

# Proposal for PERSON MEDITATING Emoji

Mark Bramhill

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## 1 Abstract

I am proposing the addition of a PERSON MEDITATING emoji, representing the popular health and mental wellness activities of yoga and meditation.



*PERSON MEDITATING could be represented as male or female. Vendors could specify male or female variants using ZWJ sequences if desired. Art by Aphee Messer*

### 1.1 Gender

The PERSON MEDITATING character is not specified as male or female. Vendors would be able to implement male or female ZWJ Sequences for male or female versions if desired.

### 1.2 Skin Tones

I propose supporting Fitzpatrick skin tone modifiers for this character, though this would be at the discretion of vendors and/or the UTC.

## 2 Introduction

Meditation and yoga are ancient, globally pervasive practices. Meditation’s origins are over 3,500 years old<sup>1</sup>; yoga’s Indian origins are 3,500-5,300 years old.<sup>2</sup> Meditation has been popular in the Western world since the 1950s<sup>1</sup>; yoga has existed in its modern form in the Western world since at least 1851.<sup>3</sup> In the United States, 36.7 million people regularly practice yoga, and a staggering 90% are aware of yoga.<sup>4</sup> For meditation, nearly 18 million adults in the United States practice meditation according to the National Institute of Health.<sup>5</sup>

In December 2014, India proposed to the UN that June 21st be declared “International Yoga Day.” This proposal was endorsed by a record 175 member countries, and was passed unanimously.<sup>6</sup> In its celebration this year, over 35,000 people participated in a group yoga class, a world record. Yogas significance is recognized globally by United Nations member countries, and deserves representation in the Unicode emoji set.

While many activities are represented in the emoji set by their affiliated equipment (e.g. BASKETBALL, BASEBALL, CRICKET BAT AND BALL, etc.), this would not be appropriate for yoga or meditation. Meditation requires no equipment whatsoever; part of the practice is to distance oneself from the physical world around you. And for yoga, while you can use a yoga mat, it is neither visually distinctive nor unique to the activity, nor is it even necessary. The best representation is a person meditating in lotus position.

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<sup>1</sup>Everly, George S., and Jeffrey M. Lating. *A Clinical Guide to the Treatment of Human Stress Response*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2002. Print.

<sup>2</sup>Burgin, Timothy. “History of Yoga.” *Yoga Basics*. N.p., Oct. 2011. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

<sup>3</sup>Paul, N. C. *A Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy*. Bombay, 1851. Print.

<sup>4</sup>Ipsos Public Affairs. *The 2016 Yoga in America Study*. Study. *Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance*, 13 Jan. 2016. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

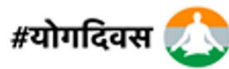
<sup>5</sup>“8.0% of U.S. Adults (18 Million) Used Meditation — NCCIH.” U.S National Library of Medicine. National Institutes of Health, n.d. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

<sup>6</sup>“United Nations International Day of Yoga.” UN News Center. UN, Dec. 2014. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

### 3 Factors for Inclusion

#### 3.1 Compatibility

I do not know of any yoga or meditation images currently used in the major platforms (Apple, Google, Yahoo, Microsoft). However, for the International Day of Yoga, Twitter India created a custom emoji hashtag, though this character was only available temporarily and not represented in user-provided text encoding.<sup>7</sup> The pose of their emoji is similar to what I am proposing.



*Twitter India International Day of Yoga hashtag*

#### 3.2 Expected Usage

##### 3.2.1 Frequency

The expected usage of a yoga emoji is extremely high:

	Google Trends <sup>8</sup>	Google Trends (Emoji) <sup>9</sup>	Instagram Posts <sup>10</sup>
Meditation & Yoga	0.87	2.44	1.33

There are nearly 25 million Instagram posts with “#Yoga”, making it one of the more popular hashtags on the service.<sup>11</sup> “#Meditation” has over 6.5 million posts. Meanwhile, a baseline comparison of “#Running” has 23.7 million Instagram posts.

<sup>7</sup>“Twitter Dedicates New Emoji for International Yoga Day — Gadgets Now.” Gadget Now. N.p., 21 June 2016. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

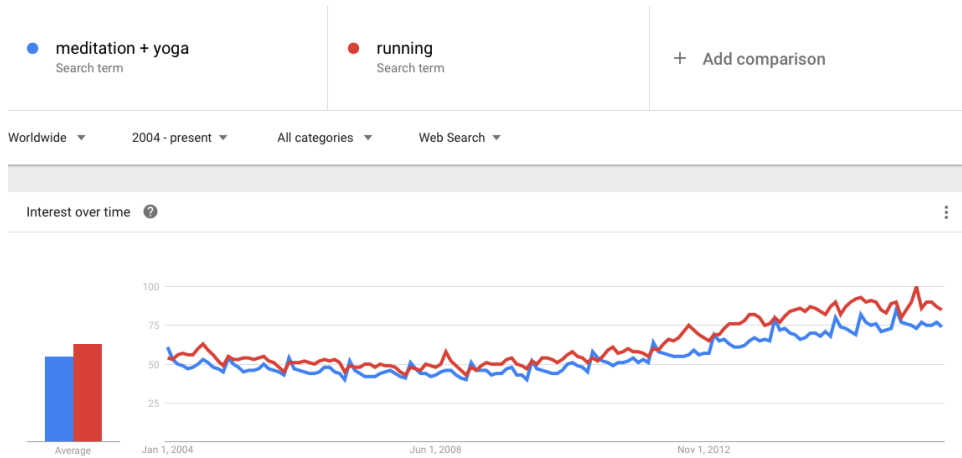
<sup>7</sup>Google Trends comparison of “meditation + yoga” versus benchmark activity “running” since 2004.

<sup>8</sup>Google Trends comparison of “meditation emoji + yoga emoji” versus benchmark activity “runner emoji” in the past 12 months.

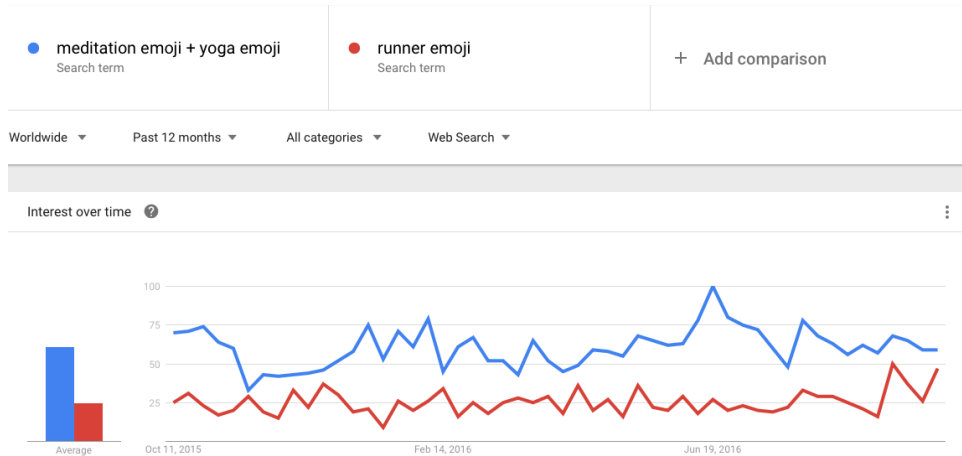
<sup>9</sup>Comparison of Instagram posts with the hashtags “#Meditation” or “#Yoga” versus benchmark activity “#Running”.

<sup>11</sup>“Top 400 HashTags on Instagram.” Top Hashtags. N.p., 2016. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

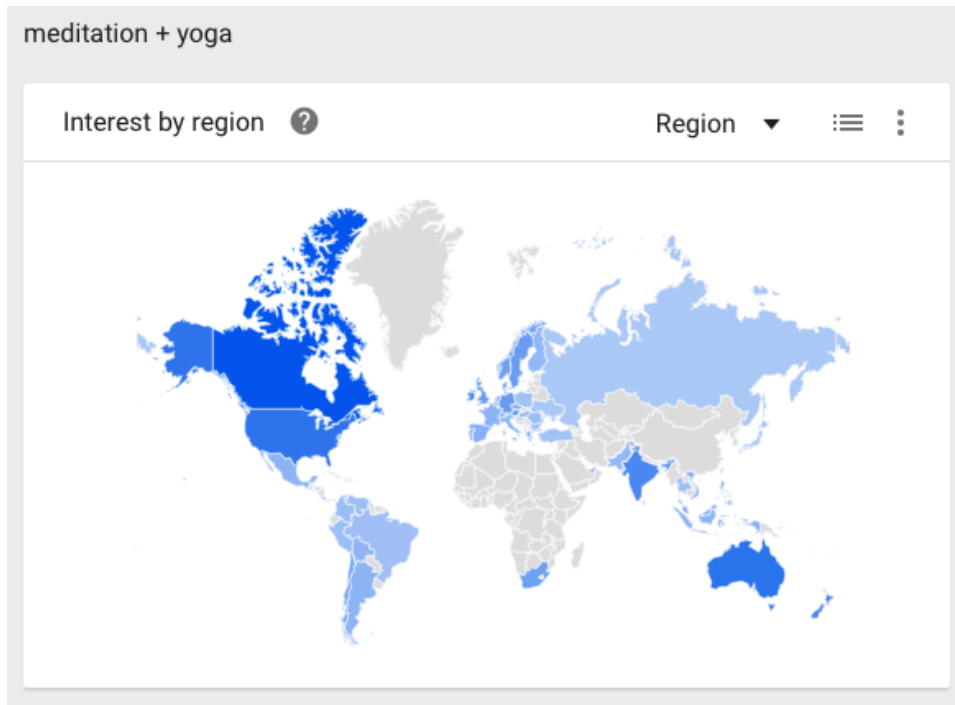
Doing a comparison of Google trends for “meditation + yoga” versus benchmark activity “running” shows comparable demand.



Additionally, doing a comparison of Google trends for “mediation emoji + yoga emoji” versus benchmark activity “runner emoji” shows greater demand for the new glyph.



Looking at searches for “meditation + yoga” relative to different countries, it is clear that interest in mediation and yoga extends beyond the USA:



*Darker blue indicates a higher frequency of searches.*

### 3.2.2 Multiple Use

A meditation/yoga emoji could represent meditation and yoga as literal activities, as well as the more broad concept of calm, zen, and mental wellness. According to the National Institute of Health, yoga is the most used mind and body practice in the U.S., with 21 million adults practicing to help with reducing stress and treating chronic back-pain. Meditation is the number three most used practice in the U.S., with 18 million adults practicing.

### 3.3 Image Distinctiveness

A figure in the lotus position seamlessly could represent both activities of meditation and yoga. It is an iconic stance, going back thousands of years:



*Statue of Buddha in a lotus position, made during the 3rd Century CE.*<sup>12</sup>

### 3.4 Completeness

The addition of a meditation/yoga emoji would be an important addition to the Activities: Sport-Person category, joining PERSON WITH BALL, GOLFER, SKIER, SNOWBOARDER, SURFER, and SWIMMER, among others.

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<sup>12</sup>[Buddha Triad and Kushan Couple. 2006. British Museum. Wikimedia. Web. 10 Oct. 2016.](#)

### 3.5 Frequency Request

According to the popular emoji encyclopedia Emojipedia, a Yoga/Meditation emoji was among the 30 most frequently requested additions to the Unicode emoji set from readers.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, a cursory search of the phrases “meditation emoji” and “yoga emoji” on Twitter reveals plenty of demand for the character. A small sample from the past couple of months:

- “There really needs to be a meditation emoji”<sup>14</sup>
- “i need a zen / meditation emoji”<sup>15</sup>
- “I’m mad they don’t have a meditation emoji!!!”<sup>16</sup>
- “why is there no yoga emoji?!”<sup>17</sup>
- “There needs to be a lil guy and gal doing yoga emoji”<sup>18</sup>
- “I need a yoga emoji. Like yesterday.”<sup>19</sup>
- “Why no yoga emoji?”<sup>20</sup>
- “damm it we need a yoga emoji”<sup>21</sup>
- “why isn’t there a yoga emoji”<sup>22</sup>
- “I’m trying to make a zen/yoga emoji as best as I can”<sup>23</sup>
- “My dad is searching for a yoga emoji rn”<sup>24</sup>
- “can’t find a good yoga emoji”<sup>25</sup>
- “Where’s the yoga emoji?”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Burge, Jeremy. “Top Emoji Requests 2016.” Emojipedia. N.p., 22 Mar. 2016. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.

<sup>14</sup>ideas generator (CurlyComediana). “@calm DailyCalm today’s session! There really needs to be a meditation emoji <https://calm.com/quote?id=NJZNxbrZxZ>” 24 Sept 2016, 8:46AM. Tweet.

<sup>15</sup>ingrid.e (ingridepure). “Tadaaa . Also, i need a zen / meditation emoji ” 23 Aug 2016, 9:02 PM. Tweet.

<sup>16</sup>Edem, Nsidiibe (King\_Nsidi\_Edem). “I’m mad they don’t have a meditation emoji!!! @GetEmoji y’all Betta fix this!!!” 16 Aug 2016, 12:10 AM. Tweet.

<sup>17</sup>De Montfort SU (demontfortsu). “Can we pick all three? (Also, why is there no yoga emoji?!)” 10 Aug 2016, 11:42 AM. Tweet.

<sup>18</sup>Jewbacca (Puuuuuuuns). “There needs to be a lil guy and gal doing yoga emoji” 9 Aug 2016, 9:39 AM. Tweet.

<sup>19</sup>Marcia (ThatGirlMarcia). “I need a yoga emoji. Like yesterday. #firstworldproblems” 10 Aug 2016, 12:02 AM. Tweet.

<sup>20</sup>KY (ymkjp). “Why no yoga emoji?” 10 Aug 2016, 3:43 AM. Tweet.

<sup>21</sup>BooooTLEg (luscsmoothie). “Lol @Teresa.Giudice ”I need to do yoga.” (damm it we need a yoga emoji) @Andy get on it #RHONJ” 14 Aug 2016, 10:36 PM. Tweet.

<sup>22</sup>Hitchens, Clare (clarehitchens). “How many times can I say I love @queenstreetyoga ? And why isn’t there a yoga emoji to ornament this post? ” 15 Aug 2016, 7:42 PM. Tweet.

<sup>23</sup>Tyu (\_Tyu). “@underskinnyhrt ”I’ll be able to go next time” (I’m trying to make a zen/yoga emoji as best as I can)” 10 Aug 2016, 12:02 AM. Tweet.

<sup>24</sup>(brookedubnerr). “My dad is searching for a yoga emoji rn” 17 Aug 2016, 2:45 PM. Tweet.

<sup>25</sup>Jordan, Jennifer (jennlynnjordan). “@HistGeekGirl heck yes! (can’t find a good yoga emoji” 18 Aug 2016, 3:11 PM. Tweet.

<sup>26</sup>Deepika (ahlade). “Where’s the yoga emoji?” 8 Sept 2016, 1:56 AM. Tweet.

## 4 Factors for Exclusion

### 4.1 Overly Specific

As stated above, meditation and yoga are practiced by millions of people worldwide. Having multiple characters to represent the many different yoga stances would be overly specific, but choosing the most iconic stance to represent the entirety of the practice is not overly specific.

### 4.2 Open-Ended

Mediation and yoga are unique, culturally, globally, and historically significant activity that deserve a place as an emoji alongside other sports and activities.

### 4.3 Already Representable

There is no easy way to convey the practice of meditation or yoga using existing emoji. You could devise clever workarounds to convey the concept of zen,<sup>23</sup> but none of the currently represented activities translate well. They're all very active and frantic — the exact opposite of yoga and meditation.

### 4.4 Logos, Brands, UI Icons, Signage, Specific People, Deities

While mediation and yoga have origins in religion, meditation and yoga are often practiced secularly and would not be giving preferential treatment to any religion over another. There are no copyright issues or issues referencing anyone historic or living.

### 4.5 Transient

Meditation and yoga have been practiced for thousands of years; yoga has existed in its modern form for over 150 years; these activities have demonstrated more staying power than most of the sports already represented in the emoji set, like BASKETBALL or MAN WITH BALL.<sup>27</sup> With their rich, lengthy history, yoga and meditation can hardly be considered transient practices.

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<sup>27</sup> [“History of the Basketball.” NBA. Web. 26 Sept. 2016.](#)