

Rocket woman

Did you know rocket yoga has attracted a wide celebrity following, including Willem Dafoe, Madonna, Sting, The Grateful Dead and Christy Turlington?

The rocket is ideal for those who want a **more physically challenging practice**, but don't let the name scare you. This type of yoga is for all, explains teacher Dharna Ashar



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HOW DOES ROCKET DIFFER FROM OTHER FORMS OF POWER YOGA?

The rocket is designed to wake up the nervous system with the upbeat tempo and arm inversions, giving energy to the practice fuelled with the constant flow of prana and creative transitions. The sequences develop strength, openness, progression and freedom. In accordance with ashtanga there is the foundation of ujjayi breath control and the engagement of bandhas, a steadiness of gaze and a serpentine vinyasa flow. They still hold the intelligence and therapeutic nature of the original format but also bring variety and an increased creativity, lifting your practice to the next level. Rocket I starts with the traditional surya namaskara (sun salutations) and then moves onto a different standing format. The routine includes all the full standing poses as well as the therapeutic forward bending of the traditional first series, with intervals of forearm balances and bandha focus. The floor poses are based on a modified primary seated series. The closing phase concludes with the traditional inversions, mudras and relaxation. This grounding routine develops core strength, joints, lower back and legs, building a platform for more high-energy and challenging asanas to follow.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT PRACTISING AND TEACHING ROCKET YOGA?

Where do I start? I'm an ashtangi and I love ashtanga, but I'm absolutely in love with rocket yoga. Rocket yoga starts to generate internal heat in less than 12 minutes and due to its high tempo, you start to sweat, increasing heart rate almost immediately. The best part is, it's recommended that you do rocket with any kind of upbeat music, be it jazz, Tiesto, or The Grateful Dead.

The rocket yoga sequence runs for two and

a half hours, but it can be modified to suit the requirements of a studio and the allotted time frame. Normally studios allocate a maximum of one and a half hours, which is still good enough. The rocket can be done in four or five different ways, so it never gets monotonous. Also, with the rocket routine you can always add or take away a pose from the sequencing, and/or shift them somewhere else in the sequence, which makes it exciting. You never know what comes next in my class.

I enjoy assisting students with the tricky asanas or inversion postures, and breaking their fear of being upside down. When I start to teach or do self-practice of the rocket routine, time freezes for me. It's such a joy to see students grow in their practice. As we all know, yoga is a journey and not a destination.

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE TRY ROCKET YOGA?

Because it gets you there faster. Rocket is a power yoga just like Bikram or ashtanga, but in a more advanced form. It is perfect for people who like to try something new and exciting. Don't let the word 'rocket' scare you; my class is for all levels. I am able to modify poses according to the student's ability, as well as provide explanations of poses and their benefits.

We sometimes need to give our body a shock with different types of yoga as well as different teachers to realise how far we can go. My own practice has become very strong since I started rocket and I didn't even realise it until I went to teach rocket to my ashtangi teacher and she pointed it out. ✨



GIVE IT A GO

Dharna teaches rocket series I every Friday from 3.30pm to 5pm in Dubai Investment Park, Mayfair Building, 3rd floor studio, opposite Choithram's (green glass building). Classes cost AED80 and spaces are limited. **Private sessions are also available. Book by calling 050 556 6740 or emailing ashardharna@yahoo.com**