

Yoga: a pathway for health, happiness and wholeness

Feeling stressed out? Yoga is a wonderful way to tone, relax and find balance in your life.



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Have the demands of daily life overwhelmed you? Feeling... Exhausted? Depressed? Rushed? Consider taking up Yoga as a practice to guide happiness and health to your life.

Benefits

Yoga has so many benefits: fitness, relaxation, strength and physical balance, flexibility, weight loss, health improvements, stress relief, mental well-being, and empowerment to name a few. Yoga can also encourage diet and lifestyle changes because they feel good within yourself, not because someone prescribes it for you. People start practicing yoga for a whole range of reasons, and the beauty of yoga is that it can meet you exactly where you are. Whether it's for the physical benefits, to prepare for a meditation practice or as a spiritual path, yoga can grow and change with each practitioner to be what he or she needs in the moment.

What is yoga?

Yoga can be defined in many ways. The Sanskrit term literally meaning "to yoke" or "union", yoga is about the union of the Individual self with the Supreme self or Divine – and it doesn't matter what name we give for the Divine, whether it be Spirit, Universe, God, Allah, Isvara or any other. It's about blending and balancing feminine and masculine principles within ourselves to bring balance, healing and wholeness to our life and the lives of others. Yoga is open to anyone of any religious or spiritual beliefs.

So what does this mean? Yoga as a philosophy as described in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras has 8 limbs, one of which is "asana," the Sanskrit term meaning "posture" which in Western cultures tends to be primarily what is thought of as yoga. When we practice the physical aspect of yoga through posture, this is asana. Yoga also has many other facets exploring the breath, body, mind and spirit. Yoga can be as simple as taking a class or as encompassing as a lifestyle, depending on where you want to go with it!



Leslie Blackburn offers bringing yoga to your home for private sessions and also offers classes at many local fitness and yoga centers. For full details, contact her at **313-269-6719** or email: info@onespaceconnected.com.



Balancing strength and flexibility, yoga meets you where you are

In Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, he speaks of the importance of balancing "sthira" and "sukha" in an asana practice. "Sthira" means steadiness and alertness, while "sukha" means lightness, comfort, and happiness. So the idea is to blend the active principle with the passive... building and using strength in some areas of the body to hold space, freeing up other areas to let go, release and relax. So while those who already carry strength and perhaps associated tightness may view yoga as a way to create flexibility, others who have a natural openness in their bodies may find more strength building benefit in yoga. Again, the beauty of yoga is that it meets each unique person exactly where he or she is in the moment.

Breath and body connection

Yoga is about awareness and connection with body and breath. It's about using your breath as your guide in your own practice. Keeping a steady, even breath is critical to guiding yourself safely through your practice. If you find your breath becoming shallow, erratic or held it's time to make an adjustment or back out of a pose. Never force yourself into a pose, always listen to your body...and gently allow yourself to release into poses. Awareness of the breath paves the way for deeper connection with Self. You own your practice, the instructor is there to guide you and suggest where to go next. Only you know what your body and breath are telling you so be sure to listen and honor those messages as well. With such awareness, your practice will bloom, your daily presence will shift and you will reap the benefits of a happier, healthier you! ●



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