

10 Questions

for Brad Kochunas by Shirley Belcher

What is your training as a yoga instructor? When did you begin?

I've been an independent practitioner since the 1970s before any certifications were available. I consider myself as *facilitating* rather than instructing the class. I demonstrate a pose then oversee the class, giving individual guidance and feedback. I simply do my practice, and people join in as they are able. I took yoga with Jim Flowers for 13 years.

How do yoga and gentle yoga differ?

Yoga workouts can be strenuous and fitness oriented. I prefer yoga poses that emphasize relaxation and stretching so you leave class rested and renewed rather than sweaty and exhausted.

What is your typical yoga class?

Class size is between 6 and 12 participants who range in age from their 50s to their 80s.

What are yoga's health benefits?

Though many health claims have been made about yoga, my focus is upon breath, body awareness, and balance. Through a series of gentle stretches and poses, the goal is to increase flexibility, improve balance, and strengthen muscle groups to help us ease more comfortably into our elder years and maintain our activities of daily living, such as getting out of a chair, climbing stairs, and turning to look over the shoulder. I use it for pain management.

Yoga has been demonstrated to improve back pain, arthritis, heart health, hypertension, and balance.

What happens in a yoga class?

We practice, for example, by beginning on our backs with a series of stretches, move to sitting poses, then to poses on hands and knees, going up to standing poses, then return to our backs for a final relaxation series to close out the session.

What equipment is needed?

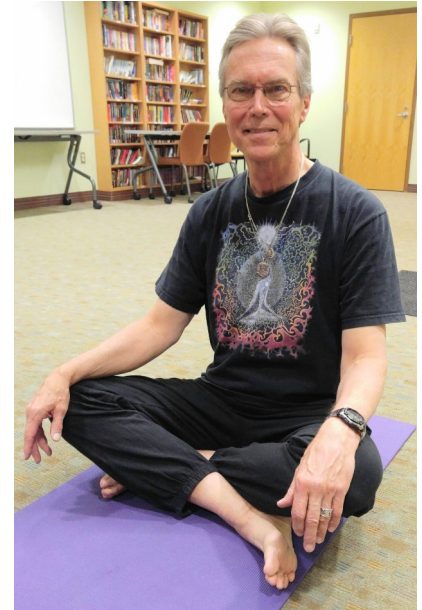
Participants should dress comfortably, bring a yoga or exercise mat, and a cloth strap, belt, sturdy necktie, or towel to help with occasional stretches.

Are there any restrictions to learning yoga?

Talk with your doctor before beginning an exercise program. Participants should be able to get down and back up from the floor without significant difficulty. In yoga, injury can occur by overstretching or rapid twisting. Body awareness means listening to our bodies. Yoga is not competitive. We can be gentle with ourselves and with others.

What should people know about yoga?

Yoga is not a panacea for everyone's ills. It has its limitations and dangers. I refer people to William Broad's book, *The Science of Yoga* for a comprehensive look at the topic.



Brad Kochunas leads yoga class on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM for an hour. Yoga is open to anyone interested, and beginners are welcome. For information, call our Welcome Center, 513-423-1734.

Are there various styles of yoga?

To name a few: Iyengar, Viniyoga, Ashtanga, Kripalu, and Integral. Developers of an approach add their own twists, methods, and philosophies that differ enough for it to be branded its own style.

What are your other interests?

In addition to yoga and tai chi, I'm a retired mental health professional with a therapeutic astrology practice at AstroCare.net. I lecture around the country on astrology and wrote *The Astrological Imagination*. I study Daoism, Buddhism, and read poetry and archetypal psychology. I maintain a daily tea and meditation practice and am an avid filmgoer. 🌱