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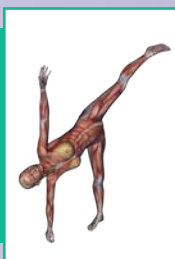
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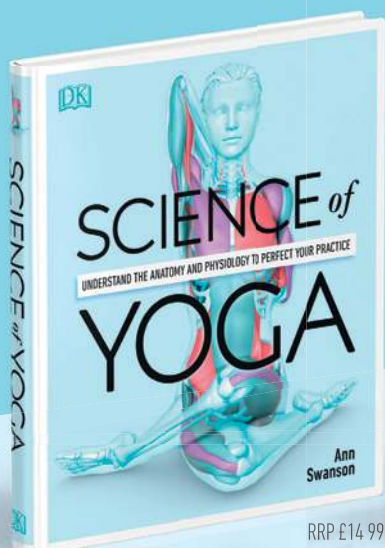
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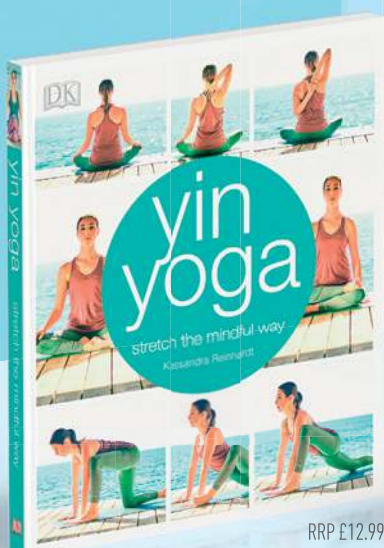
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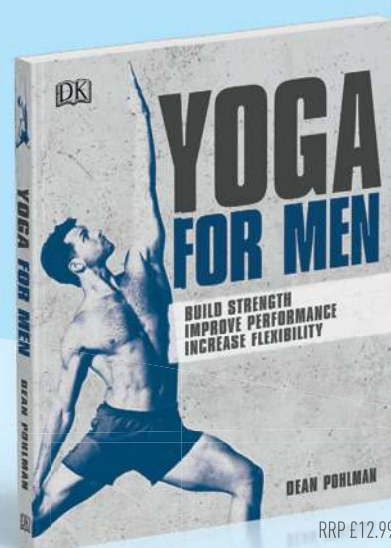
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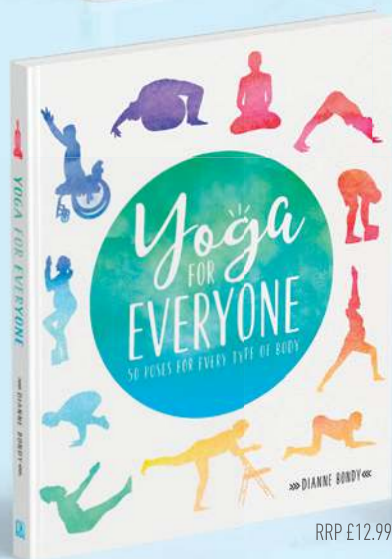
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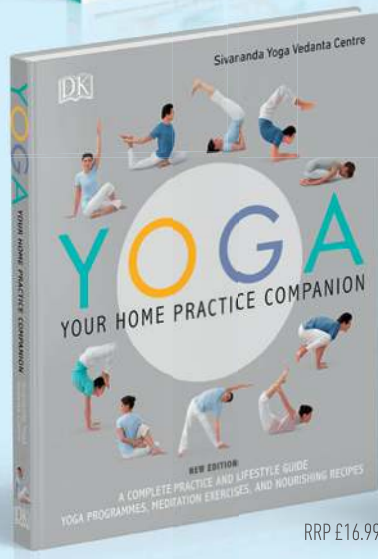
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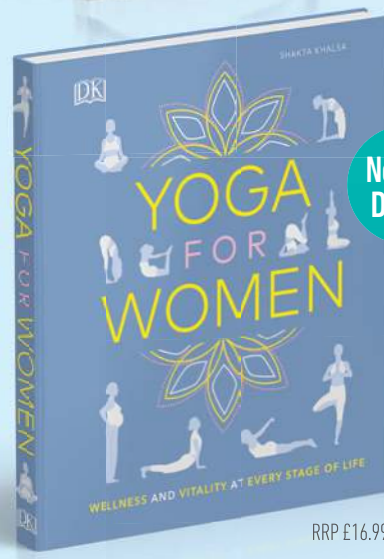
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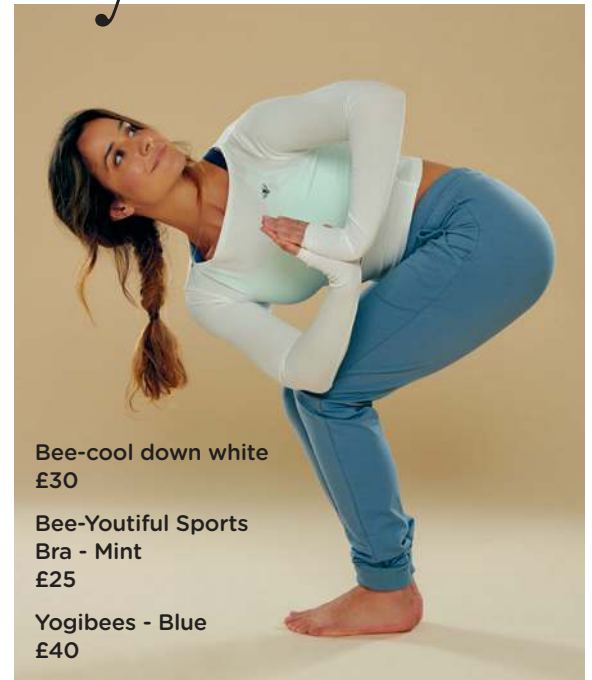
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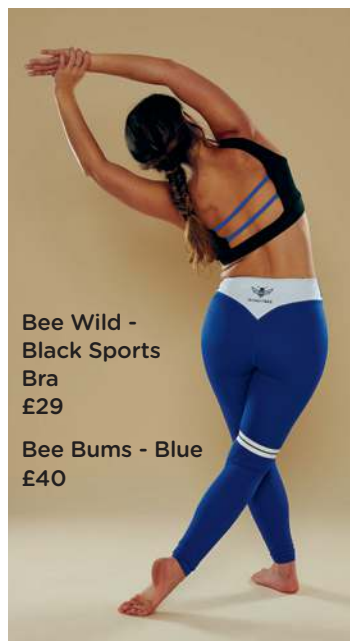
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Prime Impact, Park House,
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Earls Colne, Colchester
Essex. CO6 2NS
Tel: 44 (0) 1787 224040
info@primeimpact.co.uk
ommagazine.com

Chief Editor:

Martin D. Clark
martin@ommagazine.com

Designer:

Tom Sanderson

Art Director:

Emily Saunders

Advertising Manager:

Sara Stant 44 (0) 1787 224040
sara@ommagazine.com

Marketing

Jane Lambert

Photography & Videography:

Tomasz Jakusz & Alana Martin

Food Creative Team:

Shaun Warner

Subscriptions & Back Issues:

Hannah Allen 44 (0) 1787 224040
hannah.allen@primeimpact.co.uk

Publishing Director:

Keith Coomber

Managing Director:

Julie Saunders

Licensing:

Bruce Sawford 44 (0) 1280 860185
Bruce@BruceSawfordLicensing.com

Accounts:

Yolande Arnold

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for OM Yoga Issue 102

Jenna is wearing Bandit Bee (banditbee.co.uk)

Welcome



Welcome to this bumper November issue of OM Yoga & Lifestyle magazine, Britain's biggest and best newsstand yoga title.

We've got so much yoga to squeeze in this month so we thought we'd expand the magazine to bring you even more good vibes — that's right, this one is a whopping 164 pages (sorry Mr/Ms Postman if you have to deliver it through the door!).

Inside, you'll find everything you need to keep your practice fresh, fun and fabulous this month, from yoga and meditation through to healthy recipes, cool new kit, inspirational people and lots more.

That includes an in-depth report on yoga for the menopause. Yoga's magic can work its wonders in all sorts of ways for people and there's mounting evidence to suggest that a regular practice can help in managing some of those menopause symptoms.

If you want inspiration, check out some of our profiles this month. They include Teen Yoga founder Charlotta Martinus (OM Meets), who's opening up yoga to more and more teenagers, and Cliff Barber (OMFM), a yogi who combines his passion for mathematics with mandalas.

For adventure seekers, check out some of the sensational imagery in our travel section this month, where we showcase some of the sights of northern Colombia, one of yoga's secret destinations.

Closer to home, we've got a studio guide to London, where you'll find 10 of the capital's finest yoga establishments. Go on, break out of your comfort zone, and go check them all out. Each one offers a unique but equally awesome experience.

Enjoy the read...and enjoy the ride: life is either a yoga adventure or nothing (to misquote Helen Keller). Have an amazing month, folks.

Martin



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OM in 30 seconds



It's time to embrace your Pigeon pose with this gentle hip mobility series with the awesome Adrian Molina of Warrior Flow and online video portal Omstars. Stretch and release to ease your way through life. **Catch The Pigeon, Page 34**

It's official: London is the yoga capital of the world...well, here in the West, at least. Inside, we've got 10 amazing studios where you can find your flow and follow your bliss in the heart of the city. Get it OM!

Yoga London: Studio Guide, Page 64



Travel or yoga alone brings so much expansion and enrichment into your life. Combining the two amplifies your personal growth and development in ways you never imagined. Find out how inside.

Land Your Dream Yoga Job, Page 140

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See page 32

om Competition



Win A Free Menopause Retreat

See page 103

Contributors



Colleen Grady

Colleen is a yoga teacher, lifestyle blogger, wellness warrior, jetsetter, bohemian fashionista and soul searcher. She has traveled to 37 different countries and has studied or taught yoga in eight of them. In this issue she writes the article Land Your Dream Yoga Job (in the Teacher Zone). She is always looking for a new adventure, a challenge for personal growth, and a hip outfit. You can find her on Instagram at @mindbodycolleen or visit her website: mindbodycolleen.com



Neil Seligman

Neil is passionate about witnessing the unfolding of human potential and the pursuit of excellence. The founder of The Conscious Professional, a qualified life coach, Usui and Karuna Reiki Master, he has been practicing and teaching mindfulness meditation for 20+ years. As an artist, his Soul Portrait photography has been exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic and he teaches workshops on mindfulness worldwide. His new book, Conscious Leadership: Reveal Your Potential. Inspire Excellence — 20 Thought-Provoking Lessons, is out in November (neilseligman.com)



Nicky Clinch

Nicky is a transformational coach, spiritual mentor, speaker, entrepreneur and founder of the Warrior Woman movement. It is her purpose in life to empower women to become their most authentic and aligned selves, knowing that everything they need is already within them. In this issue, Nicky writes the article Feed Your Mind. In it, she suggests that feeding your mind to stay motivated and inspired is just as important as feeding your body with good, wholesome nourishing foods. For more information visit: nickyclinch.com

Regular contributors:

Claudia Brown, Paula Hines, Meg Jackson, Victoria Jackson, Sabi Kerr, Jill Lawson, Deb Mac, Kiki Morriss, Julia White

Words of wisdom

"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom"

Anaïs Nin

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My secret place

Yogi: Amy Lee

Photographer: Nabila Soeria

Location: Law Street Beach,
San Diego, CA, USA

Law Street Beach is a local gem tucked away in a residential neighbourhood in sunny San Diego, in southern California. "My favourite yoga spot is in the grassy area that overlooks the rocky cliffs and beautiful beach," yogini Amy Lee tells OM. "This place is special to me because it was one of the first places I taught yoga to my peers during my yoga teacher training. Needing a certain amount of practice hours teaching, I gathered my co-workers and since we all love the beach, it was easy to agree on this spot for a class." It is also the same beach where she tried surfing for the first time. "Climbing down the cliffs to the sand, with a surfboard in hand, is the epitome of SoCal vibes!"





N@maste

Love OM magazine and want to tell the world? Here's your chance



Body positive

Bodies come in all shapes and sizes, and so do minds. I long for a day where everyone's body is accepted for what it is: a machine that does an amazing job of getting us about. If it works, we marvel at it whatever the size without judgement; if it doesn't work, we support each other whatever the size without judgement. We've got a long way to go to achieve it, but things like the Body Positivity blog and open conversations are a huge stepping stone in the right direction.

Sally, by email



Yoga legs

Thank goodness for yoga! I have suffered from Restless Legs Syndrome (or the sensory neurological condition Willis-Ekbom, to give it its fancy medical definition) for 20 years (apparently one in 10 UK adults are sufferers). Horrific hours spent agitated in bed like a demented Irish Riverdance performance; nothing short of nightly torture, which has had its toll on me, both physically and mentally. Heat, cold, walking, massage, painkillers, TENS machines, CBD oil, vitamin D, iron — the remedies I've tried in desperation are endless. But with half an hour of yoga practice before bed, I can get my body where it needs to be to allow me that precious window of opportunity to fall asleep. Yoga — and OM magazine — have become an essential part of my life. I feel strongly this is an important message to pass onto your readers. Huge thanks for a mint magazine.

Andrea, by email

omline



Sunday morning planning for the week ahead..... these books are beautiful

connectedheartyyoga



Great article in the latest copy of OM Yoga & Lifestyle Magazine with reasons to visit our local yoga studio. I was too petrified for a very long time to venture beyond the doors of any studio, far too concerned about not fitting in, not being able to 'do it' and not being 'good enough'. I know I'm not alone in this.

Truth is, the best of these studios are so friendly and welcoming and there's really no need to be anxious to the point where you won't go. As soon as I'd done it - it felt great! The hardest part was the first class and now I can't keep away from some of my favourites! (When time allows!) Check out the magazine for the article ...or you can borrow mine! Have a great day!

uniqueyogalincs

Keep in touch



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A long-term practitioner and now teacher, yoga was a source of great comfort after Cari Moskow was diagnosed with breast cancer a year ago

Why did you start yoga

I signed up for yoga in college because I was curious. I loved my teacher because she seemed so zen and she required that we write in a journal every day which I still have. I remember falling asleep in savasana at the end of class. I asked a friend who took the class with me: "Are we supposed to fall asleep?" Years later I was living in NYC and my acting teacher also suggested I join a yoga class. I took his advice and soon yoga became part of my routine.

How has yoga changed your life

Yoga has brought me peace and allowed my true self to shine. I began to listen to that voice within instead of searching for answers or missing pieces in my life. I was a regular at a studio in Wilmington, NC and one of the owners asked me to join the next training explaining that she thought I would love teaching yoga, especially since I was a performer it would be natural for me. I signed up and after I graduated, I started teaching my own classes. My stepdad passed away while I was in teacher training, and I am so thankful I was in a loving nurturing environment during that time. Yoga saved me again when I received my breast cancer diagnosis a year ago. It helped me stay grounded, keep my nervous system calm, and helped



NAME: CARI MOSKOW

AGE: 37

OCCUPATION: YOGA INSTRUCTOR & ACTRESS

YOGA YEARS: 18

me keep hope and faith. I designed a restorative yoga sequence that I practiced daily during chemotherapy and months after as I continued to heal. It is now on my website and YouTube channel as a donation-based yoga video.

Favourite yoga haunts

My feet in the sand and the sun shining on my face. I love practicing yoga on the beach. I could be alone, with one other person or in a large class. I feel most connected to the earth with my toes in the sand.

Best yoga moment

My teacher training graduation. It was very special and we had a flying wish ceremony manifesting our dreams. We wrote on the base, and lit the flying paper on fire and then watched it dance around the room. I still have the paper I wrote on and opened it recently. The dreams I wished for have come true. Realising that was also a best yoga moment.

Anything else

I would love to share my Restore Me Yoga Video. You will find it on my homepage on yogaonwithcari.com. I shot that video a few months after I finished chemo so my hair looks a little crazy. I lost 60% of my hair and you can tell in that video but I also love the rawness of it. I want the video to give others strength and a place for self-love and self-care. It is for anyone going through cancer, a break-up, a tough week, or wanting to take more time for themselves. I didn't start putting myself first until I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I want to share making self-love and self-care a priority with others.

Find the Restore Me Yoga Video at: yogaonwithcari.com





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The female movement

73-year old Ahuva Zeloof is a sculptor with a passion for stone carving — and yoga

This rooftop yoga shoot includes some amazing new yoga-inspired sculptures from talented artist Ahuva Zeloof. The Iraqi-born sculptor, 73, spent her early years in Israel, before moving to London in 1972 with her young family. She's been doing yoga and later teaching it since the 1980s.

The new statues were part of her recent Reflection exhibition, which included 40 new pieces in a variety of media – stone, bronze, glass and alabaster – all inspired by female movement and energy.

Zeloof's approach to her work is similar to one of her favourite sculptors, Rodin, who famously said: "I choose a block of marble and

chop off what I don't need."

Likewise, Zeloof believes each stone or piece of raw material carries a 'story' contained within its dense shell — she need only coax it out with her chisel.

Her passion for yoga has given her an endless source of inspiration too, as well as a deep understanding of human anatomy and movement.

"There is a freedom that you feel when you practice yoga: the body is serene, but there is also movement. The female figure is incredibly versatile and endless in action." ॐ



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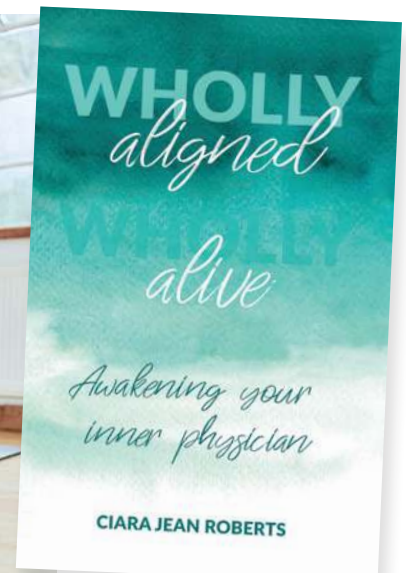


Ciara Roberts CNM Naturopathic Nutrition Graduate and Author

I found my CNM studies comprehensive, enjoyable and affirming and loved my three years of training in Naturopathic Nutrition. CNM is a combination of hopeful endeavour and academic excellence which makes it a very worthwhile experience.

My first book 'Wholly Aligned, Wholly Alive', launched in June 2019, details my journey and includes the tools of nutrition and yoga and how they have helped me. I went into renal failure at 14. I had hospital dialysis treatments until age 21 when I had a kidney transplant. I lost transplant kidney function 3 years ago and whilst waiting for another transplant, I currently support my health with both conventional and natural medicine treatments.

Having been raised by a mother very interested in natural health, I considered a Master's in Nutrition. It was through that process I 'happened' upon the CNM course and it immediately sang out to me.



It literally felt like the course had been designed just for me.

I was still working full-time in private banking credit risk in Canary Wharf when I started at CNM, however, I knew in my heart there was so much more I had to offer in this lifetime. I resigned from banking in 2013, having been supported by an amazing Global Head to go part-time for a year prior – highly unusual in my type of role. When you believe you are supported, this becomes the reality.

I loved the lecturers, whose calibre was excellent, and meeting like-minded people, some of whom became very good friends. The course content and feeling fully

equipped to practise after graduation, were helpful antidotes to my very busy, stressful banking career. I came to really enjoy studying at the weekends.

Having also qualified as a yoga teacher, I set up my own business, Wholly Aligned, in 2012. Wholly Aligned draws upon the wisdom of nutrition and yoga to help people reconnect with mind, body and soul and ultimately awaken their inner physician.

The CNM course enriched my knowledge and, importantly, helped me understand more deeply the intricate nature of therapeutic rapport and how key it is to build trust and confidence with your clients.

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Beware: Yoga!*

Please be careful where you take your Insta photos

This summer, a 23-year-old woman in Mexico fell 82ft off a balcony plunging headfirst and breaking more than 100 bones in her body. She had been attempting a yoga pose on the edge of the balcony and was photographed seconds before the horror fall. At the time of writing she was in a critical condition but alive after many hours of surgery.

It is a warning to us all about the perils of taking photos or selfies in dangerous locations. And it is a message worth heeding in an era where competition for likes and followers online is fuelling the desire for more sensational images.

A few years ago, Rolling Stone magazine published an article entitled, 'Death by Selfie: 11 Disturbing Stories of Social Media Pics Gone Wrong'. We'll spare you the details but the clue as to what happened in each case (11 separate stories) is in the title. None of these stories relate to yoga but there is a common thread in the inherent risk of striving for that perfect Instagram

pose under perilous circumstances.

In the October issue of OM (issue 101) it was pointed out by a kind reader that one of the illustrative photos we had used showed a man performing Side Plank on a railway line. We won't show the photo again here but it's fair to say that we would not recommend performing yoga on a railway track under any circumstances.

It is not just dangerous locations either. We have also come across yoga photography that offends local customs or sensibilities.

One yoga traveller in Asia was quizzed by local police recently after taking photos of herself at a number of sacred sites, which she then posted on her Insta account. The photos offended locals who complained to the police, forcing the yogini to delete her images.

Yogis are a creative bunch, so keep on snapping that asana...but please be mindful of where you are shooting and practicing. And don't succumb to social media pressure to be more daring, more extreme than the others — that's not yoga at all. ॐ

+ What's your AFFIRMATION?

An affirmation for change
and for self-care

*"I am
willing to look
within. When I give
myself what I need, I
have all that I need. I
feel in order to fill up
so that I can fuel
my fire"*

Envy is the call... the call to do something different.
It can get you fired up if you listen to what it's saying to you.

Envy, plus action, equals change and endless possibility.

You still need to do the work.
The hard thing is doing what you know you need to do.

Don't try to push the envy away.
Don't berate yourself for feeling it.
Envy is the light, not the dark; it's shining itself in order for you to do
something about it.

The antidote for envy is self-care.
What do you need?

By Deb Mac (debmac.co.uk)



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A stress-free life

5 ways to live a less stressful life



Unfortunately, stress is a reality of life — bad things happen sometimes. It's not possible to eliminate all stress, yet we can choose how we react to perceived stressful events in different ways. We can also include more of the good things in our life, those things that help us to reduce the impact of any stress and maintain more calm, peace and sanity in our day-to-day life. Here are five ideas to do just that:

1. Do one thing at a time

This is the simplest and best way to start reducing your stress, and you can start today. Right now. Focus as much as possible on doing one thing at a time. Clear your desk of distractions. Pick something to work on. Need to write a report? Do only that. Remove distractions such as phones and email notifications while you're working on that report. If you're going to do email, do only that. Standing in line for a coffee? Do only that, without checking your phone. This takes practice, and you'll get urges to do other things, but stick with it. Just keep practicing and you'll get better at it.

2. Get moving

Do something each day to be active: walk, hike, play a sport, go for

a run, do yoga. It doesn't have to be gruelling to reduce stress. Just move. And have fun doing it.

3. Do something calming

What do you enjoy that calms you down? For many people, it can be the 'get moving' activity (see above). But it could also be taking a nap, a bath, or reading, or even housework. Some people like to meditate, or take a walk in nature. Find your calming activity and try to do it most days.

4. Develop one healthy habit this month

Other than getting active, improving your health overall will help with the stress. But do it one habit at a time. Eat fruits and veggies for snacks. Floss every day. Quit smoking. Cook something healthy for dinner. Drink water instead of soda. One habit at a time.

5. Have a blast!

Have fun each day, even if it's just for a few minutes. Take time to play with the kids, play sports or rediscover board games. Watch funny TV shows. Whatever you choose, be sure to laugh...it's a beautiful thing to do. 🤪

Yoga & Aromatherapy

**Cajeput Oil (Melaleuca
Leucadendron Var. Cajuputi)**



The month of November means that we are now heading towards the season of winter in the northern hemisphere. To help keep us warm and healthy during these colder months, try using some cajeput oil (melaleuca leucadendron var. cajuputi). This fresh and fruity essential oil is robust and spicy and will help keep you well through the winter.

Cajeput comes from the Indonesian word 'kayu puthi' meaning 'white wood' as the bark is very light and it has white and green flowery spikes. It's brilliant for warming the joints and easing any aches or muscle pain.

Add one drop to a carrier oil and massage into the joints to reduce pain or add to a warm bath; soaking in the bath can give greater relief and also help with mobility.

Cajeput oil is good to have around to help with any muscle cramps: just add five drops with five drops of lavender, mix with two tablespoons of coconut oil, massage into the legs and rest well.

In ayurveda, cajeput oil is known as Katupruhi and the scent of purity as it's such a beautifully cleansing and purifying oil that helps remove negativity, cleanse and protect you. Try adding a drop to your diffuser and allow the oil to purify and cleanse the space and help you prepare for the upcoming winter months with its fresh and warming aroma.

Do not use if pregnant or on sensitive skin. Not recommended for asthmatics due to the very high levels of cineole. Never use undiluted.

Julia White is a yoga teacher and aromatherapist (jwhitelondon.com)



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Located in the centre of Knutsford on the historical Minshull Street, is popular yoga brand Carrot Banana Peach's first new retail store since 1999. The store offers a retail experience on the ground floor and a yoga studio on the first floor. It has been fitted with upcycled and refurbished furniture throughout to help showcase the latest ranges of yoga, running and fitness clothing for men and women, all made from plant-based fibres. Now you can not only have a look but also a feel of the highest quality organic bamboo, soybean and organic cotton poplin 'yoga' fitness and running attire. The store is operated by yoga teachers, so you can get first-hand knowledge and advice on what to wear or what yoga class to book yourself onto. You can also book a private shopping session for yourself or a group of people (up to five people) together with a yoga class and organic, vegan-friendly refreshments and snacks afterwards (including vegan wine!).





om loves

Beautiful things for beautiful people



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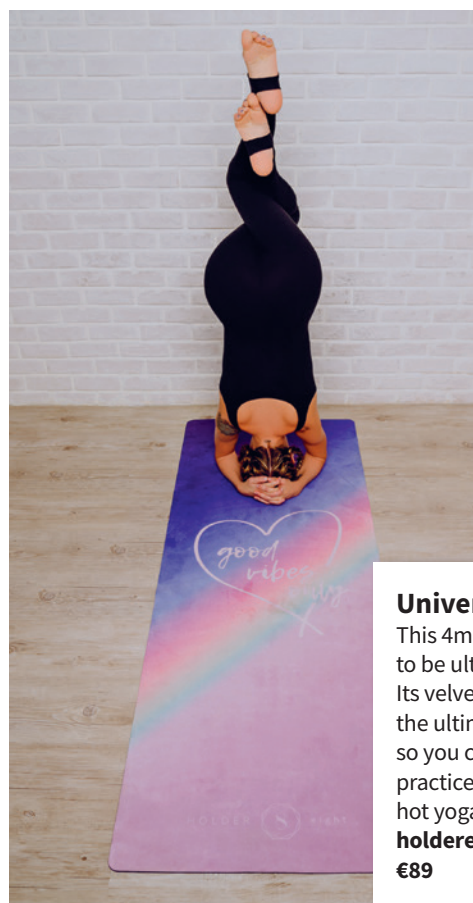
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Gecko Touch Yoga Towel by agoy

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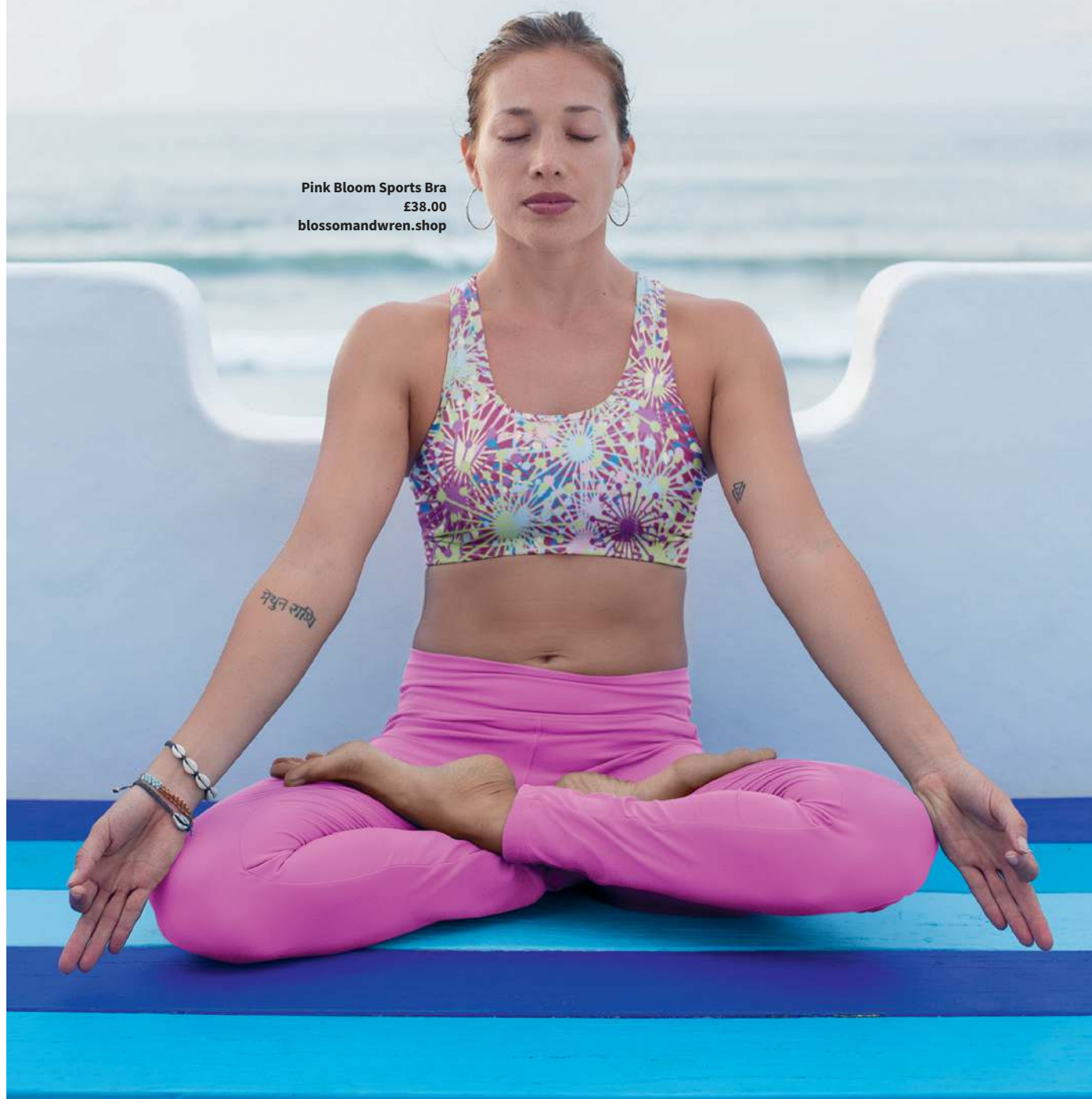
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by Alexia Nascimento



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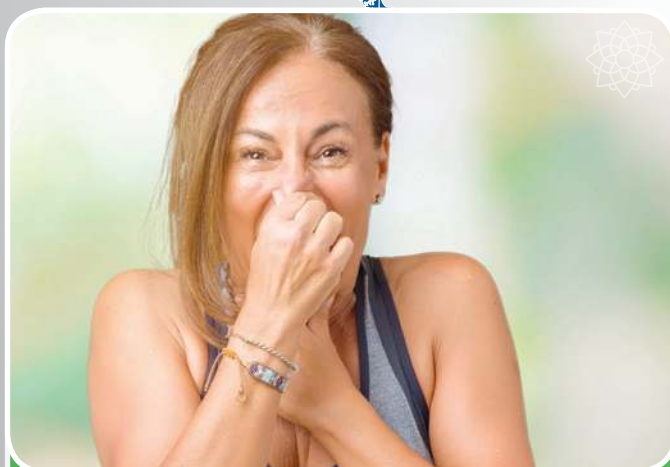


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Planet yoga

Stories from around the weird and wonderful world of yoga



USA: Stinky yoga

A new survey shows that nearly one third of American gym goers and exercisers do not wash their kit before wearing it on a repeat visit to the gym. And guess what? Yogis are the worst offenders. The survey, by the website Treadmill-Ratings-Reviews.com, states that yogis are the least likely to wash their clothes after their practice. According to the survey, 35% of yoga participants admitted that they did not wash their kit after a workout, compared to 29% for cardio, 30% for weightlifting and 33% for swimmers.



USA: Skeleton surprise

If you were wondering where the creativity of yoga product marketing would lead next, then look no further. Some rather bizarre-looking yoga skeleton plant holders were spotted recently, released in time for Halloween. Yep, the macabre yogi-style skeletons include a plant sprouting from their skull. The perfect gift perhaps for any nature-loving goth yogi during the scary season. Just when you thought yoga couldn't get any weirder (though potentially useful for your yoga anatomy class!).



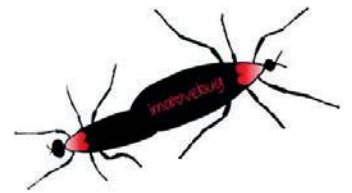
MEXICO: No walls

Dozens of Mexican yoga practitioners took part in a symbolic class recently in protest against the proposed border wall with the USA. Instructor Mauricio Rivera, cited by local press, said the intention was to share the energy and send a message of unity between Juarez and El Paso, referring to the Mexican and Texan cities across from each other on the banks of the Rio Grande. The border wall was a key promise in President Donald Trump's election campaign, but has drawn significant criticism.



UK: Lulu love

UK yogis love a bit of Lululemon. The leggings company — which sells leggings for as much as £138 online — has seen profits and staff numbers increase significantly in the UK in the past year. UK profits increased by 28% in the year to January 31, 2019, while sales jumped 38%. The Vancouver, Canada-based company now employs some 279 staff in the UK, compared with 250 last year. It also opened new stores in Manchester and Guildford and even inside Selfridges' flagship department store on London's Oxford Street.



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INDIA: Yoga talks

Indian PM Narendra Modi said recently that he has had conversations about yoga with almost every world leader on the planet. A keen advocate of all things yoga himself, and a key force for getting the United Nations to adopt an International Day of Yoga (on June 21 each year), Modi says almost all conversations with dignitaries now include a brief chat on yoga. The PM turned action man recently paring up with UK adventurer Bear Grylls to appear on the Man v Wild TV show filmed in India's Jim Corbett National Park.



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Catch the pigeon

Adrian Molina of Warrior Flow introduces Pigeon pose and a gentle hip-mobility series

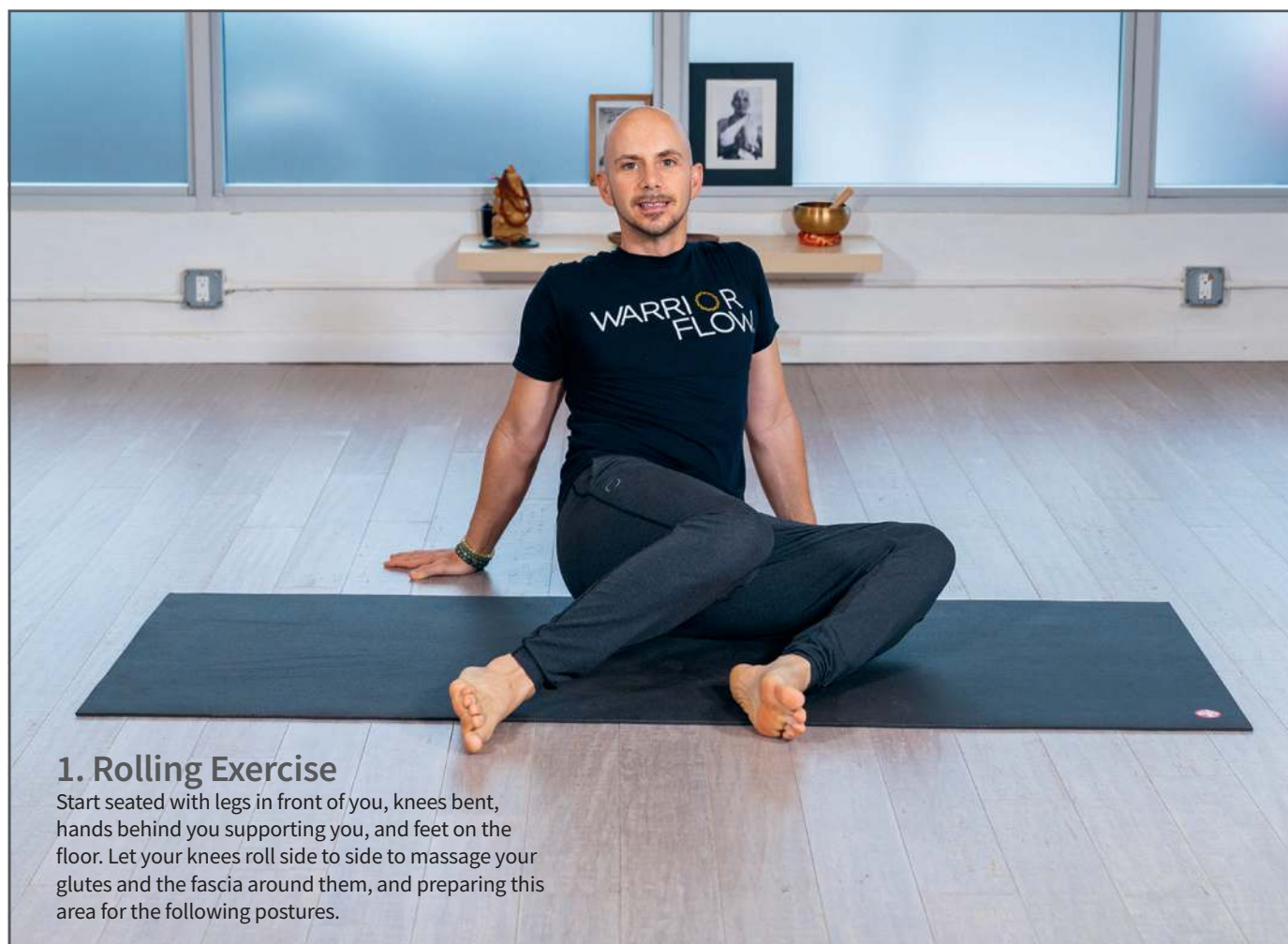
How often do you go to a hip-opening yoga class dreading that the teacher is going to call out Pigeon pose and have you stay there for what feels like forever? Well, unfortunately we won't be avoiding it here either as there are a ton of great benefits to this posture.

But what we're going to focus on is making this posture more accessible, especially for those of you who experience discomfort while doing it. This month we're bringing a bit more attention to Pigeon pose to share some helpful insights, preparatory movements and a variety of options in addition to the more traditional approach to this posture.

Yoga students of all levels and experiences, especially those with active lifestyles outside of the practice such as running and cycling, look for ways to maintain healthy hip mobility and in a lot of cases increase their hip mobility based on symptoms of tightness or

discomfort. Pigeon pose serves a variety of purposes but essentially it helps to stretch and release all of the external (outer) hip muscles and tissues. For some, this release can feel quite intense and for others less so, but overall, this release helps to decrease tension around the hip and assists in decompressing the joint itself, when performed often. Since the quality of the tissues around the hip are so deeply connected to sensations we experience in our lower back, doing this posture, or one of its variations regularly, can also help to provide relief and release of tension in the lower back.

Whether you're a teacher, student or just love to move your body, check out the options below that we've put together. You'll see a variety of approaches and ways in which you can start to work with your current level of flexibility and mobility as well as some tips and supporting movements to release tension around the hip joint. We've also included some modifications that will provide you with the same benefits but that are far gentler on the knees and hips.



1. Rolling Exercise

Start seated with legs in front of you, knees bent, hands behind you supporting you, and feet on the floor. Let your knees roll side to side to massage your glutes and the fascia around them, and preparing this area for the following postures.

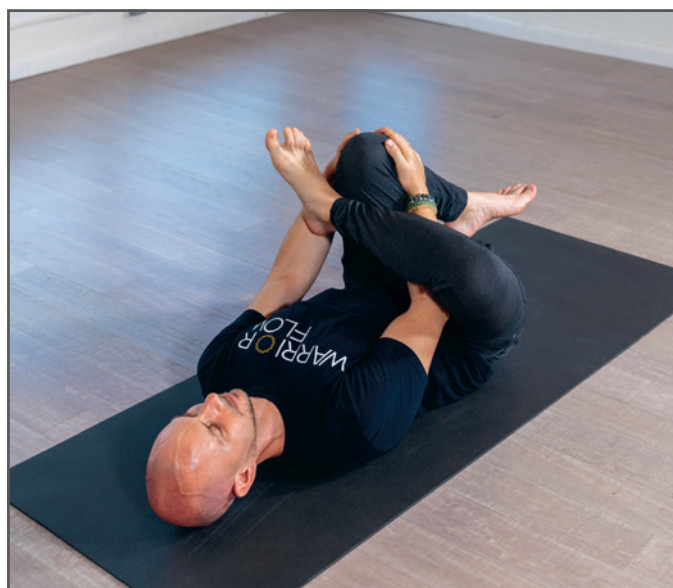
2. 90/90 Stretch

Once the area is warmed up by rolling, proceed to the 90/90 stretch, a seated variation of Pigeon pose, or Half Pigeon. Seated with one leg folded in front of you like pigeon, one folded behind you. Walk the hands forward to the point that you feel a mindful stretch.



3a. Thread The Needle

Do this stretch lying on your back. Cross your right ankle over the left thigh. With your right hand you can gently press the right knee forward. Switch sides.



3b. Thread The Needle

Do this stretch lying on your back. Cross your right ankle over the left thigh. With your right hand you can gently press the right knee forward. Switch sides.

Continue sequence >



4. Thread The Needle With Twist

This stretch has all the benefits of Pigeon pose but without the added pressure on the front knee. Cross your right ankle over the left thigh. Reaching your arms out to the side, use your abdominal muscles to draw the legs closer to you and then gently rolling the legs to the left side to the point that you can hold the right foot with your hand. Allow the right knee to move away from you. Repeat on the opposite side.



5. Modified Pigeon

This is an alternative to Pigeon that is more functional for the front knee because instead of externally rotating the hip you are sitting on your own heel and folding forward like Pigeon pose. You could also use a blanket under the knee, and/or a towel or blanket behind the knee cap to prevent the knee from compressing too much.



6. Traditional Pigeon Pose

Try this pose for one minute on each side. With the previous steps we've prepared you to hold the posture comfortably, so enjoy this beautiful hip opener.

Find out more about Adrian Molina at Warrior Flow (warriorflow.com)

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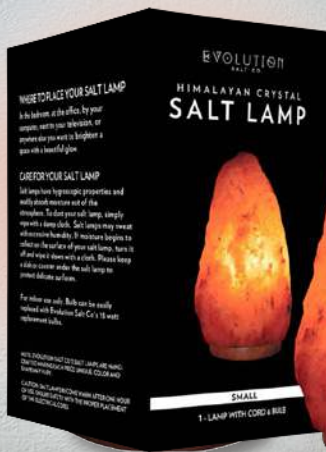
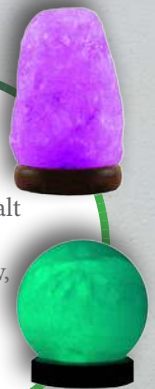


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OM meets...

Charlotta Martinus

Charlotta Martinus is on a mission to introduce teenagers to the wonders of yoga. Here, the Teen Yoga founder tells OM that the need for yoga among younger people has never been more urgent

How did you first get into yoga

While I was pregnant, my sister, who is a GP, ordered me to slow down and start taking care of myself. I was a partying BBC TV producer at the time and didn't know how to slow down.

Who inspired you in those early days

My sister and my first teacher, Swami at the Sivananda Putney centre in 1998, who is still my teacher and also my colleague, because she embodies yoga.

What does yoga give you personally

Internal space, peace of mind; it is my compass north. Therefore, it gives me more meaningful relationships, perspective on what is important as well as respect for my physical and mental health. It is my

confession, my church, my poetry, my inspiration, my rock, my solid point, my income, my flow: it allows me to feed my soul and listen and act from my soul.

Any favourite teachers

My teacher is in India, in Kerala: Swami Govindananda. I only need to be in his presence to understand yoga more deeply.

Describe your teaching style

Intuitive, strong, surprising, respectful, with a focus on how exactly the student in front of me learns and what they need, i.e. student led.

Yoga career highs so far

My only career high is when people get what yoga is: when they embody the wisdom. I

love the moment when I have a group of teens in savasana and when they get up and look at me as if they have just been taken into the temple of their own soul. But I guess having a book published was pretty amazing and also when the courses all started getting booked up over two months in advance, it made me realise that others get the importance of sharing yoga with teenagers.

It was also exciting to discuss more significant news coverage with major national newspapers and having meetings in the House of Lords and the House of Commons about bringing more yoga to young people.

The recent conversations with NHS England have been meaningful and important as well as the EU project which has had a significant



QUICK QUESTIONS

Go-to yoga book

Sivanandas daily letters

Life motto

**Health is wealth, peace of
mind is happiness**

Inspiring quote

**Serve, Love, Give,
Meditate, Realise**

Favourite health food

**Chia smoothie with freshly picked
berries from my garden**

"I am happiest when..."

**...I am sitting by the sea on a
warm summer day with time and
space to myself and my family."**



“Yoga offers an experience of the sacred within one’s own body. The time for yoga is now.”

impact in five countries. More importantly, the Hippocampus Project has been a significant game changer in having several highly experienced academic researchers evaluate the impact of yoga on young people, to produce the first substantial UK research base on yoga – this is essential for the government to get behind any initiatives that we would like to take forward. The research base of yoga up to now is pretty scant.

What was the original idea behind Teen Yoga

I was asked to teach yoga at a local secondary school in Somerset and I failed miserably, so realised I needed to devise a way to reach the students more effectively. I had already taught languages in schools across the UK and Sweden for many years, but found yoga a much trickier subject to teach. I realised they needed the benefits that yoga could bring but they were not accessing them, as I had taught yoga badly. So I thought there must be others in my shoes, who love yoga, love young people and want to serve them to become the best they can be through a yoga practice. I knew we needed to find a pedagogy that reached them deeply and stayed with them, and that would be important and significant for the future of our country and our planet. I realised that if young people could learn to take care of themselves and each other with respect and delight, then we could change the trajectory of the planet and build an optimistic and wise society.

What are the main issues facing teenagers today

Constant, epidemic, organic stress. Schools are hothouses of stress; teachers attempt to motivate students through goal-orientated methodology, creating constant stress from primary school upwards. The teachers themselves seldom have any healthy stress-busting techniques in place but simply hand on their own undigested chronic stress to the students. The online world is constantly beckoning anyone over nine years old, with the buzz in the pocket becoming an intrinsic part of their daily rhythm. Silence and solitude hardly exist for anyone. This impacts focus, concentration, resilience, physical and brain development. It also deeply affects relationships between people, which become transactional and shallow as a result of the easier and more immediate gratification of the online world. There is lots more to say about this, but basically, most mental health issues in any human start before the age of 17 years old and many mental health issues are

caused by lack of solitude, reflection, deep connection and attachment, all of which come with yoga.

Simple tips for teens to bring yoga into their lives

The Mood cards and the Yuva Yoga app were developed in answer to this question. A few simple exercises at home or in an open space for a few minutes daily can make the world of difference in your resilience to stress and other peoples’ opinions of you.

But first of all, become aware of the breath, then breathe deeper, extending the out-breath as much as you can as often as you can, basically sighing. Then, to scare your parents and little siblings, you can start using Darth Vader breath (Ujjayi) which will make you invincible to others. Then you become aware of where you hold tension in your body and release it by stretching those bits.

If you are tired but cannot sleep, then you can lie with your legs up the wall for a few minutes and close your eyes and listen to some calming music.

Advice for yoga teachers trying to entice teens to embrace yoga

Figure out what they need and what they are interested in and start from there. Don’t have your own agenda. Let them lead the way. Always signpost to other sources so that they can find their own way.

What are your plans for Teen Yoga going forward

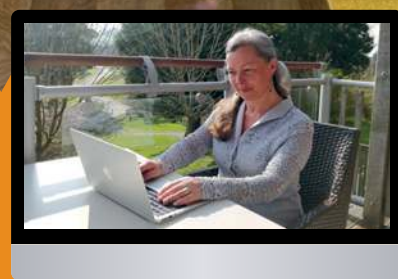
We would like to extend our reach by extending our online service and training up some specifically chosen close allies to share the course in further flung places. There will be another, more practical book published in the coming years as well and we will build on the app so that it can become a really useful tool for young people everywhere.

What do you do when you’re not doing yoga

I love to read, ride, sail and sing. But I’d say 75% of the time I am actively choosing to do yoga, whether it is on retreat, meditation, asana or teaching.

Anything else

We are at a point right now that is completely mature for yoga; many have rejected religion and with it they have lost a spiritual compass. Many feel lost and empty but churches and temples are too restrictive. Yoga offers an experience of the sacred within one’s own body. The time for yoga is now. ॐ



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A 360° overview of... Half Moon Pose (Ardha Chandrasana) With Dr Kiki Morriss

This pose will give you a wonderful sense of balance and alignment, as it strengthens your legs, hips and core

Picture a half moon in the sky, as you hold your limbs on the same plane and focus on each breath.

The benefits of this pose:

- Strengthens and stretches hips, legs and ankles.
- Stretches shoulders and opens chest.
- Develops core stability and strength.
- Improves balance, co-ordination and concentration.
- Lifts mood.

Cautions:

- Modify the pose (as below) if you have any neck discomfort or injury.
- Practice with care if you have any joint or spinal issues.

Variations:

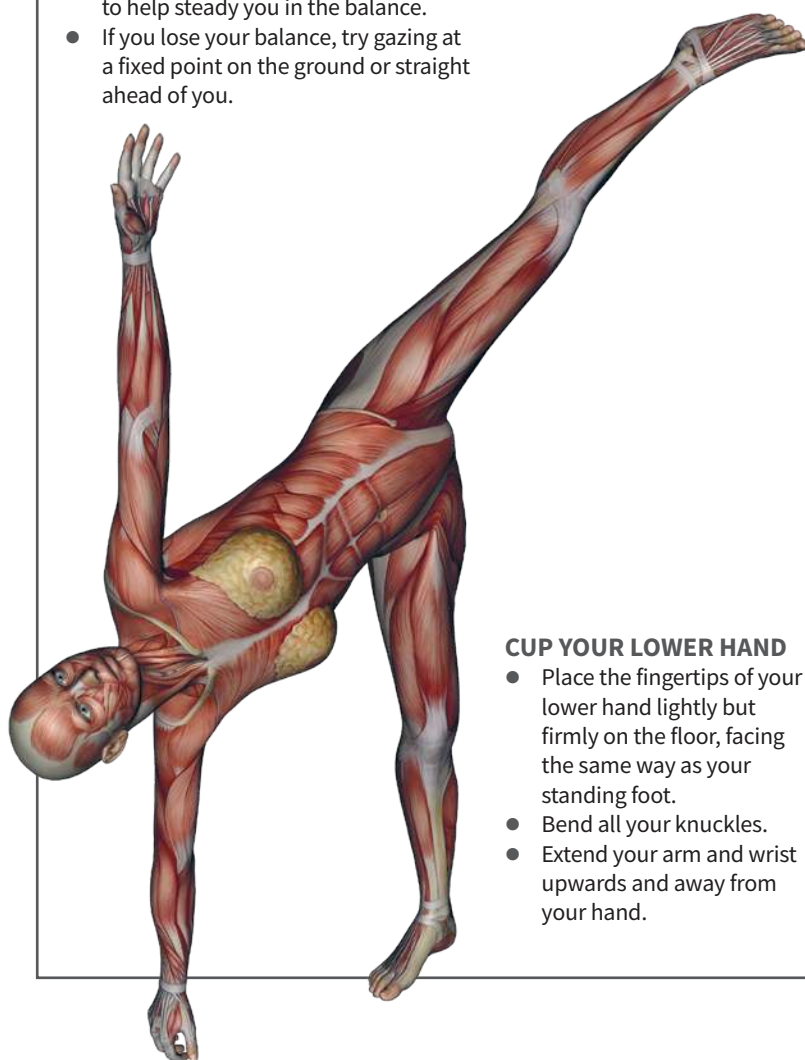
- Place a yoga block under your lower hand if you are unable to straighten your standing leg when your hand is on the ground.
- Practice the pose with the back of your body against a wall. This will help with balance and will give additional support to your back.
- To keep your back leg raised, rest your foot on a support or ask someone to hold it up for you.
- If you have any neck discomfort or injury, keep your gaze directed towards the ground or look straight ahead.
- For an extra challenge, lift your lower hand away from the ground and rest it on your standing thigh.

MOVING INTO THE POSE

- Start in Triangle pose to your right side.
- Place your left hand on your left hip and your right hand on your right lower leg.
- Bend your right knee and place the fingers of your right hand on the ground in a cup shape. Position your hand so it is about 30cm in front of your right leg and in line with it.
- Simultaneously lift your left leg, keeping it extended, straighten your right knee and lift your left arm up. Learn to synchronise this action as you move into the pose with ease and grace.
- Externally rotate the left side of your body back a little, so your hips and shoulders are in one line.

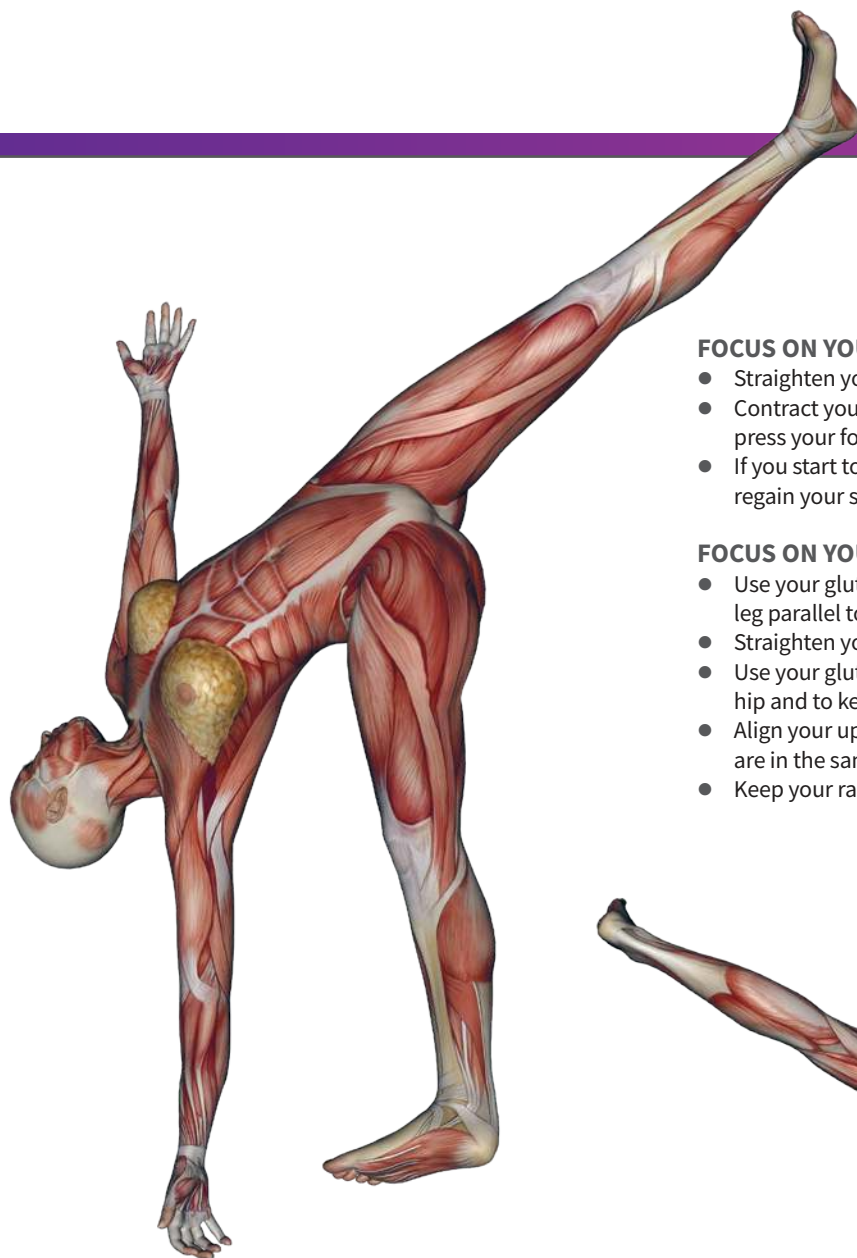
FOCUS YOUR GAZE

- Look up at your raised hand and use your gaze to help steady you in the balance.
- If you lose your balance, try gazing at a fixed point on the ground or straight ahead of you.



CUP YOUR LOWER HAND

- Place the fingertips of your lower hand lightly but firmly on the floor, facing the same way as your standing foot.
- Bend all your knuckles.
- Extend your arm and wrist upwards and away from your hand.



FOCUS ON YOUR STANDING LEG

- Straighten your knee using your quadriceps.
- Contract your gastrocnemius and soleus (calf muscles) to press your foot down and ground the pose.
- If you start to lose your balance, bend your knee to help regain your stability.

FOCUS ON YOUR RAISED LEG

- Use your gluteal muscles and tensor fascia lata to lift your leg parallel to the ground.
- Straighten your knee using your quadriceps.
- Use your gluteus maximus and psoas to stabilise your upper hip and to keep it from moving forwards and backwards.
- Align your upper hip directly above your lower hip, so they are in the same plane.
- Keep your raised foot in a neutral position.

FOCUS ON YOUR TORSO

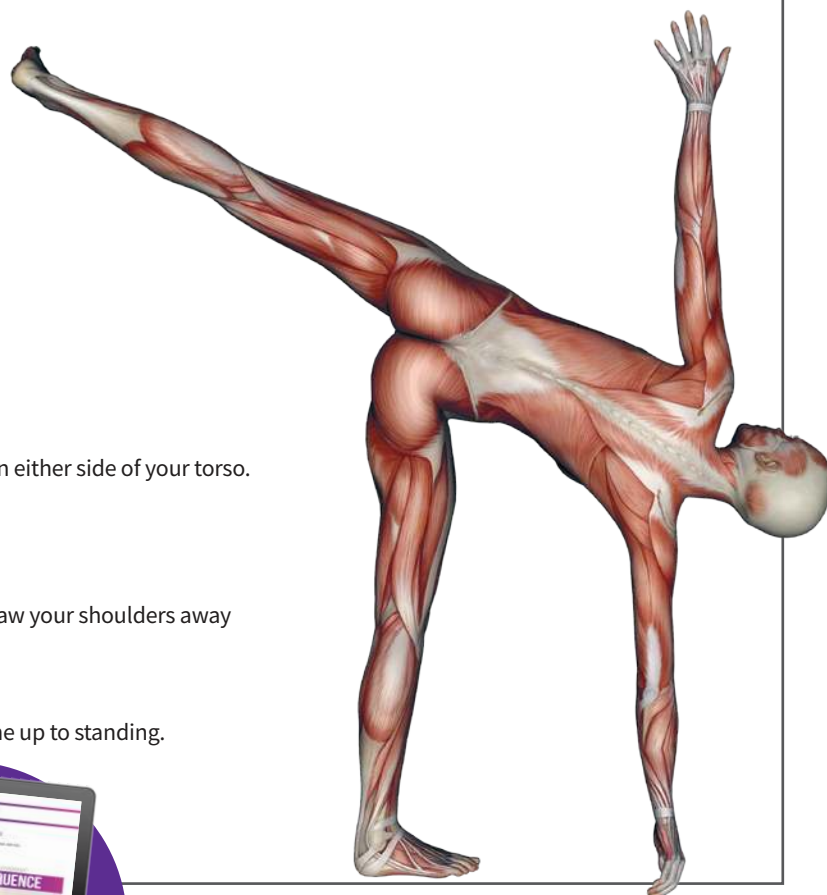
- Lengthen your spine to create equal length on either side of your torso.

FOCUS ON YOUR ARMS AND SHOULDERS

- Extend your arms from your shoulders.
- Use your triceps to straighten your elbows.
- Use your trapezius to open your chest and draw your shoulders away from your neck.

COMING OUT OF THE POSE

- Lower back down into Triangle pose and come up to standing.
- Repeat on the left side.



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Doctor Kiki Morriss is a medical doctor, yoga teacher, yoga therapist and founder of Primrose Hill Yoga, where she teaches adults, children and families. Visit: primrosehillyoga.com or [instagram.com/kikimorriss](https://www.instagram.com/kikimorriss)



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The Body Positivi+y Blog

First-night nerves

How to prepare for that first yoga class if you're not sure that you'll fit in. *By Jane Lambert*

If you're anything like me, thinking about heading along to your first yoga class might fill you with apprehension. In fact, for me, it's not just yoga. I have a general anxiety about anything new, where my brain is kind enough to tell me that people might look and laugh if I even hint at not knowing what's going on. But that's even more true with something like yoga, especially if what you see when you look in the mirror doesn't tally up with what social media tells you is a 'yoga body'.

Here are some tips to help you overcome that initial anxiety and find your place in a yoga class.

1. Wear clothes that make you feel comfortable

We've talked about yogawear on these pages before; it's really important to wear clothes that you feel comfortable. If that means buying top-of-the-range leggings that promise to be breathable and stop you from feeling the sweat, go for it. But if you're most comfortable in a pair of loose trousers and a baggy t-shirt, that's fine too. Don't get too caught up in the idea of the 'perfect' yoga outfit. You want to feel supported, and you need to be able to move in your clothes, and most importantly, you want to feel confident. That means something different for everyone, so find what works for you.

2. Get to the class a little bit earlier

Give yourself enough time to get to your class without rushing in at the last minute. Find a space that suits you: you might want to be right at the front, near the teacher, so you can see exactly how they're demonstrating a pose. Or maybe you'll be more comfortable tucked away at the back of the class, to get the lay of the land and avoid being in front of all the other class members.

3. Take it slow

Big or small, nobody goes to their first class and knows exactly what to do instantly. It's really important to take it slowly and listen

to your body. There may be some poses that you can't quite get the hang of at first, and that's fine. They might even be the poses that you thought looked easy from the outside. Everyone has their own limits, so if a pose doesn't work for you, don't force it. Speak to the teacher about a modification.

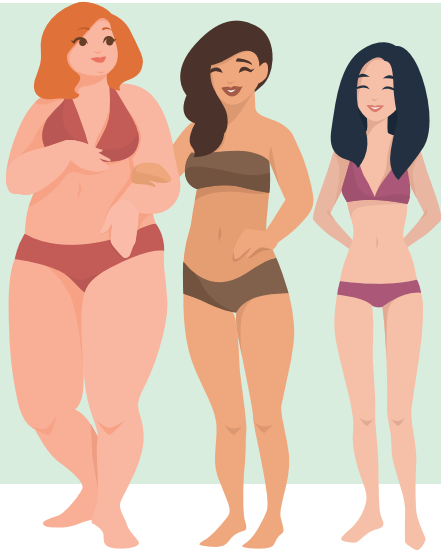
4. Do some research

If you live in a bigger town or city, you might be able to find classes that are specifically designed with body positivity in mind - CurveSomeYoga in London or Curvy Girl Yoga in Bristol, for example. But even without access to classes like this, it's always worth seeking out reviews and feedback of classes that you are able to attend. Find a class that suits you, with the style of yoga you want to practice, and the support from the teacher that you think you'll need. With that in mind...

5. Talk to your teacher

If you're nervous about just rocking up to a class, contact the teacher in advance, and explain your worries. If you're nervous that you'll be the only plus-sized body in the room, tell them that. Chances are: a) you won't be - yoga students come in all shapes and sizes (and remember that Instagram is not the best representation of yoga), and b) the teacher will set your mind at rest about everything. No teacher wants you to feel





“Yoga students come in all shapes and sizes (and remember that Instagram is not the best representation of yoga).”



uncomfortable, they want you to fall in love with yoga the way they have.

6. Try yoga at home first

There's a wealth of online classes available, both free and paid, that means you can try a session in the comfort of your own home before you venture out into the big wide world of real-life classes. This will give you the chance to get used to what it feels like to be on the mat, trying different poses. You'll be able to see what poses feel comfortable, and which ones might need you leaving a little help or guidance. You can also experiment with props - people of all

shapes and sizes can need different pieces of equipment to help them get into and out of poses. If you need something specific, knowing this in advance of attending a class can help to set your mind at rest.

Once you're in the right class, finding your confidence shouldn't be a problem. The time that you spend on the mat each week is perfect for learning to appreciate your body and all that it does. ॐ

Would you like to write about the topic of Body Positivity in yoga? We're looking for more contributions on this topic for 2020. Get in touch: editor@ommagazine.com

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Just do it

Why you need more yoga in your life



Incorporating yoga into your fitness routine is ideal for increasing physical strength and mental wellbeing. Becky Crepsley-Fox shares her top five reasons why more yoga equals more fitness:

The Physical

The comment I hear the most from people who are yet to try yoga is: 'I can't practice yoga; I am not flexible'. Sadly, this misses the point of yoga completely. Yoga isn't about flexibility, although it can lend itself to increasing flexibility. As a form of exercise, it also improves athletic performance, joint mobility and, of course, balance. The physical movement required by yoga practice is also very beneficial for reducing fatigue, and increasing muscle tone, cardio health and spinal posture.

The Mental

Although it seems a strange place to start for mental wellbeing, one of the key reasons yoga is good for your mind is because it stabilises the digestive system. Hear me out: the sequences and flows of movement required when doing yoga, massages internal organs into place, which in turn moves us from flight or fight (sympathetic) to rest and digest (parasympathetic). The deep breaths we take in yoga also help to pull us out of our adrenaline-fuelled lives and into a more relaxed present state. For this reason, yoga works like meditation and mindfulness by reducing stress and anxiety, which in turn lowers the body's heart rate and blood pressure. By this lowering of cortisol hormones in the brain, yoga helps to reduce perceived stress. It's a workout which is inherently mindful, by focusing on the physical asana, keeping balance, engaging your core, breathing in sequences and focusing on flow — the mind has little time to think of anything else.

The Spiritual

I have also heard a lot of people say: 'Yoga: is that where everyone sits in a circle and chants?' Although there are certain branches of yoga where chanting is used as a form of release, in Western culture, this is a part of the practice you won't come across as much. Though, for most, the mindfulness element of yoga does give a sense of spiritual connection to the body. For those that find this reassuring and important to good physical and mental health, there is no better form of exercise.

The Short Term

Many people have the preconception that yoga is slow and boring. Although some yoga is slower, such as Yin Yoga, there are branches that require strength and cardio fitness too. For those looking for a dynamic class, try Rocket or Yogasana, where poses need to be held for five breaths at least — this really makes you sweat! For those looking for a workout to strengthen arms and abs, a Jivamukti or Dharma class is a good place to work to. Yoga doesn't get easier with more regular practice, it only gets more interesting, more dynamic and more challenging as you improve.

The Long Term

Although in the short term, yoga practice lends itself to increased physical and emotional wellbeing, by continuing yoga for long-term gain, you can decrease the risk of future injuries and improve range of motion for joint pain. Yin and restorative classes are good to help ease connective tissue between the muscles as well as to gain more overall flexibility and relaxation. It's important to combine these sorts of classes with the more dynamic ones to give yourself a full-body and mind lift. 🧘

Becky Crepsley-Fox is head of yoga at London studio chain MoreYoga (moreyoga.co.uk)

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Ayurvedic detox: anti-ageing or a myth?

A deeper understanding of the benefits of an ayurvedic detox and pancha karma.

By Zane Zalite



At the core of ayurvedic healing is the prevention of disease through a transformative rejuvenation of the body's cells. The aim of an ayurvedic detox is to restore the doshic balance (prakriti) of an individual. It can be taken through the accelerated path, the

shodana procedure (pancha karma), or via shamana, which is a slower process and is based on herbal medicine, lifestyle and dietary changes, more suitable for those with a weaker physical or mental state. In order to understand the principles behind an ayurvedic detox, a little insight can be helpful to understand what we mean by good health.

What is health?

According to ayurveda, health is defined as when the individual's constitution remains in the given doshic order. This is determined by the agni (or digestive fire); the three doshas (vata, pitta, and kapha) being in equilibrium; the three waste products (urine, faeces and sweat) produced and eliminated normally; the seven tissues (rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja and shukra/arthava) functioning normally; and the mind, senses

and consciousness all working in harmony.

The nature and ratio of doshic balance (vata, pitta and kapha) for each individual psycho-somatic temperament is determined pre-birth, at the time of the fertilisation. When the embryo is formed, our ayurvedic constitution is determined. In simple terms, the balance of doshas in our psycho-somatic constitution is our DNA blueprint; this is our unique doshic order. When this order changes as a result of our lifestyle, it becomes doshic disorder. When doshas are in a state of disorder, the excess of doshas accumulates in the body to potentially lead to disease.

What are toxins?

Our internal environment is governed by doshas. This means our body is constantly reacting to the external environment and its effects on the doshas. In our society, it is possible that any imbalance may start by





repressed emotions. This can then cause our brain to crave unsuitable foods, or lead a lifestyle that may not necessarily be beneficial to our health. Moreover, seasonal changes and stress can also result in the generation of toxins in the body.

This, then, further affects the digestive fire (agni), which is now unable to digest the food we eat fully —and, as a result, undigested foods (ama) or toxins, lodge in our gut. This can effectively pollute the whole body with toxins, or ama, carried around through the blood, lymph, liver and then form in our muscles, bones, tissue and so on. It means our brain and body is now effectively being built from this waste material. Over time, this toxic material starts slowing down our vital force (prana) and we feel lethargic, tired, irritated or depressed. It reduces our immunity (ojas) and our cellular metabolic energy production (tejas) which may result in disease.

The key to health, however, is in our own hands:

- To stop the further accumulation of the toxins through a proper diet and lifestyle
- To eliminate toxins through an ayurvedic detox
- To build new healthy cells to strengthen our immunity and to rejuvenate the body (rasayana)

What happens during an ayurvedic detox?

A pancha karma is a full and comprehensive ayurvedic detox. It is an individualised treatment plan which uses external body treatment modalities, internal ayurvedic medicine and some specific cleansing methods which might include:

Virechana: induced therapeutic purgation
Basti: medicated enema or colonics
Nasya: elimination of toxins through the nose
Rakta mokshana: detoxification of the blood

Although pancha karma is often thought of as an entire procedure, it really is only one part of a group of therapies which belong

to the group of cleansing procedures called shodana. These cleansing methods are used to address specific health complaints and can be used on their own or collectively, in conjunction with other body treatments, diet and herbal medicine.

It will always start with a preparatory stage where the body is prepared for the main cleansing procedure. It can last between three to seven days. One of the main cleansing procedures will also last approximately seven days.

After the main cleansing procedure is carried out, the final anti-ageing or rasayana stage can start with a new lifestyle programme, featuring nutrition and herbal medicine to strengthen and boost immunity and cellular metabolic energy. During this transformative process of body cleansing it is necessary to take plenty of rest so the body can execute these major tasks. A mono diet of kitchari (a seasoned mixture of rice and daal) is recommended and there is a restriction on any stimulants, cold drinks and food, sugar, drugs, alcohol and dairy products. This is necessary in order to support the digestive fire, aid digestion and the elimination of toxins.

How a detox can help

Pancha karma is a very special, customised ayurvedic practice undertaken by a trained practitioner. It is carried out individually for each person with their own unique constitution and specific imbalances in mind, thus it requires close supervision and observation. Only after an in-depth consultation with an ayurvedic practitioner can a customised pancha karma detox plan be designed and planned.

People undergo a full ayurvedic detox for many reasons and ailments, such as chronic migraines, low back pain, joint conditions, hormonal conditions, metabolic conditions, sinus problems to name a few. The best way to then maintain health equilibrium is by following preventative ayurvedic rituals on a daily basis and also to plan in seasonal cleanses in order to balance the doshas. ॐ

Zane Zalite is an ayurvedic practitioner and the founder of Shakti Veda Spa (shaktivedaspa.co.uk)

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Yoga VS stress

The movement of yoga to the West and its increased relevance in today's eco-conscious, sedentary world. *By Paula Ahlberg*

Pick up any magazine or health publication and you are bombarded with an epidemic of stress-related illnesses. From insomnia, to depression, through to full-blown 'burn out'.

Having worked in first the health and fitness industry, and then, in the last 20 years, as a yoga instructor, I have never seen so many stressed and anxious clients coming to the yoga room. It has prompted a rise in interest in not just yoga, but Eastern healing too.

Eastern medicine treats an individual as a whole, rather than purely addressing the symptoms. Ayurveda means 'the science of life' or 'the wisdom of life'. As well as addressing the whole constitution of an individual, it examines their diet and lifestyle, often incorporating yoga as part of the treatment.

Western science is catching up with what Eastern philosophy has known for thousands of years. Yoga has the capacity to change our brain. And the more control we have in our mind, the more power we have in life.

Science research

There is ongoing research into this. Sat Bir Khalsa, a professor of medicine at Harvard's medical school, is conducting research into the effects of yoga on stress. He identifies four main subjects and their effects on the individual:

Firstly, the physical postures themselves, along with breath work, for our overall good functioning.

Self-regulation is the **second**: the ability to control the stress and emotional response, and ultimately, our resilience to stress. This is what psychologists know is the key to managing stress.

Thirdly is the cultivation of mind/body awareness. This is not only about observing what is going on in the body, but also the flow of thoughts. This is the practice of mindfulness meditation, which can change our behaviours in a positive way.



The **fourth** is about reaching deeper transcendental states, which help us to gravitate towards the positive, and enhance the meaning and purpose of life.

Yoga healing

Yoga has a great capacity to help people heal and overcome life's challenges; this, in part, explains its huge growth in modern times. As Desikachar states: "The goal of yoga is to encourage us to be a little better than we were before".

Pranayama can also help bring stress under control. Through taking fewer breaths, prolonging every breath, we can help to reduce blood pressure, which is governed by the sympathetic nervous system, the messenger to our stress response.

Breathing, together with regulating our thoughts through the challenges of asana practice, is the primary focus in traditional yoga classes.

Other things, such as mindfulness, make it a highly potent therapeutic tool.

“Yoga has a great capacity to help people heal and overcome life’s challenges; this, in part, explains its huge growth in modern times.”

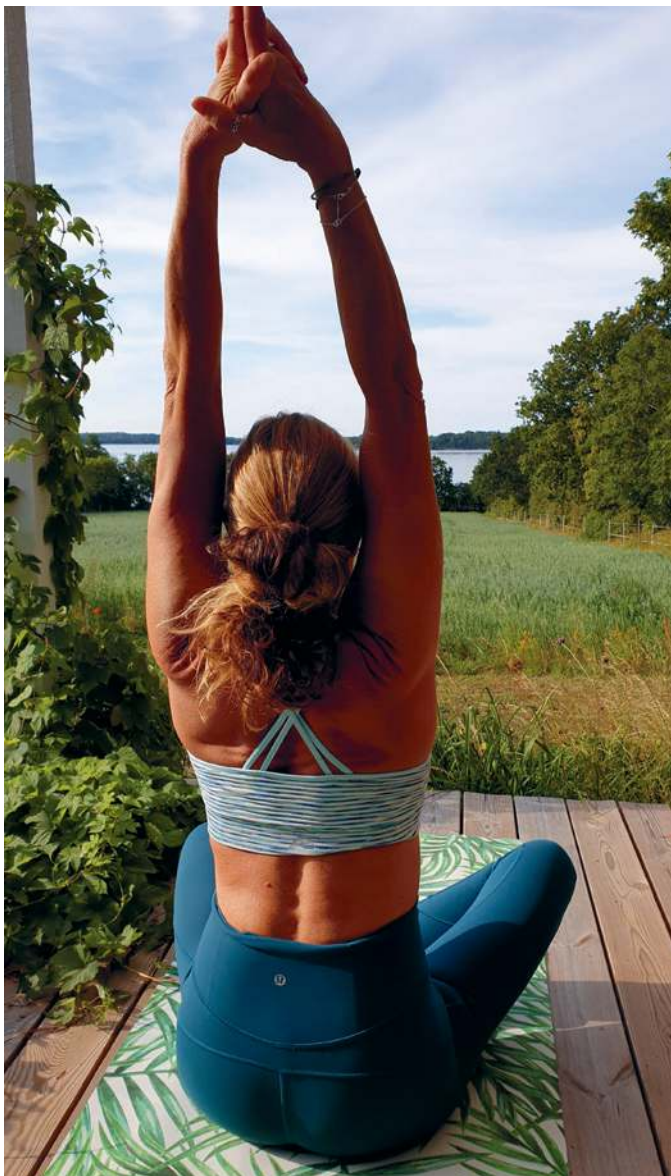
Living in harmony

There are other factors drawing people to yoga too. As well as coming to yoga to ease stress and anxiety, many of us today are concerned in some way about our planet.

Yoga, in part, began as a reaction against the growth of the urban environment, the enslavement and exploitation of animals, as well as the damming of our rivers thousands of years ago. This was when human beings shifted from living aligned and in harmony with nature, to wanting to control it.

These factors each play a role in the growth of yoga and other ancient practices today. The real juice of yoga is to get to know who you truly are and to live in harmony with nature. In 2019, it is also our friend in the ongoing fight against modern-day stress. ॐ

Paula Ahlberg is the founder of Wellbeing Warehouse (wellbeing-warehouse.com)



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Teens of colour

A new retreat in the USA celebrating youthful diversity in yoga

We're all about inclusion and diversity here at OM — and the belief that yoga is for all, no matter what age, size, ability or colour — so this retreat in the USA really caught our eye.

The 2019 retreat season for Inward Bound Mindfulness Education (IBME) recently concluded with its first ever 'Teens of Colour Retreat'.

The inaugural event, which attracted 22 teens, had a real family feel, according to Jylani Ma'at Brown, retreat manager, ideal for encouraging one and all, regardless of background.

"This retreat felt like the best family reunion. The one where you meet your long lost relatives, distant cousins, favourite aunty, crazy uncle, who end up helping you understand the dynamics of your family and bring you home to yourself."

The IBME organisation is a non-profit mindfulness-based group with activities both in the USA and in the UK. It offers mindfulness programmes for youth and the parents and professionals who support them.

Anthony 'T' Maes, lead teacher, said the Teens of Colour retreat provided a safe space for teenagers to try a whole host of new healing therapies and experiences.

"We created safety and trust and welcomed all parts of everyone. We were held within the web of the forest — drums, ancestors, empowerment, dance, deep silence, community, laughter, tears, forgiveness, and appreciative joy. Through mindful listening (internally and externally), we investigated and practiced self-care and community-care, which is a revolutionary act."

Dawn Scott, also a lead teacher, hailed it as a unique environment for teenagers as well as the supportive community working behind it.



"It's not every day that one gets to work in beloved community with adults who are wholeheartedly dedicated to nurturing young people, giving them a space to fully be themselves — to laugh deeply and be nourished by their music and culture. Shout out to all the mentors, cooks, retreat manager, and teachers who embodied trustworthiness and deep care!"

For the teen participants themselves, it was a deep learning experience. Travis Spencer, a mental health coordinator, said the benefits of such retreats could be profound. "I witnessed the awakening of our youth. This awakening is occurring when our society needs young peace warriors with hearts as lanterns of mindfulness and light. Mindful living

protects us and helps us go in the direction of peace. With the support of friends in the practice, peace has a chance." ॐ

Interested in finding out how you can contribute to making this retreat possible in the future, to make an impact and to support our future leaders? Find out more at: ibme.com



LIFE CHANGING

Here's what parents and participants had to say about the Teens of Colour retreat:

"This experience was life-changing and will forever inform the way I navigate my life." Lance S, Teen Participant

"My teen had an amazing experience. He has in the past been very reserved and kept to himself. He is a lot more interactive and wants to connect more. We are loving this experience for him and our family." Asheika B, Parent

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Find your balance again and get your life back on track with a little good karma.

By Linda Gyecsek

Have we just forgotten what it feels like to be in balance and connected to our higher self (Atma)? It certainly seems that way for many people in this modern-day world. Yoga can help us understand when our body is out of balance and when low-level stress responses are in play. If we have forgotten what it feels like to be in balance we may have become used to certain bodily tensions, headaches or fatigue and view them as 'normal', rather than as a sign our body is under stress. We might think certain sleep patterns, food cravings or dependencies are 'normal' for us – again, it's because we have become used to these habitual behaviours. Further on, this can all lead to burnout, illness or deeper experiences of anxiety and depression.

So what's the solution? It means finding the answers within, rather than searching for them outside of yourself. Our consumer society teaches us to look outside ourselves in order to figure life out. We watch movies and TV shows, we let ourselves be conditioned and guided by other people, we become trapped in games, iPhones and technology. But buried beneath all the layers of collected data, history and emotions is our authentic self and it only takes some light awareness to begin to lean in to our inner truth, rather than the opinions of the media, our ego and/or the wider society.

Balancing act

To achieve and maintain positive health, our material life and spiritual life should be balanced. Again, this is where yoga comes in. The yogic lifestyle is a combination of various yoga strands, such as Karma, Hatha, Ashtanga and Bhakti Yoga. It requires a balanced, disciplined lifestyle consisting of the following components:

Yoga Practice balancing body and mind with asana (yoga poses) and pranayama (breath work) for increasing and balancing Pranic (life force) energy.

Meditation for the ultimate balanced mind.

Mantras: positive, focused mind training, building strong relationships with the universe, or the 'source', or 'god' (whatever you want to call it).

From the Karma Yoga perspective, disconnection and even disease can arise when actions are motivated by material and selfish desires. Often, our actions are at the root of our mental state and behaviour. Your action makes your mind!

Good health and balance, therefore, is also achieved through selfless service: not expecting any results from one's actions, working without ego. If you want to control your mind, emotions and lifestyle... it all starts with good karma.

What to start

If that's all a little too confusing then here are some simple ideas to get you started in disconnecting from the noise, rediscovering your true self and regaining life balance, both inside and out:

- Go and embrace the beauty of the nature. Make plans to go hiking, swim in the ocean, have a picnic at the park. Nature is a powerful teacher of presence. Notice the natural flow and the peaceful environment.
- Join a yoga studio, be part of the local yoga community. Get to know the healing support of it.
- Be aware of your emotions instead of avoiding or repressing them. Allow them to come to the surface and release them through crying, screaming into a pillow, or moving your body. ॐ



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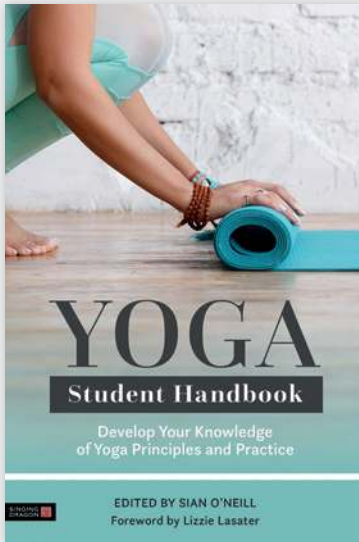
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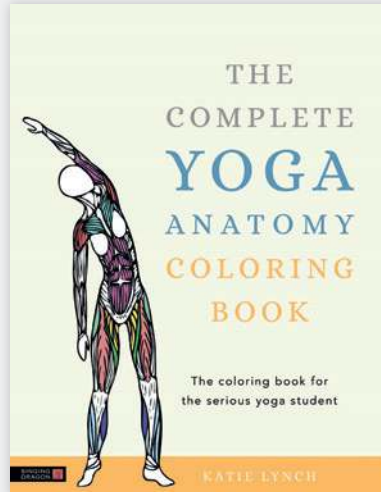


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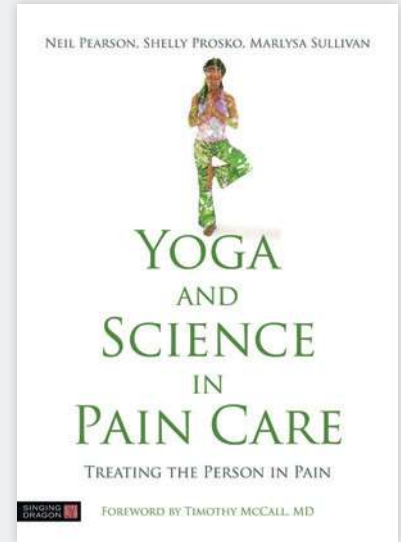
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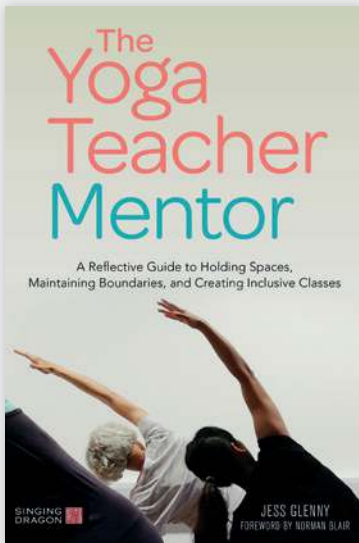
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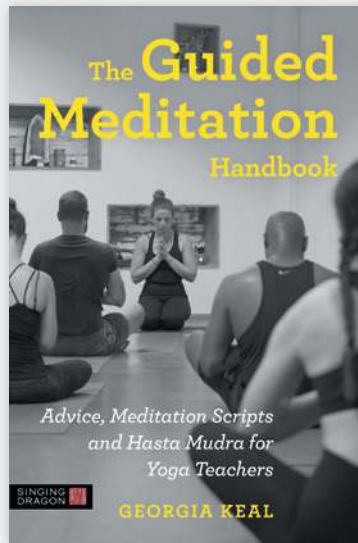
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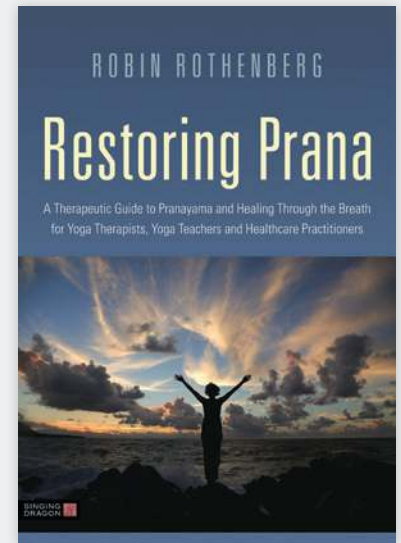
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Inside:

Page 58: The One & Only Cliff Barber

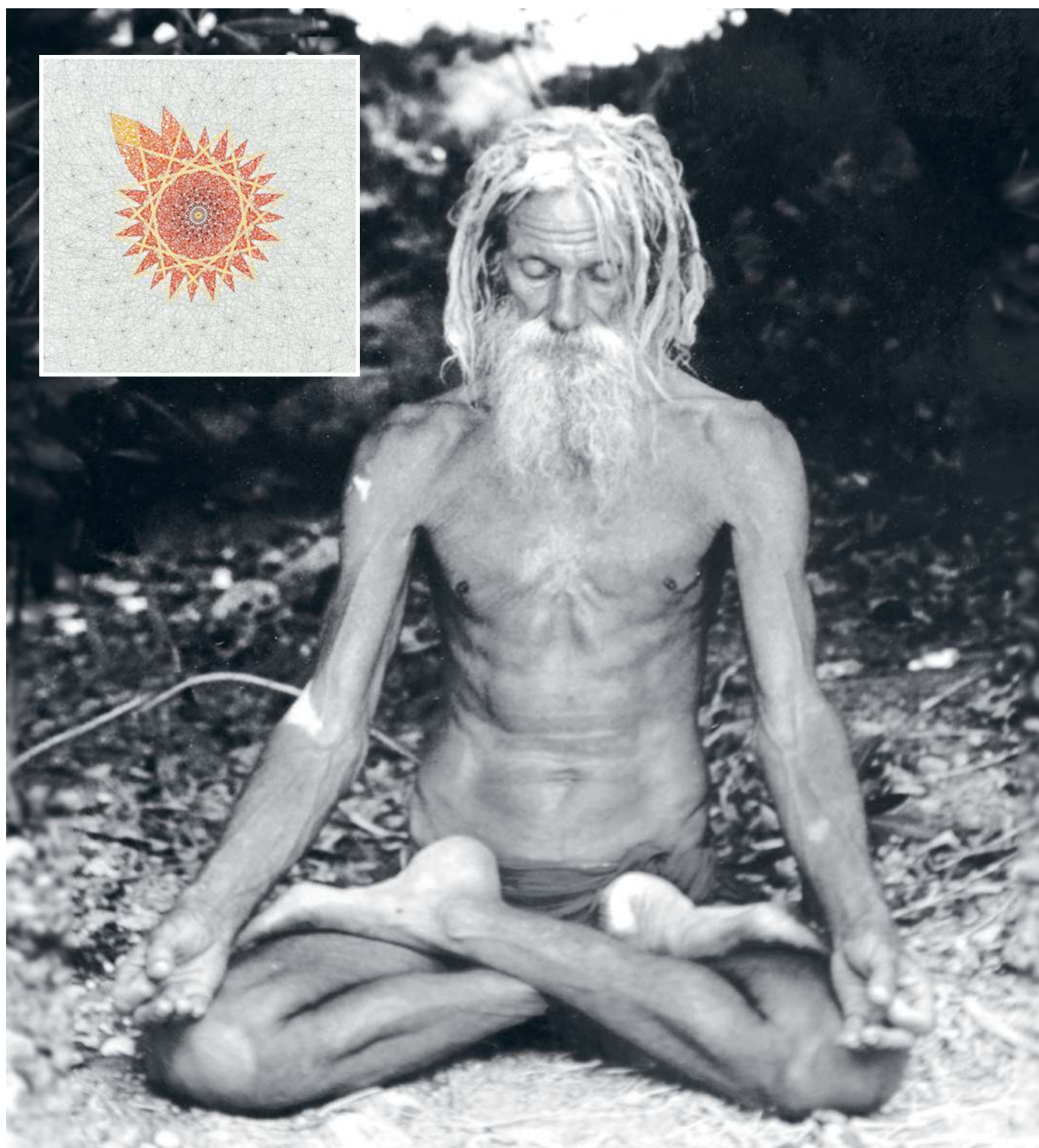
Page 62: Man On The Mat



The one and only...

Cliff Barber

Yoga teacher Cliff Barber, 88, now lives a reclusive life in rural Greece creating beautiful, mathematical-like mandalas. Writer and photographer *C. Borgen* catches up with him to discuss the release of his work



Cliff Barber, now 88, was born in Illinois, USA. He was among the first to introduce yoga from India to the West back in 1969. His life story is a classic one of a broken youth, who as an adult enjoyed financial success in the adventurous treasure diving business but found out that money could not fulfill his soul. He turned towards philosophy and yoga, never worked for money again and lived literally under a tree in Greece teaching yoga and studying pure mathematics ever since. Although this story is a classic one, I never actually met anyone who lived it.

Finding Cliff Barber

Cliff gave me my first yoga lesson in Goa, India in the early 1980's. Ten years later, I tried to find him in Greece to help me with a project considering the infamous Bock Saga. In this Saga, the story of mankind as narrated by the Bock family, the alphabet played a crucial role. Cliff had a visionary insight considering this alphabet. I had seen photographs of his drawings made up of circles and lines. Within those circles and lines, he had found the origins of our letters. He could show that the alphabet consisted not of random signs, but rather were derived from mathematical principles that gave a specific meaning to the letters. The letters of the alphabet were arranged in a circle. The lines through the connection points with this circle and other circles of the so-called Flower of Life, created special relations between the letters. These relations between the letters in the circle in turn created new meanings. I did not find Cliff that year.

In May 2016 I went back again to find him. I still wanted to know about the alphabet and how he had found its roots in mathematics. Again, I had some vague directions, but this time it was easier to find him because everybody in the area seemed to know about him, although nobody had actually seen him. It took me only a couple of days before I spotted, secluded in the trees and bushes, the contours of his dwellings. Through a hardly discernible trail, I neared the construction, consisting of beams, sticks, blankets and plastic sheets. I peeked in through the side and saw Cliff sitting on some pillows on the clay floor, on his head a watchmakers' visor with an inbuilt magnifying glass and in his left hand a second large magnifying glass. He was looking through both at a hole in a rag on a glass table, and painting within it something extremely minuscule. His hut contained, apart from this work space, a mattress, a fire place, some cats and lots of books on mathematics.

I made myself known. He looked up from his work and took off his magnifying visor. He did not recognise me, which is understandable considering we had not seen each other since we first met in the early 1980's. I, however, recognised him. I knew who it was I was looking for and in all those 35 years since our first meeting, he had hardly changed.

I asked him about the drawings and the alphabet. He answered that he was no longer interested in that subject and had not thought about it since he had come to Greece in 1989. Although he still believed he had found the mathematical origins of our Western and other alphabets within the Flower of Life, he thought of it as inconsequential to him. He argued these alphabets are man-made and thus a cultural expression that did not contain universal truth. Well, that was the end of my mission.

In the days that followed, we talked a lot about the good old days in India, exchanged gossip about people we both knew and what had kept us busy throughout all the years that had passed. He told me he never stopped working on the drawings. He still worked on them every day for several hours. I was amazed that in that little dusty hut, too small to even stand up in, he could make these elaborate near-perfect drawings, just with a regular school compass, a ruler and a pencil. His method, both then and now, consists of placing a sheet of paper on top of a plate of glass, followed by a rag to protect the drawing from the dust flying around in the air. In the rag is a little



hole, which allows him to reach the paper with his pencil and the tiniest of brushes.

Mandala man

In a corner of the hut lay a cylinder that contained drawings he had made in the past. I asked him to show them to me. He said that those were not interesting because since making them, his work had developed so much, that they were not worth looking at: "They are just doodles," he insisted. I tried to persuade him with arguments such as: "But they are interesting to see the development of your line of thinking", and "They might not be interesting to you, but for ordinary people who are new to this kind of mathematical beauty, they could be worthwhile to see". And, since Cliff does not like to refuse anything to anyone, he finally showed me the drawings.

As we carefully took the drawings and paintings out of the cylinder, the bugs that had been hiding within it scuttled away. My jaw dropped, amazed at the beauty radiating from the lines, circles and painted surfaces that unfolded before my eyes. There was a sharp contrast between the geometrical perfection in minute detail and the stains caused by the weather and the beetles that had been living and breeding between them all those years.

One more thing startled me. None of them were finished. Cliff explained it as follows: "It takes about one or two weeks to draw the lines and circles. To finish the painting takes about five months. While working I always think about how to do it better. When I think of some improvement, I quit and start a new painting with the new string of thoughts to guide me. Every painting that is not finished is proof that I keep developing the process of finding and expressing universal truth in mathematics, which is my intention. I started this 50 years ago and only recently I finished my first painting that I consider complete. Now you understand why these drawings in front of us are worthless to me. I passed on to much higher levels."

I tried to convince him of the beauty and importance of his artwork and he replied that it was not art but an attempt at mathematics. After this went on for a while, I asked him for permission to photograph the drawings and paintings. Although he saw no point in doing so, he conceded. I took them to my hotel, a typical Greek building with shining white walls that reflect a lot of light, the perfect place to take pictures.

It took me a whole day to photograph them all. It was a lot of work to chase the bugs out of them and straighten them up. As I was working on the porch in front of the reception of the hotel, many



MY YOGA JOURNEY

Here, Cliff Barker details his yoga journey in his own words:

"In the 1950's I became a treasure hunter. I was deep sea diving for sunken ships and looting them of precious materials like tin and copper. In 1961 I got the diving rights to a ship wreck, which was very rich of these materials. It made me a lot of money, but the lifestyle that came with it led to my downfall. Apart from the money my main breaking point were girls, too many girls, and bending a few rules too. At the age of 35 my whole life fell apart, I fell apart. It was totally my own fault.

In 1968 a friend gave me a meditation on the 10 archangels. That started my studies in the Kabbalah. During this time, I made the first drawings of the Flower of Life. It consists of a circle, with other circles surrounding it whose centre points sit on the circumference of the first circle. I was too poor to have a proper compass and ruler, so I used a pot of peanut butter and a steel car part to help me draw.

I did not realise at the time that drawing circles and lines and studying yoga would fill my whole life from then on. What I did realise was that my old life of chasing ever-growing needs was over and that I would dedicate my life to searching for universal truth, which would bring me closer to the divine. My break-up with my old lifestyle was definite. During that great transition in 1969, I decided I would never work for money again.

In 1972 I started teaching yoga for the first time. Four years after that I met David Williams when he came to Maui. He was the first Westerner to learn all of the eight Ashtanga series of yoga from Sri Krishna Pattabhi Jois. He watched me doing my practice and asked me if I wanted to see his. I realised he was much more advanced than I was. He is considered to be one of the great international teachers of yoga now. During the next 35 years I spent lots of time with him doing yoga.

Two years later I met Krishna Pattabhi Jois himself, when he came for a three month visit to the USA. I realised I had to go to India to study yoga in depth. A boy who had worked on the treasure hunting boat, whom I had helped during difficult times when he was young, had in the meantime become a rich man. He gave me the money to travel to Mysore where Krishna Pattabhi Jois had his training centre.

I resisted the strong physical exercises. From the beginning, for me yoga was a mental practice. I thought yoga was a spiritual way to know God. It seemed strange that one should have to go into difficult positions to get to know Him. But I did. In 1981 I went back to Mysore to study all eight series."

local people passed and watched what I was doing. Everybody seemed to know about Cliff Barker and he was held in high esteem, although nobody had actually met him. He is considered to be a guru, a holy man and even more. Only now, I started to realise his reputation, and only later I realised that this reputation extended worldwide. The next day I asked him what he thought of that. He replied that he is not holy or anything like that, but just a yoga teacher who does not see a hairdresser very often.

Find out more about Cliff Barker and the Flower of Life and to browse prints for sale, visit: cliffbarker.com



I AM NOT A YOGI

"I am not a yogi. I study yoga. It is a form of orthodox philosophy from India. It is not a religion. Philosophy is the search for truth. I am interested in universal truth. I find it in mathematics. It expresses itself in the Flower of Life.

I do not believe that God interferes in our world, but mankind does. The universe is a manifestation of God and we interfere. Our creations cause their own problems. That's why I believe we shouldn't create. It is better to be receptive.

What is in the afterlife? I don't know, but it seems there must be something. I have no idea what. The Buddhist meditation on death has three steps: 1) You will die. 2) You don't know when. 3) You can't take anything with you.

The most important thing is to be glad when you die and not sorry. You should live your life to the fullest so you don't mind dying whenever the time is there.

It all comes down to circular motion. What's the difference between life and death? Motion. Some things are very slow, but if they are moving they are alive. All the time I learn there are many levels of meaning and understanding.

I came to Greece to study mathematics. Only after studying Plato, Archimedes and other Greek thinkers in depth, did I discover there is a big difference between pure mathematics and applied mathematics. The latter is used for the construction of things. Plato said: 'Stick to pure mathematics, not the applied math, which takes your mind away from the divine to the mundane.' According to him you should start at the age of 20 and then you should have grasped it at the age of 30. In my case I still haven't grasped it. I started when I was 37 and now I am 88.

I think that the paintings could be a help in meditation. My wish is that every child in the world has a print on the wall and can watch it from his bed and dream away."

Since writing the book some things happened to Cliff and the little paradise he lives in. His hut under the tree burned down to the ground when lighting a fire to keep warm. In a haze of smoke, he barely managed to escape the falling burning roof. With a lot of help from friends a new hut was built. Then came a flood. After big rains in the mountains the river went over its banks and his new hut was destroyed. Again, the friends came together and are currently helping him to get back on his feet.

CREATING THE PAINTINGS:

"I do not see myself as an artist. I am a person that is searching for universal truth and I try to find that in mathematics. The drawings are side effects of that search. I am not an entertainer. I don't say: 'Watch me', or 'Watch my paintings'.

My hope is that the drawings take the emphasis away from the physical to the mental. You need to concentrate to look at it. The more you look at it, the more you concentrate. The painting should attract you.

My paintings follow very specific principles of pure mathematics and the colours express specific meanings of universal philosophic structure. Added are intuitive choices one can make in the search of meaningful and beautiful paintings. I am not creating it, it already exists. I am just manifesting it by painting it. Apart from mathematics and philosophy it all depends on intuition and how it is put together.

Making the painting is a concentration exercise. The reward is not in the finished product, but in the concentration while working on it. I am addicted to the buzz of concentration. What I get out of painting is the 'now-ness'.

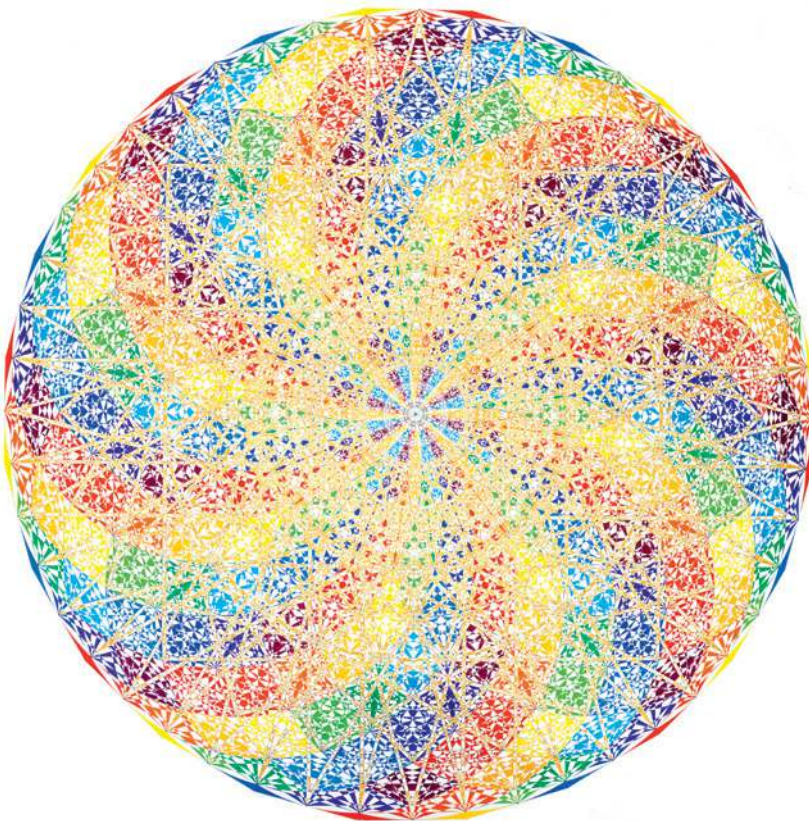
You can be wrong but you don't really know until you do it. It takes about six months for each painting to make and only then do you know if it is correct. There are so many ways to do it. Errors

can be manifold. Lines can be wrong, the system can have internal errors. The aesthetics can be disharmonious or ugly. I don't know this thing very much; I am on the path of learning. I have so much to do yet.

Even with a good painting, I wonder: 'Is it correct?' Lately, I think: 'Yes, it is pretty correct, but I can do it better.' And when I figure out how, I start a new one. That happens a lot while I'm working. Mostly I start a new one before finishing the old one. Hence there are so many unfinished paintings. It is spiritual work in progress.

All previous work is worthless to me. I even burnt a lot of them in the past when they took up too much space. All drawings and paintings that I made since the 1960's were just preparing me for those that would be complete. Only recently I have made, for the first time, paintings that I consider complete. They are activated in such a way that the colours reflect the god names and are in harmony with the meaning of the mathematical principles of the circles and lines. The new ones are activated, although I really don't know what that means. Finally, I know how to do it, but I don't know what effect it will have on what. Surely it will have some effect.

The whole thing is actually an intellectual nightmare – and terrifyingly addictive." ☸



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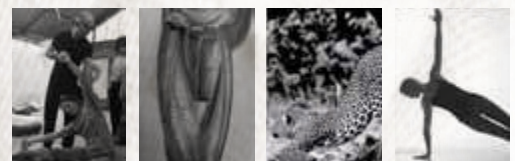
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Benefits

Urdhva Dhanurasana in yoga is considered as one of the peak backbends in the asana family. This posture provides a strong opening to the anterior chain of the body: hips, spine, chest and shoulders. The space created in these areas allows a relieving break to those parts of the body that get good at sitting. If I'm looking to reverse the effects of a long day of travel, or a 'typical' modern day of sitting down in a chair, then this posture provides an opening in all the areas that shorten due to too much sitting.

Common mistakes

Due to the nature of this peak posture, attempting this asana without sufficient focus on the movement of the spine, the wrists and the shoulders can lead to unnecessary strain in one of these areas of the body. When I sequence this posture, I'll be quite diligent in preparing the wrists for increased extension, increased flexion of the shoulder and experimenting with what position of the pelvis gives the practitioner freedom, and space in their lower and mid spine. Common mistakes quite often seen include: practitioners turning fingers towards the centre of the mat (internal rotation of the shoulder), allowing the thigh bones (femurs)/hips to externally rotate too much, and compressing into the lower vertebrae due to lack of pelvic tilt.

Tips

- Practice 'easier' poses of the backbend family to familiarise the body.
- Include backbends such as Cobra, Locust, Bridge pose prior to Urdhva Dhanurasana.
- Experiment with what degree of posterior tilt (tuck the tailbone) feels good for you in the pose. Each practitioner will be different.
- Whilst in the pose, try to counteract strong hip external rotation. Do this by pressing down through the mound of the big toes and draw the inner thighs towards the midline of the body keeping legs hip-width distance apart.
- Turn fingers away from midline and towards the long edge of the mat (external rotation of shoulder).

Awareness

Be patient with this backbend. Some days my spine takes longer to 'warm-up'. The less I force the extension of the hips/spine and think of evenly spreading the effort throughout the pose - shoulders, spine and legs - this asana becomes a delight rather than just being a testament to prove oneself. The awareness in this pose requires a 'stepping back' and then through repetition, the space and eventually the ease is created in the posture. 🧘

Yogi: Davin Jones (davjonesyoga.com) @davjonesyoga



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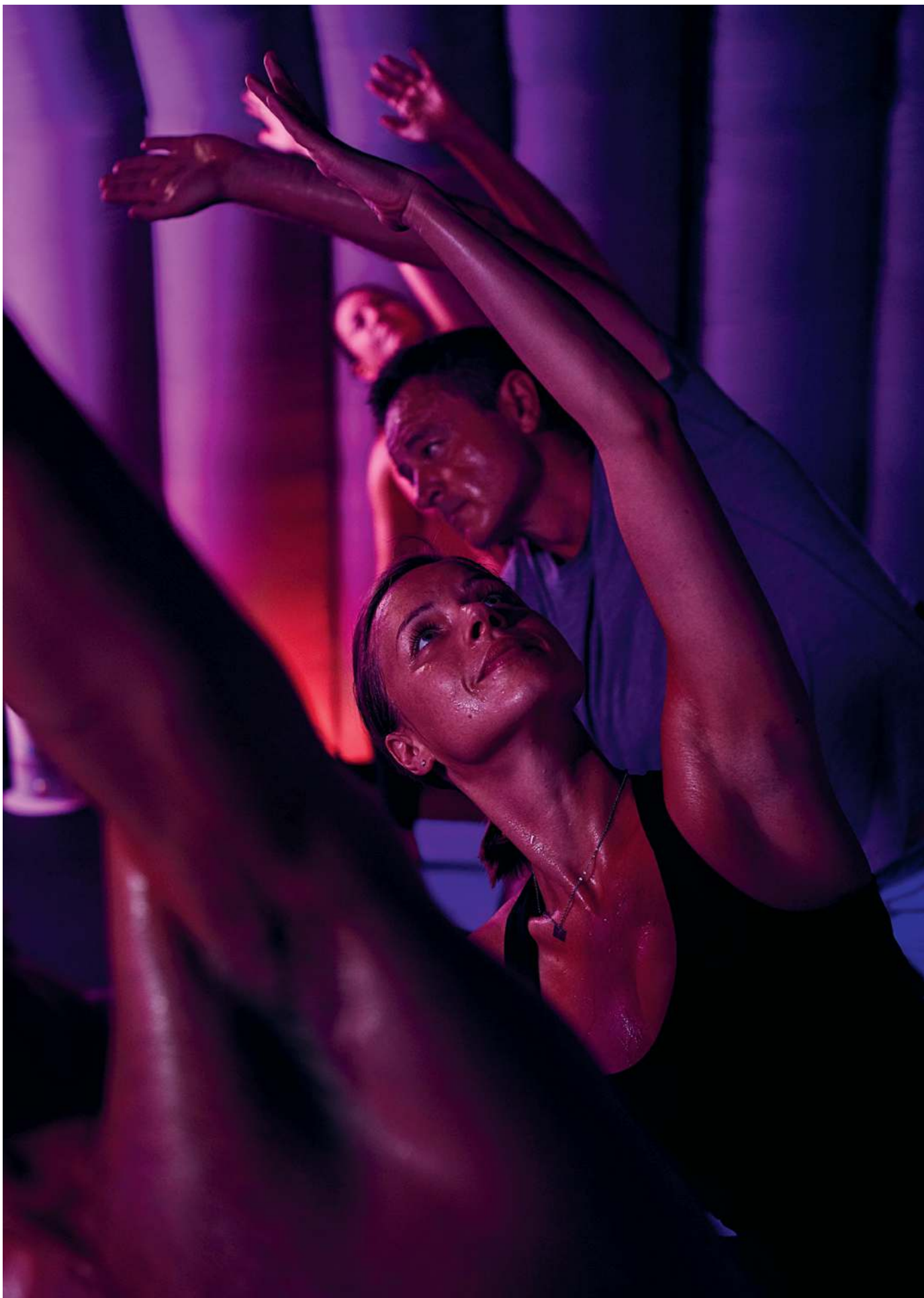


YOGA LONDON:

STUDIO GUIDE

10 amazing yoga studios in the capital where
you can find your flow and follow your bliss





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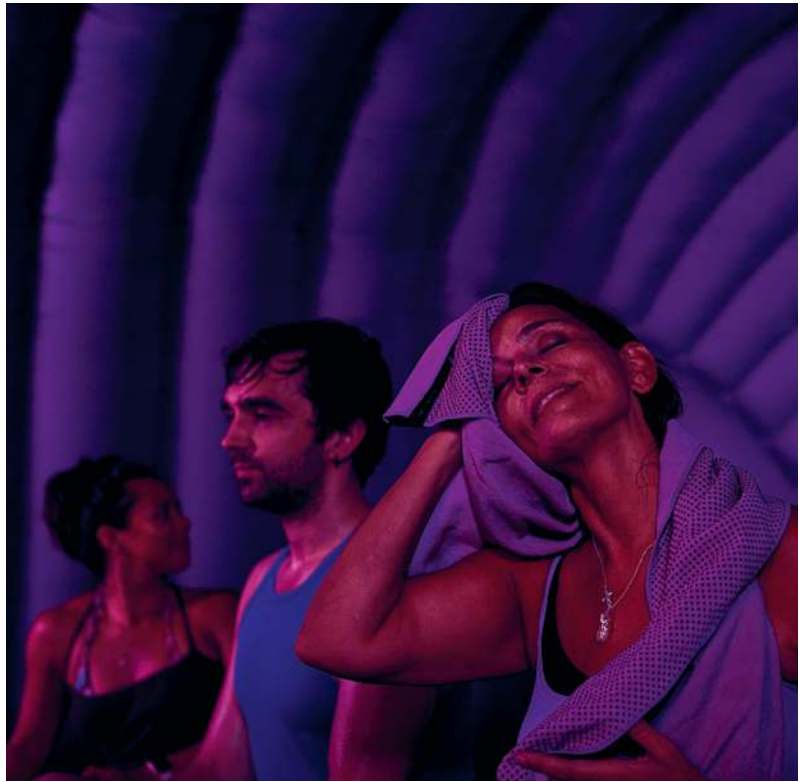
Hotpod Yoga was started with a simple mission: to reinvent yoga for the modern world. Its creators wanted to create a super-charged approach to an ancient and powerful practice that could help take yoga out of its niche and into the lives of millions of people previously untouched by (or uninterested in) yoga.

How? By creating a yoga experience like no other – one that turned up the dials to new levels. Deeper, more effective, more immersive, more intense, more appealing.

Now with over 50 locations across eight countries, Hotpod Yoga has grown into one of the world’s largest yoga businesses – a real revolution in yoga that’s well on its way to achieving its mission: millions of new yoga converts.

 @hotpodyoga

[hotpodyoga.com](https://www.hotpodyoga.com)



YOUR YOGA CITY

A city for selfies, London's landmarks mean there's no need to travel far and wide to feed your yoga Instagram addiction



Photo by Form on Unsplash

London contains some of the most iconic architecture in the world — and you can bet yoga is being done there. There aren't too many pics to prove it but we happen to know that yoga goes on inside the Houses of Parliament, arguably the capital's finest building of all.

While you're not likely to get an invite anytime soon for yoga at the House of Commons (let's face it, though, we'd all be pretty happy if our MPs can keep quiet for a bit!), there are still plenty of cool public classes available in some of London's great landmarks.

That includes occasional classes inside the Natural History Museum, high up at the top of The Shard, or in the Sky Garden, set among the luscious tropical greenery with a backdrop of incredible city views some 36 storeys high.

Then there are the regular morning slots on Tower Bridge, another

London structure recognised right around the globe. Designed to help revitalise and recharge, the early morning classes, which take place on the glass walkways 138 feet above the Thames, are open to all abilities and run this year on the third Wednesday of each month through to December 18.

It's an incredible city and an incredible place to do yoga. Who needs to travel to Bali or Hawaii for their Instagram-worthy yoga selfies?

Surprise us

Show us your favourite yoga locations in the capital. We'd love to see some of your amazing London yoga selfies. We'll even print some of the best ones. Show us your Scorpion pose in Streatham, or your Cobra in Clapham. Where do you get your zen? Oh, and please Insta responsibly! Send images to: editor@ommagazine.com

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JOY

“Happiness is your birthright” Yogi Bhajan

From the moment you enter JOY – a studio dedicated to Kundalini Yoga based in Dalston – you know you’ve left the mainstream behind. A friendly face at the reception desk welcomes you. The sound of mantras hum in the background and you might catch the soothing harmonics of the gong reverberating out from the yoga room. There’s a hint of cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves in the air as spiced yogi tea brews in the kitchen. While Kundalini Yoga can be deeply transformative, the vibe here is light-hearted, relaxed, and conducive to healing.

Nowhere in London – or indeed the UK – can you get so much Kundalini all under one roof. On the weekly schedule are classes that cater to students of all ages and abilities. Not everyone takes to Kundalini, but there’s something here for every body. In addition to ‘regular’ Kundalini Yoga classes, the weekly schedule includes Gentle Yoga, Pregnancy Yoga, Addiction Recovery, Meditation,

Gong and more, all of which draw from the technology of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan. The underlying philosophy is that through the practice, everyone has the potential to experience a state of ease in themselves, a state of joy.

While people come for yoga, they stay for the tea and a chat. Community is important in Kundalini Yoga. You can feel it in class. During a particularly challenging exercise, the group energy can carry you through. But after class, as you sip your yogi tea, you can kick back and compare notes with others who are also exploring a yogic path.

JOY is London’s home for Kundalini Yoga. The studio offers 50 weekly classes plus a variety of workshops, concerts, and training.

 @kundalinilondon

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Fierce Grace founder Michele Pernetta, one of Europe's premier yoga teachers, led the UK Hot Yoga revolution by bringing Bikram Yoga to London in 1994. Nineteen years later she launched Fierce Grace in 2013 to widespread acclaim. There are now seven studios in London, as well as studios in New York, Rome and Queenstown.

From the yoga shy, stiff or injured to advanced yogis, the Fierce Grace system is designed to be accessible and effective for everyone. Each class has a different focus and mood, developing us mentally and emotionally by allowing all aspects of ourselves room for expression. We develop our strong 'fierce' side, while our flexible 'grace' side keeps us connected. The system allows you to tailor your practice to your individual needs and all classes work in unison to bring total balance to your body and soul.

 @fiercegraceyoga

fiercegrace.com



LONDON: YOGA CAPITAL OF THE WEST

It's official...London's love of Lycra is second to none



London: the city where yoga never sleeps. Yes, it's official. The UK capital was recently named as the world's greatest yoga hotspot in a study by events and technology platform Eventbrite.

It totted up the amount of yoga-related events on its website and found that London surpassed everyone — including New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

It seems London just can't get enough yoga. Last year, yoga teachers across the city hosted more than 2,000 events on the Eventbrite platform, almost double its closest rival, New York (1,100 events) and way ahead of Los Angeles (700 events).

While many in the UK have historically looked to the USA as a hub for all things yoga in the West, it looks like there's more than enough going on here at home.

It reflects a general surge in yoga interest across the whole of the UK in recent times.

Data from Eventbrite reports a total of more than 6,000 yoga events were held across the country in 2018 — almost triple the number of events compared to 2016 where just over 2,000 were staged.

Londoners say the practice helps them to release tension and feel happy; the perfect antidote for a hard-working metropolis of almost nine million people.

It also explains the growth in the number of yoga studios around the capital in the last few years. Across the city, you'll find a class for just about anyone and everyone, no matter what your ability level or particular interest. Big events like the OM Yoga Show, held every October, also draw thousands of people to the practice each and every year. If you're searching for your next London yoga fix then you're in the right place.



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bhuti is a laid back eco wellbeing escape, a refuge from the stresses and strains of modern life offering carefully curated treatments, classes, and things for the mind, body and soul to flourish.

Created by Samantha Trinder, a yoga teacher and therapist whose journey culminated in the creation of this heartfelt community members' club offering yoga, pilates, barre studios with only the best teachers in south-west London, an organic vegan cafe as well as holistic treatments, complementary therapies — a unique one-stop wellness space.

bhuti welcomes all. Loved by a diverse range of locals from complete beginners, mums, students, young professionals and

retirees alike, as well as celebrities including Fearnie Cotton. It offers concession rates for low incomes and has a bhuti Foundation that supports disadvantaged individuals in the community.

bhuti also offers corporate wellness days: it can come into your business bringing the bhuti wellness vibe, offering a package that could include mini-workshops, a yoga or pilates class, nutritional talk, cooking class and mindfulness techniques that will have your teams fulfilling their true potential in no time.

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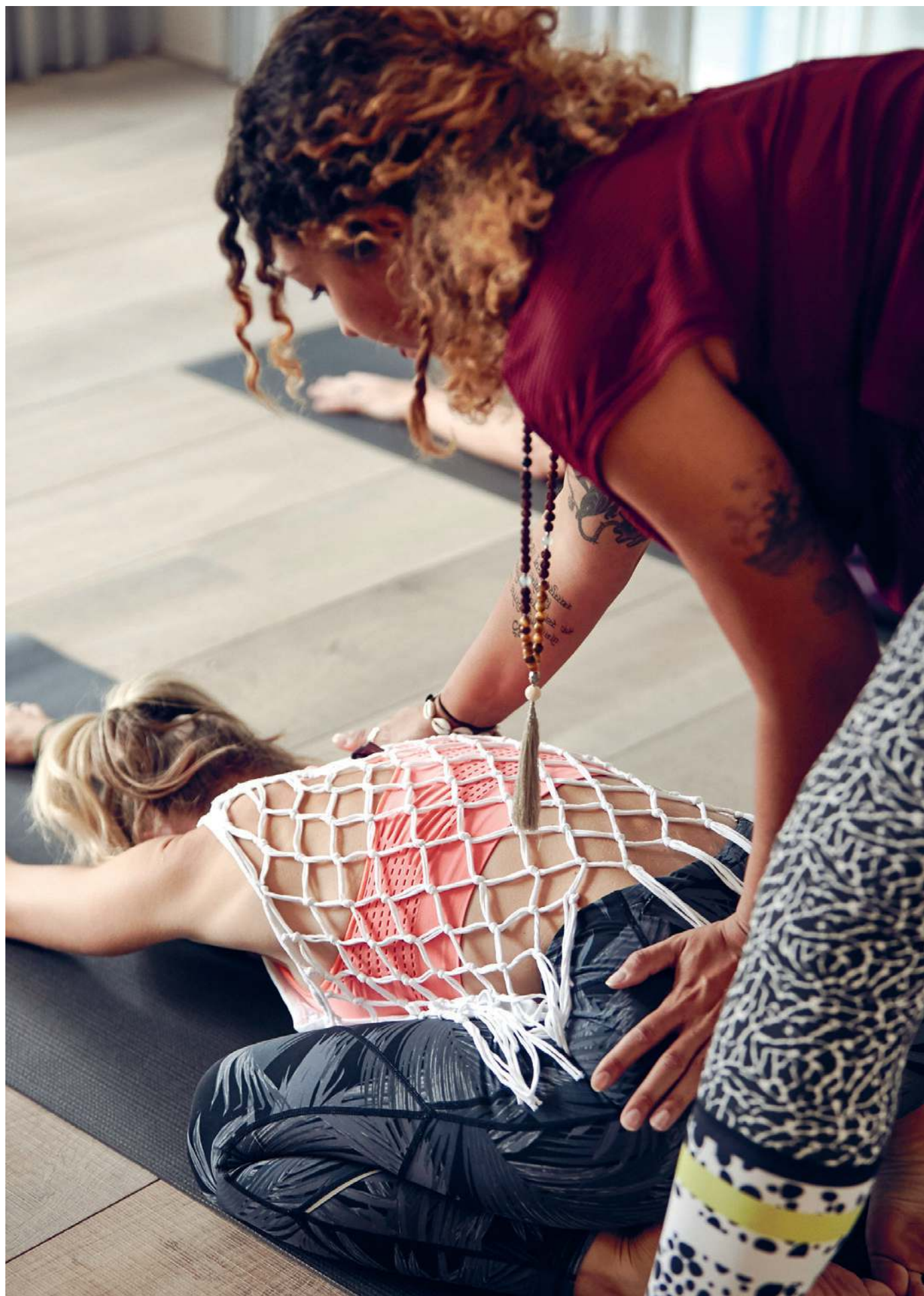
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Re:Centre is a mindful venue in Hammersmith, encouraging sustainable lifestyles. Everything from the class schedule, to the seasonal food served in the café has been designed to remind visitors of the natural rhythms we are all connected to.

Situated on the Thames Path in Hammersmith with stunning and calming riverside views — time it right and you can practice facing the sunset. There is a full timetable of classes offered throughout the day, suitable for all levels. They have unique offerings including Friday evening Yoga Nidra, Breathwork with ‘The Breath Guy’ and a brand new class, The Human Method™.

Classes are designed to reflect the changing seasons, restore balance back into our lives and encourage us all to listen to our bodies.

They also host regular workshops, art exhibitions and guest speakers, with two event spaces available to hire.

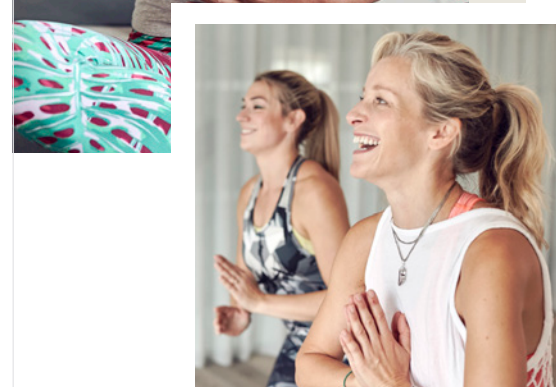
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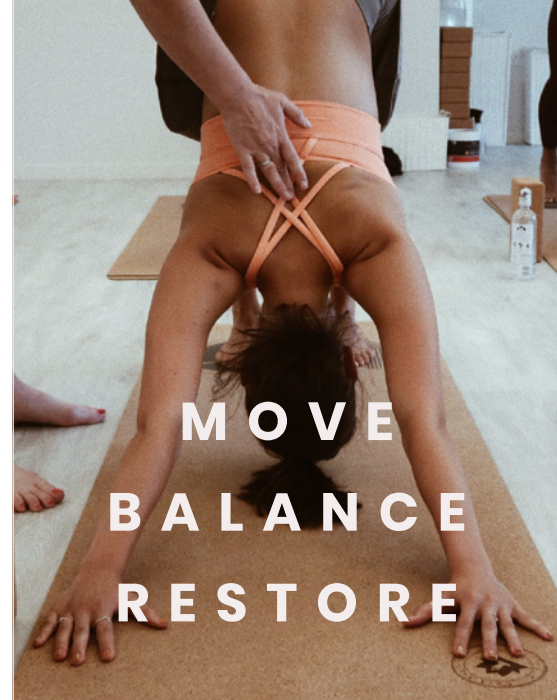
— provide a clean and natural surface to practice on.

Urban Souls believe in the benefits that regular yoga practice brings to peoples' lives — physically, emotionally and especially mentally. Classes are structured to be more accessible and to suit the sophisticated Londoner, with a diverse timetable that covers movement, balance and restoration. In addition to yoga, it also offers Pilates, meditation and sound healing, with classes ranging from complete beginner to advanced levels.

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triyoga

“We’ve created each triyoga centre to be a sanctuary away from the noise and bustle of London life; somewhere calm and tranquil, that can be a part of people’s everyday lives.”

Founded in 2000, triyoga has become London’s destination for yoga, Pilates and treatments, creating beautiful spaces where everyone can belong. With five centres in Camden, Chelsea, Ealing, Shoreditch and Soho, triyoga’s aim is to inspire and help people lead healthier lives. It offers more than 750 classes a week for beginners to experienced students, with some of London’s best teachers, so that everyone can find a practice they enjoy.

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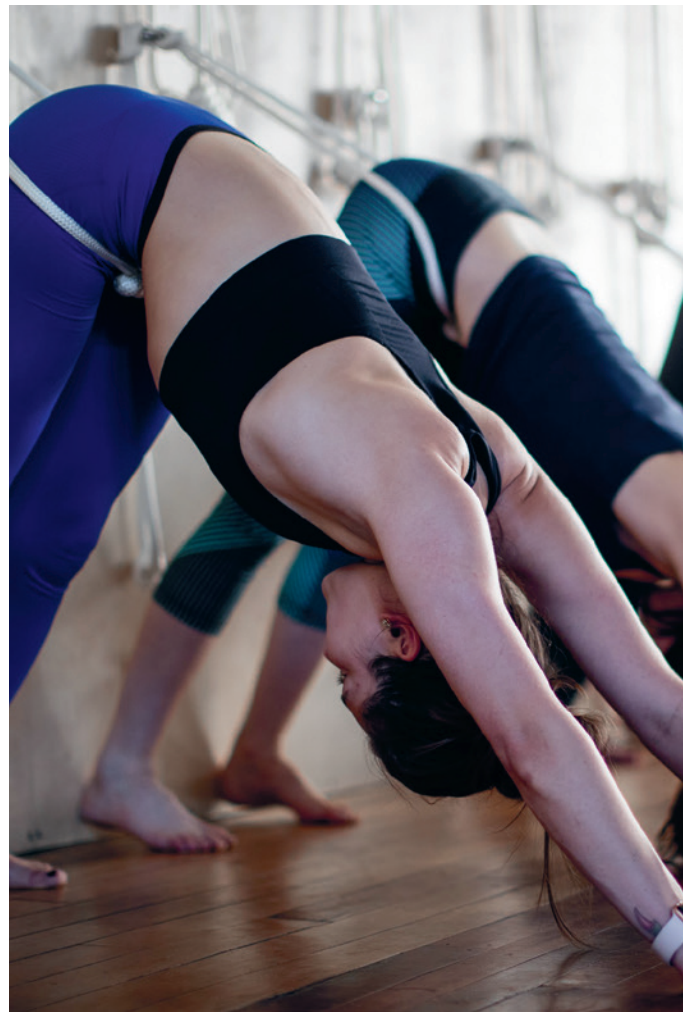
Workshops: triyoga runs more than 600 workshops a year with some of the best yoga teachers from around the world. Whether you are an experienced student or new to yoga, these workshops are the perfect way to deepen your practice.

Treatments: Enjoy a broad range of treatments to help you be your healthiest self, with triyoga’s hand-picked team of experienced therapists.

Teacher training: Become a yoga teacher with triyoga’s 350-hour teacher training diploma course or expand your teaching skills with a range of advanced and specialist trainings.

 @triyogauk

triyoga.co.uk





YOGA LONDON: STUDIO GUIDE

Where to get your yoga fix - studio directory

Bhuti

50 Hill Rise, Richmond TW10 6UB (Richmond)

bhuti.co

Fierce Grace

Unit 1 372a Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8PL (Brixton)

53-55 East Road, London N1 6AH (City)

First Floor, 48 Ballards Lane, London N3 2BJ (Finchley)

173-175 Queens Crescent, London NW5 4DS (Kentish Town)

260 Kilburn Lane, London W10 4BA (Kilburn)

56 Muswell Hill, London N10 3ST (Muswell Hill)

200 Regents Park Road, London NW1 8BE (Primrose Hill)

fiercegrace.com

Hotpod Yoga

19 Eccleston Yards, London, SW1W 9AZ (Belgravia)

40 St Matthew's Road, Brixton, London, SW2 1NL (Brixton)

13-19 Croxted Road, Unit 3, London, SE21 8SZ (Dulwich)

Arch 406, Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PH (Hackney)

1A Great Western Road, London, England, W9 3NW (Notting Hill)

8 Morden Road, London, SW19 3BH (Wimbledon)

hotpodyoga.com

Joy

27D Dalston Ln, Dalston, London E8 3DF (Dalston)

joy.yoga

One Yoga London

15 Myddelton Rd, Hornsey, London N8 7PY (Hornsey)

oneyogalondon.com

Re:Centre

Thames Wharf, Rainville Road, London, W6 9HA (Hammersmith)

recentre.co.uk

The Lodge Space

The Lodge, 120a Lower Rd, London SE16 2UB (Surrey Quays)

thelodge.space

triyoga

57 Jamestown Road, London, NW1 7DB (Camden)

372 King's Road, London, SW3 5UZ (Chelsea)

Unit 30, Dickens Yard, Longfield Avenue, Ealing, W5 2UQ (Ealing)

Unit 2, 10 Cygnet Street, London, E1 6GW (Shoreditch)

2nd Floor, Kingly Court, Soho, London, W1B 5PW (Soho)

triyoga.co.uk

Urban Souls

27a St Ann's Road, Notting Hill, London W11 4ST (Holland Park)

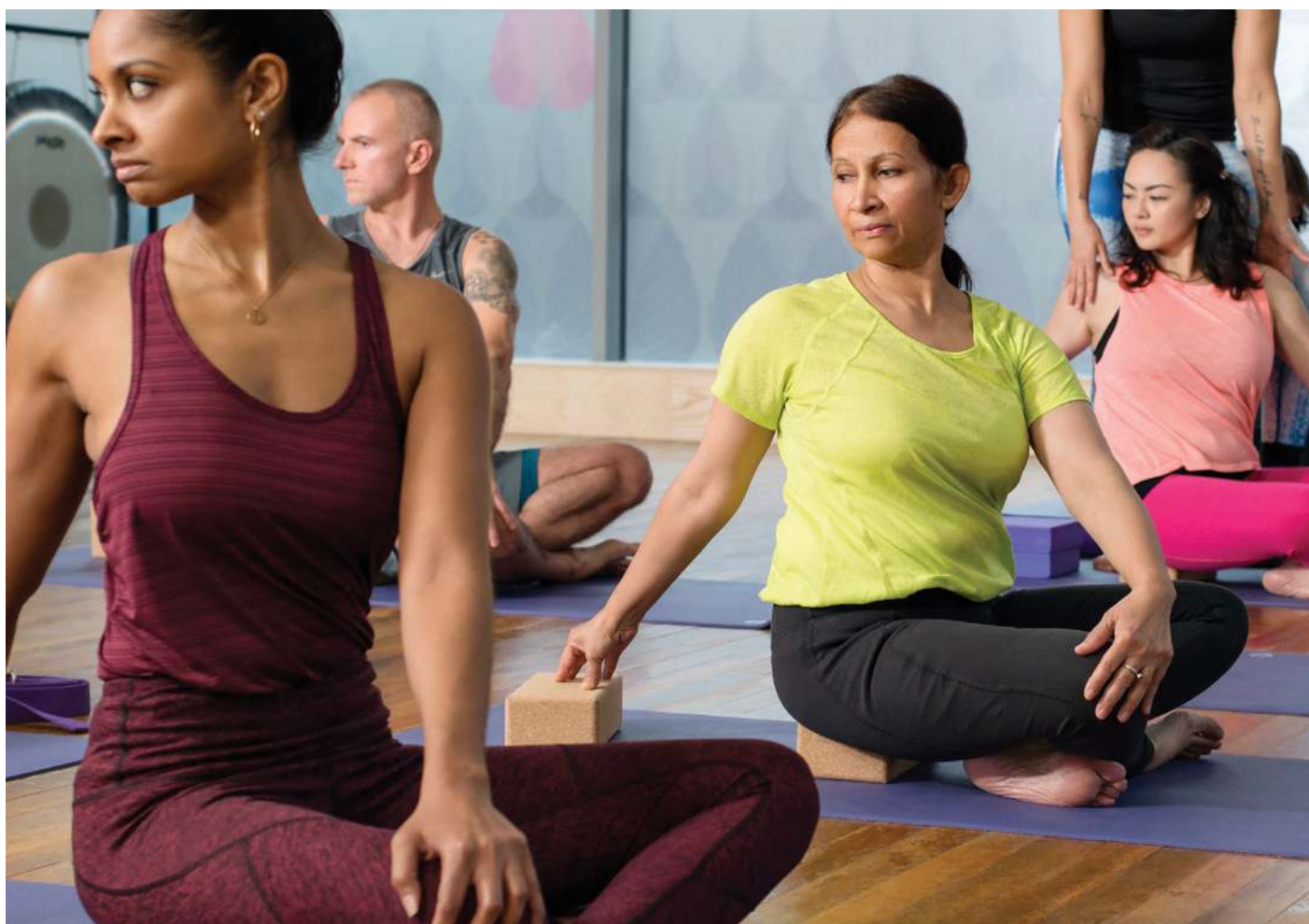
urbansouls.yoga

Yogaloft

3 Lonsdale Rd, Kilburn, London NW6 6RA (Queen's Park)

27 Beethoven Street, London, W10 4LG (Queen's Park)

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THE LODGE SPACE

“Healing from the inside out, find your own space at the Lodge”

theLodge.space is home to three beautiful studios, a spacious health food café and two treatment rooms; all set in the beautiful backdrop of Southwark park. Sunlight streams through large windows overlooking the park, whilst yogis relax in the outdoor garden sipping fresh juices.

Just minutes from Canada Water station, theLodge.space has one of the most diverse yoga and fitness offerings in London. The welcoming studios offer not only normal vinyasa-style yoga classes, for all levels, but they also have a bespoke aerial yoga studio and separate hot yoga studio. There's also a diverse offering of other classes such as Pilates, dance, sound baths, baby/toddler classes and unique signature classes like HIIT yoga.

Building on the ethos of 'not just a yoga studio' but a bustling wellness hub, the vast café offers a day-long menu, with well-presented healthy dishes and extensive gluten-free and vegan options.

Pop into the cosy treatment rooms and sample the relaxing services including massage, reiki, acupuncture, osteopathy and more.

An all-inclusive space with a culture welcoming all skill levels and backgrounds.

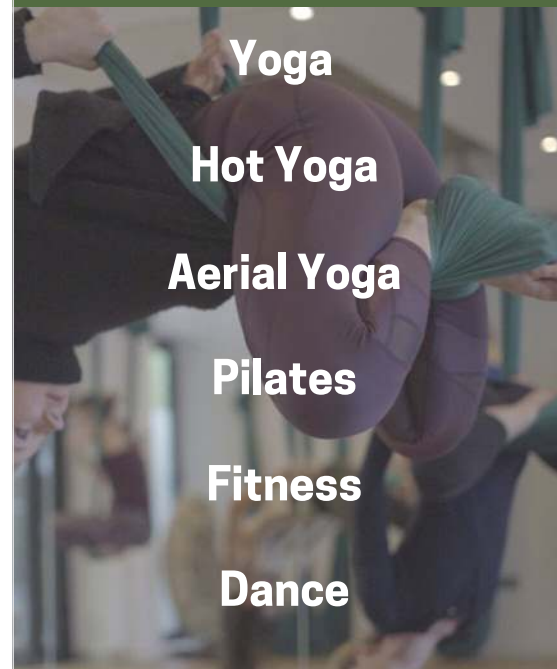
Check out the intro offer of '£20 for 15 days of unlimited classes' and experience the zen for yourself.

 [thelodge.space](https://www.instagram.com/thelodge.space)

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YOGALOFT

“Inspirational teachers, nurturing therapies,
welcoming community”

Queens Park favourite, Yogaloft has opened a second beautiful London studio. Yogaloft first opened in 2012 in a former Victorian hayloft. Founder Susannah Tomkins, a passionate Iyengar yoga practitioner and teacher, came across the stunning building in a pretty and peaceful mews. Eight years on, Yogaloft thrives at the heart of the Queen's Park community.

September saw the opening of Yogaloft's eagerly awaited second studio housed in a former warehouse on Beethoven Street, just five minutes walk from Queen's Park tube. Step through the door which is down an unassuming side street, just off Kilburn Lane, and you're in for a surprise.

“We've had the same reaction again and again”, says Ian, co-owner, “you suddenly find yourself in this spectacular, light- and

air-filled oasis which seems to expand in every direction”. It has high ceilings, natural light, plentiful plants and fresh air gracing the three stunning studios.

Yogaloft Beethoven Street retains the local feel for which Yogaloft is known and loved. Between the two centres there are more than 150 yoga and reformer Pilates classes every week, taught by carefully selected, skilful and inspirational teachers, holistic therapies to nurture and heal body and mind, and a welcoming café where you can sit by the green wall, enjoy a smoothie and breathe in the fresh air before stepping back out into the city.

 [yogaloftlondon](#)

[yogaloftlondon.com](#)



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ONE YOGA LONDON

“Make each day your masterpiece”

John Wooden

One Yoga London is a boutique yoga and Pilates studio just off Hornsey High Street in north London. Called a ‘hidden gem’, it offers you a warm welcome and a calm respite from your hectic world.

Whether you’ve never set foot on a yoga mat before or you can scratch your nose with your toes, you’ll find the right class to make you feel energised, uplifted and amazing.

Light streams into the fully equipped studio for the daily classes, including:

- Yoga Basics: chatty and laid back for a welcoming, relaxed vibe
- Yoga Flow: a dynamic workout that reaches every part of your body & mind
- Honey Flow: so you can chill out, reboot and feel great

- Yin Yoga & Mindfulness: deep stretching that feels oh-so-good
- Pilates Sculpt: a mix of yoga and Pilates to get your heart pumping and arms wobbling in minutes

The hand-picked teachers here have the depth of experience to guide you expertly through poses, and the warmth, kindness and humour to make you feel at home.

So why not make your day a masterpiece and go visit for yourself?

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YOGA & THE MENOPAUSE

An exploration of the treatments and therapies available for the menopause
— and how yoga can help. *Written and compiled by Claudia Brown*

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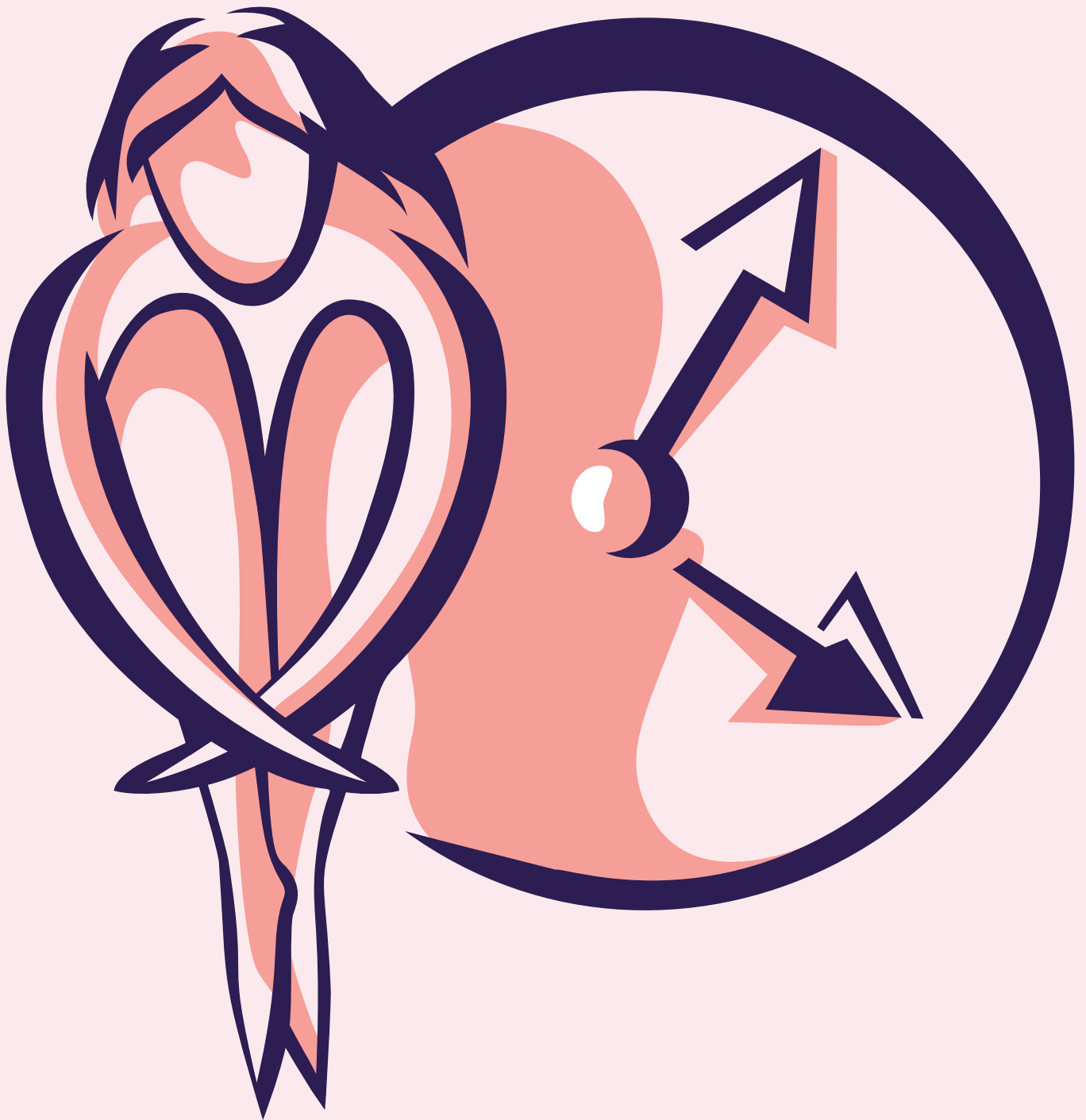
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Please consult a medical professional before changing or embarking on any new treatment or therapy





WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE?

Understanding the basics behind the menopause

The word menopause actually means your last menstrual period: meno- refers to your menstrual cycle and -pause literally means stop. However, the actual definition of being menopausal is when you have not had a period for one year. The menopause occurs when your ovaries stop producing eggs and, as a result, the levels of your hormones called oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone fall.

The term perimenopause is often used as this is the time in which you experience menopausal symptoms but are still having periods. These periods are often more irregular and scanty than they used to be.

The hormones oestrogen and progesterone work together to regulate your menstrual cycle and also the production of eggs. During your perimenopause, the levels of these hormones fluctuate greatly and it is often the imbalance of these hormones that leads to symptoms of the menopause occurring. For some women these symptoms only occur for a few months and then their periods stop completely. However, other women experience symptoms for months or even years before their periods stop.

Often, when you read about menopausal symptoms, this also refers to perimenopausal symptoms.

Oestrogen protects a number of different systems in your body: your brain, skin, bones, heart and vagina – so low levels can affect all these parts of your body.

Normal event

The average age of the menopause in the UK is 51 years, however this can be earlier for some women. Symptoms of the perimenopause often start at around 45 years of age. If the menopause occurs before the age of 40 it is classed as Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI). If the menopause occurs when you are under 45 years of age then it is called an early menopause.

Although the menopause is a normal event in a woman's life, certain conditions can bring about an early menopause. These include if you have had your ovaries removed during an operation, if you have radiotherapy to your pelvic area as a treatment for cancer or if you have received certain types of chemotherapy drugs that treat cancer, then you may have an early menopause. Women who have medical or surgical treatment for endometriosis or PMS may also experience an early menopause. Genetic and autoimmune factors can also play a part.

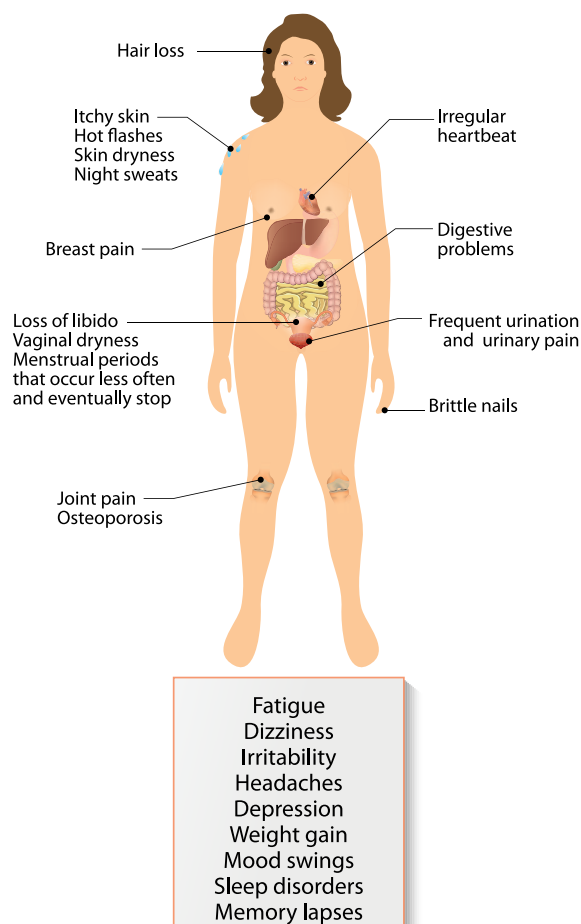
If you have had your womb (uterus) removed (in an operation called a hysterectomy) before your menopause, you may experience an early menopause even if your ovaries are not removed. Although your ovaries will still make some oestrogen after your hysterectomy, it is common that your level of oestrogen will fall at an earlier age than average due to reduced blood flow. As you do not have periods after a hysterectomy, it may not be clear when you are in 'the menopause'. However, you may develop some typical symptoms when your level of oestrogen falls.

Information source: menopausedoctor.co.uk

MAKING THE DIAGNOSIS OF MENOPAUSE

If you are younger than 45 years of age then you usually need to have tests to diagnose the menopause. The most common test is a blood test measuring a level of a hormone called follicle stimulating hormone (FSH). If this is raised, then it is very likely that you are menopausal. This blood test is often repeated 4-6 weeks later. If you are under 40 years then you may be advised to have other blood tests. Some women may also be recommended to have a bone density test (DEXA scan) to determine the strength of your bones. However, if you are over 45 years of age and have irregular periods with symptoms of the menopause, then you do not need to have any tests to diagnose the menopause.

Common symptoms may include:





THE MENOPAUSE DOCTOR

Leading UK menopause expert *Dr Louise Newson* explains her own journey through the menopause and the value and role of yoga

Dr Louise Newson worked as a GP in the West Midlands for 15 years, and has written hundreds of articles on various topics for doctors, patients and organisations including the Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Journal of Family Medicine. In more recent years, she has written an increasing number

of articles on women's health issues including the menopause and its management. She is also involved in running courses for training doctors and nurses about the menopause and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). She is now the founder of a website (menopausedoctor.co.uk) to educate others and tell more people about the effects of the menopause.

Here, she tells OM her own story and how she became one of the UK's leading experts in the menopause field:

"I have seen women whose lives have been detrimentally affected by menopausal symptoms. Many of my friends are also experiencing similar symptoms, but are confused and often worried about the prospect of taking HRT. Increasingly, I hear stories about women going to ask for advice and support from their own GPs and being told simply to "get on with it" or that they are not able to have HRT (when they actually could take it) or even that they are simply depressed and need anti-depressants (even though they are not clinically depressed).

I am constantly surprised and disappointed at how little accurate information there is for women to learn about the menopause. The internet can often be a really powerful resource of medical information, and certainly many other conditions are really well covered with some excellent information for people to access. This is sadly not the case for the menopause, which affects all women.

Admittedly, around a quarter of women sail through their menopause without any symptoms whatsoever, but these women are clearly in the minority. For the vast majority of us, having menopausal symptoms can be horrendous and can really adversely affect the quality of not only our lives but also those of our partners, families and work colleagues. Although I personally only had symptoms for a few months, I was surprised how dreadful I felt and



how difficult I found it to function and carry on with my normal life.

I've created the Menopause Doctor website to try and empower women with information about their menopause and the treatments available so they can hopefully have more knowledge and confidence to approach their own GP to ask for help. I also want the website to help other healthcare professionals to be able to access important guidelines and articles so that their experience and knowledge of the menopause can improve and they can in turn help lots of other women.

For around six months I was experiencing perimenopausal symptoms and did not realise that how I was feeling was related to my change in hormone levels, despite being a menopause specialist! I had less energy, reduced motivation, poor sleep and was more irritable. I was becoming more short tempered with my children which was out of character for me. I also was experiencing worsening migraines both in duration and severity. I put all the symptoms down to working too hard and creating my website.

My yoga practice had become more difficult and my joints felt stiffer and my muscles were sore. I thought this was because I was stressed and also getting older. It was only when one of my teenage children suggested that my mood was similar to that of some of her friends before they have their periods that I realised I had not had a period for several months and clearly all my symptoms were likely to

be due to my perimenopause! I felt so stupid and embarrassed but then I struggled to receive the right help and advice on the NHS.

Despite having a huge amount of knowledge about the menopause and perimenopause, there is still such a limited service that provides evidence-based and holistic care for women. This experience was around two years ago and thankfully with a combination of healthy diet, regular Ashtanga Yoga practice, mindfulness and the right balance of HRT, my health has not felt this good for such a long time. I am very fortunate to have accessed excellent care from one of my mentors, but too many women are less fortunate than me.

For me yoga ticks so many boxes. Pelvic floor muscles often weaken as we get older and certainly yoga is an excellent form of exercise to strengthen our pelvic floor muscles. In addition, it improves my strength, stamina and general muscle tone. However, yoga is an excellent way of clearing my mind and keeping focused. There is no way I can do a headstand if I have a thousand different thoughts in my head!"

Dr Louise Newson is a GP specialising in menopause and author of the Haynes Menopause Manual, available from <https://haynes.com/en-gb/menopause>.



WELLNESS CENTRE

Dr Newson recently opened the Newson Health Menopause & Wellbeing Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon, a new menopause and wellness hub with a yoga studio inside. Here, she tells OM what to expect there:

“For me, the studio is a sanctuary where women can have individualised tuition and find the right type of yoga for them. It is also a way where we can offer individual or very small group

classes, so women feel totally at ease starting a new exercise.

Too many people do not understand what yoga is. Many people have been surprised when I say my most regular form of exercise is yoga and they often think it is just a bit of sitting down with your legs crossed and breathing deeply. Too many women are apprehensive about starting a new exercise when they are perimenopausal and menopausal and often do not want to join a gym.

In addition to the yoga studio, we offer holistic treatments including pelvic

floor physiotherapy, nutritional advice, wellbeing advice, counselling, hypnotherapy and we sell a few supplements. I have thought very carefully about being able to offer women ways of experiencing a positive perimenopause and menopause. I am fortunate that we have opened in a most wonderful building which has beautiful natural light and has a very calming atmosphere as soon as you walk in.”

Find out more at: newsonhealth.co.uk

YOGA THERAPY: THE SCIENCE

Yoga: a safe and effective therapy in alleviating menopause symptoms



A recent study conducted by a renowned institute suggested that yoga therapy can alleviate menopausal symptoms and enhance quality of life. In a secondary analysis of a controlled trial in comparing the effects of yoga on 40 breast cancer survivors who suffered from menopausal symptoms, attendees scored a significant improvement. These included improvements in psychological and urogenital menopausal symptoms, as well as enhanced quality of life, social, emotional and functional wellbeing and fatigue in comparison to a control group.

“Self-esteem plays a vital role in the beneficial effect of yoga... yoga can have long-term benefits for women diagnosed with breast cancer and undergoing menopausal transition,” noted Dr. Koch AK, the lead author.

Furthermore, in the compared study to test the effects of a 12-week traditional Hatha Yoga and meditation intervention on menopausal symptoms in breast cancer survivors, yoga and meditation showed a

significant improvement in lowering total menopausal symptoms compared with the other care group.

With these promising results, some researchers have suggested that yoga can be considered as a safe and effective alternative intervention in ameliorated menopausal symptoms with a persistence of at least three months.

In fact, yoga intervention also has positive and specific implications on menopausal symptoms’ frequency, according to the 37 disease-free women experiencing hot flashes randomised to an eight-week Yoga of Awareness programme (gentle yoga poses, meditation, and breathing exercises).

The yoga group expressed a significantly greater improvement in hot flash frequency, severity, and total scores and in levels of joint pain, fatigue, sleep disturbance, symptom-related bother, and vigour in post-treatment, compared to a control group.

More importantly, at three months follow-up, patients in the yoga group also maintained the improvement in hot flashes, joint pain, fatigue, symptom-related bother, and vigour but also showed additional

significant gains in terms of negative mood, relaxation, and acceptance in post-treatment.

Taken together, it suggests that participation in yoga classes may be one of the safest and most effective interventions in attenuated menopause symptoms.

Sources:

(1) *The effects of yoga and self-esteem on menopausal symptoms and quality of life in breast cancer survivors. A secondary analysis of a randomised controlled trial by Koch AK1, Rabsilber S2, Lauche R3, Kümmel S4, Dobos G5, Langhorst J6, Cramer H3. (PubMed)*




(2) *Yoga and meditation for menopausal symptoms in breast cancer survivors. A randomised controlled trial by Cramer H1,2, Rabsilber S3,4, Lauche R1,2, Kümmel S4, Dobos G1 (PubMed).*

Claudia Brown would like to thank Dr Louise Newson for providing all the medical advice on the menopause / HRT / alternatives to HRT for this article. Visit her website: menopausedoctor.co.uk for information on all things menopause for you and your GP



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MANAGING THE MENOPAUSE WITHOUT HRT

Tips and tricks to see you through the menopause

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can be beneficial for many women. However, there are some women who cannot take HRT for medical reasons and others who wish to not take it. Taking HRT is not the only treatment for the menopause and should not be given in isolation without considering other treatments and lifestyle interventions.

Healthy diet

It is really important that women eat a healthy balanced diet. As our bone density reduces during the perimenopause and menopause, it is essential to eat a diet rich in calcium to keep our bones strong and healthy. Reducing the amount of sugar in our diet is beneficial and trying to eat foods with a low glycaemic index (such as brown rice and oats) will reduce sugar swings and can be beneficial to our pancreas which produces insulin. Eating less processed foods and trying to eat healthy fats such as those in avocado and nuts are important. There is increasing evidence that gut health is very important too, not just for our general health but this can also influence mood, emotions and wellbeing. The levels of gut-friendly bacteria can reduce after the menopause which can lead to symptoms such as poor digestion or food intolerances.

Some women find that things such as spicy foods, caffeine (in tea, coffee, cola, chocolate, etc), smoking, and alcohol may

trigger hot flashes. Avoiding these things may help for some women. A healthy balanced diet, including foods rich in Vitamin D will also help. Eating a healthy, balanced Mediterranean-style diet is beneficial for overall good health, and is recommended.

Reducing alcohol

Some women find that drinking alcohol can worsen their symptoms, especially hot flashes. Keeping alcohol intake to a minimum is healthy for so many reasons as drinking more than the current recommendations can increase our future risk of osteoporosis, heart disease and even some types of cancer. Alcohol also contains hidden calories.

Regular exercise

Undertaking regular exercise is clearly very important for our cardiovascular and bone health. It can also help reduce anxiety and stress. Even just walking up the stairs instead of using the lift is a step in the right direction. Doing yoga regularly can also help balance other hormones such as melatonin, thyroid hormones and stress hormones.

Having enough sleep

It can be very common for sleep patterns to change with our changing hormone levels. Avoiding using phones in the bedroom is essential as the blue light emitted from screens can affect our melatonin (sleep hormone) levels. Many women find it useful

to sleep with a window open so having fresh air circulating in the bedroom. Avoiding caffeinated drinks for a few hours before bedtime can reduce stimulation. Drinking alcohol can actually make the quality of your sleep worse so this is another reason to moderate your alcohol intake. Using meditation as a way of mimicking restful sleep even if you are not fast asleep can be difficult for some women but it is certainly something worth trying to master.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

This can work to improve emotions, such as anxiety and low mood, which can occur as a result of the menopause. There is also some evidence that CBT can be beneficial to reduce the frequency and duration of hot flashes.

Acupuncture

There is some evidence that acupuncture can improve menopausal symptoms.

Herbal preparations and supplements

Agnes castus may improve some symptoms such as mood swings, tension and anxiety. Black cohosh and red clover may help improve some symptoms. There is no strong evidence that any of these preparations are beneficial, however, this does not mean they do not work. There has been little research into this area. It is important that if you do take a herbal treatment then it should have a traditional herbal registration (THR) and this logo should be clearly marked on the packaging. If you do choose to explore herbal medicine as a treatment option, it would be best to consult with a qualified medical professional or herbalist.

Isoflavones and phytoestrogens

These are present in various foods including soy, flax seeds, lentils and oats. The results of taking these as a supplement to improve menopausal symptoms are very varied and the risks of taking these are still unknown. They are generally not recommended in women with a history of breast cancer.

(Information source: menopausedoctor.co.uk)



YOGA FOR GOOD HEALTH

Yoga can play an important role during menopause and perimenopause, with or without HRT. Here's what Dr Jacqueline Boden, a GP in Birmingham says:

"In the past, going through the menopause has been seen as the 'end of the best' of women's lives – but in many ways it is the start of a time in our lives where we can look after ourselves more and grow in different ways. It is an opportunity to re-evaluate our physical, mental and spiritual health, at a time when the day-to-day demands of a young family, of working our way up a career ladder are starting to lessen. HRT has benefits for both physical and mental health, but concentrating on our fitness and flexibility, and learning to process the stresses and worries of life are just as important. Yoga can help with improving bone mass and preserving our joints; we exercise both our bodies and brains in balancing poses, and we can use our powerful minds to decrease stress and anxiety by learning meditation techniques."



OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is a condition in which your bones lose their strength and are therefore more likely to break or fracture, usually following a minor bump or fall. Your bone tissue is made up of protein hardened by calcium salts and other minerals to make it strong. Bone tissue is alive and it constantly changes throughout your life in order for it to be as healthy as possible.

Until you are around 30, you normally build more bone than you lose. However, during the menopause, your bone breakdown occurs at a faster rate than your bone buildup, resulting in a loss of bone mass. Once this loss of bone reaches a certain point, a person has osteoporosis.

The drop in oestrogen levels during the menopause results in increased bone loss which leads to your bones becoming less dense and less strong. Around 10% of a woman's bone mass is lost in the first five years of the menopause and this increases your risk of osteoporosis developing.

Osteoporosis is more common in women who do not take HRT after the menopause. One in two women and one in five men over the age of 50 experience fractures, mostly as a result of low bone strength.

It is very important to have adequate vitamin D levels because it is a very important vitamin for keeping your bones healthy as it enables calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth, to be absorbed. Vitamin D is made in the

skin following sun exposure and is found in very small amounts in some foods.

Regular exercise can be very beneficial and it is important to find a type of exercise that you enjoy. Yoga, running, walking, tennis, and dance can all help to keep you fit and healthy — these sports can also help keep your bones strong.

HRT is the best treatment for the

prevention and also the treatment of osteoporosis. Taking HRT has been shown in many studies to improve bone density and also reduce the risk of fractures occurring. The earlier HRT is taken the better it is for our bone health.

Information source:
menopausedoctor.co.uk



YIN YOGA VS MENOPAUSE

Rose Shaw explains how Yin Yoga may help ease menopause symptoms

When suffering the discomfort of menopause and perimenopausal symptoms, the very last thing we feel like doing is exercise. The idea of becoming more heated, sweating more and feeling even more out of control and disconnected from our bodies when we are already tired from disturbed sleep is not appealing, despite knowing the benefits especially of holistic modalities such as yoga.

However, there may be another way. Yin Yoga invites us to experience the immense power of doing nothing. Like regular yoga, Yin invites us to open a new conversation with our bodies and to treat them as an old friend rather than an enemy to be despised and punished.

Yin is a very passive and still form of yoga where we deliberately switch off the muscles to access the deeper tissues of the body, influence collagen production and nourish our joints. Although we appear still, on a cellular level Yin unleashes a tsunami of positive responses.

We know that there are many types of exercise and indeed many ways to train fascia (our deep connective tissues) but Yin Yoga offers us the opportunity to slow down, to remember that life isn't an emergency, to be present and to take stock. As a result, Yin Yoga is often referred to as a 'back door' to mindfulness and meditation.

In a nutshell, we dry out as we age. Synovial fluid and cartilage changes allow more wear on bones, tissues dry up and as a result we become brittle, not unlike a sponge. We want to stress the fibroblasts that live in the joint capsules to secrete collagen fibres and proteins to hydrate our tissues through Yin Yoga's gentle, static holds.

So we know that it has potential health benefits, keeping the body soft, still and supported – rather than exploiting range. Every cell, bone, organ, joint, ligament and tendon is made of, and surrounded by, connective tissue. This fascia system is the largest sensory organ in the body and our great communication network.

Regular Yin Yoga, for some, can ease aches and pains, increase flexibility, calm temperature and soothe our cardiac and nervous systems by safely stressing the tissues without any effort or force during the time in the pose. Think of Yin as braces on the teeth: gentle pressure over time for valuable results.

We hold each pose for around three minutes each, keeping the body soft and still. The breath is coaxed in and out through the nose, encouraging the belly to fill up as we breathe in, returning to the way we were born breathing.

Rose Shaw is a Yin Yoga teacher trainer in Lancashire (Yogabyrose.co.uk)



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AROMA THERAPY

Using essential oils during the menopause for comfort and nurturing



There are many ways to find comfort and support for those experiencing symptoms associated with the menopause or perimenopause.

Yoga is one of them. Another is the use of essential oils and aromatherapy.

“Using essential oils during menopause can be really helpful in supporting, nurturing and comforting you during this time of transition,” says Jenny Gibbons, clinical aromatherapist and founder of Root and Flower.

“I love this quote from Dr. Christine Northrup: “Our fertility stops being about having children and starts being about what we create for ourselves that benefits us and the people around us.”

“If we take these words to heart, we can understand that this time can be about looking inward and deeply accepting ourselves and that this too can be an act of kindness, nurture and creativity.”

Opposite, are a few essential oil blend recipes to help support those going through the ebb and flow of the menopause and inspire you as you journey inward:

1. To calm and cool during hot flashes:

Into a 10ml pure coconut oil or jojoba oil base add:

- 2 drops of peppermint essential oil (to cool, boost energy and remedy headaches)
- 5 drops of clary sage essential oil (‘wonder oil’ for all things hormonal)
- 2 drops of geranium essential oil (mood elevator and anxiety comforter)

2. To remind you of your inner beauty:

Into a 10ml pure coconut oil/jojoba oil base add:

- 5 drops of ylang-ylang essential oil (offers feelings of self-love and confidence)
- 5 drops of rose essential oil (encourages

deep self-love and acceptance. Also helps us to trust and release fears associated with heart matters, intimacy, trust and our own power)

- 2 drops of sandalwood essential oil (helps you surrender anxiety around releasing and letting go. Connects you inward)

3. For a restful, deep sleep:

Into a 10ml pure coconut oil/jojoba oil base add:

- 6 drops of lavender essential oil (deeply relaxes and comforts, like the softest blanket)
- 2 drops of ylang-ylang essential oil (to calm and balance the nervous system, and gently soothe)
- 2 drops of roman chamomile essential oil (to calm and make you super sleepy)

Either pour these blends into a warm bath or apply a little onto pulse points as desired.

CLAUDIA RECOMMENDS

OM writer Claudia Brown highlights her own aromatherapy favourites:

“I was very keen to explore all complementary therapy options for my own menopausal symptoms. My most amazing discovery is clary sage — it is so popular that my local high street shop hides it as it gets stolen!

I’ve researched extensively on this subject and there are many similarities both commercially and anecdotally about which essential oil can help with certain symptoms. I have great fun mixing my own potions and lotions based on my symptoms, and spread liberally on my abdomen and pulse points.

Internationally acclaimed book, ‘The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy’ by Salvatore Battaglia suggests bergamot,

german and roman chamomile, clary sage, cypress, sweet fennel, geranium, jasmine absolute, juniper berry, lavender, neroli, rose absolute and otto, ylang ylang.

Doterra produce Clary Calm: a blend of clary sage, lavender, bergamot, roman chamomile, cedarwood, ylang ylang, geranium, fennel, carrot seed, palmarosa, and agnus castus.

Youngs Essential Oils use the following essential oils in a variety of options for women: geranium, coriander, vetiver, orange, clary sage, bergamot, ylang ylang, sandalwood, peppermint, fennel and frankincense.

Root & Flower make the lovely Sacral Chakra oil which contains clary sage, ylang ylang, rose geranium and neroli, while Aveda’s Chakra 2 spray contains sandalwood, orange and geranium.



CLARY SAGE

Clary sage essential oil is considered by many experts to be the most effective of all essential oils for balancing hormones. For some women it can provide relief for menopause symptoms like hot flashes and anxiety, reduce the intensity and frequency of night sweats, relieve symptoms of PMT and reduce menstrual pains as well as regulate hormones to lift your mood and improve mental strength. The herb contains natural phytoestrogens, often referred to as ‘dietary estrogens’ derived from plants that regulate estrogen levels. A 2014 study in the Journal of Phytotherapy Research showed that inhaling clary sage essential oil resulted in lowering cortisol levels by 36%, while also improving thyroid hormone levels. High cortisol levels can lead to weight gain, depression, and many other problems. The post-menopausal women who participated in the study had been diagnosed with depression, but after the trial, they noted that clary sage had a significant effect on improving their mood and relieving symptoms of depression.



GERANIUM

Geranium essential oil is known to be calming, soothing, revitalising and detoxifying. It can help improve dry skin, a common problem for menopausal women and is also considered a powerful regulator in hormone secretions that help treat PMT and menopause symptoms, reduce anxiety and irritation and alleviate mood swings. In research focused on menopausal women, those who received aromatherapy massage for eight weeks using a blend of geranium essential oil and almond oil experienced improvements in mood and depression. For some women, geranium essential oil can also provide cooling relief from hot flashes and night sweats.



YOGA, MENOPAUSE AND ME

Four women describe their own experiences

Charlotte Fleming, 41, Stafford

“Yoga has transformed me in all manner of ways...there is a sentence I never thought I would say when I was encouraged to give it a try 18 months ago! I’ve been a cynic most of my life about the whole ‘meditation and breathing thing’; I was also an ex-Pilates attendee. Now I go to yoga every week and wish I could fit in more classes.

So here is how I got there: my body, mind and unfortunately, soul, were changed forever in 2010 when I underwent a total hysterectomy at 31. I thought I had made the best decision after 16 years of chronic pain and multiple surgeries. How I was wrong. I wasn’t really told or given much information on how being thrown into an early menopause would affect me.

Yes, I’m on HRT, and most people think that’s it, all sorted and fixed. But in the last four years, I’ve struggled with unspoken menopause symptoms: tiredness but an inability to sleep, aches in my bones, especially my lower back, and it turns out I’ve got the early stages of osteoporosis. Then there’s the anxiety, low moods, my concentration wasn’t the same, brain fog made me feel I was losing my marbles, plus weight gain, which of course leads to no sex drive (dare I say the words ‘vaginal dryness’ — the one symptom most women won’t admit to, let alone tell their husbands, friends or even a GP to get treatment!).

After losing nearly three stone in weight I was encouraged by a friend to start going to the gym and try yoga as I’d been complaining that I was unfit and my back pain was at its crippling worst. I initially thought it won’t last, but at least I’d get to spend time with my friend.

I joined the gym and started my first yoga session. I remember coming away after feeling lifted and elated. I can’t explain why really; it was as if I’d been carrying around this fog stopping me from being



me. The breathing exercises helped me focus the mind and I use them a lot now for either clearing my head to get to sleep, or when my anxiety flares up. I also know how to warm up and cool down correctly for exercising, alleviating any muscular strains. I now have a strong core and it’s toning up my body a treat. I now do yoga in the gym or at home; for me, a good session of numerous poses is as good a workout as doing running or cycling. Before, I never thought yoga would make me sweat, laugh, cry (only occasionally!), or even get out of breath.

Menopause is a condition. For lots of women it goes unnoticed, or women just think that they are feeling the way they are as part of getting ‘old’ and do nothing about finding ways for menopause to fit into their life; not you trying to adjust your life around it. I absolutely recommend yoga, it’s one exercise that’s for all ages, all shapes and sizes. No matter what the reason for doing it, yoga can and will benefit your mind, body and spirit.”



Karen Russell, 61, senior yoga teacher and sports yoga specialist in London

“I was extremely lucky to experience a menopause totally free of the debilitating symptoms some women I know have endured for varying lengths of time. I can’t say definitely that it’s due to practicing yoga for so many years, but I am convinced that it helped. I’m sure that the rhythm of regular practice helps to control mood swings; I didn’t experience any, neither did I have a single hot flush. It may be that I was just very lucky. When I look at friends of a similar age, it tends to be those who have always exercised, whether that exercise includes a yoga practice or not, who have had an easier time during peri and full menopause.

However, no matter what sort of exercise one does, nothing can change the fact

that the rate of muscle loss accelerates considerably after the menopause. Sadly, no amount of chaturangas will obliterate those bat-wing triceps! It will help, but I firmly believe that women need weight training too, or preferably a combination of weights, body weight and functional movement training, plus yoga of course. We have to be prepared to put the time in: maintaining muscle mass, replacing lost eyelashes and chasing disappearing eyebrows with a pencil, dye, or whatever, takes serious commitment!”

“I was extremely lucky to experience a menopause totally free of the debilitating symptoms.”

Claudia Brown, 47, Stafford

“**H**ave you heard of the zombie idea? An idea that should have been killed by evidence, but refuses to die? This is true about HRT and the various myths about the menopause such as it only happens to you when you are 51!

I like to think I'm pretty well educated. But I'd never heard the word perimenopause until I was about 41 and some women in the office were talking about it. "Perry who?" was my reaction. My own perimenopause started when I was 44. A healthy, fit, 44-year-old yoga teacher and I started peeing my pants when I had an unexpected sneeze or cough... and then the sweating started. Then the brain fog. Then the facial hair. I looked like a 15-year-old boy trying to grow his first beard!

I spoke to the nurse at my GP practice who totally wrote off my suggestions because I was too young at 44. As I've now done my own extensive research, I've found that this is nonsense. I then spoke to my GP who was a lot more amenable as I'd gone armed with a list of symptoms that were textbook menopause. She, quite rightly, insisted on having my well-behaved but long-standing thyroid condition investigated before going any further down the menopause track.

Luckily for me, the endocrinologist was very definite that I was perimenopausal so my GP gave me all the information leaflets about lifestyle suggestions and natural approaches. The thing was, I was already doing it all! As a yoga teacher, I already lead a healthy lifestyle (apart from the odd bag of chocolate buttons and a cheeky cocktail!). The herbal remedies weren't cheap and they weren't helping.

I began my own research and was amazed at the lack of information on the perimenopause. The first really helpful information I found was actually in one of my yoga texts: 'Yoni Shakti' by Uma Dinsmore-Tuli. I started talking about it in my classes and it was and continues to be amazing. It was like opening Pandora's Box: my students began sharing their stories, tips and experiences. Women began taking their tops off if they had a hot sweat. There was horror story after horror story about health professionals who were dismissive, disinterested or uninformed. I've been really lucky to have a supportive GP who has listened to me and supported me in taking the decision to try HRT. I'd got to the point where I was so forgetful, confused and irritable that I didn't like myself anymore; how my husband put up with me I'll never know (and I was plucking my beard on a daily basis!). I told my doctor to hit me up with the good stuff and I've never looked back.

The more I began to read, the more I began to notice in the media. TV personalities were talking about their menopause journeys: Davina McCall, Lorraine Kelly, Carol Vorderman and even Hollywood star Gwyneth Paltrow, who has just launched the wittily titled 'Madame Ovary' supplement range.

But I must stress here a few things. I am an advocate of a woman choosing her own path when it comes to how she copes with this time in her life. For me, HRT has been the best choice, and it's a decision I made after spending a lot of time researching all my options. Also, very importantly, there were no health reasons why I shouldn't take it. I totally understand that this is not the case for a number of women.



I've been amazed at the 'HRT shaming' on some of the social media sites about people saying that women shouldn't take HRT because it causes breast cancer, is dangerous, is made of horse urine, and other myths that that will not go away.

I've also found Liz Earle's new book, 'The Good Menopause Guide' really useful. She tackles the myths about HRT as well as providing advice on skin, hair and nutrition, balancing hormones, osteoporosis and how to boost energy and self-esteem.

When it comes to yoga, I think, for me, it's a case of just do the yoga! I don't think that there are two or three poses which are going to magically reduce the sweats or the brain fog, but a steady and consistent practice reaps rewards."

“But I must stress here a few things. I am an advocate of a woman choosing her own path when it comes to how she copes with this time in her life. For me, HRT has been the best choice, and it's a decision I made after spending a lot of time researching all my options. Also, very importantly, there were no health reasons why I shouldn't take it. I totally understand that this is not the case for a number of women.”

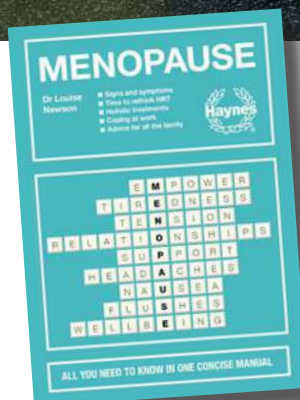
Sammy Carter, 49, yoga teacher, Carlisle, Cumbria

“I was already practicing yoga when the menopause started, so it’s hard to say whether I was suffering less symptoms than others because of my yoga practice, or whether I was just one of the lucky ones whose symptoms were manageable. However, a couple of years into my menopause I decided to train to become a yoga teacher and as a consequence started to practice more. Within a couple of weeks I noticed I was feeling really good: my physical symptoms, like the hot flushes, were less frequent, and my general mood improved. I was feeling happy. I also noticed how my mood quickly spiralled down if I was unable to do yoga. Within a week or so I would feel all the symptoms ramping back up.

For me yoga was the key to my sense of wellbeing, physically and mentally. So I took another course, this time in Yin yoga. This is a deep meditative practice that helps to maintain healthy joint mobility, so perfect for the older, or more philosophical yogi. Many of the postures are seated and held for 3-5 minutes, so you are still, and connecting with your breath.

As rocket scientist Yin Yoga master Bernie Clark says: “We don’t use our body to get into a pose, we use the pose to get into our body.” The aim is to go within and reconnect with the very root of our own being; to rediscover ourselves, or even reinvent ourselves (as the menopause, male or female, invites us into our next stage of life.) When you feel that connection on a regular basis, whether it’s daily or weekly, it grounds you and helps you to stay strong through the big upheavals — whether that’s the menopause, moving house, or losing a loved one. Yoga will always be there to bring me back to that deep connection, a place of inner strength from where anything is possible.”

“When you feel that connection on a regular basis, whether it’s daily or weekly, it grounds you and helps you to stay strong through the big upheavals — whether that’s the menopause, moving house, or losing a loved one.”



The Menopause Manual
The new book by GP and menopause specialist Dr Louise Newson. The Menopause manual is available from www.haynes.com priced at £12.99.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

NHS
nhs.uk/conditions/menopause

The British Menopause Society
thebms.org.uk

Women’s Health Concern
womens-health-concern.org

British Acupuncture Council
acupuncture.org.uk

British Reflexology Association
britreflex.co.uk

Complementary Medical Association
the-cma.org.uk

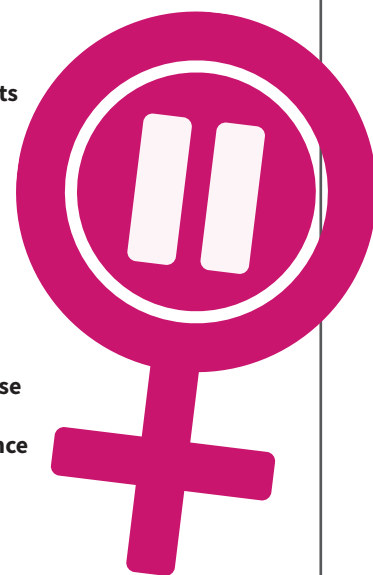
International Federation of Professional Aromatherapists
ifparoma.org

National Institute of Medical Herbalists
nimh.org.uk

Society of Homeopaths
homeopathy-soh.org

Liz Earle Wellbeing
lizearlewellbeing.com/category/live-well/the-menopause

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Guidance
nice.org.uk/guidance/qs143/resources/menopause-pdf-75545477829061





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Don't worry,
be happy

A meditation for laughing at life.

By Jill Lawson

Laughter is good medicine. A positive attitude keeps the doctor away and optimism does wonders for our health and wellbeing. Sugar coating our world with giggles lightens the mood, and makes life a bit rosier.

Options such as laughter yoga, comedy clubs, funny movies, and simple joke telling, all give us access to awaken our inner wellspring of humour with a few chuckles or roaring merriment.

Thinking about this meditation takes me back to my days in yoga teacher training. After spending four hours a day for several weeks in yoga asana practice and quiet contemplation, something inside of me cracked open. I didn't break down or have emotional outbursts. Instead, my classmates would often find me laughing uncontrollably. Sometimes at the most inappropriate times. I am not sure I can explain why this was happening to me.

Eventually I realised that feeling giddy and allowing myself to laugh was bringing my dark, inner world into the light, and this was personally healing. It tickled me to laughter.

If you are in need of a bit of laughter, practice the following (funny) meditation. Keep in mind what philosopher Lao Tsu said: "As soon as you've made a thought, laugh at it."

An ounce of laughter is worth a pound of cure (or, something like that!).

Have fun with this one, and try not to take yourself too seriously.

Do it now

Begin in a comfortable position. After taking several deep breaths, imagine a gurgle in your stomach. It feels like a flower just waiting to bloom from deep in your guts and spread its fragrance all around you. You want to control it, but you cannot. The urge to release what you feel in your belly it is growing stronger. You might be afraid you will offend those around you if you release what is inside of you; the sound, the sensation. But don't worry about that. Have confidence in yourself, and stay the course. Feel the electric current of an approaching laugh about to blow a fuse from deep within your innards. Don't hold back. Let it rip like there is no tomorrow. Isn't life a gas?

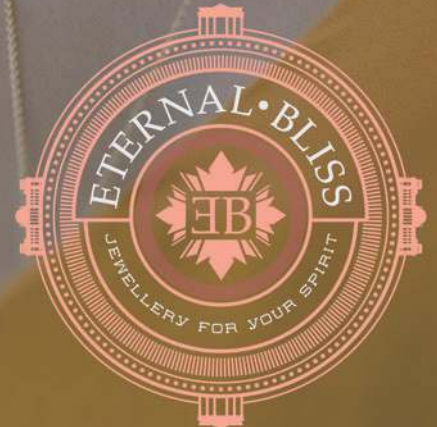
Hopefully this meditation is causing you to chuckle a bit. We all need humour in our lives. Without it, we would be forced to carry the burden of seriousness everywhere we went. Who wants that? Take the time to laugh a little, whether it be at yourself or something you find funny. ॐ

Jill Lawson is a writer and yoga teacher enjoying life on the island of Maui in Hawaii (jilllawson.net)

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Be more *#Mindfloral*



From meditation to gardening, popular flower brand Interflora has put together a bunch of fresh ideas to promote everyday mindfulness

Reaching for that third cup of coffee and it's only 9am? Stressing over deadlines, or mindlessly scrolling your way through the day? We constantly hear about the importance of our mental health, but we rarely take a minute to ourselves to switch off. One thing's for sure, we could all do with a little more mindfulness in our lives.

Interflora (interflora.co.uk) recently teamed up with a group of experts to offer ways to help us take some time out from busy schedules, everyday worries, and even social media — to just be in the now. Its expert team includes the likes of yogini Emily Clare Hill, allotment influencer Kirsty Ward, and nutritionist Amanda Ashy Boyd.

Using the healing properties of flowers and nature, and focusing on the beauty in the everyday, it has listed ways we can reduce stress, improve our happiness — and maybe even cut our caffeine intake!

“Interflora’s #Mindfloral campaign has been crafted to really make a difference in peoples’ lives, focusing on how we can achieve a state of mindfulness through being in the now, getting rid of those everyday distractions, and taking a little more ‘me’ time,” said Interflora’s Helen Sharpe.

The company has created a series of videos to get its mindful message across.

Each one offers practical tips and techniques to help people

connect with their natural state of being and the world around them.

“From focusing on the rising and falling sensations as we breathe, or the soft texture of soil whilst gardening, the videos encourage us to look at life a little differently, and to notice the reality in front of us.”

Here are some ideas to get you started on your #Mindfloral journey:

Gardening therapy

This is a growing trend for improving wellbeing. Nurturing plants is known to have a calming effect on our minds and bodies, and being wholly absorbed in an activity – taking in the immediacy of our environment – can help us to remove ourselves from the frenetic noise of a fast-moving world. It's like nurturing yourself, and going out and tending to plants is a really effective way to be mindful, while walking barefoot through a garden can be a unique way to connect with nature and the earth.

House plants

Embrace the calming impact of house plants. It's no secret that plants have numerous health benefits and these are well-documented when it comes to the ones we eat. But did you know, just by having plants in your home they can help improve your health? Certain indoor plants help to improve the air quality, as well as helping your blood pressure and heart rate. Plants also help to reduce stress and the act of tending to plants can be a perfect way to practice mindfulness. Having beautiful cut blooms around the house can also aid your mood – choose calming blue and purple hues, known for soothing the mind; you could even add some Eucalyptus to stimulate the immune system.

Garden yoga

Connecting our body and mind through yoga can help us experience being present in the moment. Being in the present of 'what is' often means we'll receive so much more from the experience of the moment, and perhaps open ourselves up to new possibilities and better see the beauty around us. Practicing yoga in nature is the perfect complement to this; consider using the grass rather than a mat to connect with the earth and your surroundings.

The nutrition of nature

Food is a lot more than just what we eat to satisfy our appetite – we can boost our health and wellbeing by incorporating nature into our diets too. Micro nutrients, for example, vitamins and minerals, are where a lot of our antioxidants are found, and many of these can come from foraging in nature and even in our gardens. Take dandelions; the root is often used as a diuretic in tea. Meanwhile, dried rose petals can add a touch of sophistication to a summer BBQ by popping them in a glass of Prosecco. Or elderflower, the ultimate drinks mixer, is also very immune-supportive. Whether you have them growing in your garden, or you'll be foraging, including these parts of nature in your diet can help you become more mindful.

Flower arranging

Another way to relax, that's both simple and rewarding, is flower arranging. Taking a few moments to yourself is important, and your blooms of choice can also help; calming blue and purple stems can alleviate stress and anxiety, and promote creativity. Lilac roses, purple freesia and purple lisianthus; all colours which can help with depression, calming the mind and soothing mental illness and nervous disorders. Meanwhile, lavender is known for reducing anxiety and stress, and the calming eucalyptus stimulates the immune system and clarifies the mind. ॐ



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- The dates are set in late autumn the previous year and we are happy to take applications from November onwards
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Yoga at the *Serpentine*

Yoga fulfils Serpentine artist's vision in aid of Mind charity. *By Lucy Edge*

When Serpentine Pavilion artist Junya Ishigami described his work as “a cave-like space for contemplation” he probably didn’t expect to be taken literally.

But that’s exactly what happened when YogaClicks (yogaclicks.com) and Zephyr Wildman (zephyryoga.com) joined forces to put on a yoga and meditation class under his slate roof installation in London’s Hyde Park.

As a fund raiser for the charity Mind, we envisaged the class as a celebration of

yoga and meditation for stress and anxiety, dedicating it to those suffering from mental health issues, and those that love and care for them.

With the kind permission of the Serpentine Galleries, at 8am in the cold but brilliant morning sunshine of Kensington Gardens, we got to it. Students came from near and far – one keen yogi traveling all the way from Dublin to join us.

Focusing the class on practical tools for times of stress and anxiety, Wildman began with an explanation of RAIN – a simple practice that helps you, at any given point, (R) recognise what’s going on, (A) allow yourself some breathing space, (I) investigate what’s happening in your mind and body and take the steps to (N) nurture yourself.

Acknowledging the work of Buddhist psychologist Tara Brach (whose new book is listed in our OM Books section this month), Wildman explained to the class: “We have to be our own friend. To approach ourselves the same way we approach a friend who is



struggling. To a friend we say... 'I see you. I'm right here with you. Your pain and suffering matter to me. I'm not leaving you.' As she wisely reminded us, we have to learn to do the same thing for ourselves: to hold ourselves in a loving and kind presence and give ourselves the opportunity to experience our own capacity for love and belonging; to connect to the light within us – the light that radiates out the truth of love.

The practice of RAIN is most powerful when it is combined with movement. As any experienced yogi knows, when we practice we start to understand that moving our body changes our psychology – we begin to experience that link, and we get in touch with our life force – that Pranic experience – the vitality within.

So our teacher gave us some simple asana, or postures, to help us start to change our psychology. These postures included Virasana (Hero pose), where we were invited to feel, in the palm of our hands, a sense of presence, as if we were holding a tender gift. Malasana (Garland pose) helped us to connect to the spirit of the earth – to feel stable and grounded, but also to let go both metaphorically and physically – surrendering and releasing. In Tarsana (Butterfly pose variation), as we humbly bowed our heads and cradled the tops of our own feet, we honoured both the Hindu and Buddha goddess of compassion and

protection, and everything we have walked through in our own lives.

"Your challenges, pain and suffering have been invaluable in teaching you how to skilfully navigate this life," said Wildman. "And through this experience and wisdom

you are able to offer it to others – giving support and kindness and creating a sense of safety and belonging." Namaste to that. ॐ

Lucy Edge is the founder of YogaClicks and author of Yoga School Dropout (yogaclicks.com)



MALA FOR MIND

The class raised several hundred pounds for Mind, and a fund-raising mala bracelet, specially designed by YogaClicks, is on sale now to raise more money for this vital charity. To purchase the Mind fund-raising mala bracelet visit: yogaclicks.com

For more information on the work of Mind visit: mind.org.uk



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Feed your *mind*



Feeding your mind to stay motivated and inspired is just as important as feeding your body with nourishing foods, *says Nicky Clinch*

"Your mind will always believe everything that you tell it. Feed it with life, feed it with inspiration, feed it with love"

One of the biggest culprits in modern day living, that is directly affecting our state of health and wellbeing... is poor and unadulterated boredom.

We're bored with our jobs. Bored with our routines. Bored in our lives.

And when we end up in this resigned bored state of mind it affects our whole energy and state of mind. We end up eating when we're not hungry just to fill the gaps of time. We zone out for hours on our phones. We watch endless hours of TV. All just to stimulate us through the time and space of

our lives. But more and more feeding into this same energy of 'just getting by'.

Do any of you relate to this at all?

Lately, I found myself getting caught up in this cycle. I didn't know I was bored but I clocked myself recently and realised that whenever I had a free moment I was putting on the TV, watching endless episodes of Friends or zoning out on Instagram or even

online shopping but filling up my basket and then not buying anything.

I was getting so tired from work and motherhood that the moment I got any time to switch off I just wanted to disengage in the quickest, easiest way possible. But I realised this way of using my 'free time' wasn't feeding me in anyway whatsoever. In fact, I was getting more and more disengaged and losing more and more energy like this, so it was feeding the cycle in a negative way.

I realised for me that I was craving inspiration. I realised that I was working so hard and using up so much energy being a mama that my own individual self was getting bored and uninspired. So, I decided to change this as soon as possible. I have made a commitment to feed my mind with only fuel that would inspire me and enable me to continue to grow in a more positive way. So, I swapped the IG zoning out with listening to inspiring podcasts. And I swapped the online news reading with some great and inspiring books. And I decided that if I was going to watch something I would watch something inspiring and uplifting that would teach me something new.

In essence, I was choosing to feed my mind with foods that were going to nourish my mind in a way that it would grow. Where I may learn new things, new skills and hear new inspirations.

After only two days of doing this, I have found my whole state of mind has shifted. I feel excited, positive and inspired by life. Which is feeding back into my work and even in my relationship with my family. I feel more energetic and alive and I feel excited as to when I can next have free time to do more of this. Making sure we are constantly feeding our minds with nourishing 'mind foods' is just important as feeding our body with actual nourishing foods. We are incredible beings that are just dying to thrive and grow and evolve and if we forget this and become complacent and resigned in our lives we get bored. And our mind becomes uninspired and shuts down.

So how are you all feeding your mind right now? Maybe you are someone that is constantly feeding your mind and this may not apply to you. But for those of you that are finding yourself getting bored and ending up numbing your mind out, how can you change your habits and introduce more nourishing foods for your mind?

Here are some suggestions:

Meditation

Meditation helps to quieten an overstimulated mind which affects our whole body and energy. Just 10-20 minutes of meditation a day will make a huge impact on how you feel in your day. Plus, it will allow your mind to have a rest, helping you feel more energised and positive within yourself.

"I was getting so tired from work and motherhood that the moment I got any time to switch off I just wanted to disengage in the quickest, easiest way possible."

Try it out. Just sit and breathe or meditate for 10-20 minutes each day starting today.

Podcasts / Ted Talks

There are so many incredible podcasts out right now that are just so easy and wonderful to listen to. They cover all manner of topics, including yoga. And there are endless amazing Ted Talks out there too, so search them out and find the ones that you love. Here are two of my own absolute favourites: Stroke Of Insight (by Jill Bolte Taylor).

Reading

I recently bought several books that were recommended to me that were aligned with my field of work and what inspires me in my life. And I am absolutely loving learning new things every time I open up their pages. Which is feeding me on so many levels. Here are some books I would recommend to help inspire your spiritual and emotional growth that you may enjoy too. But if not, choose whatever works for you - just let it be something that will teach you more than you already know:

- *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* – Stephen Covey
- *Wildflower* – Drew Barrymore
- *Big Magic* – Elizabeth Gilbert
- *The Journey of The Heart* – John Welwood
- *Breaking Free of Emotional Binging* – Geneen Roth
- *Being Comfortable with Uncomfortability* – Pema Chodron

Remember that all parts of who we are need feeding, not just our bodies. And making sure we are continuously feeding our minds is part of building a fully nourished and empowered life. So that we can continue to grow and feel inspired in our own selves.

Of course, all of the suggestions I've offered above are inspiration to me personally, but you are different to me. You may love art or poetry or fishing or travelling. So please listen to your own self and choose what inspires your beautiful, authentic, individual mind. ॐ

Nicky Clinch is a transformational and spiritual mentor (nickyclinch.com)



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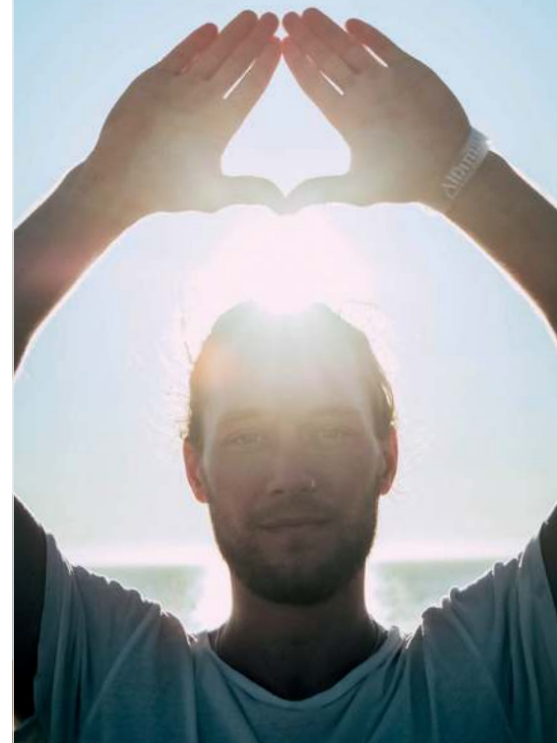
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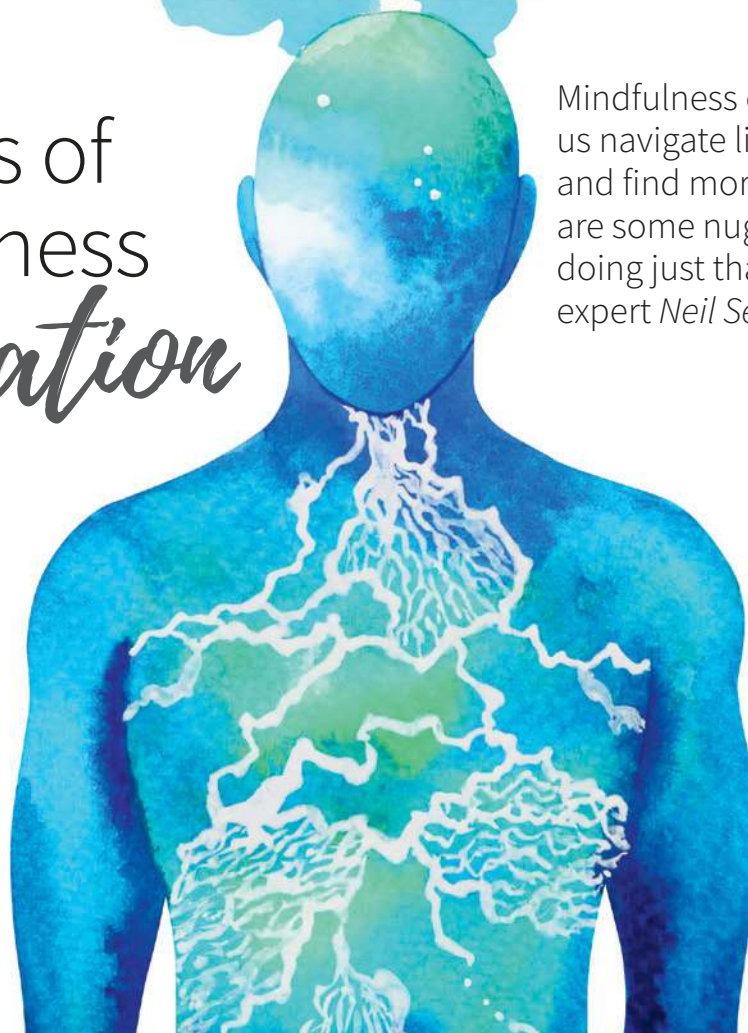
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5 gems of mindfulness *inspiration*

Mindfulness can be great to help us navigate life with more ease and find more purpose. Here are some nuggets of wisdom on doing just that from mindfulness expert *Neil Seligman*



You know how someone who is into yoga is a yogi? Well I was trying to think of what to call someone who is into mindfulness? Would they be a mindi? Or what about a nessi, medi or mindo? As you can imagine, I'm not really delighted with my brainstorm – but there must be a nascent word out there, surely? Perhaps it is already bursting forth from the creative ethers beneath Silicon Valley – preparing to launch itself into the field of conscious awareness where it will begin to take up space in taglines and product ranges... Anyway – if you've got any good ideas – I'd love to hear them!

Back to business – here are five of the best gems of advice I've ever heard on the subject of mindfulness and living mindfully:

1. Get to know your interiority

Interiority is a funny word, but it is a useful one. Most of us have spent so much time working out how to operate in our external reality (since birth) that we forget that our primary environment is the complex intimate space that looms into view when we close our eyes. We also forget that this primary environment is no less primary when our eyes are open. In fact, everything that you experience gets processed through your body and mind, is felt as emotions, decoded or recoded in thoughts, and is noted by your physiology as felt sensations. Mindfulness offers a map when it comes to navigating these wilds. Stay curious – the onion of your inner world has many layers.

2. Meditate to get good at life

Mindfulness is one of those pesky skills that sort of looks like nothing and then turns out to be a minefield of everything. It also sounds floaty and inspiring in those inspirational quotes, but suddenly becomes all gnarly and complicated when it comes time to actually sit. I think it's worth remembering that when we meditate we aren't actually doing it to get good at meditation. It's not a competitive sport after all, it doesn't make for good spectating, and you'll often be doing it alone or when nobody is looking. So, the real reason to meditate is not to get good at meditation but to get good at life.

3. It's okay to want something from your practice

The Buddhists (whose tradition holds the roots of modern mindfulness) are not big fans on goal setting. When it comes to meditation, they will stretch to a lightly held background intention (for example to live in the spirit of the unending meditation) but

they will dissuade students from striving towards any particular goal. Yet modern mindfulness is secular, and many of its practitioners are modern folk who have been brought up on a diet of goal setting, ambition, and drive. Little wonder that teachers and students alike tend to bring their hopes and dreams to the cushion. Perhaps you'd like to be less stressed, happier, calmer, or more resilient – you might want to improve your sporting prowess, your communication skills, or confidence. No problem. As long as you can be open minded enough to get to your goal in a non-linear fashion, by letting go, rather than striving – you'll be fine.

4. Use rituals but hold them lightly

When it comes to your at-home morning or evening sitting practice, adding in an element of ritual will absolutely help you embed your routine. The word ritual might conjure scenes of religion, incense, or saffron robes, but it can mean any repeated actions done with meaning. No doubt you already have a few rituals in your life – perhaps that first cup of coffee in the morning, that long bubble bath at the end of a rough week, or stealing from the hidden chocolate bar secreted in the back of the fridge?

Having a few special objects that surround and support your mindfulness practice works well. My ritual involves setting up my meditation cushion and mat, sitting down gently, pulling a soft blanket over my legs and then setting my kitchen timer for practice. Interacting with these objects which have been collected with care over time, and repeating the same actions each morning, helps me enter my practice. In fact, as soon as the ritual begins, the practice is already underway.

5. Mindfulness brings on the mind in the right way

Mindfulness (like yoga) is a practice of embodiment which is the skill of inviting awareness into the body, so that we might be in touch with its data and respond better to our environment. When we are embodied we have a better chance of acting resourcefully when faced with surprises, upsets, and uncertainty. Besides helping us become more embodied, mindfulness is also a compassion practice. It allows us to bring compassionate awareness to our challenges and connects us with our wisdom. So, to bring the mind on in the right way: start with awareness in the body (embodiment), then the heart (compassion) and finally the mind (intelligence). Notice what happens when you do. ॐ

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Shine through the chakras



Upgrade your operating system through the energetic compass of the chakras.

By Schamet Horsfield

Chakras, chakras chakras...you have probably been hearing this word a lot recently, but what does it really mean? Is it just another 'woo woo' spiritual fad to sell more yoga classes, workshops, and rainbow coloured yoga pants?

Perhaps, but there's also an ancient wisdom attached to the word 'chakra'.

Just like a great new little café that becomes the talk of the town, chakras are making their way into people's lives like a recipe for divine success. Providing an amazing map to higher levels of consciousness where you can feel tapped, tuned in and manifest your dreams into reality.

But what are chakras?

The word 'chakra' is Sanskrit and means 'spinning wheels of light'. The chakra system is taken very seriously in the East and is part of a much bigger system, philosophy and way of life.

The system is, in essence, a map of the human energy field.

There are seven main chakras that relate to different regions of the body and brain including our organs, nerve clusters, meridians, emotions, thought patterns and human consciousness. From the microcosm to the macrocosm, chakras also relate to time, space, geographic locations as well as human history and evolution.

The chakras provide a fascinating system and tool used and integrated by many different cultures. Specifically, it originated from Tantra and ancient Vedic science. The chakras are said to be the seven keys for transforming the map of consciousness.

Energy programs

World renowned author of 'Eastern Body, Western Mind' and chakra teacher Anodea Judith, gives this analogy:

"Our body is the hardware. The mind is the software. Our belief system is our operating system. Yoga is a pathway. The chakra system is a profound map to wholeness and to manifestation. They are also portals

CHAKRA WORKSHOPS

Based in New Zealand, Schamet Horsfield is a chakra yoga teacher, energy healer, and teaches chakra workshops and retreats. Her Journey Through the Chakras Workshop offers a seven-week path of self-discovery journeying step-by-step through the chakra system to become more aware of your chakras and how to open and balance them. She is hosting master teacher of the chakra system, Anodea Judith, this month in Wellington (November 13-17) for her world-famous workshop 'Mastering the Charge in Your Body, Your Emotions, and Your Chakras', a transformative five-day training based on the book 'Charge the Energy Body'. This workshop will explore simple techniques that can be used anytime, anywhere for a 'quick fix' and guide in creating a chakra-based practice that will have a powerful cumulative effect on your life. Visit: diamondinthebay.co.nz



between the inner and outer worlds."

Our chakras are like programs stored within our body and mind and moulded from birth. These programs are impacted by the kind of childhood and home life we had, the country we grew up in, and even the generation we grew with. Whether we are aware of these programs or not, they affect our choices and the life we live.

If our programs are not operating at maximum capacity or if some of our programs are 'buggy', our personal reality does not match the reality we want and life can feel like it's not working out the way we want it to.

Have you experienced reoccurring relationship issues? Or do you keep trying to lose weight but just end up frustrated and falling back into old patterns? Maybe, despite all of the positive affirmations you tell yourself, your self-confidence seems to be stuck? Or people just don't seem to be respecting you lately?

Chakra therapy

If any of this resonates with you, it might be time to upgrade your operating system!

What does it mean to upgrade your operating system?

When our hardware and software are upgraded through chakra therapy we can shift the energy (or Prana as it's known in Sanskrit) and remove the blocked energy that is causing our 'dis-ease'. When our human body has energy flowing, a bit like a crystal-clear river, we become more tuned in and dance gracefully through life. After all, as the late, great Albert Einstein noted: "Everything is energy and that's all there is to it. Match

the frequency of the reality you want and you cannot help but get that reality."

In order to dance gracefully through life with a solid grounding, connection, strength, ease, power, love, joy, passion, and purpose we must be clear and in tune with our own energy field and consciousness. We must be able to free ourselves as much as possible from our own blockages, self-limiting beliefs, family and/or self-created baggage, fears, judgements, energetic and emotional imbalances and self-criticism.

Once we release the energy stuck in the body and clear our mind of toxic thoughts, we can channel high levels of divinity and creativity through our vessel, our human body, for the soul. We can achieve divine consciousness with ease and grace. We become tuned in and life just flows. We live the dream and dream the life we want into reality.

When we have strong and well-balanced chakras, we know who we are, what we want, and we go out there and make it happen from a place of feeling connected and grounded. We know our place in the world and we are not afraid to make our dreams come true. We feel, speak, and express from a place of truth, love, beauty and spread love and light wherever we go. Because our human vessel is clear and vibrant, we reap the rewards of vibrant health and our energy field vibrates at a loving frequency. We become in tune with our higher self and our crown chakra naturally opens; once we are open, we can receive new ideas. When our mind is clear and our hearts are open our true soul path and life work results as true joy and contentment. ॐ

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Dr. and Master Zhi Gang Sha

Moving meditation through *Tao Calligraphy*

What is Tao Calligraphy? OM explores an ancient Chinese spiritual practice re-envisioned for the modern era

The ancient art of Chinese calligraphy has long been revered for cultivating one's life force, wellbeing, happiness and wisdom.

Tao Calligraphy is a unique form created by Dr and Master Zhi Gang Sha for the 21st Century. It builds on the traditional Chinese calligraphy by infusing the unique one-stroke Yi Bi Zi with Tao (source) light, blessings and messages of the greatest Tao qualities of love, forgiveness, compassion and more. Master Sha created Tao Calligraphy in 2012 in preparation for the modern era.

"Tao Calligraphy is oneness writing," he says. "It is also art... yet much more than art and a unique form of art, and so much more. The beauty and expressiveness of the calligraphies can be immediately experienced on a visual and aesthetic level. Being in their presence and opening one's heart and soul to their messages can bless and bring the person into a contemplative state, which in turn creates a sense of oneness and an expansion of higher consciousness."

Art that goes beyond art

As the creator of Tao Calligraphy, Master Sha has integrated Chinese calligraphy with the essence of ancient wisdom and philosophy. Starting with the rare calligraphy style, Yi Bi Zi that uses only one continuous brush stroke, Master Sha has infused this oneness writing with blessings and power to create an extraordinary new form that conveys the essence of Tao, the source of all life.

With the creation of Tao Calligraphy, Master Sha brings all his spiritual wisdom and humanitarian experience, combined with the medical and energy mastery to his calligraphy. His own calligraphies carry what he calls "permanent light treasures spiritually transmitted" during the process of writing the Tao Calligraphy. These powerful transmissions create a high frequency vibration of light around anyone tracing the Tao Calligraphies.

Source field

A source field called a Tao Chang is formed through Tao Calligraphies, which carry the purest Shen Qi Jing of Tao and Oneness. Everyone and everything is made of Shen Qi Jing, where: Shen is message or information, and includes soul, heart and mind, Qi is energy and Jing is matter.

"The Tao Chang carries Shen Qi Jing of Tao Source and Creator; it is beyond powerful and effective for blessing health, nourishing relationships and finances, increasing intelligence, enlightening soul, heart, mind and body, and for transforming all aspects of life. The significance and power of Tao Chang is to transform negative Shen Qi Jing into positive Shen Qi Jing and bless every aspect of life."

In summary, he adds, Tao Calligraphies are the source treasures to transform every aspect of one's life.

Give it a try

Visit the Master Sha Tao Centre in London to find out more. Free evenings are held on Wednesdays from 7:00pm to 8:45pm. Visit: MasterShaTaoCentre.co.uk

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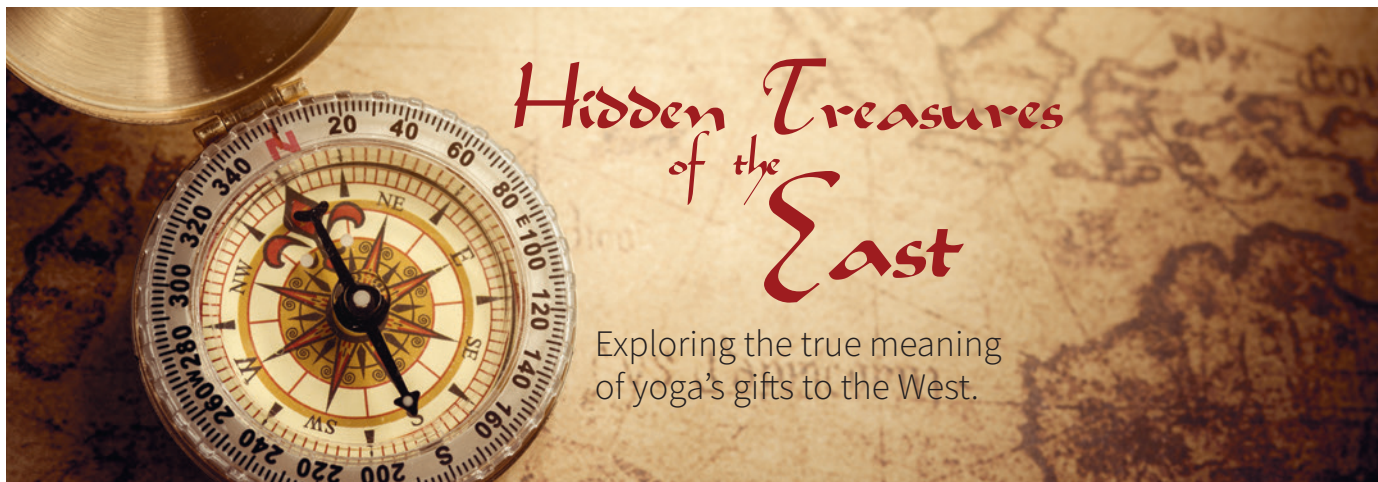
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Diwali – The Festival of Light

Originating in the East, Diwali is a famous festival celebrating light over darkness. Falling on the new moon, millions of candles are lit by households to shine light on this dark night to conquer the negative spirits that linger in the darkness. It is a celebration of good over evil. Families, friends, communities gather to participate in the festivities. The best clothes are worn, the most scrumptious dishes are cooked - there is colour, joy, laughter and fun! The underlying essence though is spiritual development: the significance of lighting a candle to purify our souls to eventually liberate us from material attachments.

Symbolism

Fire itself is a source of light and a source of life in many ways. It creates a field of energy around itself, an etheric sphere. When a candle is lit, it fills the whole space with an energy, signifying a living presence as the flame dances - alive, hot and bright. The burning flame invokes our inner state, cleansing and purifying our minds and hearts.

In the East, many households light a diya (a wick made of cotton wool doused in ghee, purified butter) daily as part of prayers, ceremonies and rituals as it signifies goodness, fortune and abundance over darkness and anything associated with evil.

The ghee symbolises the lower vibrational energies such as greed, lust, jealousy, hatred, the wick is symbolic of the ego, whereas the flame, the soul. When the wick burns the ghee, it destroys these negative energies, the ego also perishes, liberating the soul and guiding it to the path of enlightenment.

Lighting a candle

Lighting a candle for some of us has become a daily discipline, a spiritual tool, a key to meditation. When we meditate on the



flame, we connect to source, establishing our own relationship and interaction, allowing the higher powers to help us navigate through our own darkness. When we light a candle, we step into timelessness, we experience meditation, peace, stillness. From this state, we are able to perceive and make measured decisions. As we focus on the flame we set ourselves free from our karmic patterns, our own conditioning blocks. With an open heart, we truly experience unconditional love for ourselves and each other.

We awaken our own inner fire. As we light the fire outside of ourselves we manifest our own inner fire, that which connects us to our true state and awakening journey. This connectivity is yoga. We expand our consciousness to that which is authentic as we are guided to make the decisions that best serve our purpose.

From Darkness into Light

Om Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya

Mrtyor-Maa Amrtam Gamaya

Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih

Lead me from Ignorance to Truth,
Lead me from Darkness to Light,
Lead me from Death to the Immortality,
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

This Sanskrit mantra beautifully describes the journey from darkness into light as it's dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, the powerful energy of the divine feminine. It is the light that guides us through our lives. ॐ



By Sonal Thakrar (kleem.co.uk)

A Year of Self-Love



November Moving through pain

Self-love is the practice of loving yourself just as you are. Loving all sides of yourself: the light as well as the darkness. Acknowledging that there is nothing you need to hide or push down, all parts of you are welcome.

This month, we're exploring the role that self-love plays in our healing. When life brings us unexpected pain and challenges, while we cannot control our external circumstances, we do have control over our response. We have control over how we take care of ourselves. We have control over how we heal our wounds. We can choose to respond from a place of self-love each time. While this may not always be the easiest way it is the way that will bring us more peace and happiness in the long term.

Ups and downs are a natural part of life. It is easy to love yourself during the ups; when life is going well. The real test comes during the downs. Can you love yourself when you're not feeling great? When it feels like things are falling apart? This is more challenging, but these are the moments when you need your love the most.

Allowing yourself to feel and express (rather than suppress) your pain and challenges is crucial to self-love.

If you don't allow yourself to truly feel, the difficult emotions don't just leave - they stay, and they fester. They impact your future decisions and behaviours and inhibit your ability to connect deeply with who you really are, and how you want to be in the world.

While we're generally taught to celebrate the positive emotions, most of us are taught to feel ashamed and push down the more difficult ones. But the most self-loving thing to do is to invite them in, to feel them, to explore what they are trying to teach you, and then to release them when you are ready.

Start by asking yourself: "What am I feeling right now?" Label the emotion you're feeling; maybe it's sadness, anger, grief, frustration, anxiety or guilt?

Then allow yourself to feel it for a little while. Set aside some time to cry it out, or maybe write out all your thoughts in a journal. Maybe talking to a trusted friend works better for you, or it may feel good to



go and punch a pillow. Move the body or scream if you need to and know that by honouring your feelings in the moment, you are giving yourself the best possible chance of feeling good again soon.

While it is unrealistic to be happy all of the time, you can choose to respond to your current emotions and circumstances with self-love, and honour moving through the pain with that in mind. ☸

Sabi Kerr is a yoga teacher and life coach. It's her passion to support people in developing deep levels of self-love, so that they can move forwards and create their fullest lives (sabikerr.com)



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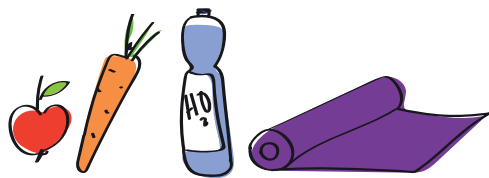
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Happy curries

Healthy vegan recipes for winter



Everyday dhal

SERVES 4 WITH LEFTOVERS

PREP TIME: 10 MINS COOK TIME: 55 MINS

Dhal is an Indian staple, a lentil-based curry that can be as soupy or as thick as you like. We can't get enough and batch-cook it so we always have a portion (or 10) in the freezer. Eat with flatbreads, pickles and yoghurt.

- 200g **yellow split peas**, picked over and rinsed
- 200g **split red lentils**
- 3 tbsp **neutral cooking oil**
- 1 **onion**, finely chopped
- 3 cloves of **garlic**, crushed or finely grated
- 3cm piece of **ginger**, peeled and finely grated
- 2 tsp **black mustard seeds**
- 1 tsp **ground turmeric**
- 1 tsp **cumin seeds**
- 1 tsp **ground coriander**
- ½ tsp **garam masala**
- 1–3 tsp **red chilli**, finely chopped (to taste)
- ½–1 tsp **dried red chilli flakes**
- a squeeze of **lime** or **lemon juice**
- **salt** and freshly ground **black pepper**
- a handful of **fresh coriander**, to garnish

To serve:

- **Parathas** (see recipe opposite)
- plain **dairy-free yoghurt**
- spicy **chutney** or **Lime Pickle** (see recipe opposite)

1. Place the yellow split peas and 1 litre of water in a large deep pan with a lid and bring up to a fast boil. Use a large spoon to skim off and discard any scum that rises to the surface. Turn the heat down to a simmer, cover and cook for 30 minutes.
2. Add the red lentils to the pan along with another 1 litre of water, cover and cook for a further 20 minutes, or until the red lentils are soft and collapsing into the broth.
3. Meanwhile, make the temper mixture. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil to a frying pan set over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 12–15 minutes, stirring often, until caramelized and brown. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 2–3 minutes, then add the remaining oil and the mustard seeds. When they begin to pop, add the rest of the spices, the fresh chilli and dried chilli flakes and a generous pinch of black pepper. Cook until the spices are fragrant but not scorched.
4. When the split peas are soft and the lentils have collapsed, remove the dhal pan from the heat. Pour in the hot temper mixture, including the oil, and stir. Add some salt, then taste and add more as needed (you can also add more hot water, if you like a soupy dhal). Just before serving, squeeze in a little fresh lemon or lime juice, and stir again.
5. Serve garnished with a little fresh coriander and eat hot, with parathas, plain yoghurt or raita and spicy chutney or pickles.



Paratha

MAKES 8 SMALL BREADS (OR 4–6 LARGER BREADS)
PREP TIME: 30 MINS, PLUS 30 MINS RESTING AND 15 MINS
CHILLING COOK TIME: 5 MINS PER BREAD

- 150g **chapati/atta flour**
- 50g **plain flour**, plus extra for dusting
- ½ tsp **salt**
- 6 tbsp **vegetable ghee**, melted
- 100–125ml **water**

1. Place the flours in a bowl, add the salt and 2 tablespoons of the ghee and use your hands to rub the fat in, until it feels sandy. Add enough water to make a dough, adding it little by little so it doesn't become sticky. Shape into a ball and knead for a full 5 minutes (or use a mixer fitted with a dough hook). Wrap in clingfilm or a clean damp tea towel, and let rest for 30 minutes.
2. With the remaining melted ghee nearby, divide the dough into 8 small balls (or 4–6 larger balls). Dust a work surface and rolling pin with flour and roll out each ball to a thin 23cm disc. Sprinkle with flour, then use a pastry brush to lightly brush the tops with melted ghee. Tightly roll up the discs into sausage shapes, then coil into spirals. Tuck the outside ends underneath the spirals.
3. Place in the fridge for 15 minutes to firm up (or in the freezer for 5 minutes). Remove the coils from the fridge and dust everything with flour again. Squash each coil flat with the palm of your hand, then roll out to 20cm discs. Stack the discs with greaseproof paper between each one to stop them sticking.
4. When ready to cook, set a large dry frying pan over a medium heat. When hot, brush the top of one of the breads with melted ghee and place in the pan, ghee-side down.
5. After about 2 minutes, when bubbles appear on the top, brush that side with ghee, and flip. Cook until beginning to brown, then flip again. Flip once or twice more, until the bread is golden brown all over. Set aside and keep warm while you cook the rest. Serve immediately.

Lime pickle

MAKES 6–10 PORTIONS
PREP TIME: 15 MINS, PLUS UP TO 4 WEEKS
PICKLING COOK TIME: 1 MIN

- 10 **limes**, stems removed, washed thoroughly
- 6 tbsp freshly squeezed **lime juice** (about 3 limes)
- 1 tsp **ground turmeric**
- 4 cloves of **garlic**, crushed
- 3cm piece of **ginger**, peeled and finely grated
- 2½ tbsp **fine salt**
- 2 tbsp **sugar**
- ¼ tsp **asafoetida**
- 1½ tsp **hot chilli powder** (or more, to taste)
- 1 tbsp **paprika**

For the temper:

- 6 tbsp **neutral cooking oil**
- 1 tbsp **black mustard seeds**
- ½ tsp **fenugreek seeds**
- 1 tsp **nigella seeds**
- a pinch of **cumin seeds**
- 1 tsp **fennel seeds**
- 6 **curry leaves**, roughly torn
- 100–125ml **water**

1. Slice each lime into 4 wedges (or 6 if large), then cut each segment into 6–8 small pieces, widthways. Place in a bowl with the remaining ingredients (except the temper) and mix well.
2. To make the temper, heat the oil in a small pan over a medium heat. When hot, add the mustard seeds and, when they begin to pop, add the fenugreek, nigella, cumin and fennel seeds and let sizzle for 30–50 seconds. Remove from the heat, add the curry leaves and sizzle briefly, stirring. Tip the tempered spices into the bowl with the lime. Mix well, then taste for heat levels – if you love really hot pickles, you may want to add some more chilli powder, or even crumbled dried chillies.
3. Pour everything into a large sterilized jar with a lid (1 litre capacity, or use 2 or 3 small jars), allowing a 3cm gap at the top. Leave for 2–4 weeks (the longer the better), turning the jar upside down every couple of days. Once opened, store in the fridge for around 1 month. Use clean spoons when serving or the chutney may go mouldy.



Lemongrass coconut aubergine curry

SERVES 4

PREP TIME: 15 MINS COOK TIME: 30 MINS

This simple curry packs way more punch than its quick-and-easy prep suggests.

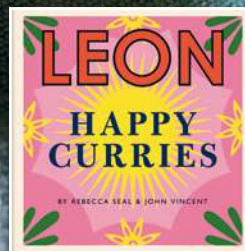
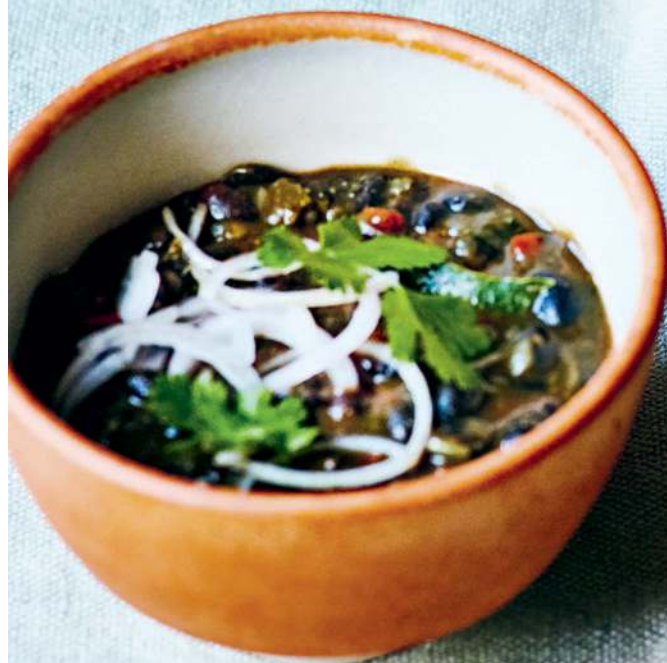
- 4 medium **aubergines**, stem ends trimmed, halved crossways, then cut into 2cm wedges
- 3 tbsp **neutral cooking oil**
- 600ml **full-fat coconut milk**
- 2 **sticks of lemongrass**, bashed with a rolling pin until almost flat
- 4 **spring onions**, roughly chopped
- 2 cloves of **garlic**, crushed
- 8 **lime leaves**, roughly torn
- 1 tsp **ground turmeric**
- 1 tsp **ground cumin**
- a generous pinch of **dried red chilli flakes** (optional)
- 50g roasted **unsalted peanuts**, chopped
- finely grated zest of ½ **lime** (unwaxed)
- **salt**

1. Heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
2. Put the wedges of aubergine and the oil into a roasting pan and use your hands to toss it all together, making sure each piece is lightly coated in the oil. Roast for 20 minutes, turning the wedges halfway through.
3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the coconut milk, smashed lemongrass, spring onions, garlic, lime leaves, turmeric, cumin, chilli flakes, if using, and a good pinch of salt. Mix well.
4. Remove the aubergine pan from the oven and pour the coconut mixture over the aubergine wedges, turning each one to ensure they are all coated in the coconut curry. Return to the oven for a further 10 minutes.
5. Tip the peanuts onto a baking tray, and pop them in the oven for the last 7 minutes of the curry's cooking time.
6. Remove both pan and tray from the oven and set the aubergine curry aside, while you tip the nuts into a pestle and mortar and lightly pummel. Add the lime zest and a small pinch of salt.
7. Remove and discard the lime leaves and lemongrass from the aubergine curry, then serve the aubergine curry sprinkled with the peanut and lime zest topping.



om tip

If you really like to make your tongue tingle, swap the green chilli for ¼ of a super-hot Scotch Bonnet chilli, deseeded and finely diced (be sure to wash your hands or wear gloves).



LEON Happy Curries by Rebecca Seal and John Vincent is published by Conran Octopus, £16.99. Photography by Steven Joyce

Caribbean-style black bean curry

SERVES 2 AS A MAIN OR 4 AS A SIDE

PREP TIME: 20 MINS COOK TIME: 25 MINS

Don't skip the toppings – the shallot and lime really make this curry sing.

- 1 tbsp **neutral cooking oil**
- 1 **onion**, finely chopped
- ½ **red** or **orange pepper**, deseeded and diced
- 2 cloves of **garlic**, crushed
- 2cm piece of **ginger**, peeled and finely grated
- 10 sprigs of **fresh coriander**, stalks finely chopped, leaves reserved to garnish
- 1 tsp mild or **medium curry powder** (ideally Jamaican but Madras or similar will work)
- ¼ tsp **hot chilli powder** (optional)
- 400g tin **cooked black beans** in water, undrained
- 1 sprig of **thyme**
- 1 **bay leaf**
- 2 tbsp **coconut milk** or **coconut cream**
- ½ tsp **apple cider vinegar**
- **salt** and freshly ground **black pepper**
- 1 **shallot**, finely sliced, to garnish

To serve

- freshly squeezed **lime juice**
- **rice** or **Rotis**

- 1.** Heat the oil in a saucepan set over a medium heat, add the onion and pepper and sauté for about 8 minutes, until softened and the onion is just beginning to brown.
- 2.** Add the garlic, ginger, coriander stalks, curry powder and chilli powder, if using. Cook, stirring, for 2–3 minutes, until fragrant. Add the beans along with the water from the can, the thyme and bay leaf and bring up to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low and gently simmer for 10 minutes, stirring every now and then (add a splash of water if the pan gets too dry).
- 3.** Remove from the heat and add the coconut milk or coconut cream and the vinegar. Stir well, then taste for salt and pepper – add a touch more vinegar if you'd like more tang.
- 4.** To serve, divide between bowls, then top each one with the reserved coriander leaves, sliced shallot and a little squeeze of lime juice. Eat with rice or roti, as a main, or alongside jerk chicken or tofu.



Busting the diet myth

Understand the simple nutrition basics before you worry about what milk to put in your tea,
writes Adele Stickland

Nutrition and the latest diet are a constant, prominent topic within the media - social and otherwise. With the headlines screaming 'fats are bad', 'you're eating too much protein' and 'coconut oil is poison', it's no wonder so many people struggle with knowing what they 'should' be eating or understand the effects of what they are currently eating.

Nutrition has become sensationalised – tabloid headlines are our daily digestive intake. It is time for a common sense, down to earth and factual approach. With the misconceptions of the healthy heart diet and the population's current high-carb predisposition, the typical diet is anything but balanced. Going back to basics and examining the ratio of your macronutrients – your carbs, proteins and fats – is your first step. Don't worry about what milk you put in your tea, almond, cows or soya, as it is introspective and detailed. Instead, take the time to assess the bigger 'macro' picture of what you are eating every day.

The predominance of carbohydrates in the Western diet has coincided with an explosion in ill health, of the type that leads to a slow and painful death.

"Almost nothing that we commonly believe today about fats generally and saturated fat, in particular, appears upon close examination to be accurate," wrote Nina Teicholz in *The Big Fat Surprise*. The author spent 10 years investigating and systematically reviewing every piece of research, and I consider her to be meticulous and pragmatic. *The Big Fat Surprise* was the book of the year in 2014 for *The Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the BBC Food Programme. It was described in the *British Medical Journal* as "a remarkable job in analysing how weak science, strong personalities, vested interests and political expediency have initiated this series of experiments."

This article will guide you through what macros are and bust the common myths associated with them.

What are macros?

In short, macros are your fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. Each type of food is broken down by your body in a unique way. Your body

will favour carbohydrates as they are easy for the body to digest and they are taken up and turned into energy in a fast and simple manner. Fats are harder for the body to digest because they are metabolised differently and take a little longer, which can have a very different effect on your body composition. These two pathways don't work in unison; they work separately but they complement each other.

Carbohydrates come in two main forms - green and beige. Green carbs are all vegetables and fruit whilst beige carbs are pasta, rice, bread, also known as starchy carbs. Your body will use the glucose (from carbs) before it even begins to use the fat in your love handles as fuel. Vegetables contain carbs, fruit contains carbs and biscuits contain carbs, as do bread, oats, and bananas.

If you are exercising for over two hours a day, then you are probably consuming an appropriate amount of carbs. However, let's be honest, if you are going to the gym three times a week, following the same or similar exercise routine each week and spending most of the day behind a desk, the chances are your carb intake is too high.

Comparing the macro recommendations of the most popular diets you can quickly see the staggering range of carb intake that dieticians speculate around:

- Low-fat diet: 60% carbs, 20% fats, 20% protein.
- Low-glycaemic-index diet: 40% carbs, 40% fats, 20% protein.
- Low-carb diet: 10% carbs, 60% fats, 30% protein.

The carb and fat ratios vary widely, however, the protein recommendations are generally in keeping.

Where do we start?

Your exercise level and your body type will determine how many carbs you can tolerate. If you are a tall, slim, athletic type who plays tennis every evening - then carry on, your body can cope with the regular 'carb' fest that most adults consume on a daily basis. If, however, you are smaller, with a bit of belly and like to drink Sambuca every weekend whilst eating carbs for breakfast, noon and evening, then you are incrementally on a carb-crash diet, which will

probably lead to exhaustion and future illness.

The way we all try to eliminate the belly is using a diet, which underestimates the long-term effects on your emotional self and physical self.

Most people diet at some stage or in some way – it is perceived that whenever the pounds have piled on you can reset your body by basically starving for a few days, weeks or months. There are three problems with this: the psychotic teenager, which is the psychological effect of dieting that comes out to play, the biological effect and hormone disruption which leads inevitably to reset failure. Finally, it doesn't work forever: your body becomes less resistant, and the inner teenager turns into the middle age, grumpy, stressed-out ogre with low self-esteem.

The false belief that fats make you fat and that cholesterol causes heart attacks, which we have been living with for the last five decades, has become entrenched. For whatever reason, whether that is vested interest, ego or the inability to look at the bigger picture, dissident frustrated voices are being heard in both the US and UK. What began with science researchers and medical journalists, has trickled into the arena of fitness and the 'subversive' world of alternative medicine, but yet to hit the mainstream.

Busting macro myths


Low-fat diets are based on carbs, which are lower in calorie. The diet culture is based on the simple belief that 10g of carbs contains fewer calories than 10g of protein or 10g of fat. If you eat carbs, you are consuming fewer calories. When your body is young and resilient, it has an amazing ability to right itself using insulin. Normal cells are highly sensitive to insulin, which is one of your body's inner guidance systems. Over a prolonged high-carb diet where your body is constantly using carbs as a source of energy, insulin becomes exhausted as your body is no longer insulin sensitive. Insulin is a storage hormone.

In addition, the diet hypothesis ignores your gorgeous body's chemistry – carbs provide a quick energy burst and will result in becoming hungry after a few hours. Fats and proteins sustain your feeling of fullness and allow you to use 'fatty' deposits in your body to sustain your energy levels for longer.

An alternative to counting calories is examining your macronutrients. If you are analytical, you can use ratios on your smartphone with apps such as My Fitness Pal. Counting nutrients are where I spend my time. How many mung beans can I eat in a day?

Eat more fat to burn more fat

Simply put, your body can't burn fat if glucose is circulating. Breast milk is 54% saturated fat, coconut oil is saturated fat and avocado is monounsaturated fat. Dietary fats do indeed have more calories and your smartphone diet app is going to go off the scale when it reads 'duck' on your macronutrient balance, which is why you are asked to eat lean meat, such as chicken. Apps and dietary guidelines are following the redundant theory that a healthy heart is derived from whole grains. You need dietary fat to assist the function of your heart, head and every cell in your body.

Whilst the majority of people could be looking for a quick fix to a perceived unsightly bulge or excess weight gain across the middle, there is no pill or potion that will remedy this in the long term. Low-fat diets are a thing of the past, instead, increasing your intake of good quality protein and eating more fat will ensure longer term happiness, energy and a healthier version of you. 

Adele Stickland is the founder of Get Gorgeous! an online platform dedicated to inspiring and empowering women to great health and more vitality. Over 20 years, she has educated hundreds of women on the role of nutrition, movement and a healthy mindset. Gorgeous! (Panoma press £14.99) is her new book that provides women with expert guidance to change their perception of food.

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THE 3 MYTHS OF CHILDREN'S YOGA TEACHING

Breaking the myths in teaching yoga for children. *By Ayala Homossany*

“I am so bored!”
 “Oh...This class is so boring!!!”
 Have you ever heard these words in your kids' yoga classes before?
 I believe so...I did, and more than once!

So many emotions ran through my body when I heard those words, but most of all I knew one thing: the kids in my class just threw me a lifeline.

Let me share with you some insights into the world of children's yoga and try to break few myths some people might have about yoga for children.

Myth 1: During a yoga class all children are sitting quietly and following instructions

Children are curious; they constantly explore the world around them. As such, they have different ways of receiving information. During a yoga class they will move around, chat and do all they know in order to try and make themselves feel more comfortable, physically and emotionally. So, expect the children in the class to move, talk, share thoughts and ideas with you and even make suggestions about the class. The role of the teacher is to hold the space for them and to support and share with the children new tools and techniques to empower, nourish and help them be comfortable where they are.

Myth 2: When children say they are bored in a class, they are being rude

'Bored' is a word that holds in it so many meanings. It can mean: 'This practice is too challenging for me'; 'I am hungry and can't

concentrate'; 'I am tired and all I want is to rest'; or even, 'I am anxious and I want to get out of here.' When children tell you that they are bored, don't take it personally. Know that you just received the most candid feedback; a piece of inside information. Thank the children for sharing these words with you and look closely at what they really mean. From there, you can choose to change the activity, or change your position or tone.

Myth 3: I should always stick with the class plan I prepared for my children's yoga class

No matter where you hold your class, every child comes from a different background and carries with them different emotions. Until the children are actually in the room with you, you can't know if they will be edgy, sluggish, tired, energised, or relaxed. Therefore, if you use a prescriptive class plan, think of a way to keep it flexible and be ready to adjust it at any moment. Having an overall theme or an intention that you carry with you throughout the class, can be an easy way to make the class more agile and flexible. Before the class starts, have a mini brainstorm where you remind yourself of all the poses, breathing exercises, and yoga games which could relate to your theme or intention. When the children arrive, you will be more comfortable to retrieve from your tool box the practices that will mostly benefit the children at that specific time. ॐ

Ayala Homossany is a senior yoga teacher who runs the Yogacampus Children's Yoga Teacher Training 'Empowering Children through Yoga and Creativity'. She is also the author of the award-winning Enchanted Wonders A-Z cards. Visit (ayalayoga.com).



The *eightfold* path of yoga for children

Introducing yoga's eightfold path - Patanjali's template for a meaningful life - to children.
By Bryony Duckitt



Without philosophy, yoga would be gymnastics. It is, in fact, a way of life. Yoga is not just about the physical poses but is made up of eight different parts - the so-called eight limbs of yoga. This eightfold path is the heart of yoga philosophy and offers a way to develop a healthy, peaceful life. This ancient code consists of universal principles, personal disciplines, postures, breathing, focus, concentration, meditation and the opportunity to experience joy in every moment.

These eight limbs of yoga are:

- 1. Yama:** social restraints or ethical values, like universal commandments
- 2. Niyama:** our personal disciplines
- 3. Asanas:** physical exercises
- 4. Pranayama:** breath control or regulation
- 5. Pratyahara:** sense withdrawal in preparation for meditation
- 6. Dharana:** concentration
- 7. Dhyana:** meditation
- 8. Samadhi:** ecstasy/enlightenment

The Yoga Tree of Life

To introduce the eightfold path to children we explore the yoga Tree of Life and share

examples as we move through it. Ultimately, to teach children how to 'live' their yoga, we as teachers need to truly practice what we teach. In this way they will hopefully observe and absorb a good deal of our practice. By understanding and following the Eightfold Path children can achieve a healthy body, wise mind and the ability to feel compassion, ultimately finding true inner peace and reflecting this outwardly too.

1. Yama – The Roots

1. Ahimsa - Non-violence

Violence is not only physical but can manifest in the words we speak. Encourage children to speak with kindness to others and to themselves. Develop positive affirmations together.

2. Asteya

– Non-covetousness / stealing

Encourage children to come up with their own creative ideas and if they are to copy someone or something – to give credit. Do not take anything that does not belong to you. Think about how you would feel if something was taken from you. This is important with time keeping too: being late is stealing another person's time.

3. Satya - Truth

Always speak your truth and act in a way that is true to your inner self and integrity. Only make promises that you can keep. Honesty creates trust and more self-confidence.

4. Brahmacharya – Self-control

This yama is about greed and desire, which is a big problem in today's society - we always want more! This can refer to food, sweets, toys, clothes, new technology etc. Teach children not to take more than they need and to be grateful for what they have.

5. Aparigraha – Non-accumulation of needless wealth and materials, non-possessiveness.

For many children the amount of possessions they have is very important (media and advertising have a lot to answer for here). Ultimately, we are trying to detach from too many possessions.

2. Niyama – The Trunk

1. Saucha - Cleanliness and purity

This refers to our bodies, thoughts and words. As adults we can set the example by

living a clean, balanced life with exercise and healthy food, caring for the environment and not speaking negatively in front of children.

2. Santosha - Satisfaction and contentment

This may be one of the most important Niyamas – to be satisfied with all that we have and all that we are. To accept what is and remain unaffected by what may be taken away.

3. Tapas – Self-discipline – the ability to try and work hard

Encourage children to practice yoga at a certain time each day/week as this will develop positive habits. Perhaps a few sun salutations each morning or five minutes of quiet sitting.

4. Svadhyaya - Introspection and self-study

Children have many questions, encourage them to think and discuss. Introduce meditation and contemplation exercises to know one's self and try to be the best person you can be.

5. Ishvara - Pranidhana - Faith in a higher power/source

A belief or understanding in something bigger than ourselves/ego. Not driven by individual wishes and desires.

3. Asana/Poses – The Branches

By practicing physical asanas, we improve our circulation, respiration and digestion. Our body becomes stronger and supple and our memory, concentration and willpower improve. Asanas help us to be calm and are very important for a healthy body and mind. In children's yoga we explore traditional poses in fun accessible ways. Some represent living things - Cobra, Lizard, Eagle, Tree or mimic natural forms – Mountain pose. Others represent man-made objects such as Boat, Bridge, Chair or are inspired by geometric shapes – Triangle. We also give the children opportunities to make up their own poses.

4. Pranayama/Control of Breath – The Leaves

Practice breathing exercises to teach about inhalation and exhalation. There are many fun ways to introduce children to their breath – blowing feathers and bubbles, breathing with the Hoberman Sphere, belly breath etc. Until a child is 12 years old and their lungs have fully developed it is important not to encourage retention of breath.



5. Pratyahara/Control of Senses – The Bark

Here we use poses and activities to stimulate and educate the senses, such as eyes around the clock, listening to different sounds with the eyes closed, mindful tasting, smelling different scents, feely bags etc.

6. Dharana/Concentration – The Sap

Balancing poses such as Tree, Warrior 1, 2 and 3 are wonderful for increasing focus and concentration. Present warriors in the context of determination, perseverance, focus, concentration, strength and personal power. Try to incorporate affirmations such as “I am brave. I am balanced. I have the strength and focus to realise my dreams.”

7. Dhyana/Meditation – The Flowers

Relaxation and guided imagery are ways to introduce meditation to young children. Encourage drawing mandala meditation, sitting meditation and mindful exercises. Dhyana should be uninterrupted, deep concentration for a prolonged period.

8. Samadhi/Enlightenment – The Fruit

We cannot show this full realisation to a child, but the feeling just after you have eased yourself up from your relaxation – blissed out and happy – might be just a tiny glimpse of Samadhi.

Children's yoga is not just about story telling or clowning around. When practicing yoga poses with children, it is important to introduce them to yoga theory and philosophy too. To give them an understanding of yoga in its entirety so that they are not blindly following what you are doing. They can then internalise a greater knowledge of yoga's benefits, where it originated and all aspects that will take their practice to a deeper level.

Bryony Duckitt, founder of YogaBeez Children's Yoga School runs accredited teacher trainings in the UK and overseas (yogabeez.com)



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TEACHER ZONE

A deeper understanding of yoga... for teachers, by teachers

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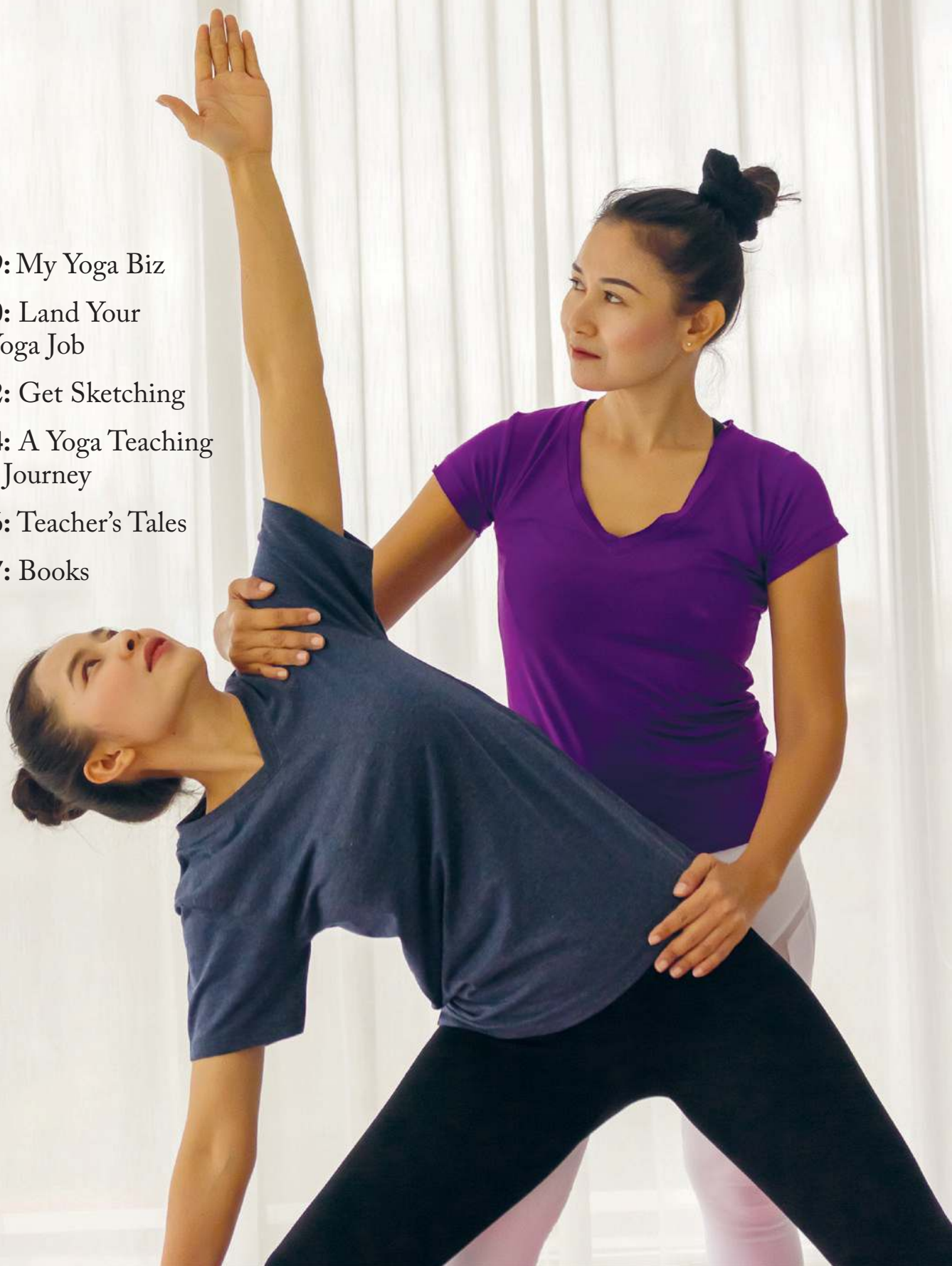
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MyYogaBiz

Tips from the experts to help you grow the yoga business of your dreams

This month's mentor: Rachael Field, 39, of Eva & Alma (evaandalma.com) in Stourbridge, West Midlands

YOUR NICHE

My niche is empowering and encouraging people to be brave enough to slow down and deeply connect with themselves to find inner peace in the modern world. I didn't choose this niche – it found me. I was into high-impact sports, classes and swimming and was very fit. Slowing down didn't cross my radar but then I had major spinal surgery in 2011. I was always told to avoid yoga due to the amount of forward bending involved. I — and my medical team — were under the impression that the traditional Hatha-style yoga was the only option, so I avoided it.

I then discovered I have an invisible neurological disability that means my body is stuck in 'fight' mode. My whole life is now spent managing my symptoms so I can live with purpose. Around three years ago, I accidentally discovered that yoga was more than what we see on Instagram when I stumbled upon a Restorative Class. I became hooked as it was a great way to calm my nervous system in a way I wasn't used to. So my yoga journey began.

The owner of my local studio approached me and said she could see potential in me to teach Restorative Yoga and bring more people into the practice. She helped me find training that fitted around my health challenges and then hired me to start teaching at the studio. I love teaching yoga and find my niche is attracting people who wouldn't have been able to take part in the more physically challenging classes, or physically fit and strong people who need to rest and restore the body and quieten the mind.

SOCIAL MEDIA

I am very active on Instagram and Facebook, using these platforms to not only create a 'tribe', but to share inspiration, self-care wisdom,



connect people with each other and simply send as much love and empowerment out as I can. If you're spending too long on social media because you feel pressured to be 'seen', or you are on the comparison trail, then I would suggest you limit how you use it. You don't have to be on social media to be successful. If you enjoy sharing that way then go for it; if it's a chore, the energy from your writing will come across that way and you won't have an engaged audience. The importance of social is just that – to be social.

SELF-CARE

I am a self-proclaimed Self-Care Queen! Not only is self-care a huge part of my own healthcare, I'm an advocate for bringing it more into our daily lives. Self-care is a hidden super power. Taking care of myself always comes first. I'm a yoga student first, teacher second. Why? Because yoga, especially Yin and Restorative, is a big part of my own self-care and if I neglect my own regime, I can't support others through my work. No self-care for me means no teaching. My self-care practices encompass a balance of mind, body and soul health. I check in with myself regularly and ask myself what I need. I am not afraid of my emotions so will regularly work with and release any emotions when they arise. I'm also a qualified Soul Midwife (end-of-life therapist) and it is very deep work. You cannot do this work if self-care isn't a big part of your own life. This is another motivation to put taking care of myself on the top of the agenda and teaching others how powerful that can be.

Written and compiled by Claudia Brown (yogabyclaudia.com)

Land your *dream* yoga job

Top tips on how to land your dream job as a yoga teacher. *By Colleen Grady*

Have you ever put those dreamy photos of yoga teachers leading classes on a perfect palm tree shore on your vision board? Or maybe teaching in a whimsical villa among the rice fields of Thailand, or in a super-green eco-friendly healing sanctuary? If you have ever found yourself wondering how to land one of those opportunities, this is for you.

Teaching yoga in other countries has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my own yoga journey. Travel or yoga alone brings so much expansion and enrichment into your life. Combining the two amplifies your personal growth and development in ways you never imagined.

There are basically two different methods to landing that yoga teaching job abroad. The first entails showing up and seeking out places to teach once you arrive. The second is to search online and set up the job prior to arrival. Here are some guidelines to put an end to the fantasies and vision boarding and to actually making it happen.

Method 1: Show up in the place you want to teach

In any field of work, it is more beneficial to speak to the managers in person, see the facilities in real life, and stay a few days in the community to get a true feel for the job. Showing up and shaking hands is always and will always be more memorable to an employer than an email pitch read through a screen. So, if you are ready to

book your ticket, reduce your load down to a backpack, and throw yourself into the culture, these are some steps on what to do next:

STEP 1: Allocate two weeks of money to traveling and networking

This method requires you to save some money before you can start making money abroad. Research the location you are traveling to and figure out how much money you will need for two weeks before you find a job. Allocate around two weeks to staying in a community and hunting around for a position.

Important items to have ready before you arrive:

- Business cards
- Practice a two-minute pitch about yourself on family and friends
- Have an active social media or blog/website
- A compiled list of studios, hotels, resorts, surf camps, etc. in the area that offer yoga regularly

STEP 2: Book your ticket abroad

They say that if you want success, the power of association is key. Showing up in the place you want to teach and surrounding yourself in the environment will increase your chances of success. Now it may sound frightening and uncomfortable to take time off, pack your bags, and arrive somewhere jobless, yet, this is actually the best option out of the two.



STEP 3: Show up and be present

As soon as you land, start chatting with everyone you meet and tell them your mission. Someone is bound to have a contact for you or give you a lead on where to check out. In your first week, take as many classes as possible. Show up with business cards in hand. Stay after class to talk to the yoga instructors, managers, and receptionist.

My suggestion for the after-class small talk is to tell them you just arrived in the community and are looking for a position. Even if that specific place is not hiring, ask if they recommend checking out any other places or if they know anywhere hiring. Typically, people in yoga communities are kind and helpful, so the odds are in your favour to get connected. It is handy to leave a business card at each place you make a contact. If the place does not have a position open currently, they still may use your contact and reach out when they need a substitute instructor.

STEP 4: Take a job or continue networking

In this process, you will get even better at networking and pitching yourself. This learning curve is extremely valuable in the business of yoga. If you do all of these things, you are likely to find a job in the two-week timeframe. If you did not find a job, maybe this specific market is already saturated. But the chances are you probably gained valuable insight on neighbouring yoga communities you could check out next. You had the experience of really putting yourself out there and the next time it will be much easier.

Method 2: Securing a position before you embark

Below are the three different resources I've used to find yoga jobs abroad.

Yogatrade.com

The most common resource is yogatrade.com. A wide range of retreat centres, hotels, hostels use this as a job board. You can search for opportunities by country. Email all current and past openings that sound interesting to you. Contacting the opportunities, even if they are filled, could open a door for a spot on the substitute list or a lead to contacting another facility.

Workaway.com

This has a wider range of work exchange opportunities. There can be options such as a local family may be looking for a private instructor in exchange for room and board. A vegan cafe may be looking for a teacher and a cook in exchange for accommodation and a little pay. Jobs found on here are typically exchanges, not paid positions.

Use social media to direct message studios

An additional way to look up places that offer yoga online is through social media in the area you are interested in working. Directly send them an email introducing yourself along with your resume and some photos. It also helps if you have a website to show your credibility.

Once you find a place and they are interested in hiring you, ask to schedule a skype call with them. On both ends, each of you should want to legitimise the position and each other before flying half way across the world to work there.

Things to keep in mind...

This method is more difficult because you rely on a digital platform to connect. In my experience, challenges have arisen from issues such language barriers, wi-fi availability, and lifestyle.

Keep emails short and to the point

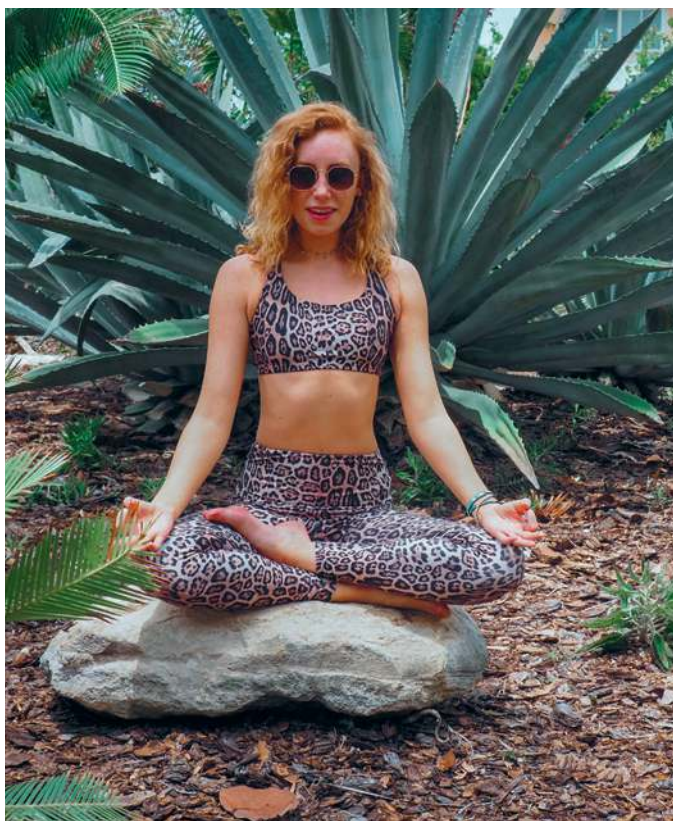
You are likely to be contacting someone whose second language is English. It can be difficult for anyone to read a long, descriptive email and it's especially challenging in a language that is not native to the reader. Be precise and cut out any extra irrelevant information.

**Don't get disappointed**

The speed of life and responsiveness is not the same in all areas of the world. In many other cultures, people are not as chained to their inbox and devices as we are in the West. Don't get discouraged if it takes some time to get a response to your email. It is still possible to land a yoga job before arriving to a community, but these are things to take into consideration as you start your search.

Your dream of teaching yoga abroad is very doable. Let these pointers serve as a roadmap for you on your soul-seeking journey to achieve those goals. ☯

Colleen Grady is a yoga teacher, lifestyle blogger, wellness warrior, jetsetter, bohemian fashionista and soul searcher (mindbodycolleen.com)



GET SKETCHING

Inspire your teaching with simple yoga stick figures



You have probably come across little yoga stick figure drawings: Maybe you learned drawing them during teacher training and already use them to plan your classes, or maybe you never dared to pick up the pen yourself because you think you can't draw.

Science has shown that sketching is a powerful tool for learning. Adding visuals to our notes not only looks nice, it also has proven benefits: when we draw, we understand and remember the content better*. We also grasp the information faster as our brain recognises images more quickly than words**. So even if you can't remember a whole sequence after sketching it, the visual form gives you a quick overview that you can take in at a glance.

No matter where you are in your sketching journey, drawing asanas and sequences inspire and support your teaching in various ways and, with a few practical tips, you can start sketching your own simple but clear stick figures... even without artistic talent.

Keep an inspiration journal

Sketching is a perfect way to collect inspiration for your classes. If you come across a nice piece of sequencing in a class you visited, tried out an interesting transition between poses in your own practice or came up with a particularly effective way for cueing a certain pose, capture these snippets in a notebook by sketching them as short sequences. You can also collect quotes and ideas for class themes alongside.

Next time you need inspiration for a class, just browse through it and let the visual references spark ideas for a new flow.

Analyse other teachers' classes

Especially when we start out as yoga teachers, learning from good examples is crucial on our way to develop our own teaching style. Sketch out classes from your favourite teachers to analyse their structure: What are the different parts? What is the order of different types of asanas? How are certain poses balanced by counter poses? What is the peak of the sequence and how are the students led there?

Trying to sketch a class from memory after attending also strengthens your 'sequence memory' over time and helps you to see patterns during a class.

Plan your classes

This is probably the most obvious application. Visualising a class while planning it helps you to get a better feel for the flow and physical balance of the sequence.

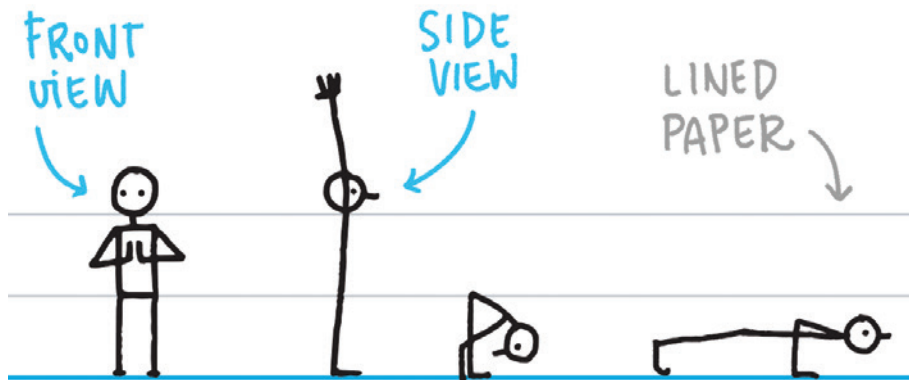
For more flexibility, sketch the individual postures on index cards (or small pieces of paper) and move them around until you are happy with the sequence. Redraw a cleaned-up version after the planning stage and keep it in a folder to build up a collection of ready-to-go classes. You can even use it as a reminder during class if you haven't memorised the whole sequence yet.

Use sketches as a teaching tool

Simple stick figures drawn on a flip chart are a great tool to use in workshops or during teacher training when teaching alignment, anatomy or the principles of sequencing. In addition to physical demonstrations, a simple posture sketch with a few annotations that your students can copy into their notebooks will anchor the material in their memory and they leave with clear and easy to understand notes they can revise later.

* The Surprisingly Powerful Influence of Drawing on Memory: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0963721418755385>

** In the blink of an eye: <http://news.mit.edu/2014/in-the-blink-of-an-eye-0116>



Share your flows

Share a printed version of your sketched sequences with your students for their home practice, or create custom practice plans for your private clients. Using the stick figure format makes it easy for your students to follow the sequence at home.

As social media becomes an increasingly important way to market your studio and your classes, hand sketched flows provide eye-catching content that feels authentic and relatable, and that you can share on Facebook or Instagram.

If you feel inspired now to start sketching some poses, here are 5 tips for getting started and for sharpening up your little stick yogis to be as clear as possible.

Use lined paper

The lines help us with getting the proportions right. Measuring one line space for the legs, one for the torso and neck and one for the arms with extended hands will give us some good enough guidance.

Stick to the baseline

This makes it easy to see how the flow progresses from standing to seated to poses on the floor

Distinguish front and side view

Looking from the side is the clearest angle for most poses. In side view, sketch the torso as a line. In front view, sketch it as a rectangle to clearly show the position of the shoulders and hips.

Use birds eye perspective

For some poses on the floor, it's best to sketch it as if seen from above. To distinguish these from standing poses, sketch the mat underneath the figure.

'Practice and all is coming'

Sketching (like yoga) is a practice. At first, it might feel unfamiliar and awkward and you might not be happy with your drawings. Be kind to yourself, try to relax and give yourself some time to ease into the new skill. You will get better with every stroke. 🧘

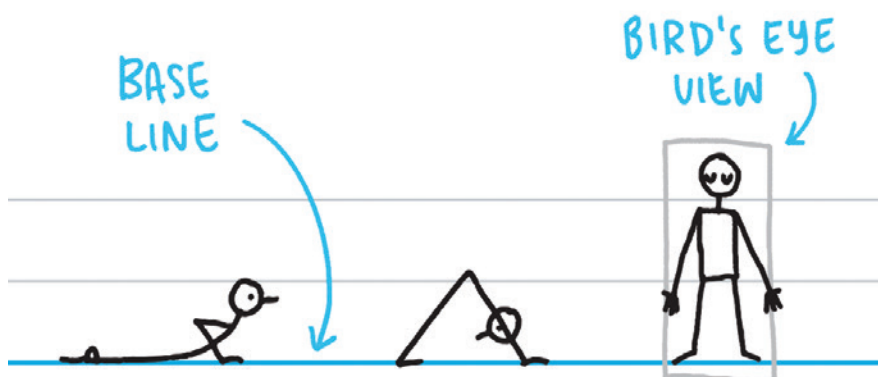
Eva-Lotta Lamm is a designer and Yogini who is passionate about helping people to access richer learning and deeper thinking potential by using visual tools. She is the author of 'Yoganotes - How to sketch Yoga Postures and Sequences'.

Yoganotes is a complete guide to sketching yoga postures and sequences. It



teaches you a system for drawing yoga postures with a few simple strokes. It's quick and fun to learn, even if you have no drawing or sketching skills.

The book is available as a printed version (€25.90) and as an e-book / PDF (€19.90) at www.yoganotes.net



Ubud, Bali ★ Mar 29 - Apr 5, 2020
a global celebration of
yoga · dance · music

IS YOUR SOUL SEARCHING
FOR COMMUNITY AND
CONNECTION?

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A yoga teacher training *journey*

A personal account of a yoga teacher training in Bali,
by Sonal Thakrar

I embarked on my second teacher training in April 2019, this time over an intensive month in Ubud, Bali. Two enlightened souls, Bridget Woods Kramer (bridgetwoodskramer.com) and Ananda Leone (anandaleone.com), imparted the wisdom of their invaluable gifts: opening to grace and embodying the three principles of Anusara Yoga - Attitude, Alignment and Action with the Power of the Breath. I learnt these were the most fundamental threads to my yoga practice. Once I set my foundation and intention for the practice, I aligned my mind and heart to that divine power; softening my boundaries and being open to the energetic power within my magnetic fields. I willingly became aware of every part of myself, sensing that duality of light and shadow

exists within me and moving through with breath, awareness, strength, courage, softness and love.

The course was designed to be intensive, so we could fully immerse in the teachings of Anusara Yoga and Pranayama without the distractions of daily life. Like a sponge soaking in the rich knowledge, we would sit in the yoga shala for over 10 hours a day living and breathing the teachings, our breaks getting shorter as the days progressed.

I signed up for this immersion experience to deepen my own practice and to complement my first yoga teacher training in 2016. What I hadn't envisaged was the life journey that followed. Here are my top eight life lessons from my Bali journey:



1. Learn to share space

I asked the universe to give me space and my own room. She decided to put me in a family villa with my own room but sharing a bathroom and outside terrace. She gave me what I needed and not what I thought I had wanted. She taught me how to respect my own space, how to respect another's and when to come together in companionship. I realised I 'needed' both space and company, just not exclusively. My villa mate was a beautiful soul goddess who turned out to be Amanda Holden's doppelganger. I drew a long straw. Thank you, universe.

2. How to shut out the 'noise'

On the first night around 9pm, I heard an incredible croaking racket. There was a pond directly outside my villa, and I learned very quickly that, come nightfall, the frog ringleader sounds out the call. Every night until 5am I slept with a rave party so loud that ear plugs were useless. By week two, I surrendered. The frogs taught me to quieten the noise inside me; the noise that needs to be silenced is internal, rather than external. On the first night back home, I missed the rave party.

3. Surrender is part of recovery

Day 2, I collapsed in morning practice, with no warning that I was coming down with something. Fatigue, dehydration and nausea had me bedridden in my shared villa (another sign). Thank god for the angels who brought me fresh coconut water and checked in on me. Sporting layers, long leggings and sweatshirt under a duvet with no air conditioning was no competition to my classmates in the lightest of yoga wear in mid-30 degrees heat. Missing classes left me with waves of guilt, anxiety and FOMO (fear of missing out). I hadn't even spoken to all of my classmates yet! Struggling to raise my head above the pillow, I had no option but to find peace and surrender to what was – I was convinced the universe must have a plan.

4. Trust in the process: faith in healing

The universe did have a plan! I asked for help – not easy for me. Pills were not going to fix what I had. My teachers knew that too and suggested I go see a healer. Not just anyone: fate sent me to Wayan, author Elizabeth Gilbert's real-life healer in 'Eat Pray Love'. When I turned up, she told me to 'come back tomorrow', and I almost fainted. I stood before her and begged her to fix me. That was the start of an intense five-day healing process that involved lots of prayers and offerings to spirits, ingesting a variety of charcoal pellets, lime green gels, constant wafting of incense, herb scrubbing and massaging, ceremonial and ritualistic cutting with her grandpa (a 'medicine man' who spoke no English), and a four-hour round trip to a derelict temple high in the mountains to be bathed in the holiest of springs. My trusted driver, half my age, who ferried me to every session, knew more about my intimate healing journey than I ever will. I received with abundance, glowing in the energy of these incredible spiritual healers with gifts that cannot be articulated into logic. Only faith and trust known as 'Shradda' can give any explanation as to why we seek out these messengers to help us on our path. I missed almost the first week of teaching, but my teachers knew I needed healing and supported me wholeheartedly.

5. Breathe

One of the most important lessons I learnt from Ananda was 'Life is Breath and Breath is Life'. I truly learnt how to breathe after spending two hours in class every day for four weeks. My chest opened, my heart expanded, I softened and melted into the sweet rhythm of my breath. Life felt open, and I was 'breathing' for the first time. Lesson: breathe. Breathe using every part of the diaphragm, front body to the sides of the torso opening the intercostal muscles and breathing through the back body above the collarbones.

6. Have fun

The universe was instrumental in showing me that I can have fun if I am open. During our first weekend off, most of the group were relaxing poolside, having treatments, shopping or nose deep in their teaching manuals. But I had an agenda. I wandered off in boho chic (a world away from my home life as a city lawyer), sat in the coolest of cafes full of beautiful people and sipped green juice. I sat and wrote, creativity channelling through me. Later, I wandered up the street to sit with Gerry Prana at Karma House Tattoo designing my new ink addition, before spending six hours on our last full day off before exams getting inked. How did I fit in a 200-hour teaching training and 30-hour pranayama training, I ask myself? I learnt that life doesn't have to be too serious, I can still remain focused but add playfulness. My new ink design became the inspiration behind my exam theme.

7. Trust in yourself

Exam day and tensions are high in camp. With so much learning to process in four weeks, it's impossible to remember every alignment and heartfelt cue. With less than 48 hours to prepare, I had to transition from mind to heart. It was there all along inside of me,

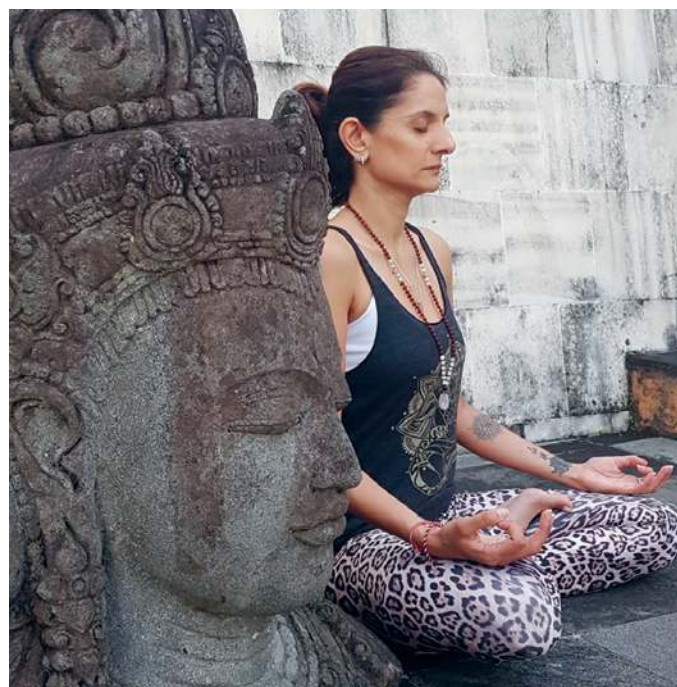
but I had to go through the emotion before I had the realisation. So, I put all the trust I had in myself, chanted a Shakti mantra to invoke confidence, poise, and authenticity in my voice, channelling the powerful divine feminine energy as I delivered my class. Immediately afterwards, relief enveloped me. I couldn't recall much except quoting a Patanjali sutra and relating it back to the theme of stillness before new beginnings – feedback was incredibly humbling, the opening comment being that I had managed to articulate four weeks of learning from my heart space into a 30-minute lesson and had left out only the kitchen sink! Magical. Because I trusted in what was already inside of me.

8. Letting go

Something most of us truly struggle with – me, most of all. I find change challenging even when I 'know' it's the best thing for my growth. I have been wearing a pendant with a Sanskrit inscription honouring Lord Krishna for years. It's travelled with me during the turbulent rollercoaster ride of my life, a talisman infused deep with my prayers and energy that I wore 24/7. The chain broke in 2017 just before I climbed 3,000 metres up the Himalayas after a 10-day yoga retreat. After initial panic, I secured the pendant to my bra. Within 20 minutes of final descent, it was back around my neck sporting a new chain. Back to Bali, during morning practice, it broke again and the pendant fell on my mat. My heart skipped a beat. I knew intuitively what that meant (cynically perhaps I just needed a stronger chain!) and spoke to my mentor Bridget at the end of the session. Her pause and look energetically confirmed my own intuition and when she verbalised it, I burst into tears. It wasn't until the guided meditation part of my exam delivery, when I spoke about the magic that happens in the stillness after letting go, that I knew what I must do. The next day, just before I left for the airport, I walked to the ancient temple in the village where two sacred rivers meet. After a prayer of gratitude, I offered up a part of myself in the form of my pendant, which was ready to be released to Mother Bali. It had done its job and I was energetically ready for the next chapter in my life.

The most significant lesson all of my teachers have imparted is that I cannot authentically hold space to take anyone 'there' unless I have been 'there' myself. With the deepest gratitude to all of my teachers for their teachings in this lifetime and beyond. ॐ

Sonal Thakrar is co-founder of Kleem (kleem.co.uk)





A fair energy exchange

It's not all about money, but there's got to be a fair energy exchange in all business dealings,
writes Paula Hines

In the world of business across multiple industries, there has been a steady increase in the expectation of people to work for free, and the business of yoga is no different. For those businesses holding this expectation I have a genuine question:

Why would you expect someone's best work if you are not willing to pay for it?

(For clarity, I am not talking about charities or donating one's time and skills to a good cause.)

Think about how you've felt in any job you have done where you feel or know that you are not being paid your worth. Then think about how that feels if you are being asked to work for free. However conscientious you are, even if your work is good it is still highly likely that psychologically you are not bringing your very best to the work, and it is not even intentional. I notice a different energy comes through when I am paid (fairly) for my work monetarily or receiving what I deem is a fair exchange. Having spoken to many people about this, I am far from alone.

In the brilliant Yoga is Dead podcast, Indian-American hosts Tejal

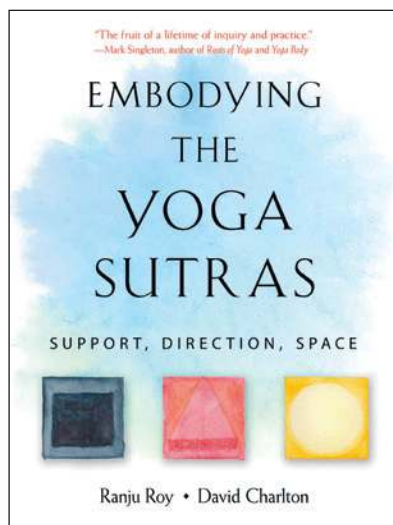
and Jesal discuss 'Karma capitalism', clearly explaining the difference between householders vs. people who renounce everything: "... Householders still have to make a living and that money is not considered evil – they still need to provide for themselves.... and take all of that out of the context of India and bring it into the West where there is no social structure of giving to yogis. If a man dressed in orange robes came to your door and asked for food you'd probably think he was crazy and call the cops."

I would add that as much as we want to serve it's hard to do that from a shaky foundation. As Michael Bernard Beckwith so astutely said on this subject, "It is not about greed but basic survival. You can't be the light of the world if you can't pay your light bill."

If you're a business approaching anyone about working for free, please question this. If you're truly not in a position to pay or offer an energy exchange that is agreeable and mutually beneficial to all involved, then should you be asking at all? Just think what value your business would receive if you paid people fairly.

In the end a fair energy exchange yields better results for everyone. ☯

Om books

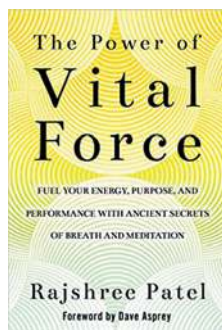


Embodying The Yoga Sutras: Support, Direction, Space

Ranju Roy, David Charlton
YogaWords
£20

Most students and teachers of yoga in the Western world will have come across Patanjali's Yoga Sutras at some point. In *Embodying The Yoga Sutras*, the authors focus on 17 of the most important sutras and show how each one illuminates the relationship between the body, the breath and the mind in a practical, clear and contemporary guide. The sutras are carefully deconstructed, put into context and developed into ideas for practice. With illustrated asana sequences and suggested practices, it is both a practical and philosophical book. The authors give readers a whole new vocabulary with which to understand yoga as a living, vibrant and dynamic tradition.

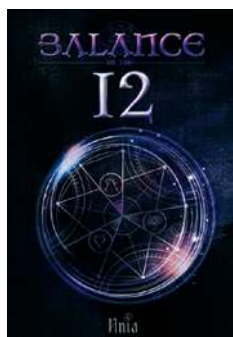
Further reading:



The Power Of Vital Force

Rajshree Patel
Hay House
£20

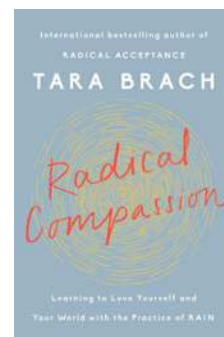
If you are looking to change your life using the art of meditation, look no further than *The Power Of Vital Force* by Rajshree Patel, an international self-awareness coach, teacher and speaker. In this book, she combines ancient wisdom from the perspective of the ancient Indian spiritual tradition of Vedanta, with the modern principles of psychology and self-help, offering a fresh approach to happiness and success. Going beyond the usual well-known tools of meditation, the author offers simple, accessible techniques, ranging from breath work to cold-water foot baths, that can help to shift the flow of energy, for maximum life force.



Balance Of The 12

Ania Bo
Anaibooks.com
£9.99

A fantasy/sci-fi adventure infused with philosophy, mythology and anthropology. Features a fully realised world that lives in parallel with our own based on the notion that the universe was created by 12 energies, which turned into the 12 races on earth. Eleven of these races live in secret among mankind, coexisting in precarious harmony and dependent on the balance between them to keep the universe alive - if one race falls, the universe falls. Brought together by the balance, in the the story Jane and Samuel must choose to follow the legacy left to them or to watch as the 12 races erupt in a war that will destroy them all. A book for anyone interested in philosophy, mythology or just a great adventure story.



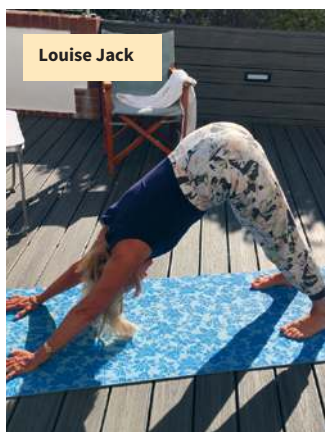
Radical Compassion: Learning To Love Yourself And Your World With The Practice Of Rain

Tara Brach
Viking Penguin

In *Radical Compassion*, out in January, the author has distilled years of her meditation research, teachings and practices, making them more accessible to all. She incorporates the four steps of RAIN meditation, which leads people to Recognise, Allow, Investigate and Nurture their emotions and process them more fully in order to develop more compassion for themselves and others. The book is brought to life by memorable stories shared by Brach and her students as they deal with feelings of fear, loss, self-aversion and painful relationships - and as they discover step-by-step the sources of love, forgiveness, compassion and deep wisdom alive within us all.

Yōgā is fōr èvèry bōdy

Your pictures. Your community



Lindsey Porter outside
Doune Castle, Scotland



Nicki McGuigan



Self Love Yoga Retreat



Katy Chisnall and
Cecil the pug



We want your photos!

Send us happy shots, fun pics, great asana (or bad asana!), big smiley faces, anything at all – and see them in OM Magazine. It doesn't have to be you doing a yoga pose either. We want to see your yoga life: a pre-class group hug, a cup of tea after class, what you got up to at the weekend, send them all via email to: jane@primeimpact.co.uk



Omtravel

Awe-inspiring retreats and ideas for yoga explorers

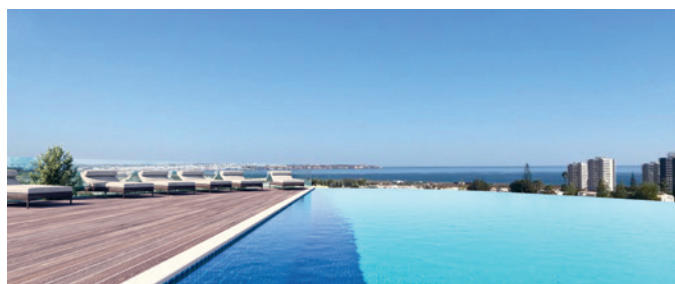


Live long and prosper

ANNOUNCING THE OPENING OF THE LONGEVITY HEALTH & WELLNESS HOTEL IN ALVOR, PORTUGAL

Longevity Wellness Worldwide recently unveiled its new five-star Longevity Health & Wellness Hotel in Alvor, Portugal. This state-of-the-art centre embraces modern integrative and regenerative medicine with the most advanced wellness and preventative diagnostics, therapies and programmes. It's a truly amazing medical spa centre. With panoramic views of the bay of Alvor, the property offers a world-class spa area over two floors focused on a full array of medical and non-medical therapies for optimal health. The wellness menu reads like a smorgasbord of detox treatments including bath and body care rituals, massage, coaching and, of course, yoga. Or if you're looking for something extra then there's everything here from ozone therapy to hyperbaric oxygen therapy. You name it, they've got it!

Find our more at: longevityalvor.com





Power of Intention retreat

TIME TO BOOK YOUR YOGA SUMMER HOLS IN SUNNY SPAIN

A seven-day yoga retreat in Spain hosted by OM writer Claudia Brown. Themed around the Power of Intention, expect a wide range of yoga styles as well as insight into the wider world of wellbeing, coaching, mindfulness and healthy living. Molino del Rey is 50 minutes from Malaga Airport and popular tourist resorts such as Marbella and Puerto Banus. You'll stay in a luxury yoga centre with air conditioned and en suite rooms, set in the beautiful nature reserve of Sierra de las Nieves in Andalucia. The resort also has its own meditation caves, and the unique magical grotto swimming pool is sanitised by a saltwater filtration system. The whole mountain is honeycombed with caves so you can always go exploring and find your own personal meditation space. Afterwards, sit back and relax and enjoy the delicious healthy food in great company.

The Power of Intention Yoga Retreat with Claudia Brown takes place at Molino del Rey, July 5-12, 2020. Prices from £995pp, sharing en-suite twin room. Various pricing and accommodation options available. Visit: yogabyclaudia.com



New look for Chiva-Som

A NEW ERA OF WELLNESS BEGINS AT THE ICONIC RESORT IN THAILAND

Chiva-Som International Health Resort in Hua Hin, Thailand, has reopened its doors following the completion of the fourth and final stage of a top-to-toe renovation – the first major works since its inauguration 24 years ago. It sees improvements to the Health & Wellness area, the Bathing Pavilion, Niranlada Medi-Spa, and the resort's seaside restaurant, Taste of Siam. Famed as a pioneer of the wellness industry since its inception in 1995, Chiva-Som offers the ultimate luxury to guests and is a dreamy destination for all things yoga, where Western practices and Eastern philosophies are brought together seamlessly.

Visit: chivasom.com



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SECRET YOGA DESTINATIONS: NORTHERN COLOMBIA

Clint MacNichol takes the road less travelled to explore some of yoga's hidden highlights in the remote north of Colombia



Northern Colombia possesses some of the most diverse environments anywhere in the world. Choose a direction from the city of Santa Marta and the visitor will soon chance upon a new climate, terrain or experience — a mere 25 steps outside the airport doors from the arrivals area you'll find the Caribbean Sea and the beach.

Santa Marta is a city experiencing growing pains due to a rise in visitors and those fleeing Venezuela (a 5-6 hour drive from the border). A city of approximately 500,000, still rough around the edges, acts as the main rest stop and launching area for the real reason most come this way...nature. Tourists will find all the necessary means of travel to venture further in any direction.

South of the airport brings you to the small community of Ciénaga where freshwater and saltwater join forces to create an ecosystem reminiscent of the everglades in Florida. Ciénaga is experiencing an environmental resurgence. Once in a state of decline due to poor highway planning that cut off the sea from the rivers, adjustments are seeing new life return. It is safe to say, visitors to Colombia will not make a journey to this area specifically, perhaps only noticing it from the window of a bus to Barranquilla. The majority of adventure seekers and nature lovers make their way further north to the communities of Rodadero, Santa Marta and Taganga.

A ride east will give you the chance to discover a rainforest and the highest coastal mountain range in the world, known as the Sierra Nevada. The small village of Minca acts as the gateway to any travels further into the mountains. Here you will find another community in transition. Minca was, not long ago, a battleground for rebels, traffickers and other militant groups. Now, investment and curiosity has turned this tiny riverside mountain village into a place teeming with activity, still with the signature relaxed Caribbean feel.

The Sierra Nevada Mountains give birth to coffee, cacao, and varieties of fruit. The mountains play home to what seems to be an infinite number of birds, frogs and monkeys. They even possess a snow-capped peak with views of the Caribbean Sea, a truly unique combination.

Not to be outdone, the coastal path, northeast of Santa Marta, guides visitors to the Tayrona National Park, great for crystal clear beaches, jungle and strictly-guarded lands with access only by foot or by boat. The Colombian government goes to great lengths to ensure this land is not spoiled; even closing the park for the month of February each year, to let the land 'rest'. This area also holds another secret: some of the best scuba diving experiences in the world at the most affordable prices.

The options do not end at Tayrona Park. Keep venturing north-east and you will reach a growing area known as Palomino, nestled right on the shore, along with other coastal paradises such as Costeno Beach. Here is the point where a new transition begins: travel to the most northern tip of South America and a completely new terrain awaits. The lush forests melt away; now, you come face to face with a sprawling desert touching the sea in a place known as La Guajira. The yellow/orange sand, etched with waves created by the wind contrasted by the bright blue and white skies would seem the ideal surroundings for a meditation session.



The Magdalena region is an ideal locale for photographers and wildlife enthusiasts, but one more group can truly benefit from a visit to this amazing land. Weaved into every area, yoga instructors are ready to help you release, relax and find your centre.

Ashtanga, Vinyasa, and Acroyoga, to name a few, are available to anyone who makes yoga part of their being. Yoga instructors, men and women alike, all are willing to carve out space for a few mats, offering practice opportunities in almost every area of northern Colombia.

The options are unlimited. Just like blood coursing through the arteries to feed the body, the flow of yoga instructors seems to reach everywhere. Destinations for yoga are not fixed, but rather seem to appear where needed.

Whether it be a private one-on-one lesson, rooftop session, in a studio, in a park, under a thatched roof with the ocean in the background or high in the mountains with nearly 360 degree views of the rainforest, rest assured the calming force of a yoga class is nearby, just listen for it. Just in case, though, don't be afraid to ask around.



Yoga in Santa Marta

Much like the diversity in climate and environment offers something for every visitor, Santa Marta's yoga experiences are certain to fit any budget.

Bash Yoga

Are you a visitor travelling on a shoestring? If so, visit David (Bash Yoga) at the Quinta de San Pedro, 'la Quinta', a large historical site surrounded by a lush garden, where a free yoga class every Saturday morning will suit your finances just right. On occasion, the cost of entry may be a food donation, nevertheless, this class can see upwards of 40 attendees and potential new friends. David's aim with the Saturday morning classes is to make yoga accessible to as many people as possible. He calls it 'Yoga Karma'.

 [instagram.com/bashyoga](https://www.instagram.com/bashyoga)

Padma Wellness Centre

If a short stay is on the cards, plenty of options exist closer to the centre of the city. The most recent entry to Santa Marta's yoga scene is the Padma Wellness Centre & Restaurant. Here, Lina has begun what she hopes is a full-service destination...including yoga, naturally. Padma is centrally located with a schedule of daily classes set in a clean, modern studio setting.

 [instagram.com/padma_wellness](https://www.instagram.com/padma_wellness)

Yoga Land

Yoga Land can be found in the neighbourhood of Los Cocos, still considered a very central portion of Santa Marta. Here you will find a modern studio with clean lines and bright décor. Yoga Land is owned and operated by a long-time resident of Santa Marta, who demands only quality teachers preside over a class, even going so far as to bring in guest teachers from Bogota and beyond.

 [instagram.com/yogalandsama](https://www.instagram.com/yogalandsama)

Private sessions

If you're looking for the personal touch, many of the amazing men and women in and around the area are available for private sessions. Having a partner to guide you through an intensive session from one of the many hotel rooftops will be hard to pass up. Oh, and I should mention, summer is the season — every day.

Group yoga retreats

Stepping away from yoga on a client level, there are options for the global retreat organiser as well. If the production budget permitted, a much larger list would have been compiled, however these two examples illustrate the variety of sites available in Greater Santa Marta for those seeking new destinations for group excursions:

Corazon del Mundo

Beginning our journey at a higher elevation, Corazon del Mundo is a getaway nestled far above the city of Santa Marta in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. Perched on a clearing on the west slope of the mountains, Jana has created a hideaway with 360-degree views of the rainforest from the second level of her large mountain property. Which just so happens to be the launching pad for yoga sessions. Able to host up to 9-10 people quite comfortably, you will truly find a bit of isolation from it all. Should there be a group of cost-conscious travellers, dozens of hammocks can provide an economical stay.

Corazon del Mundo does not have road access. The price of admission — further ensuring guests are away from it all — is a 30-40 minute hike. The time goes by quickly as you can stop for great photo-ops, visit an indigenous family, check out various native fruits growing along the way and even visit coffee processing machinery from the past. Don't fret: a donkey can bring up personal goods, to lessen the load.

A transplanted Texan longing for a forest playground since the days of her youth, when she would visit her grandparents in the US' Midwest, Jana has begun hosting retreats with great success. However, she is not banking on yoga to ensure sustainability. This mountain retreat is smack dab in the middle of her very own coffee finca [farm]. On any to visit Corazon del Mundo coffee is always





available to drink and for purchase.

The fun does not stop there. Mature trees and new plantings of cacao will make certain the finca is producing the raw material used to make chocolate, for a good long time to come. Guests will enjoy from locally-grown fruit, veggies, eggs and some protein for mealtime.

 [instagram.com/corazon.del.mundo](https://www.instagram.com/corazon.del.mundo)

Gitana del Mar

Another destination for those organising client wellness retreats is Gitana del Mar, on the shores of the Caribbean Sea. The property was discovered after a year-long search, followed by planning and construction taking place over an additional year. This painstaking effort gave birth to the dream of owner Nina and her husband, and has now been in operation for more than six years. What initially began as a dream for a new couple exploring their love in Costa Rica, became a bit of a homecoming as Nina found herself returning to her native Colombia.

Contrary to the harmony provided by mountain wildlife, be prepared to be soothed to a state of tranquility by the sea, just metres away. Just wait until you see the thatched-roof platform where yoga classes commence. The design and decor all blend with the surroundings, to avoid any structure seeming to invade this lush paradise. And the reviews are glowing: just take a peek at tripadvisor to see.

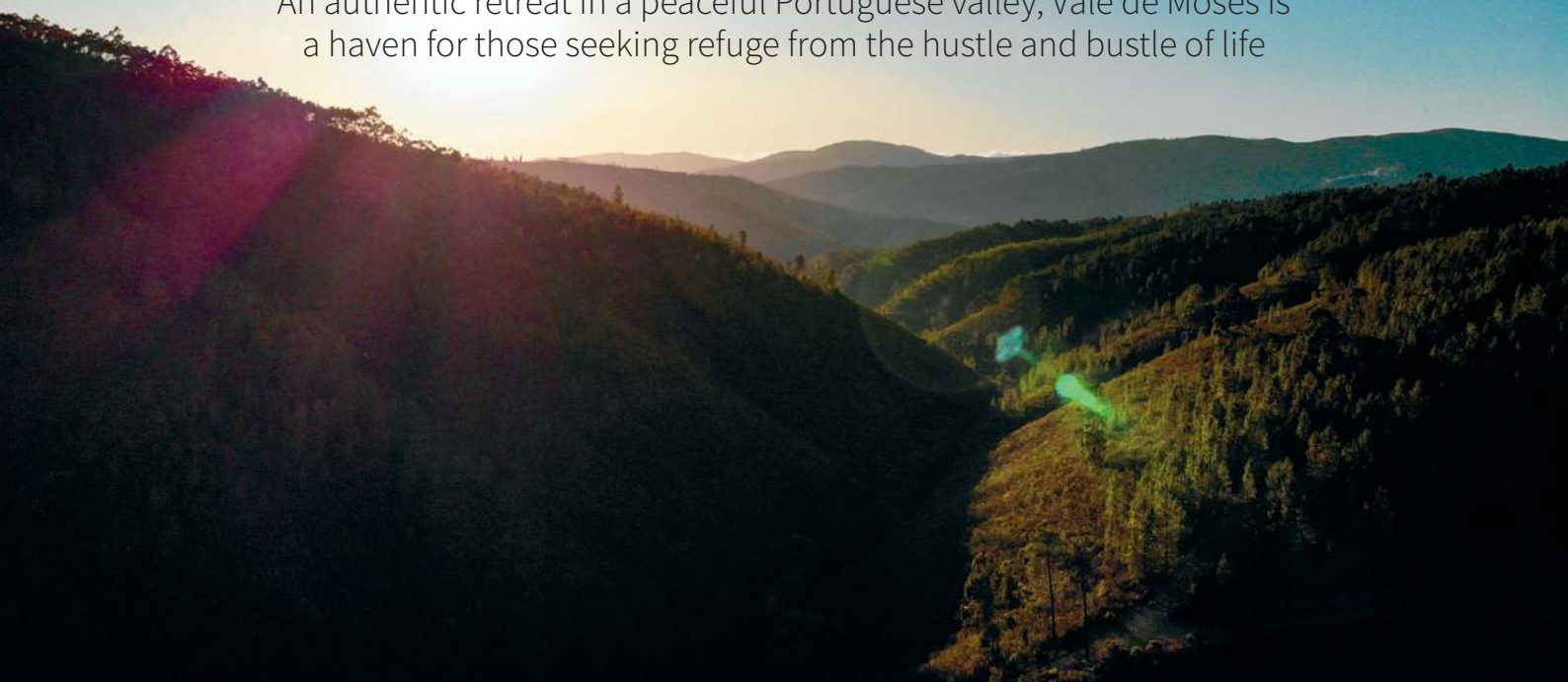
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Clint MacNichol is a photographer and world traveller. When not photographing the people and places of northern Colombia, he operates the only coffee tasting service in the country's third largest coffee region.

Find him on Instagram:  @clintmacnichol or @sierratastings

Viva Vale de Moses

An authentic retreat in a peaceful Portuguese valley, Vale de Moses is a haven for those seeking refuge from the hustle and bustle of life



Could this be the most beautiful place on earth? At Vale de Moses the birds sing, the sun illuminates rolling forested hills, and the yoga will straighten out your soul, while the yummy food will satisfy your tum. OM has experienced the Vale de Moses love first hand and it's pretty special. Beautiful, like-minded souls sharing yoga together in a natural, eco-loving space. Here, there's a rolling schedule of retreats throughout much of the year, so whatever style you're after, you're sure to find it — one thing that stays the same is the good-vibe and heart-felt welcome to join wherever you might be in your love affair with yoga. We've picked out a few upcoming retreats to whet your appetite, but check online for more details:

Forest Bathing Winter Retreat

Visit Vale de Moses anytime between November and March for a unique forest bathing experience. During these months, instead of the usual weekly programme, you can arrive any day and stay for as many nights as you like, for a minimum of two nights. Includes accommodation, food and use of all facilities, plus private yoga and massage treatments can be arranged on request.

Yoga With Emilie

Breath by breath, layer by layer. This retreat with Emilie de la Chapelle is about coming home to yourself: finding space to reconnect with what is important in life through yoga. Two separate weeks available during March (15-21 & 22-28 March, 2020).

This Yoga Life

Join the amazing Tashi Dawa for a retreat that will focus on how we can use our yoga practice to expand our centre, to live with ease and create a platform for more skillful action in all aspects of our life. Four weeks available in springtime (29 March - 4 April, 5-11, 12-18 & 19-25 April, 2020). 🧘

Find out more at: valedemoses.com





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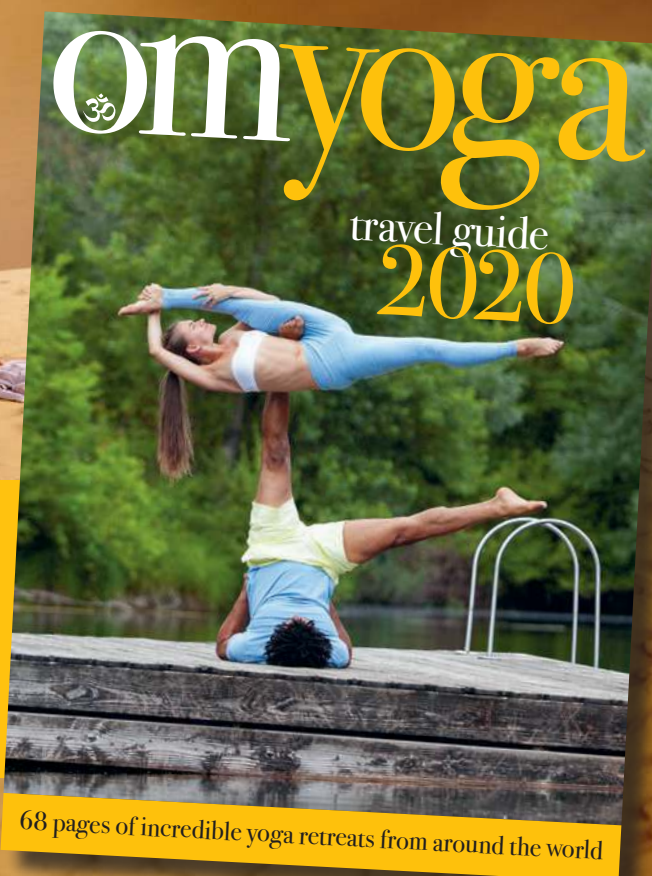


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Making malas

A mala can be a very beautiful thing...or a test of patience and endurance,
as *Victoria Jackson* discovers

Every time I go to any gathering of yogis there's always someone wearing mala beads as a necklace or wrapped around their wrist. A mala is a thread of 108 beads used in meditation practice, kind of like a yoga rosary, where passing each bead between the fingers helps you track the number of repetitions of a mantra.

They can be really pretty, often made of semi-precious stones or coloured glass. I'm always a little envious of this look — kind of boho chic meets yoga studio fashion. I'm not sure I could pull it off as a style myself. In any case, I'm an annoying stick-in-the-mud purist when it comes to mala beads, since I learned traditional ways of handling them with respect or even reverence. The idea of keeping it to yourself as a personal aid to meditation annoyingly kicks in every time I think about incorporating the mala into my partywear — even if I know the other party-goers will be beautiful spiritual types.

But just because I don't choose to wear them to a party that doesn't mean I don't love my mala beads. And actually I guess that's the point: mala beads should be attractive. Meditation can be hard enough, so anything that helps draw you towards your practice is surely a good thing. In fact I love the tactile experience of handling a

mala so much that I've just threaded one myself for the first time. It took a few hours to tie a knot between each bead and then finish it off with a larger 'guru bead' and a colourful tassel. The act of doing this felt like a meditation in itself, needing calm concentration and a lot (and I mean a lot!) of patience.

And I had to let go of my habitual desire for perfection, because my first mala is, in truth, a bit messy. There are a few escaping ends of threads and the beads are not all evenly spaced, since some of my knots didn't quite land where I intended. When I'd finished it, I viewed it with a critical eye, ready to focus on the flaws. But as soon as I sat down to meditate, all these concerns disappeared. My fingers didn't notice the uneven spacing. Instead the mala string trickled through my fingers, the beads gently chiming as they knocked together. I settled quietly into the rhythm of repeating the mantra—and I let go of all thoughts about attending that yoga party! And the added bonus: once I've refined my technique a little, my Christmas presents are sorted for this year! ॐ

Victoria Jackson lives and teaches in Oxford. She is registered with Yoga Alliance Professionals as a vinyasa yoga teacher



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