



P₂M Yoga

“Bamboo News”

A Yoga Newsletter from Peter Marnocha

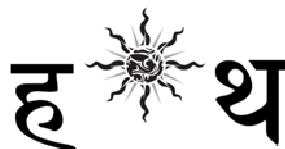
November 2009

Hello fellow Yogis & Yoginis! Welcome to the first issue of my Yoga newsletter. I hope you enjoy! I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say "I've ALWAYS wanted to try Yoga..." and I always try to politely ask. "Well, what's stopping you?" The reasons are too numerous to count. So, let's spin this around..

Top 10 Reasons to Try Yoga

Originally published by Yoga Alliance in 2006

1. **STRESS RELIEF:** Yoga reduces the physical effects of stress on the body. By encouraging relaxation, yoga helps to lower the levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Related benefits include lowering blood pressure and heart rate, improving digestion and boosting the immune system as well as easing symptoms of conditions such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, asthma and insomnia.
2. **PAIN RELIEF:** Yoga can ease pain. Studies have demonstrated that practicing yoga asanas (postures), meditation or a combination of the two, reduced pain for people with conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune diseases and hypertension as well as arthritis, back and neck pain, and other chronic conditions. Some practitioners report that even emotional pain can be eased through the practice of yoga.
3. **BETTER BREATHING:** Yoga teaches people to take slower, deeper breaths. This helps to improve lung function, trigger the body's relaxation response and increase the amount of oxygen available to the body.
4. **FLEXIBILITY:** Yoga helps to improve flexibility and mobility, increasing range of movement and reducing aches and pains. Many people can't touch their toes during their first yoga class. Gradually they begin to use the correct muscles. Over time, the ligaments, tendons and muscles lengthen, increasing elasticity, making more poses possible. Yoga also helps to improve body alignment resulting in better posture and helping to relieve back, neck, joint and muscle problems.
5. **INCREASED STRENGTH:** Yoga asanas (postures) use every muscle in the body, helping to increase strength literally from head to toe. And, while these postures strengthen the body, they also provide an additional benefit of helping to relieve muscular tension.
6. **WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:** Yoga (even less vigorous styles) can aid weight control efforts by reducing the cortisol levels as well as by burning excess calories and reducing stress. Yoga also encourages healthy eating habits and provides a heightened sense of well being and self esteem.
7. **IMPROVED CIRCULATION:** Yoga helps to improve circulation and, as a result of various poses, more efficiently moves oxygenated blood to the body's cells.
8. **CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONING:** Even gentle yoga practice can provide cardiovascular benefits by lowering resting heart rate, increasing endurance and improving oxygen uptake during exercise.
9. **FOCUS ON THE PRESENT:** Yoga helps us to focus on the present, to become more aware and to help create mind body health. It opens the way to improved concentration, coordination, reaction time and memory.
10. **INNER PEACE:** The meditative aspects of yoga help many to reach a deeper, more spiritual and more satisfying place in their lives. Many who begin to practice for other reasons have reported this to be a key reason that yoga has become an essential part of their daily lives.



Prana • Purusha • Moksha

Yoga Pose of the Month

Down Dog or Downward-Facing Dog (*Ardho Mukha Svanasana*)

In the many Yoga classes I've taken, there is usually the assumption that everyone, even beginners know the basics of this posture. Unfortunately, many new students to Yoga do not know this and will look at the teacher or other students for a visual representation of this pose. Therefore, I would like to take the time to slightly deconstruct Down Dog for the beginner...or even the intermediate Yoga practitioner. Honestly, I still find myself constantly refining this pose. As with any yoga pose, the student may find themselves "losing the pose" periodically. That is, you may practice postures well, but then get into a "funk" where the pose just isn't happening. It's okay, just practice, practice, practice! I hope you find the images and explanations below helpful in your practice whether it be in a class or your home practice.



Acceptable forms of Down Dog:



In both poses above, the hips should lift as high as possible to lengthen the spine and the head & neck completely relax and drop. If your legs are straight as in the first photo, it is acceptable to lift the heels higher off the floor. Although the arms are involved, the lift is generated by the core and the hamstrings. The hands, with the fingers comfortably spread are firmly grounded into the floor. If your elbows have a tendency to hyper-extend, you may want to slightly bend them.

Upper back & Shoulders:



Keep the upper back and shoulders broad as in the first pose above. Unfortunately, the lighting in pose one gives the impression that the shoulder blades are popping out. They should lie as flat as possible with this broadening. Pose two exaggerates the compression of the blades towards each other. Notice the gathering of the skin between the shoulder blades. Try to avoid this by broadening the upper back and shoulders.

Hatha Yoga & Karma Mondays

Every first Monday of the month is Karma Yoga at Body in Balance for my Hatha Yoga classes! In lieu of a drop-in fee or the use of a class pass, your class is free if you bring three (3) non-perishable food items which will be donated to Second Harvest food pantry. Practice Yoga and give back to the community.