British Wheel of Yoga Calls Time on “Puppy Yoga”

Friday 6 November, 2026

The British Wheel of Yoga BWY, the National Governing Body for yoga in England and Wales, urges yoga teachers, venues and event organisers to steer clear of using young animals for commercial entertainment.

Despite growing animal-welfare concerns, an outright ban in Italy and a proposed ban in the Netherlands, puppy yoga remains a commercial wellness trend in the UK. BWY believes the practice is inconsistent with yoga’s core principles, particularly *ahimsa*, or non-violence and compassion towards all living beings.

Diana O’Reilly, Chair of BWY, said:

“While animals, including puppies, can bring people joy and may have a calming effect, their presence in yoga classes can shift the focus from self-reflection to external entertainment.

“Yoga is an ancient discipline that cultivates mindfulness, concentration and deep introspection. Ahimsa is one of its founding principles. That principle requires us to consider not only students’ experience, but also the welfare, comfort and natural developmental needs of the animals involved.

“Young puppies need substantial sleep, quiet, safe spaces, access to water and the freedom to withdraw from interaction. Evidence and expert concerns raised around puppy yoga indicate that these basic needs may not always be met, with puppies potentially exposed to prolonged handling, noise, unfamiliar environments and disruption to rest.

“Sleep deprivation and stress are not acceptable costs of entertainment. Describing such activity as ‘socialisation’ does not make it beneficial for the puppies concerned.

“For these reasons, BWY does not support puppy yoga or other commercial yoga and wellness activities that use animals primarily for entertainment. We encourage yoga teachers, venues and event organisers to avoid activities involving puppies, kittens, goats, rabbits or other animals where the animal’s participation is driven by commercial appeal rather than genuine welfare need.”

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About BWY

The British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) is committed to sharing yoga’s transformative power and rich heritage through events and education. Guided by yoga’s principles and traditions, BWY’s mission is to enrich lives through yoga, increasing accessibility and inclusivity. Established as a registered charity in 1965 and recognised as the National Governing Body for Yoga by Sport England and Sport Wales, BWY serves more than 5000 members and is supported by a 100-strong local volunteer network and a small central team.

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Scan Me:

Company Contact:

British Wheel of Yoga

T. 07843389985
E. communications@bwy.org.uk
W. https://www.bwy.org.uk

Additional Contact(s):
Natalie Lyndon

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