



Fashion Action

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Planetary Wellbeing

Human Vitality

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Green Yoga

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Many yogis are in touch with nature, yet may be unaware that the equipment and clothing they use to perform Downward Facing Dogs, Cobra poses, and Tree poses (among many other common Yoga positions) is less than **health- or planet-friendly**. If you're a yoga aficionado like many of us in the Hearts family, you'll appreciate our guide to some of the most green yoga mats, blocks and clothing. By learning which products to avoid as you align mind, body, and spirit with this ancient blend of stretching exercise and meditation, you'll be ready to flow with your practice more sustainably than ever before.

Quick Guide: the Environmental Footprint of Non-Green Yoga Gear

- **Carcinogenic PVC yoga mats and blocks:** PVC (polyvinyl chloride) is a flexible polymer that is used to make many yoga mats and blocks, but it is known to be mutagenic and/or carcinogenic because of chemicals like dioxins and lead.^[i] ^[ii]
- **Liver and kidney disease from PVC phthalates:** PVC yoga gear is also made using harmful phthalates which are added to the plastic to make it flexible. **Phthalates** have been linked to liver and kidney disease, as well as with birth defects in boys.^[iii]
- **Unrecyclable PVC pollutes air, water upon disposal:** PVC cannot be recycled and when it is sent to landfills or is incinerated, it releases even more carcinogenic dioxins.^[iv]
- **Potentially toxic fossil fuel textiles:** Many everyday yoga clothes sold today are crafted from synthetic fabrics, such as polyester, Lycra and Spandex. Polyester contains antimony, a chemical that is linked with the development of bronchitis and emphysema.^[v] Spandex, Lycra and polyester are all derived from petroleum, which may trigger allergic reactions.^[vi]

Take Action! Choose Eco-Friendly Yoga Gear and Clothing

1. **Practice with eco yoga blocks:** Instead of using toxic PVC blocks, why not choose yoga blocks made of bamboo, sustainable wood, or cork? [BarefootYoga.com](#) carries bamboo blocks – bamboo grows to maturity in just a few years, while trees take decades to mature. If you're looking for wooden yoga blocks, be sure to select only sustainable wood blocks (FSC-certification is preferred!), such as the renewable poplar designs sold by [Manduka.com](#). They also carry sustainable cork blocks.
2. **Choose plant-based yoga clothing:** Many yoga wear manufacturers create environmentally-friendly yoga clothing crafted from recycled materials or new, organic materials (such as hemp, bamboo, and organic cotton). If you're looking for chic yoga separates that are crafted to the highest eco-friendly standards, be sure to check out the stylish, functional tops and bottoms sold by [AmericanFlora.com](#), which are made from recycled fabric. Another great option is [MahaDeviDesign.com](#), which offers stunning yoga wear created from hemp, bamboo, and organic cotton eco-fabrics.
3. **Use a natural mat and strap:** Stay true to your green ideals by avoiding PVC yoga mats and instead choosing a natural mat and strap made from plant-based materials. Natural rubber yoga mats, such as those offered by [Gaiam.com](#), are attractive, durable, and eco-friendly. Natural rubber is tapped (like maple syrup) from trees without hurting them which means it's completely renewable and sustainable. Yoga straps options include those made from planet-friendly materials, such as organic cotton or hemp. [Wailana.com](#) provides a range of organic cotton designs in appealing colors.
4. **Relax with greener blankets, pillows, and eye bags:** Soothe your soul with post-yoga accessories that are kind to Mother Earth. Look for pillows, blankets and eye bags crafted from renewable or recycled materials, such as the organic designs created by [Lovemymat.com](#). They also make an eco cleaner for yoga accessories – a great way to reduce the toxicity of your practice even further.
5. **Tell your local yoga studio to sell sustainable equipment:** If you're concerned about the PVC yoga gear that you see in your local yoga studio (not to mention the non-sustainable yoga clothing that many people wear while they exercise), advocate for healthier choices at your local studio. Take yoga studio owners aside and ask them if they're aware of the environmental repercussions of using PVC yoga gear, rather than eco-friendly clothing and equipment, and then suggest green alternatives.

Dig Deeper: Dangers of Non-green Yoga Gear

- Discover just how harmful PVC products are by reading this [HealthyChild.org's PVC: The Most Toxic Plastic](#) for extensive information on the subject.
- Learn more about eco-friendly yoga mats by watching [Travel and Eco Friendly Yoga Mats](#)
- Discover why bamboo is such a great renewable resource by watching [Bamboo is Environmentally Sustainable](#).

+ References

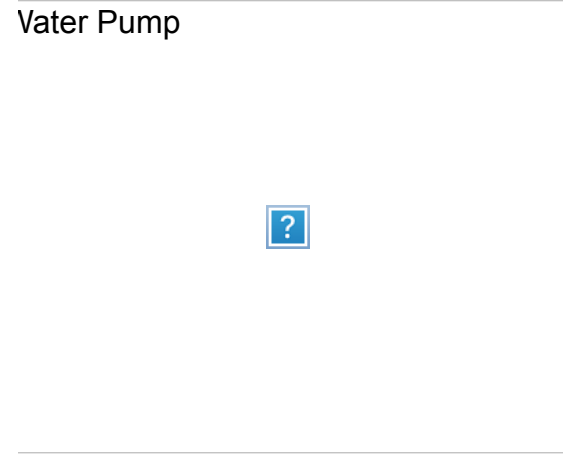
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