



South County Fitness:
Hot Yoga and Beyond

HEALING BODY, MIND AND SOUL

Written By **ROBIN SHEPHERD**



Wendy Mosgrove, Founder & Owner
Beyond Yoga Studios of Morgan Hill
and Gilroy Bikram

hotyogasouthcounty.com

Wendy Mosgrove was skeptical yet intrigued when a neighbor told her how “hot yoga” had changed her sister’s life for the better. Wendy decided to give it a try. What happened at her first yoga class would have made most people grab their mats and run.

“The room was extremely hot and it smelled,” Wendy said. “I was on the verge of vomiting for the entire ninety-minute class. I had already committed to a series of classes; otherwise I would have bowed out. I had to see it through.”

For the record, Wendy is a consummate career athlete. She devoted 14 years to classical ballet including work with the Hartford and Connecticut ballet companies. She spent more than 20 years as an aerobics instructor and personal trainer, working at Jane Fonda’s Workout in San Francisco and other health clubs, and as a Fitness Director for the SF Marina Health Club and Princess Cruise Lines.

As for her motivation, Wendy was hoping that hot yoga, which has its roots in the Bikram yoga methodology, would help with some chronic back and neck pain as well as some issues with depression and insomnia.

Her perseverance paid off. She soon started to regain full range of motion in her joints and her pain subsided. She was sleeping better at night and no longer felt the need for anti-depressant medication. Needless to say, she was hooked.

Something was spurring her on to explore yoga at a deeper level. And so, at 52, Wendy became one of the oldest students enrolled in Bikram Yoga of India Teacher Training. At first, she wasn’t sure that she would make it through the program.

“We did 120-minute classes twice a day, six days a week, for nine weeks. It was intense but I soon started to feel better physically, mentally and emotionally.”

Improving her practice of yoga was rewarding but Wendy still felt drawn to something deeper.

“At a certain point in life we begin to reflect on our work and we want to give something back. With yoga, I had found my calling. I decided to open my own studio to share the benefits of yoga with others. I realized that everything I had done earlier in my career prepared me for this step.”

Wendy graduated from her teacher training in 2009, she invested her life savings to open up Bikram Yoga Morgan Hill in 2011. She obtained a construction loan to renovate a space in downtown Gilroy and opened Bikram Yoga Gilroy in 2015.

“It’s uncanny, but from the moment I walked in to teach my first class, I felt this deep sense of love for my work, and for my students. When I teach, I feel the Holy Spirit working through me.”

Wendy is meticulous in training her staff and providing instruction that balances safety with proper yoga postures, breathing and movement. Postures with names like half-moon, cobra, eagle and standing bow can be challenging to the novice but with consistent practice, young and old can learn and benefit from yoga. Wendy encourages all of her students to push themselves a little, to test their limits and grow.

As Wendy describes it, heat and proper breathing are vital to the practice of hot yoga. Warm muscles are more relaxed, allowing a deeper stretch. This, along with deep breathing, opens up the veins and capillaries, increasing the flow of blood and oxygen to organs, glands, muscles and tendons. Heat also encourages the body to sweat, which releases toxins, while regulating body temperature.

Always mindful of the things she disliked about her first experience with yoga, Wendy has gone beyond the traditional bikram methodology – providing some classes of a shorter duration and with less heat – while staying true to the breathing and postures.

“By giving people more options, I’m making yoga accessible to more people, including older adults and kids.”

Wendy has added variety to her program with “hot pilates,” a complement to yoga that works the body’s core abdominal and gluteal muscles; and Zumba, a great workout to Latin music that she described as “not too dancey.” She also plans to add Vinyasa (non-hot) yoga classes this fall.

She has also invested in special air filtration and flooring in her studios to maintain an uber clean and healthy environment for her staff and students.

“I want to offer something for everyone at our Morgan Hill and Gilroy studios,

and I want them to be comfortable while they are here.” She recently rebranded her business as Beyond Yoga Studios to reflect a broader focus.

Clearly proud of her staff, Wendy added “I’m very picky about who I hire. I look at their technical skill but I also look for people who have a sense of humility and the capacity to be kind and loving. When you teach from a place of love, people feel it.”

At the end of each class, Wendy’s gaze travels across the room as she says, “Peace be with you. God is with you always. Namaste.”



“I chose yoga as a way to jumpstart a new fitness regime. It’s a great workout, even in the middle of a busy work day. I can almost feel the toxins leaving my body and I have this sense of well-being after class.”

Heidi Cayton



“Since I took up yoga almost four years ago, I’ve lost fifteen pounds, and increased my flexibility, muscle mass and balance. Yoga’s benefits have carried over into other parts of my life. I’m more focused, less distracted, and I’m dedicated to a healthy lifestyle.”

Stan Mucha