

The Benefits of Yoga

☸ A “PEACE” OF MY MIND...

Tracie's message

Everyone begins the practice of Yoga with different intentions. Many start to lose weight, reduce stress, heal psychological or physical injury, gain a competitive edge, etc...Let me say now, Yoga is for everyone! Whatever your age, body type, gender, religion, cultural background, levels of flexibility or physical fitness...yoga is for everyone! I often hear, I do not have the time for Yoga. My tough love response is that if your life does not permit you the time for health and well being you need yoga more! People will say, “after I get through this stressful time, or busy part of my life... I will come to yoga.” This is the very time a person should begin yoga! There are simply no valid reasons for avoiding yoga, unless you just don't want to! Ironically, the practice of yoga would support your choice. If you do not want yoga, then yoga is not for you, at least for now! From the philosophical teachings of yoga you would be advised to make your choice, stay aware of your choice, take responsibility for your choice. Always question, for yourself, the purpose for your choice and whether or not it truly serves your highest good.

The benefits of yoga are truly infinite. Yoga serves as a foundation and practice in life for physical fitness, psychological fitness, and relationships. Simply put, total health and well being. Yoga, properly utilized, empowers us to change mediocrity of living to an excellent

experience in life. I learned from my teacher that to see your progress in yoga, look at the quality of your relationships and how you respond to stress. This simple but profound advice brought me back to my yoga mat hundreds of times. Considering that our bodies



are the biggest distraction in life; with it's profound intelligence, yoga suggests that we become physically fit through proper use of the body and correct breathing.

Yoga then teaches that we learn to govern our own lives by being in charge of our senses instead of being mastered and directed by our five senses. This is attained by right use of attention and learning to direct awareness with a focused, yet gentle approach. Ultimately we learn that our personal world view is flavored by our own life experiences and things are not always as they seem. With this in mind, seek to see the world from a present moment objective perspective, through the lens of empathy and compassion. Interestingly enough this does not mean we are taught to become passive observers, instead to learn to live fully in the world according to personal values and to develop the courage to stand in truth for those values!

Love, T.



**“The journey to mastering
Yoga's challenging postures
empowers you to journey
through life's challenges
with mastery.”**

~ Tracie Brace

Intelligent strength: In yoga poses, the whole body is involved. You learn how to use your body from the inside out. Your strength is meant to begin at the deepest supporting muscles and then goes out from there. Through practicing this in yoga class, you can learn to move in a way all the time that keeps your body healthy. In many cases, you can heal your own aches and pains through learning yoga. If you have ever had back pain but do not yet know about the piriformis or psoas muscles, get in class! We talk about these muscles often and teach you how to access them in your own bodies. You gain strength from the core and learn to support all your joints. Our bodies are not actually meant to fall apart as we age. If this is happening to you, yoga will show you how to reverse the clock!

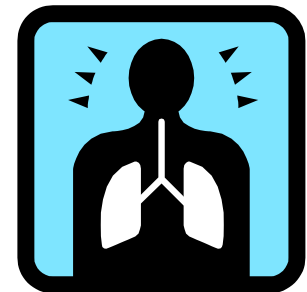


Flexibility: The most commonly known benefit of yoga is that it increases flexibility. This is actually a byproduct of learning intelligent strength. The muscles work in pairs around the joints. Flexibility does no good without strength. As you strengthen one muscle, the muscle on the other side of the joint will become more flexible. Through using all the muscles in the body, you gain increased range of motion in all your joints. Another reason flexibility increases is due to the changes in your nervous system, which I will cover later. Know that it is possible for you to touch your toes again!

Stability & Balance: When you have strength and flexibility, you have stability. When your body is working from the inside out, you can move more easily. You find that your limits begin to disappear. This quality can not easily be separated from the next...

Power of Mind: If your mind was a car, would you be driving? Most of us let our minds take control of us instead of us taking control of our minds. Sometimes you can't believe what your mind tells you! Yoga teaches you to get back into the driver's seat and create more thoughts that support what you want in life and clean out the ones that do not serve you. You learn to not allow situations or people to take over, but instead to stay committed to your values even when it is a challenge. You become the eye of the hurricane instead of being out in the storm.

Respiratory efficiency: To the degree that you feel stress in your life, your breathing is affected. The ribs and spine are meant to move with your breath. Many people do not use the diaphragm to breathe and instead overuse the neck and shoulder muscles, leading to pain and tightness there. In yoga, you learn the posture and breathing techniques that use the diaphragm and also improve your uptake of oxygen. Your respiratory system links with many of the other systems of the body, which leads me to the next benefit.



Nervous system balance: With the perception of stress and the underusing of the diaphragm, your body is subjected to overstimulation of the "fight or flight" response. As you improve breathing and focus, your nervous system is allowed to relax. Your nervous system basically runs your body, so the effects of this are innumerable. The ability to relax does have to be practiced. Every yoga class works with this concept, leading up to the full relaxation at the end of class. This helps your body work better and also helps you have more rejuvenating sleep.

Improved quality of life: There are countless more benefits, but these give you a general flavor – yoga improves your quality of life. If your body feels healthy and full of energy, if your mind is relaxed but powerful, there is no limit to the amazing experience of life you can have. It just keeps getting better and better.