



# Guide to Creating a Home Studio

with Anna Guest-Jelley



## **Curvy Yoga Guide to Creating a Home Studio**

So you're all set up for a home yoga practice: you've got your copy of *Permission to CURVE* ready to go. You've got your yoga mat. You've blocked some time out of your schedule. Seems like everything is in place, except...

Wait: where are you going to practice?! And how are you possibly going to clear a mat-sized space in your already cramped, child/pet-filled, noisy house?

If you relate to any of this, I hear ya. I, too, have struggled in the past to stake out (and keep!) a space I love in my house.

Of course, you can practice anywhere you can roll out a mat (or rug or whatever you need to practice without feeling like you're going to slip and fall). But there are also some easy ways to add inspiration into your yoga space.

## Studio Tour (not a la the stars, but a la me)

I like to start my practice with some meditation. So I've got my cushion in front of my yoga and meditation books. I like to think I can absorb their wisdom if I'm by them (and it also makes me feel less guilty about the ones I haven't read – yet). Real reason my mat is here: it's the only place it's not in the way. Also, this doubles as a dog bed as often as not (and by that I mean it's way more often a dog bed).



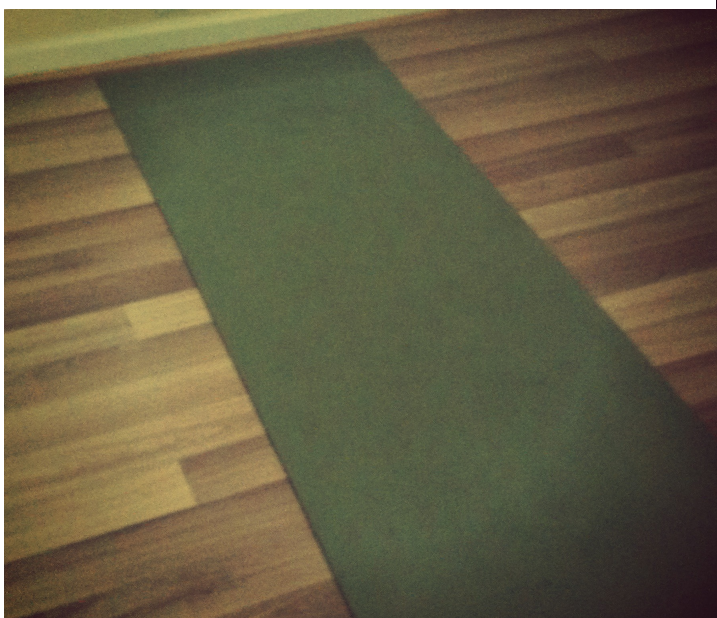
Here's a place for lots of my yoga toys, including an unreasonable amount of blocks. This is also where I keep the beautiful singing bowl my teacher, Cora Wen, gave me. I use the singing bowl to mark a symbolic beginning and end to my practice.

Don't have a singing bowl? No worries! You can do the same by taking a deep breath, chanting "Om" one time or anything else that indicates a time marker for you. You'll see I have a basket here for small items – yoga strap, eye pillow, etc. Real reason I have this: It's an extra shelf left over from a house where I needed it. It doesn't have much use in my current house, so I "repurposed" it for yoga. Pretty sure I learned that from a show on HGTV.



Here's my yoga toy chest! I've got a bolster, a couple sandbags and some fun blocks in here. Makes me feel like when I was a kid and I got to pick a toy out of a "treasure chest" at the dentist's office. Real reason this is here: I couldn't fit everything on the other shelf, and if I leave it loose, it looks like a hot mess in my office.

On my desk, I've got a collection of things I love – pics of loved ones, inspired and inspiring gifts from friends. This isn't technically my "yoga space," but since it's nearby, I count it. Especially since I could never have any of this on the floor. That would be a major dog



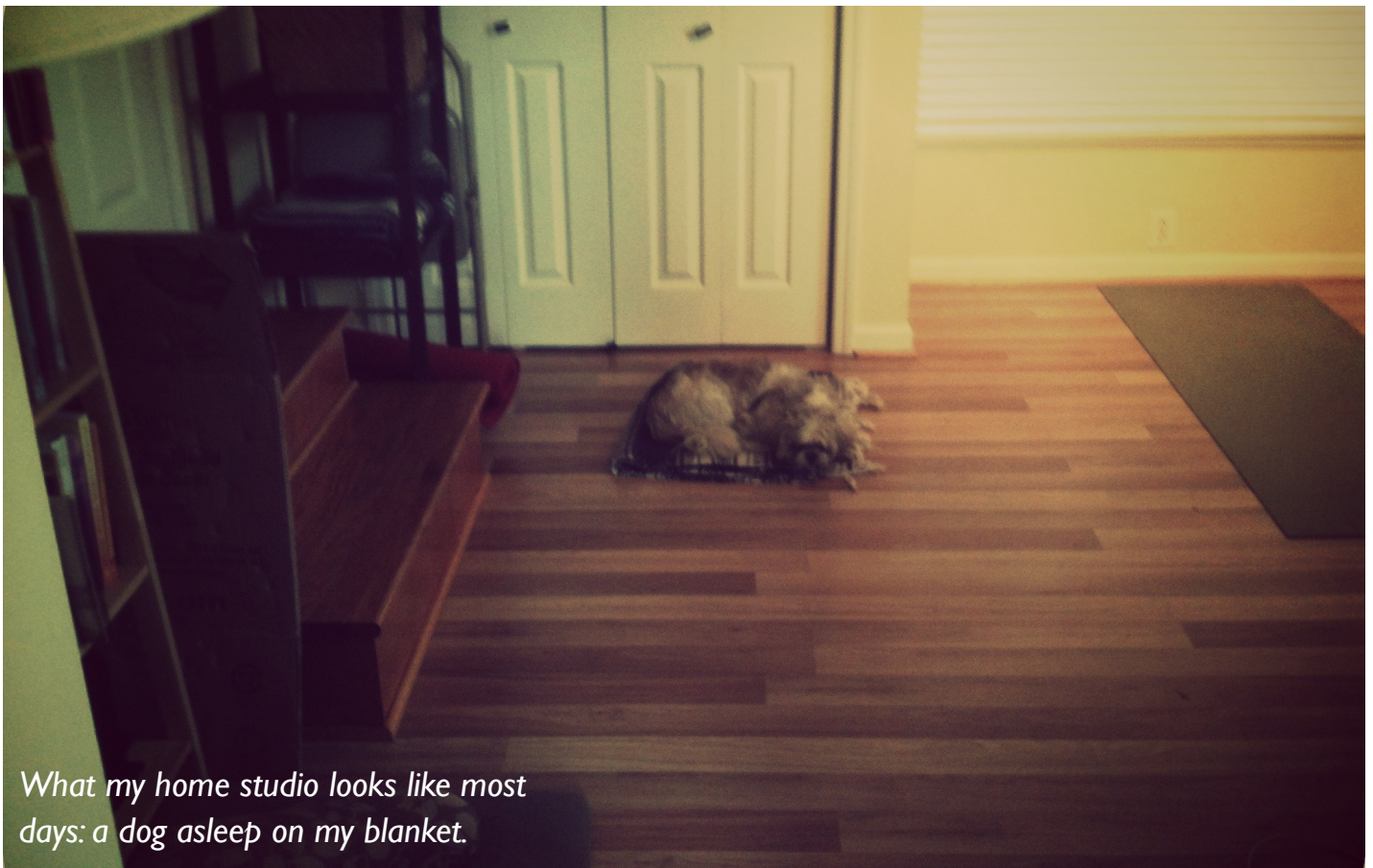
All you really need: a mat and a little bit of space to call your own.

## The Goods

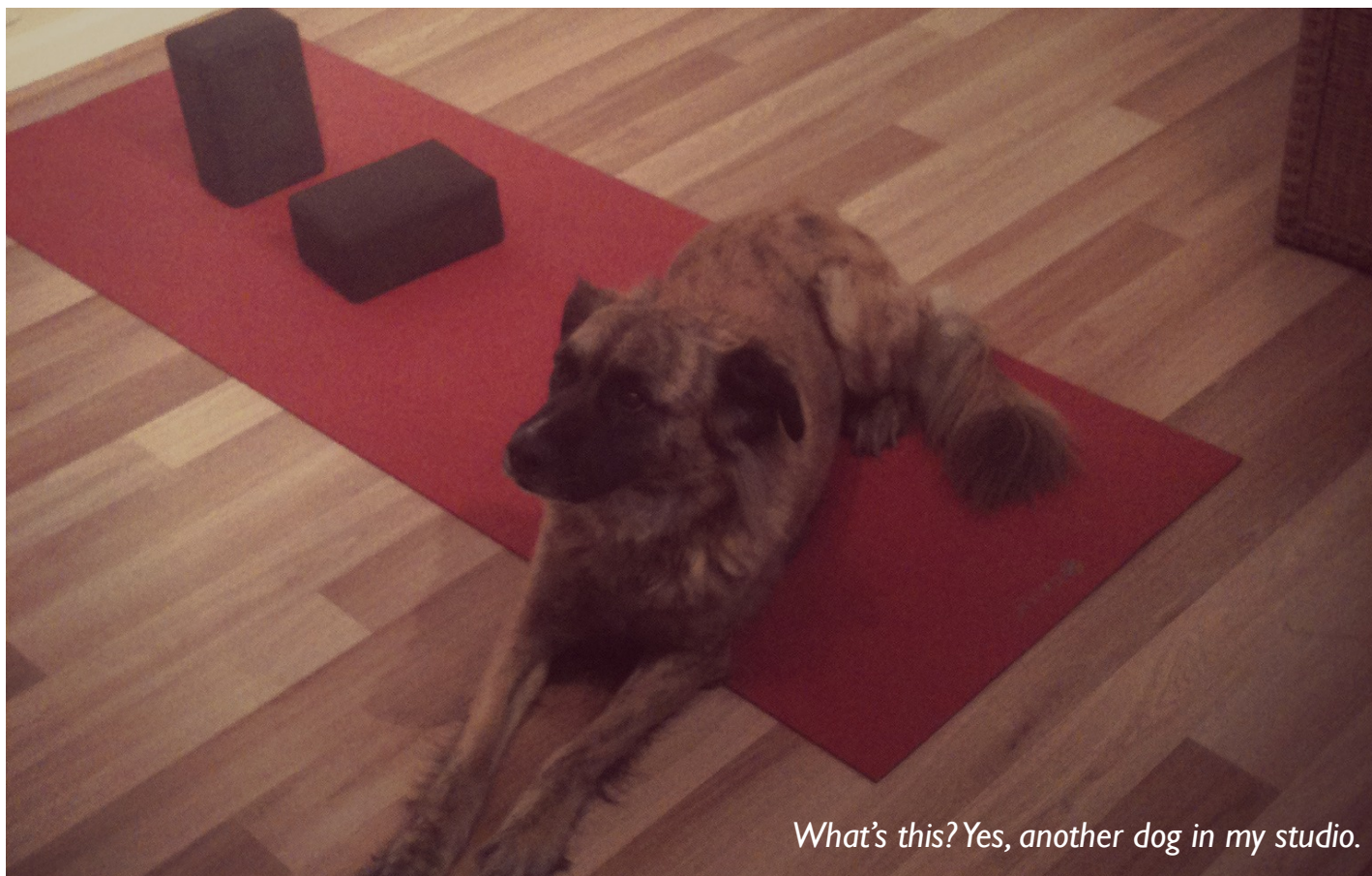
So now that you've gotten an inside look at my home studio, let's break it down in terms of what you might like in your own space:

If you plan to meditate, you might like something comfortable to sit on. I love my v-shaped cushion because it has a wider base of support than traditional cushions (called zafus). It and the cushion underneath (called a zabuton) came from [Hugger Mugger](#); I've had these for at least five years, and they're still in perfect condition; they haven't lost their supportiveness at all. You don't need meditation-specific things to sit on, though; a couple blankets or a chair you like will do quite well.

**Repurposed storage:** Many of us have a few spare baskets or bookshelves lying around – or could find one fairly easily and inexpensively at a garage sale or from a friend who's not using it. Look around your house with a creative eye for what you could claim for your yoga space. If you have to hunt around for your stuff, it makes it that much harder to get started. So getting (and keeping!) it all in one place saves you time and effort – and may be the thing that gets you on the mat.



*What my home studio looks like most days: a dog asleep on my blanket.*



*What's this? Yes, another dog in my studio.*

**Determine the props you want:** I recommend having at least 2 blocks and 1 strap. Of course, this doesn't mean you have to have official "yoga" versions of these things. For blocks, you could use canned goods or books. And for a strap, you can use an old tie or the belt off a robe. If you are in the market for some yoga props, though, you can often find them at all-purpose type stores, like Target. I like [YogaAccessories.com](http://YogaAccessories.com) for these types of things – the quality is good, and they have sales what seems like all the time. I recommend 4" foam blocks and a 10' yoga strap (because it's a snap to make the strap shorter if that's what you need, but you can't easily make it longer).

Other nice things to have include 2 blankets (if you don't want the yoga version, 2 towels can suffice), a bolster (or firm pillow) and maybe an eye pillow if you want some really good relaxin' time at the end of your practice. You can get all of these things at the two places mentioned, or any other number of online retailers (in-person stores are less likely to have a bolster, although I suppose it just depends on where you go).



## What Everyone Wants to Know About a Home Studio

First of all, if it's got a mat in it, it's a studio. Makes it sound (and, somehow, feel) more official. As in "I'm off to my studio now. See you in an hour."

And that's really the most important part about creating space for a home practice – the (uninterrupted) time as well as the physical space.

So here are my best tips on making that happen (and rolling with it when things don't work out as planned):

**Schedule it:** If you feel like you can never get a quiet moment alone in your house, schedule it. This may sound a little silly, but it might be the way to go. Schedule your practice for the fifteen minutes when your partner takes the kids out in the backyard to play. Or in the sliver of time between client calls. No yoga police are coming to determine if your practice "counts;" you're the one who gets to determine it. So figure out how *and what works for you and then set it up.*



**Set a timer:** Yes, I know this can feel a little stodgy. But it's really worked wonders for me. With my timer set, I don't fret about accidentally practicing yoga for 2 hours (and meanwhile missing an appointment).



**Close the door:** If you have a door to your yoga space, close it. That indicates to you and the world of your house that it's yoga time. If you don't have an actual door, close a metaphorical door by informing your housemates that you'll be practicing yoga for the next 30 minutes (or however long). So barring any life/death emergencies, you'll catch them on the flip side.



**Set the mood:** There are a couple things to consider here – lighting, sound and ambience. Depending on what you want from your practice today, you might like different things. For lighting, you might consider open shades/windows, or maybe a darkened room is more your speed. For sound, you might like to turn on a sound machine to block ambient noise – or maybe some music (anything from classical to Beyoncé) is what you need. For ambience, you might like to light some candles or incense. If that doesn't tickle your nose, though, maybe ambience to you is what you wear or lovely painted toenails.







## What to Do...?

So now that you've got your stuff all ready to go and you've carved some space out of your schedule, what on earth are you going to do?

When you're first starting practicing yoga at home, I recommend doing something guided – from the [CurvyYoga collection](#), you might like a [video](#), [podcast](#) or some of the sequences in *Permission to CURVE*. This is also pretty google-able, so feel free to do some searches to find what works for you. In addition, if you have something like Netflix, there are often yoga videos available to rent.

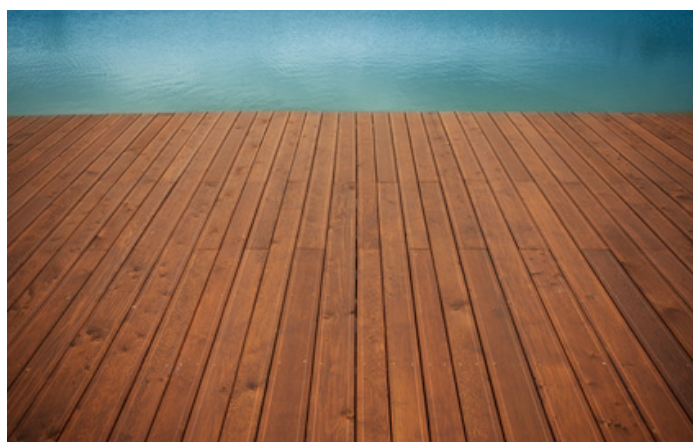
As you become more comfortable with practicing at home, you can start experimenting and letting your body be your guide. If “let your body be your guide” sounds like Jiminy Cricket wisdom that you never learned, here are a few tips:

**Begin with Centering:** Start with at least 3-5 minutes of centering. I like to do a seated meditation, but you could also lie down or do anything else you like. After at least a minute or two of breathing and settling in, I ask myself what I'd like to do that day.

**Trust the Answer:** I often scoff at the answer that comes up (no matter what it is). More sun salutations? How absurd. More supine leg stretches? Been there; done that. As soon as I get into that judging mind, though, everything goes off track. So I'm learning to trust the answer and follow it, no matter how ridiculous or unwanted it may seem.

**Keep Checking In:** As I continue through my practice, it's easy for me to move out of my intuition and right back into that judging mind: "Wow; this is going great! Now let's do Plank for 7 minutes!" Odds are pretty good that a 7-minute Plank is coming more from my achieving mind and less from my intuition. So I'm learning to continually check-in: once is never enough for me.

**If You're Going to Set a Goal, Make it Feeling Good:** If it's helpful for you to have the container of a goal, make it feeling good during and after your practice. What this means will vary from day-to-day, but it won't let you down.



*Here's the most important thing to know about creating a home studio: it's all about you. So make it as simple or as elaborate as you'd like. And most of all, make it a place to enjoy your practice!*

*With love & light,*

*Anna*

