a male who does yoga. And yogini is a female who does yoga.
- Andrew: Interesting. I've only ever heard the expression **yogi**, never yogini, that's new to me.
- Jeremy: Yeah, yeah. Maybe it could be a **made-up term**. But I heard it used to refer to women. Some instructors say, "Hello **yogis** and yoginis," something like that. So I have heard that before.
- Andrew: So you're a yoga instructor. I imagine you're quite flexible, then? Unlike me.
- Jeremy: Now I am. But I played basketball my whole life, until I was maybe 27, and I pretty much stopped completely because I had so many lower back problems and pain in my tailbone, my lower back. And I was so tight, I couldn't sleep very well.
- Andrew: Yikes.
- Jeremy: Because laying in my bed was uncomfortable.
- Andrew: Wow.
- Jeremy: So I stopped playing basketball. I started doing yoga and I really got into yoga when I was living in Korea.
- Andrew: OK.
- Jeremy: And, in Korea, there was a studio I went to almost, not every day, maybe four times a week. And I would do yoga at home, a little bit every day, and stretch before I go to sleep. So now I am quite flexible, more flexible than most people, but there are still things I need to work on, of course.
- Andrew: So what made you decide to choose yoga?
- Jeremy: Well, when I teach classes to new students, people who have never done yoga before, I describe yoga as learning how to use your body properly.
- Andrew: OK.
- Jeremy: So, if someone gives you a car before you can drive the car, you have to learn how to drive it. You have to learn how to use it, the steering wheel, the



pedals, the buttons. But we get a body when we're born and no one really teaches us how to use it properly.

Andrew: It's true.

Jeremy: So my wife also is a yoga instructor and we both have had this same experience. It is much easier for us to use our body now, lifting heavy things, going under a table, for example, or getting into a narrow space or lifting something heavy. Those things have become a lot easier. And another **analogy** I use is that your body is sort of like wearing a suit that is too tight for you.

Andrew: OK.

Jeremy: So when you're tight, if you imagine wearing, say, a sweater that is too small, you can't move very well, right? You can't move your shoulders or your arms.

Andrew: You're really restricted, you can't move around.

Jeremy: Very restricted, and over time, if you wear that shirt every day and you stretch it out, it starts to fit better. And this is kinda the goal of yoga. I got into yoga because I wanted to be more comfortable in my own body.

Andrew: Yoga is interesting to me. It seems a little bit different than other exercises because there's a spiritual side to yoga.

Jeremy: Yes.

Andrew: And some people are heavily into the spiritual side, and I know that other yoga practitioners stay away from the spiritual side. When you practise yoga, do you find it to be a spiritual practice as well, or is it mostly just an exercise thing for you?

Jeremy: I think if it is just exercise to someone, then it's not yoga.

Andrew: Interesting.

Jeremy: The word yoga means union or two things becoming one, sort of. And when you are in a difficult pose in yoga, say you're balancing on one foot and your other leg is out to the side and you're holding your toe, a very difficult pose.

Andrew: Sounds difficult, yes.

Jeremy: Yeah, yeah. In that pose, you can't think about other things. You have to be one with the present moment.



Andrew: OK.

Jeremy: In order to balance and use all the muscles properly and be in the pose. So yoga is sort of like meditation with your body. And another aspect is sometimes we store memories or pain in certain areas of our body. So, for example, if someone got in a very traumatic car accident when they were younger, they may have some stiffness in their hips or their back, and when they are doing yoga sometimes that emotion comes back. You're doing a certain stretch and all of a sudden you feel fear or sadness or something like that. And for me that has happened many times, especially with legs. In basketball, your legs are the most important part, right? You need to move side to side, run, and jump.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely.

Jeremy: And so for me, there is lots of fear stored in my legs. And when I'm doing a stretch, sometimes I get a flash memory of being knocked over in a basketball game or I feel the fear again.

Andrew: Really? It all comes back.

Jeremy: It comes back, and you get a second chance to process it or to be with that feeling and let it pass. You don't have to hold on to the memory or the pain, and then you get more flexible. So flexibility comes with open mindedness, they're kind of one and the same thing.

Andrew: Well that's certainly **fascinating**. I think you're convincing me that I need to start practising yoga. Sounds very good.

Andrew: One final question for you, Jeremy. What's your favourite yoga pose?

Jeremy: I think it changes because sometimes my body needs something specific, and at that time there is a certain pose for that. But probably my favourite is just sitting on the ground with my legs crossed, it's called lotus pose. There's half lotus like the lotus flower, half lotus and full lotus. And at first half lotus was impossible for me, and now I'm working on full lotus, and it has taken years to unravel everything, unwind, to release all that tension.

So I think you might enjoy yoga, especially because you played basketball a lot like me. But not all instructors are the same, and sometimes some instructors have a different concept of yoga and they push people away from yoga sometimes. So I would say just be mindful of that, going into your first yoga class.

Andrew: Yeah, I've never taken a yoga class before. I have done a little bit with YouTube, there's a teacher on YouTube, popular, I think her name is Adrian, or Adrienne.



- Jeremy: Adrian, I know her.
- Andrew: Yeah, I watched a couple of her videos and followed along and I thought, hmm, this feels good. But I never took it any further than that, so maybe one of these days coming up I can finally try taking a class and see what yoga is about.
- Jeremy: Yeah, or you can do it at home, too. There are lots of good YouTube channels, like Adrian's or some other ones.
- Andrew: Will you start a yoga YouTube channel one day, Jeremy?
- Jeremy: Maybe one day, yeah, I'd like to do it in multiple languages. So maybe some day I'll do that.
- Andrew: Cool. I like that idea, **multilingual** yoga. Very cool.
- Jeremy: Yeah.
- Andrew: That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time.

Detailed Explanations

To loosen up

Phrasal verb

In this episode, our hosts speak of the benefits of yoga and how yoga can help you **to loosen up**. This has two meanings. In terms of your muscles, **to loosen up** means to make them more flexible and less tight. In terms of stress, **to loosen up** is to become less stressed and psychologically more comfortable.

Here are a couple more examples with **to loosen up**:

Gill: What are you doing?

Dieter: Just a bit of yoga.

Gill: A bit of yoga before playing soccer?

Dieter: Yeah, it helps me **loosen up**. I've been doing it for years. With your sore hip, you should try it, too!

Gill: OK. Show me some moves.

Nathan: Amanda, you look really tense. What's wrong?

Amanda: Hard day at work. The stress is really getting to me.

Nathan: Here, have a beer and **loosen up**. Let's go out tonight and have a picnic by the river. Sound good?

Amanda: That sounds great. That would help my peace of mind.

Yogi

Noun

A **yogi** is someone who practises yoga.

Here are a couple more examples with **yogi**:

Sandra: Is that a yoga mat in your backpack?

Nancy: It is.

Sandra: I didn't know you were a **yogi**. How long have you been doing yoga?

Nancy: Oh, I'm a long-time **yogi**. I've been doing it since I was 10 years old. My mom was a yoga instructor.

Martin: Ah, my back is hurting again. It's so stiff.

Warren: That's something I've never understood about you.

Martin: What's that? My back?

Warren: How you always have a stiff back but your girlfriend is a super **yogi**. Why don't you do yoga with her? It would loosen you up so much.

Martin: I've been meaning to, but ...

Warren: But you're lazy?

Martin: I guess.

Made-up term

Idiom

In this episode, Jeremy says the word “yogini,” referring to a female practitioner of yoga. Andrew has never heard that term. Jeremy says it might be a **made-up term**. That means the word might not be an official term found in the dictionary, but possibly a word only a few people use. As languages always change, **made-up terms** heard in movies, songs, or on the internet often make their way into the dictionary and become official terms. Neologism is another word for this.

Here are a couple more examples with **made-up term**:

Babs: I see you just did the groceries. Wait. Did you buy four bags of carrots?

Fran: Yeah.

Babs: What are you going to do with four bags of carrots?

Fran: Eat them, of course. I’m a serious carrot-aholic.

Babs: A carrot-aholic? That’s a **made-up term**.

Fran: Does it matter? You understand it, don’t you?

George: Laura, I heard you’re really into poetry. Do you have a favourite poem?

Laura: Definitely! “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll. Have you read it?

George: I have. But I’m sorry, I don’t really like it.

Laura: What?

George: The rhythm is good, but he uses too many **made-up terms**. I can’t understand it.

Laura: That’s the whole point! The **made-up terms** are meant to be humorous. They’re not meant to be understood.

Analogy



Noun

An **analogy** is a comparison between two things to clarify a situation or an argument. If you're telling a story and the other person doesn't understand, you can try telling a similar story so that the person will better understand you. The second story is the **analogy**.

Here are a couple more examples with **analogy**:

Aidan: Hey, what's wrong?

Mary: My parents are on my back again. They don't like that I'm studying to be an elementary school teacher.

Aidan: What? That's strange.

Mary: It's because my brother is a doctor and they wanted me to be a doctor, too.

Aidan: That's not fair. Think about it. What do doctors do? They help people. What do elementary school teachers do? The same thing! They help people. They guide people. They make huge differences in the lives of young people.

Mary: You're right, actually. That is a pretty good **analogy**.

Aidan: Teaching is a noble profession. If you like it, I think you should pursue it.

Mary: Thanks.

Dave: How was class this morning?

Heather: Not good. I didn't understand what the professor was trying to say. A lot of students didn't.

Dave: Did someone tell him that?

Heather: Yeah, I did.

Dave: And what did he say?

Heather: He tried to explain by way of **analogy**. He told another story to explain the first story, but that made us even more confused!

Dave: What was the story? Maybe I can help.



Fascinating

Adjective

When something is **fascinating**, it is very interesting. It causes fascination and wonder in someone. It is common to say that books, movies, stories, or people are **fascinating**.

Here are a couple more examples with **fascinating**:

Edwin: Have you seen any good movies recently?

Yasmine: I saw Inception yesterday. It blew my mind.

Edwin: Really? How come?

Yasmine: It's a movie about going into people's dreams and stealing their thoughts.

Edwin: Oh, wow! That's **fascinating**! What's the title again?

Yasmine: Inception. If you watch it, you won't be disappointed.

Steve: Your bag looks heavy. What do you have in there?

Fiona: A bunch of books on Picasso. I'm writing a report for class.

Steve: Picasso! I love him. He's so **fascinating**.

Fiona: I know. He lived such an interesting life. There's an exhibit of his work at the museum next month. Wanna check it out?



Multilingual

Adjective

In this episode, Jeremy talks about giving **multilingual** yoga classes. That means he would like to offer yoga classes in more than one language.

Here are a couple more examples with **multilingual**:

Veronica: Hey, I just overheard you speaking on the phone. Were you speaking Spanish?

Carly: Yes, I was.

Veronica: I knew you spoke English and German, but I didn't know you spoke Spanish!

Carly: Actually, I have a lot of **multilingual** friends, so I try to learn new languages whenever I can.

Veronica: That's awesome! Can you teach me something?

Johnny: If you could live in any country, which country would you like to live in?

Giri: There are so many!

Johnny: Pick one.

Giri: I like small countries, so maybe some place like Singapore.

Johnny: Good choice. Why Singapore, exactly?

Giri: It's a smaller city-state. It's very **multilingual**. And I already speak English, Tamil, and a little Malay.

Johnny: And if you move to Singapore, you can work on your Mandarin!



Quiz

1. True or false: Yoga is good for flexibility.

- a) true
- b) false

2. Which term does Jeremy prefer?

- a) yoga instructor
- b) yoga teacher

3. Which of the following expressions best describes loosening your muscles?

- a) getting tighter
- b) getting more relaxed
- c) getting stiffer
- d) hurting your tailbone

4. What is Jeremy's favourite yoga pose?

5. Which of the following is NOT a good expression to describe a made-up term?

- a) a falsehood
- b) a made-up word
- c) a newly coined term
- d) a neologism



Writing or Discussions Questions

1. Have you ever done yoga? What is your experience with this activity?
2. Do you think yoga can cure many of your body's sore spots?
3. When you are feeling tense, what is something you do to release that tension?
4. A common expression used in English for an analogy that does not work is "comparing apples to oranges." That means you are comparing two things that should not be compared. What is a similar expression in your native language?
5. What do you think are the greatest benefits of being multilingual?
6. How many languages can you speak? How many languages do you want to speak?



Quiz Answers

1.a 2.a 3.b 4.lotus pose 5.a

Episode credits

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