

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why should I use an environmentally friendly mat ?**

Yoga mats have become the major accessory to ones practice and with the ever increasing trend it means millions and millions of mats are out there being bought and disposed. That's a lot of mats in landfill sites. We believe the postures on your yoga mat are the beginning of a journey to protect and promote the health and well-being of your body, mind and soul. If this inner awareness is awakened one hopes it finds reflection in the external world. Practicing on a shiny glossy plastic mat made as cheaply as possible for maximum profit we view as the antithesis of yoga. It is a simple gesture to practice on a mat created with yoga in mind from renewable resources.

We thought it would be lovely to be able to practice on something a bit closer to nature: something aesthetically considered but still have a good grip! Of course the choice is up to you!

### **Why are ecoYoga mats environmental?**

ecoYoga mats are made from entirely natural plant based material. They are PVC free (PVC is a long term pollutant plastic). At the end of the Yoga mat's life they can be composted - making them completely eco-friendly.

### **How do I care for my ecoYoga mat?**

- Let your ecoYoga mat breathe as much as possible, especially if you work a sweat on to it. Wiping down with a damp cloth before and after class is good practice.
- The mats wash well in the washing machine through a cool cycle using a small amount of detergent if really dirty. They will retain a lot of water. Remove excess amounts by rolling up with a dry towel - the old traditional woollens method!
- Dry flat to avoid creasing (though these will eventually smooth out).
- Do not put through a tumble dryer.
- Avoid contact with oils and store out of direct sunlight as both the se will aid degradation of the rubber.

### **Why do ecoYoga mats cost so much?**

The price of raw natural rubber has been increasing over the last few years. Natural rubber and syn the tic rubber are closely linked so the increase in oil prices which affects the price of syn the tic rubber has had a knock on affect on natural rubber prices. The rubber market is a speculative market and big brokers continue to forecast the massive consumption rate in China and the far east. This is pushing the price up. Our mats are made from the highest quality natural materials in the UK . We try to minimise waste as much as possible. Quality control and production costs are higher than mass produced German or Chinese mats in comparison.

### **What about fair trade or child labour?**

Our mats are made in the UK . We deliberately chose not to make our mats in China or Taiwan where they would have been cheaper. There are currently no Fair Trade standards within the jute or rubber industry. Jute is set to have standards in the future. Our Scottish jute supplier has long family business relationships in India and

Bangladesh and works only with government factories (all ISO-9001 certified) where standards can be monitored. They already have their own standards in practice. The rubber industry has not met with consumer demand to supply fair trade rubber though in the current climate of business we hope this will change in the not too distant future. We are making our own enquiries into the potential of this for our mats.

**My ecoYoga mat has an odour. Why is this?**

The base material for our mats is natural rubber baked in an oven during the curing process of manufacture. The Natural mats therefore have an odour of latex when new. This wears off after some time and a good bit of airing after use. Our latest batch of mats has very little natural rubber smell.

**Do you have different colours of mats?**

We wish to have a core group of colours that will satisfy a broad spectrum of tastes. As time goes on we may bring out different colour ranges. Generally it is easier and more economical for the factory to work with fewer colours which we prefer.

I was sold an "eco" yoga mat by another supplier. Is it really "eco"?

The chances are that your mat still contains PVC, an environmentally damaging plastic. There is however much change afoot in the yoga mat world with increased demand for non-plastic goods. We have not yet found any supplier of Yoga mats that conform to our strict standards of ecology.

**How long will my ecoYoga mat last?**

It really depends on your practice, your environment and how you look after it. The natural rubber is sensitive to sunlight, oils and extreme heat (e.g. sitting on top a radiator). These all will contribute to the degradation of the material. We have had customers buying their new mats after 18 months happy with its wear. At the end of 2006 we made some improvements to the mat so we anticipate longer life spans for most practitioners.

**My mat sheds little pieces and sticks to my clothes. Is this normal?**

From time to time this has caused concern for some practitioners. Initial shedding has occurred with some mats then stops until much later into the use of the mat. Lycra clothes seem to attract the little rubber particles more than cotton which means we would not suggest lycra as the best fabric to practice in. Again it depends on your practice. We are looking into wear and tear of the mats as time passes and we always need feedback. With the slightly higher density of rubber in our new mats we hope any premature wearing will be substantially reduced.

**Other suppliers sell Eco-tex Yoga mats. What is this?**

Eco-tex (or Oeko-tex) is a private European testing laboratory that assesses materials for harmfulness to human skin contact. These Yoga mats are not strictly "environmental" or "ecological". We believe any product that contains PVC cannot claim to be environmental. ecoYoga does not sell any Yoga mats with the Eco-tex certificate.

**What is PVC?**

PVC (PolyVinyl Chloride) is an oil based plastic. It is used in many applications such as wiring, flooring, pipes, wallpaper, window frames, doors and food packaging and is very cheap.

**What is rubber or latex?**

Rubber and Latex is the substance, a lectin, skillfully tapped from just below the bark of the tree *Hevea Brasiliensis*. Natural rubber latex as it is tapped is a watery substance in which is suspended a mixture non-rubber particles like proteins, carbohydrates, lipids and minerals. The most commonly used latex product in the world is the condom. Over one billion condoms are distributed by the World Health Organisation to combat the aids epidemic. Over eight billion are still needed.

**I have heard about Latex allergies?**

Some people have a skin reaction to the rubber proteins in Latex. Our mats are specially formulated to minimise the dispersion of rubber proteins and the refore should be no problem to the vast majority of users. If you suspect an irritation you can give the mat a cycle in the washing machine. Flushing with water is the process used for condoms and rubber gloves to remove excess protein particles. If you already suffer from a latex allergy we would not advise you use the ecoYoga mat as a precautionary measure.

**I have heard of PER and TPE yoga mats. What are these?**

TPE (thermoplastic elastomer) foam is a non-toxic plastic that can be melted down easily for reuse (unlike PVC). Commonly it is used as ear plugs, toothbrush handles and weather seals. Yoga mats is one of its recent applications. It is soft and less durable, though more favourable, than PVC. PER (polymer environment resin) is a synthetic compound developed as an alternative to PVC. In the 1990s the popularity of PVC gave way to consumer and processor awareness of its environmental implications. PER contains no phthalates or heavy metals and has food grade skin safety.

**Rubber Tyres...are they not natural rubber?**

Tyres are made from synthetic rubber. There are many classes of synthetic rubber but basically all are made from a raw material derived from petroleum, coal, oil, natural gas and acetylene.

**The jute on my mat is not perfect. Is this a fault ?**

The weave of jute chosen for the design of our mats is quite loose and soft. Inherent in this weave are random anomalies of loose threads and nubs. Whilst we discard the more extreme cases do not consider the milder cases as faults or defects: in fact we feel that the mats have a more individual nature as a result.

**Thicker, heavier mats?**

No one has ever complained of their mat being thicker than expectation. There have however been laments over it being thinner.

The thickness of the ecoYoga material has been underestimated during several productions over the past few years. The method of the current factory to ensure good quaity material of minimum thickness has resulted in the mats being a very healthy 4mm. This allows for potential discrepancy below our standard 4mm (caused by machinery and our fabulous but temperamental compound).

The general outcome, teamed with the increased density of compound, is that the mats, certainly the latest grey batch, are 5mm in thickness and slightly heavier.



dial indicator measuring thickness of ecoYoga material 2007