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*Mellara Gold*  
meet this month's  
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## FINAL VOTING NOW OPEN

The nominations are in and the shortlists have been drawn up, now is your time to go and vote for your favourites! The winners of each category will be announced at the OM Yoga Show 2023

### The categories are...

- Favourite Yoga Teacher
- Favourite Yoga Studio
- Favourite Yoga Teacher Trainer
- Favourite Online Yoga Platform or App
- Favourite Yoga Mat
- Favourite Yoga Clothing Brand
- Favourite Yoga Charity
- Favourite Yoga Retreat Company
- OM Yoga Good Karma Award 2023

Head to [ommagazine.com/om-yoga-awards](https://ommagazine.com/om-yoga-awards) to make your vote.

Voting closes September 1st 2023

# Om

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**On the cover:**  
**Model:** Mellara Gold  
(mellara.com)

**Photography:**  
inherimagephoto.com

## Welcome



Summer is here. Welcome to our July issue, a happy place filled with good vibes, totally amazing people, plus oodles of ideas and inspiration for your healthy yoga life.

Now is the time to get out and about and soak up all the wonders of nature. Take a look at our special report this month, The Great Outdoors, to see all the incredible ways you can experience yoga as nature intended, from

summer festivals to awesome sailing adventures.

In this issue we continue our build up to this year's OM Yoga Show. That includes an interview with our cover star, Mellara Gold, who'll be travelling from the USA to join us at London's Alexandra Palace in October.

We also showcase Joaquin Gomez and Sarah Grogan of Within Yoga, and take a look at the work of The Prison Phoenix Trust, a charity that supports prison communities with yoga and meditation.

Find them all at our show and practice live and in-person with the best! It's the biggest yoga weekender in the whole of Europe, so something not to be missed.

If you're new to yoga, then the OM Yoga Show is also a great place to start and to explore. For now, read through our Yoga for Beginners report to get a head-start and hopefully we will see you in October.

Have a wonderful month, folks...and do send us your summer yoga snaps. Tag us on Instagram or just email them to us if you want to see yourself in a future issue of OM!

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# OM in 30 seconds



Mellara Gold will be flying in from the USA to join us at the OM Yoga Show in London this October. Here, she shares her yoga story and how the practice has had such a profound impact on her life. **OM Meets Mellara Gold, Page 26**

The Prison Phoenix Trust is a UK charity that is doing outstanding work sharing the transformational benefits of yoga and meditation with offenders inside prisons and supporting them on their journey on release. **Prison Yoga: A Beacon Of Hope, Page 54**



Summer is here! Explore some great ideas for taking your yoga practice out and about, from messing about on the water, to conscious festivals, and once-in-a-lifetime sailing and adventure holidays. **The Great Outdoors, Page 82**

# Contributors



**Dr. Tracey Meyers**  
Tracey is a psychologist, yoga teacher and therapist, and author of the book, Yin Yoga Therapy for Mental Health. She leads yoga, mindfulness and self-compassion initiatives for yoga teachers and therapists, mental health professionals and other organisations, with over 25 years' clinical experience as a psychologist and expertise in neuropsychological assessment, trauma-informed therapies and integrative medicine. Visit: [traceymeyerspsyd.com](http://traceymeyerspsyd.com)



**Tom Williams OBE**  
Tom is a certified yoga teacher from the UK with a passion for Ashtanga and classic Hatha yoga and runs the Mastering Sanskrit Asana Names course at Yoga Soda. Practicing yoga has been a source of personal growth for him for many years. Despite a setback from a rock climbing fall in 2021 that left him with permanent mobility issues, he continues to find joy in sharing his love for yoga with others. Visit: [yogasoda.co](http://yogasoda.co) or connect on Instagram [@loveyogasoda](https://www.instagram.com/loveyogasoda)



**India Pearson**  
India is an outdoor advocate, mother and founder of Fin & Flow: a hub for people to connect through wellbeing activities like yoga, paddle boarding, and beach cleans. In her mid-20s, she changed direction from professional dancing after she discovered yoga, leading her to re-focus on what fuelled her soul. Now she hosts the outdoors podcast 'Start a Ripple ...' which celebrates the power of moving in nature. Connect on Instagram [@with\\_india](https://www.instagram.com/with_india)

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# My *secret* place

**Yogi:** Rob Lahoud

**Photographer:** David Parry

**Location:** Yarramundi Reserve,  
New South Wales, Australia

Yarramundi Reserve was once a favourable location for Aboriginal occupation as it was close to fresh drinking water. It was also an important source of stone for making tools and attracted a rich and diverse suite of plant, animal and aquatic resources for First Nations Australians. Today, it is a great place for nature lovers, with over 90 different species of birds. The reserve is suitable for swimming, kayaking, fishing or a relaxing picnic by the river — and yoga. “This pose teaches us that true strength is grounded, calm, and ever-present,” says yogi Rob Lahoud. “Practicing Tadasana (mountain pose) reminds us that we too can have the strength of the mountain. We work to keep our feet grounded, solid upon the earth, but lift our hearts and our heads toward the sky. Both still and active, peaceful and strong. A bulwark (protective wall from potential aggressors) rather than an obstacle.” 🧘





# N@maste

Love OM magazine and want to tell the world? Here's your chance



## Living with love

I love learning about how to apply some of yoga's deeper teachings to everyday life.

Your Living the Teachings column is always an inspiring read, as was your Ahimsa: Living With Love article in the June issue. The recent series of articles by Esther Marie were also great in helping to find ways to embed yoga and some of its spiritual ideas into busy lives.

Imogen, by email



## Aussie rules

It was nice to see a studio from Down Under featured in your June issue. The Australian School of Meditation and Yoga looks like a truly amazing space and if I ever make the journey to Oz I will definitely visit! Please include more overseas studios, it's a great way to see how other yoga communities are living and thriving together across our precious planet.

Mel, by email



## On trend

I enjoyed your trending yoga styles report in the May issue. I'd heard about Anusara Yoga before but didn't really know much about it, so it was good to learn more in your magazine. I now feel inspired to give it a go.

Mandy, by email



## Keep in touch



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## OM Yoga Show

Really great to discover some of the faces who will be appearing at the OM Yoga Show this year in your previews. I'm planning to travel down from Lincoln for the whole weekend with a friend this October. Can't wait!

Liz, by email

# Om yoga show

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**NAME:**  
Heike Petersen Cunza  
**AGE:** 48  
**OCCUPATION:**  
Founder of Wellicious  
yoga wear brand  
**YOGA YEARS:** 23

If she's moving and stretching her body, then Heike Petersen Cunza, the founder of Wellicious yoga wear, is a happy bunny

### Why did you start yoga?

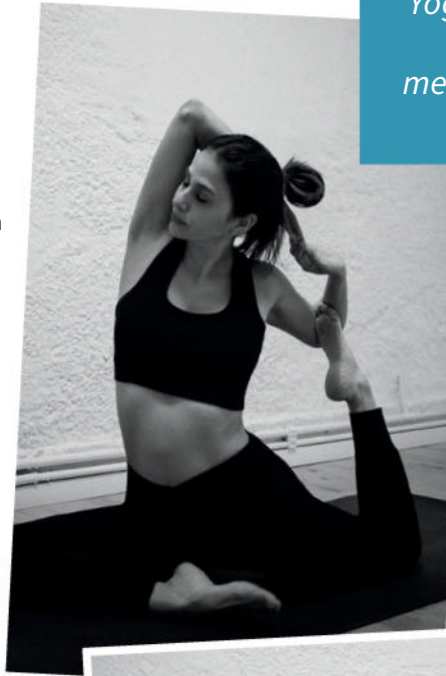
I cannot remember exactly why I started doing yoga, but by chance, I attended a yoga class in Germany before moving to London, and just fell in love with it. In the beginning, I started doing yoga two or three days a week, however, for the past 18 years, I have been practicing yoga daily and it has changed my life for the better.

### How has yoga changed your life?

Yoga is part of my daily routine and lifestyle. I simply love it! I love eating healthily, meditating, and taking care of the planet by trying to live more sustainably. At the same time, I also enjoy life and listen to my body, so if I'm craving treats or a glass of wine, then I just do it! Yoga reminds me to live in the present and nurture both the people around me and myself.

### Favourite yoga haunts?

I absolutely love doing yoga alongside nature in the fresh air, so in the mountains or at the beach. When I travel, I try to seek out beautiful spots to



*"Yoga is part of my daily routine and lifestyle. I simply love it! I love eating healthily, meditating, and taking care of the planet by trying to live more sustainably."*

practice yoga, but honestly, so long as I am moving and stretching, I am very happy wherever I do yoga.

### Best yoga moment?

Oh, I have so many! I love being taught new yoga poses and exercises by inspiring yoga teachers. My favourite poses to do are inversions, such as headstands and legs-up-wall pose, as they make me feel young and full of energy. Inversions were particularly effective at helping me get through the menopause. I also enjoy the feeling after my yoga class, especially after practicing savasana. Finally, I love practicing yoga with a group of friends and sharing the experience.



### What else?

Yoga has encouraged me to be the person that I am today, it has been a constant source of joy and grounding in my life for so many years. It has inspired me both personally and professionally, as I am now also the owner of Wellicious, a sustainable and circular yoga clothing business. ॐ

Follow Heike Petersen Cunza on social media @Wellicious or visit: [wellicious.co.uk](http://wellicious.co.uk)

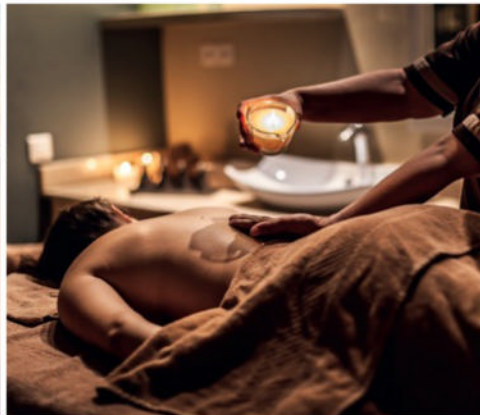
# Om Competition

WIN

2 nights yoga holiday at Paradis Plage resort in Morocco — worth over £800\*

\* Flights NOT included

This month we've teamed up with Paradis Plage, a dreamy eco resort in Morocco, to offer one lucky winner a two-night stay with a companion in a Premium Suite on a half-board basis with full access to the three yoga sessions each day.



Paradis Plage is a dreamy paradise nestled between the Atlas Mountains and a stunning sandy beach that extends for kilometres. As Morocco's first eco resort, the centre is a true pioneer in providing sustainable holidays. Located just a few kilometres north of Agadir, this peaceful haven, far from the hustle and bustle of the city, offers a relaxing beach holiday where you will be able to enjoy plenty of activities

such as yoga or enjoy a calming massage in the spa. Or try your hand at surfing: the resort is located close to some of the world's best surf spots just a few minutes away. Outside, there are three hectares of tropical gardens right on the beachfront to liberate your senses for a true eco-friendly, exotic yoga and wellbeing escape.

Explore the resort for yourself at: [paradisplage.com](https://paradisplage.com) 🌐

To enter visit: [ommagazine.com/paradisplage-2023](https://ommagazine.com/paradisplage-2023)

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Valid for 1 year: from 15th June 2023 to 15th June 2024
- Holiday to be taken outside of school holidays
- 2 nights in a Premium Suite for 2 persons

- Half Board for 2 persons (excluding beverages)
- Free access to the 3 daily yoga courses during the stay.

Closing date for entries: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023



# The Happiness Explorer

## How to...get comfortable with uncertainty

By Lydia Kimmerling



**W**e never really know what lies ahead. Isn't it funny how the things we do know for certain — that we will grow older and that eventually we all die — are the things we fight hardest against?

What if, when faced with a lot of uncertainty, you were able to flow with it, so that you were calm and accepting and could believe that everything was going to be okay? Because that's what we want when we're faced with uncertainty; we just want to know that everything is going to be okay. What would be different for you today if you believed everything you felt unsure about, or were worrying about, would work out okay?

It's important to define what I mean by 'okay'. There is suffering in the world that is not okay and things happen that cause extreme pain and deep trauma, which is not okay. This is not about being blasé and saying, 'Oh don't worry, you'll be okay', and disregarding painful experiences. If you have suffered, or you are suffering, as a result of a traumatic experience, someone saying you will be okay may not be enough. There are many amazing healing modalities that

can help you and sometimes addressing and healing the trauma is exactly what you need to free yourself from the past and move forward.

The type of okay I am talking about is faith in yourself to get through whatever life throws at you. For example, if something doesn't work out — the new relationship, the job interview, the move to a new house, the company you started — you know you'll be okay because you trust yourself, and you can handle change.

To trust yourself is to trust life itself. How trusting are you? Your experience of life is the experience you have of yourself and if you fear change, then you fear life, because you and life are always going to change.

When you don't trust yourself, you stay in situations that rob you of your happiness, such as when you no longer enjoy your work but won't leave because you see it as too risky. Perhaps you are unhappy in a relationship but stay in it too long because you think it's safe, or you long for a promotion but won't speak up in the meeting because you fear the reaction. It's when you know that you need to make a change, but you resist taking action because

it feels like there is so much unknown — and the unknown is scary. Dealing with uncertainty means finding comfort in the unknown.

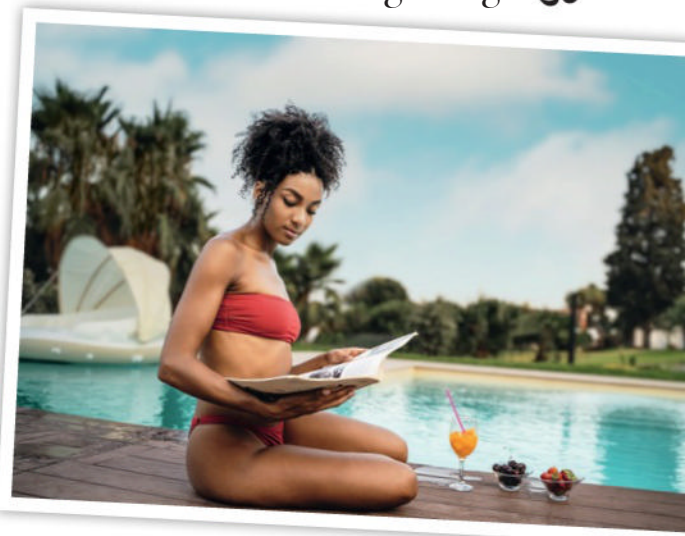
In times of uncertainty, we are most often worrying about something in the future that hasn't happened yet. It's as though we want to reduce the unknown so much that even thinking about the worst-case scenario (which can be easier to believe) feels less scary than accepting the complete unknown or thinking about the best-case scenario and risk being disappointed.

To change how you're feeling during times of uncertainty, you first need to bring yourself into the present moment and accept where you are now. This deep level of acceptance will connect you to your true self who is not worrying, fearful or doubting themselves. Your true self is happy and at peace and this is when you feel most empowered. ॐ

*For more tips and advice on being true to yourself, follow Lydia Kimmerling (aka The Happiness Explorer) on Instagram @lydiakimmerling and drop her a message to say hi and that you read this column today.*

# Summer holiday snaps

Where are you going for your summer hols? Take a copy of OM with you, take a pic, and share it with us on Instagram



**O**ur lovely readers are awesome — and we want to see more of them! Whatever your plans this summer, take a copy of OM magazine with you on your travels, take a quick photo, and share it with us on Instagram — and be sure to tag us @omyogamagazine

We'd love to know where you are in the world and what you're up to this summer! If you're jetting off to Japan, or somewhere else amazing, then be sure to pack your copy of OM in your bag. We want you to fly the yoga flag all across the world.

If you find yourself high up the Empire State Building in New York, or the Eiffel

Tower in Paris, get that photo with OM magazine and share it with everyone.

Even if you're spending this summer at home, then we want to see your amazing photos too. From London's great parks to Britain's incredible National Parks, the UK is as photogenic as anywhere else on this precious little planet of ours.

If you're spending most of your summertime enjoying the sunshine in the back garden or just tending to your plants on the balcony then why not share that too?

There is magic in all things. With yoga, every single day can be an unforgettable journey, there's really no need to travel

to find the joy within.

No need for fancy poses either: just send in your photos of your good ol' self with a copy of OM magazine and let the world know that the spirit of yoga is everywhere and all around us.

Community is one of the greatest things a yoga practice can give us, so let's tell the world and connect during this once-in-a-lifetime super summer of 2023.

Share your photos and tag us on Instagram @omyogamagazine

## Paani® Bottle: Elevate Your Hydration



Introducing the extraordinary Paani® Bottle – a water bottle that goes beyond the ordinary. Crafted from pure copper, this bottle not only carries the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda but also boasts the support of scientific studies. Backed by rigorous testing, it has been proven to eliminate an incredible 99.9% of bacteria, ensuring your water remains germ-free. Based in the UK and shipping worldwide, Paani® Bottles offers more than just safety compared to plastic or steel alternatives; they provide scientifically confirmed health benefits as well. It's time to rethink the way you hydrate and make the switch to Paani®. Available now.

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@paani



# Living the teachings — understanding yoga's everyday spiritual meanings



## GROUNDING

**G**rounding means connecting with the earth, both physically and spiritually. It is quite usual to start a yoga class focusing on being grounded.

Essentially, grounding is about leaving behind the daily pressures of life and connecting to the present moment using our senses and our breath. It invites us to notice what is happening inside of our physical bodies and to gain new insights by listening in this way.

Grounding helps us to feel calmer and more balanced and can help in reducing feelings of anxiety, as well as reducing pain and inflammation in the body.

Think of a tree with roots reaching deep into the earth — when we feel grounded, we too can grow and live from a place of stability. Just like a tree, when we are grounded we feel solid, strong and well balanced.

Emotionally, grounding for a few minutes at the beginning of class gives us permission to leave the external world at the door, to settle mentally and to 'fully arrive' before asana practice commences. Connecting to the present moment in this way also encourages physical relaxation and releases some of the superficial tension in the muscles, fascia and joints, or other things that we may have arrived to class with.

Yoga is a barefoot practice and part of the reason we do it in this way is because this supports a feeling of emotional and spiritual grounding.

Eastern philosophy states that our vital energy (also known as our 'prana' or 'chi') will increase when our feet are able to absorb energy directly from the ground beneath us.

Chinese medicine places great emphasis on the bottom of our feet where energy meridians and acupressure points are

located. Practicing barefoot certainly provides a richer sensory experience as well as improving our technique.

A lovely thing to do is walk or practice yoga barefoot in nature; grounding in this way enhances the whole sensory experience. Research also demonstrates that connecting with nature in this way can reduce emotional stress, physical pain and encourage a better night's sleep.

To be grounded is to keep returning to the present moment, something that many of us find incredibly difficult. If we can keep 'coming back' during our practice to this feeling of being grounded then we will feel that the ground beneath our feet is more solid and reassuring, rather than being lost at sea, where many of us spend much of our day-to-day lives. ॐ

*Sue Pugh is a yoga teacher and the founder of [vitabonayoga.com](http://vitabonayoga.com) and [yogainspecialplaces.com](http://yogainspecialplaces.com)*



# The mind-heart-body connection

The importance of mental wellness for a healthy heart and brain: six easy lifestyle tips



**R**esearch shows anxiety, stress and depression can have a negative impact on physical health and may even increase the risk for heart disease and stroke.

In fact, the American Heart Association identified a strong interconnection between the mind, heart and body in its scientific statement, Psychological Health, Wellbeing and the Mind-Heart-Body Connection.

“The body’s biological reaction to stress, anxiety and other types of poor mental health can manifest physically through an irregular heart rate or rhythm, increased blood pressure and inflammation throughout the body,” said volunteer chair of the statement writing committee Glenn N. Levine, M.D., FAHA, master clinician and professor of medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and chief of the cardiology section at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center.

“Negative psychological health is also associated with health behaviours that are linked to an increased risk for heart disease and stroke, such as smoking, lower levels of physical activity, unhealthy diet, being overweight and not taking medications as prescribed.”

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, Levine added, all affecting how we think, feel and act. “It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Practicing mindfulness in all forms allows one to be more aware of, and have more control over, emotional responses to the experiences of daily life.”

Here are six tips to improve your mind-heart-body connection:

## 1. Practice meditation regularly

Even simple actions such as communing with nature or sitting quietly and

focusing on your breath can have a positive impact.

## 2. Get plenty of good, restful sleep

Set a regular bedtime, turn off or dim electronics as bedtime approaches and form a wake-up routine.

## 3. Make connections and stay in touch

Reach out and connect regularly with family and friends, or engage in activities to meet new people.

## 4. Practice mindful movement


There are many types of gentle mindful practices like yoga and Tai chi that can be done anywhere with no special equipment to help ease your soul and muscles.

## 5. Spend time with your furry friend

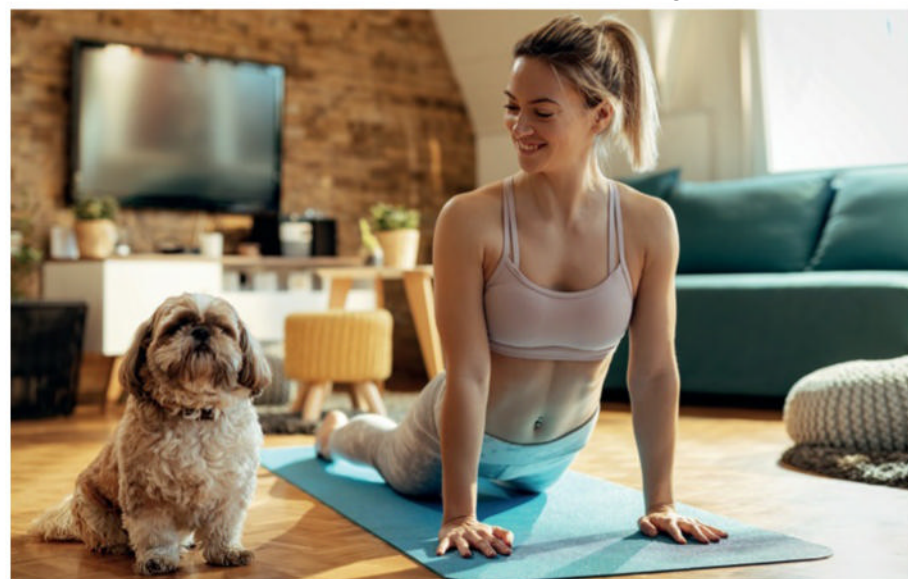
Companion animals are often beloved members of the family and research shows pets may help reduce physiological reactions to stress as well as support improved physical activity.

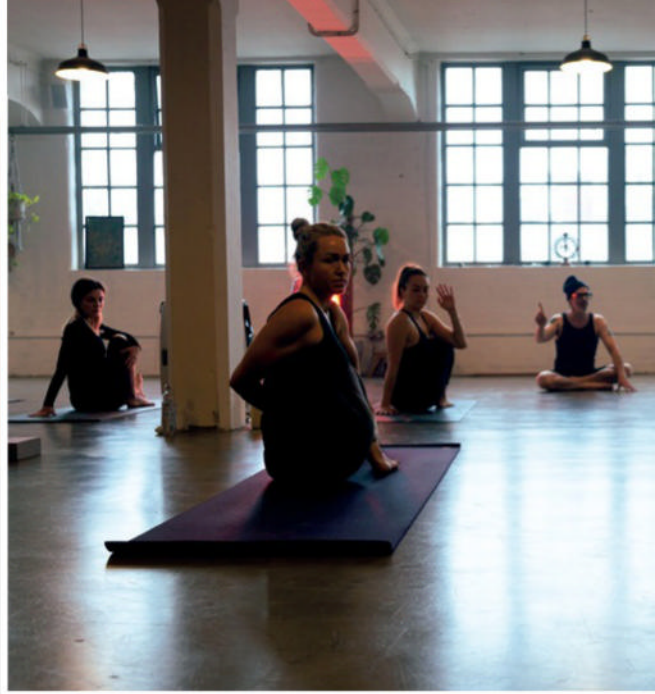
## 6. Work it out

Regular physical activity – a recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity or a mix of both weekly – can help relieve tension, anxiety and depression, and give you an immediate exercise ‘high’.

“Wellness is more than simply the absence of disease,” Levine said. “It is an active process directed toward a healthier, happier and more fulfilling life. When we strive to reduce negative aspects of psychological health, we are promoting an overall positive and healthy state of being.” 

*Learn more about the importance of heart health at [heart.org](http://heart.org)*





# Amazing SPACES

## YOGA MCR

Yoga MCR (Space at the Mill Studio)  
2nd floor, Wellington Mill, Duke Street,  
Manchester M3 4NF

[yoga-manchester.co.uk](http://yoga-manchester.co.uk)

Set right in the heart of Manchester, you'll find daily yoga classes for every body hosted by world-renowned yoga teacher and former DJ extraordinaire, Matt Ryan. Yoga MCR is a new studio recently opened by the former sound guru, who used to run the decks at the city's infamous Hacienda Club. While the notorious

dance venue is sadly no more, Ryan has been teaching and practicing yoga around the world for the past 20-plus years. He's now returned to his home city Manchester for his latest venture, Yoga MCR. The studio is an amazing space that's perfect for yoga and is based in an old mill in the Castlefield area of the



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city centre. It offers classes and a friendly hub that is accessible to all — everyone is welcome here no matter what your yoga background (or lack of), age or body shape. Come along and experience the transformational power of its unique classes, Yoga 45 and Yoga 60. These comprise of a flowing aerobic sequence

of standing and seated postures that will help to build strength, flexibility and balance. The sessions will also help to combat the stresses and strains of modern-day living, leaving you refreshed and energised, ready for the rest of the day. When in Manchester, do what the locals do — head to Yoga MCR. ॐ



**Handbook For Today**  
 Your wellbeing and personal growth journal. Handbook for Today is a luxury hardbound journal that provides you with prompted daily gratitude journaling, tick-lists of positive daily micro-habits, weekly reflection pages for personal growth and science-backed positive psychology techniques. Be happier, re-wire your brain into a more positive way of thinking, become mentally stronger and grow into the person you really want to be. This beautiful little handbook will be your companion along the way.  
**£27.99**  
[handbookfortoday.com](http://handbookfortoday.com)

om  
 loves  
 Beautiful things for beautiful people



**Ira Active Top White**  
 Ira Active Top White from Studio Éhr. Double-layered, a smooth finished racer-inspired crop top that can be worn for yoga or any sporty activity, as well as swimming, surfing... and the street! Crafted from a sustainable recycled techno-fabric made of Econyl regenerated nylon, quick-drying stretch fabric in smooth white finish.  
**£115**  
[studioehr.com](http://studioehr.com)



**Weleda Shower Gel**  
 One for the boys, Weleda's Active Fresh Invigorating Shower Gel will transform your shower! The energising fragrance of organic rosemary and zesty litsea cubeba will leave you feeling invigorated and refreshed, and is ideal for a morning mood-boost, or as a revitalising pick-me-up after a strenuous day or workout.  
**£8.25**  
[weleda.co.uk](http://weleda.co.uk)



**My Personal Space Mist**  
 Protect yourself in a rose scented bubble. If you are often overwhelmed by other people's energy, have trouble maintaining clear boundaries and find it difficult to concentrate in yoga classes Saskia's My Personal Space Mist can be a godsend. In gorgeous Somerset rosewater, this award-winning mist contains powerful flower essences to help maintain your boundaries with inner confidence.  
**£12 (+£3.90p&p)**  
[saskiasfloweressences.com](http://saskiasfloweressences.com)



**Rise & Align Tank Tops**

Rise & Align is a small US yoga apparel firm founded by former Peace Corps volunteer, Cat Thomas, who's on a mission to give back — a percentage of sales are given to organisations that support young women with access to education. Featuring original designs and hand printed in a home studio, Rise & Align tank tops look great and are made from a super soft cotton blend that's perfect for yoga, hiking, musical festivals or anything else you're planning this summer. Support the little guys! Find them on Etsy too.

**£25**  
[weriseandalign.com](http://weriseandalign.com)

**Kin Yoga Leggings**  
 The folks over at Kin Yoga Mats have just launched their first ever yoga leggings. Comfy cotton touch, smooth supple flow, these ankle-length black leggings are flattering for all skin tones and body types. They feature a high waist and firm support and are made from a cotton blend that feels soft and cosy but wicks away sweat, without that cheap shiny polyester finish! The premium essential legging for flowing, moving, sweating, or just cosy living.  
**£48**  
[kinyogamats.com](http://kinyogamats.com)



**AromAI Harmony Breeze Candle**  
 Who needs humans these days? AromAI has announced the launch of its first candle, Harmony Breeze, designed entirely by AI. In a move to push the boundaries of what artificial intelligence can achieve, the company has created this luxurious, plant-based candle that has impressed industry perfumers and scent enthusiasts alike. Made in England with 100% soy wax for a cleaner, longer-lasting burn, and hand-poured by skilled artisans (who playfully refer to themselves as 'human puppets'), ensuring the highest quality and attention to detail — yes, humans are still needed after all!  
**£27**  
[aromai.co.uk](http://aromai.co.uk)



**Edeniste Eau De Parfum**  
 Stress-busting perfumes from Edeniste. Introducing the first generation of active wellbeing fragrances which offer scents that have been tested physiologically and proven to boost emotional wellbeing. Pioneering perfume company Edeniste works with leading neuroscientists from around the world at the cutting edge of olfactory research to create beautiful fragrances proven to boost your mood. Carry the bliss around with you and spread calm vibes wherever you go.  
**From £68**  
[edeniste.com](http://edeniste.com)



# Planet yoga

Stories from around the weird and wonderful world of yoga



## USA: Meditate like Yoda

Think meditation is boring or just something that's not quite for you? Jedi Master Yoda would strongly suggest otherwise. Small in size, but wise and powerful, this mysterious little green character appeared again at cinemas recently with the 40th anniversary of Return of the Jedi, the third film in the original Star Wars trilogy. Often seen deep in calm, meditative thought and quiet contemplation, Yoda has become one of the most popular characters in the Star Wars universe. Further proof that the meditative mind works! Be more like Yoda.

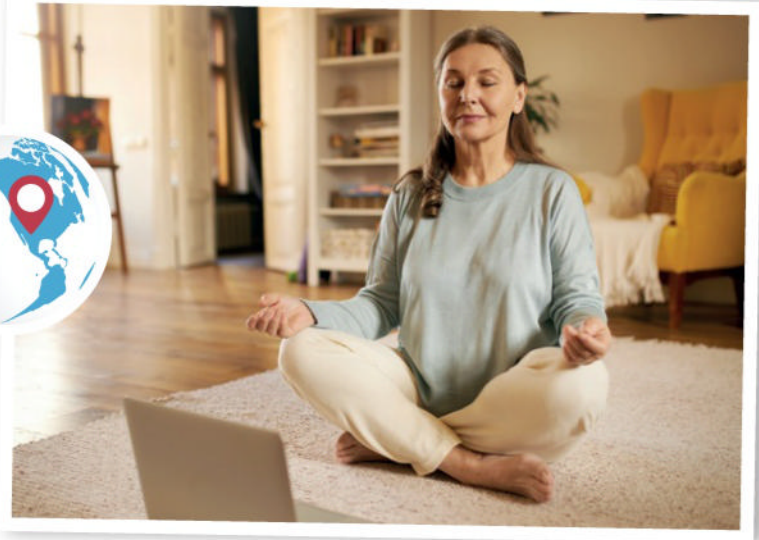
## UK: Staying power

Yoga and running can help men perform better in bed, according to research reported recently in The Daily Mail. The work, led by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), looked only at men who suffer from premature ejaculation. Going for a run for at 30 minutes a day, five times a week, could help guys last two and a half minutes longer, according to a study looked at in the review. It also found that yoga could add 30 seconds to their staying power, other evidence suggests. "We need more research in this area, but approaches like physical activity could help all men," said Lee Smith, professor of public health at ARU, and senior author of the review.



**USA: Ageing gracefully**

Yoga is good for longevity: it's official. The Harvard Gazette reported on research that found yoga may improve known predictors of longevity, such as walking speed and leg strength. The poses, breathing and meditation exercises have been shown before to improve balance, mobility, and mental wellbeing in older adults. And it's never too late to start. "It may be helpful to get involved... at a younger age, but...we still saw clinically meaningful results in an older population. It's never too late to start a yoga practice," it quoted researcher Julia Loewenthal as saying.



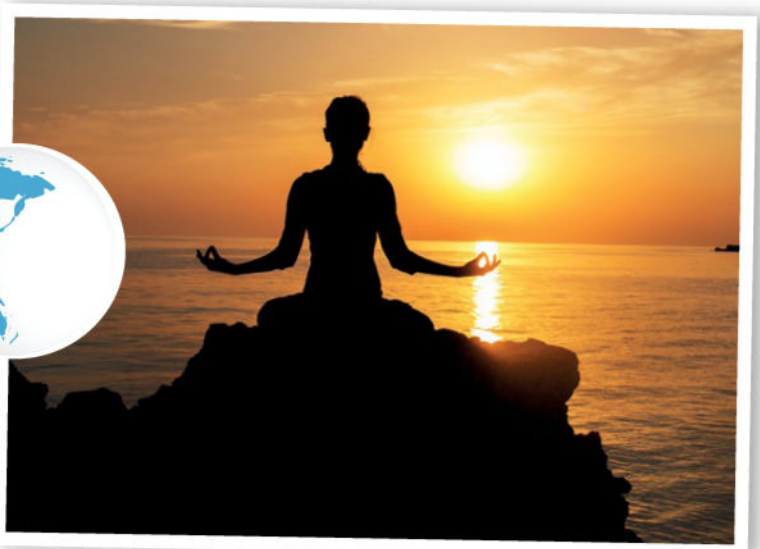
**UK: Tottenham Hot-Spa**

Tottenham Hotspur are looking to step up their game — in yoga. The Premier League club is recruiting a wellbeing guru to guide players in soothing wellness activities after games, including yoga sessions, art classes and even poetry readings. "The club is seeking a health & wellbeing lead to develop the health and wellbeing services across the club," it posted in an ad, reported by The Sun newspaper. The new guru will work with other fitness professionals at the club to develop a complete wellness offer for the men's first team and other levels including the junior ranks.



**India: Simplify your life**

Yoga can simplify the complexities of life, that's according to Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra. "In such a time when the mind wanders in the blind race of materialism, yoga is very important for mental peace," he said, addressing a yoga gathering in his home state. "If time is spared for yoga, the complexities of life can be simplified," he was reported as saying by Indian press. He also said that just 20 minutes of meditation can be equivalent to around four hours of sleep, referring to a research study. The message: do yoga!





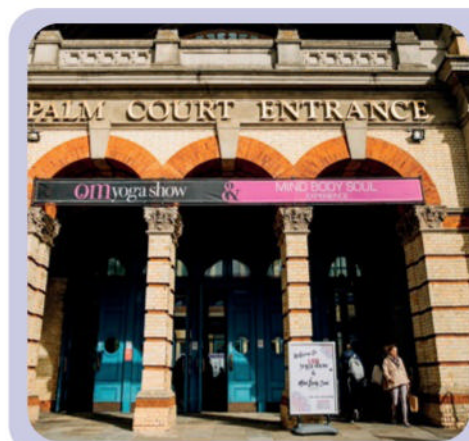
**OM YOGA SHOW**  
**13th, 14th & 15th**  
**October 2023**  
Alexandra Palace, London  
[omyogashow.com](http://omyogashow.com)

# OM Yoga Show 2023

The OM Yoga Show is getting closer! If you haven't booked tickets to Europe's biggest yoga fest yet, then now's the time. Our big yoga weekend takes place on 13th-15th October at London's iconic Alexandra Palace. It's a celebration of all things yoga and is accessible to all. Here's a flavour of some of the things you can expect to see.

One of the best things about the OM Yoga Show is its sheer diversity. Just as OM magazine seeks to make the practice accessible to all, the London event is designed and intended to attract as many people as possible, from all backgrounds, to experience the power of yoga. You'll find all styles and disciplines on offer, with a class or

workshop to suit everyone, whatever your interests, ability levels or experience. There's an international flavour to the show as well, with teachers, students exhibitors and participants arriving from all across the world, from India to Italy, from the USA to Japan. All are invited! Spice up your yoga practice — and your life — with a visit to the OM Yoga Show this year.



## Get your tickets

Book your entrance tickets now to the OM Yoga Show and save money\*

- 1 Day Ticket: £20 £15
- 2 Day Ticket: £36 £27
- 3 Day Ticket: £48 £36

Children under 16 (accompanied by a paying adult) are **FREE**  
**Buy your tickets now at: [omyogashow.com](http://omyogashow.com)**

### WORKSHOP TICKETS

All workshop tickets on general sale now





# Within Yoga

Enjoy the Within Yoga experience at the OM Yoga Show with founders Joaquin Gomez and Sarah Grogan

**Y**oga changed Sarah Grogan and Joaquin Gomez's lives for the better. It gave them the tools for self-exploration, self-expression, and self-acceptance. Through yoga, they realised that we are the architects of our own journeys; we already have all we need within us to grow, heal, and thrive.

Grogan found yoga while on a wellness retreat she attended to escape the city. She fell in love instantly and shortly after embarked on a yoga teacher training, half in London, half in India. As she progressed through the course, she realised she wanted to leave a 10-year career as a stockbroker to pursue life as a yoga teacher. She wanted to inspire others through yoga as she had been inspired.

Gomez had always been connected with movement; as a child he loved athletics and managed to compete nationally in Spain doing 400m/h and

long jump. He found yoga in his early 20s and decided to dive deep into the practice, following his instinct of going to Nepal. After finishing his first teacher training, he realised his passion was to share the practice of yoga with the world.

The pair met through working together at a studio in London. They quickly became friends, started attending each other's classes, and got to know each other's yoga communities. When it flows it grows! They realised they had the same passion to share the practice of yoga and how they would do it was completely in alignment. Both share very similar values and come from very similar lineages of yoga and they each bring their own unique style and experiences. This was the genesis of Within Yoga.

*Discover more about Within Yoga at: [within.yoga](http://within.yoga)*

## CHECK OUT THESE AMAZING WORKSHOPS

### ARM BALANCE WORKSHOP WITH JOAQUIN GOMEZ

Movement is our nature and balancing is an inherent art. Just like a child needs time and practice until they can stand on two legs, we all require practice to be able to balance on our arms. There are many theories and concepts on how to balance, but just like that kid learning how to stand, arm balancing is achieved with isolation, implementation, and exploration. In this workshop, you will cover some fundamental aspects of arm balancing, and work with drills and flows to help you 'float' with confidence. This class is aimed at all levels but is not recommended for complete beginners.

**Saturday 14th October 2023: 11.45 - 13.15**

### WITHIN YOGA MASTERCLASS WITH SARAH GROGAN & JOAQUIN GOMEZ

The Within Yoga system created by Sarah Grogan and Joa Gomez encourages you to go deeper into your yoga practice. This practice embraces the powers of change, exploration and adaptation that come through intense but accessible practice. This system will help you build a strong foundation, give you the tools to move forward in your yoga journey, and the inspiration to try new things.

**Sunday 15th October 2023: 11.45 - 13.15**



Photo: inherimagephoto.com

OM meets...

# MELLARA GOLD

Mellara Gold is one of the many inspirational teachers you can practice with at the OM Yoga Show this year. A native to Australia, she moved to Los Angeles as a teenager to pursue her dream of acting before discovering yoga. She's now been teaching for over two decades and can't wait to share her insight and energy in London in October

### How did you first get started in yoga?

At 17, I was diagnosed with five bulging discs and knew I had to find a way to heal myself. I was a teen trying to be an actress living in LA and had just graduated from high school in my native Australia. This diagnosis was the external circumstance that brought me kicking and screaming to yoga. I didn't like my first classes; it was painful, kind of boring, slow and not me. Yet the universe had other plans and it didn't take long before I fell in love with this ancient practice. Also, I know now I wasn't settled within until I began to include the teachings of yoga and meditation into my whole life. Only then did I begin to heal my whole self, my body, mind, and spirit. This is the journey toward a life worth living that I share in my book, *A Life Worth Living: A Journey Of Self-Discovery*, through Mindfulness, Yoga and Living In Awareness.

### Can you tell us more about your healing journey?

Throughout my younger years I had been harsh on my body, not listening to what it needed, pushing its limits, and as a result, creating pain. When the pain was triggered by an emotion, I'd be tough on myself, restricting my food intake and reinforcing messages that I'm not good enough, which only worsened it. I was a conspirator in my own self-destruction, unable to feel gratitude for all that my body gives me. I could only see what it wasn't able to do, and it hurt.

I'm not as harsh on my body today as I was back then, but I still have moments where I have to consciously find what is working well in my body and focus on that. It has taken me years, even decades, to get where I am now and with each day I am realising that to love my body is to meet my body where it is. Now, when my back injury flares up, I slow down, observe my breathing, and visualise sending healing waves of peace throughout my body. Some of my physical injuries I believe are connected to old thoughts that I have perceived as true and sometimes they can be triggered in the present moment. When this happens I try to be aware of it and if possible where the root of the triggering is coming from.

### Who or what inspired you in those early days?

I studied Hatha, Viniyoga, Iyengar, and Ashtanga with Steven Freedman, Steve Walther, Diana Beardsley, Marla Apt, Paul Cabanis, and Frank White, all highly skilled. A few years later, I continued my training with Erich Schiffmann and Saul David Raye, and established a private and a studio practice in Southern California's Westlake Village area. Teaching yoga contributed greatly to my self-



Photo: intherimagephoto.com

healing, and I've been able to light a spark in others for their healing too. I'm forever grateful for the pain I've had to endure, as it helps bring me to the truth of who I am and how actions have consequences. This injury and compassionate inquiry will probably be with me the rest of my life.

### What differences have you seen in your practice over the years?

It is, and has been, a gift to move in these beautifully-crafted positions and quiet the chatter of my mind. Areas that had been blocked, tight, or injured become more open where I feel a true embodiment within. I had a glimpse of this feeling in the beginning and yet today it feels even deeper, like my practice seems to be in a continuous loop of growth and healing. Exhales felt like bridges connecting my body, mind, and heart with my breath. It's like entering the heartbeat of the mother: in the deep quiet, I can feel her soothing me. I embraced a oneness within myself and with all beings I can only describe it as pure love; the biggest hug from the most beautiful being in the cosmos. With yoga, I have the patience and resources to tackle whatever comes up, including the recurrent pain in my back. Today I would tell that young woman in pain: "You'll manage. You'll move through this, and it won't be as consuming as it feels today."

### What are the main styles of yoga you practice and teach?

I love teaching and being a student of Hatha

yoga, and I feel a respectful remembrance to all of my teachers through the ways in which I have been taught by them and can sometimes feel their energy in the room. Throughout the week I primarily teach a slow, hot, yet gentle flow class in a mindful way. I read the energy of the room, which is something I didn't consciously do so much as a newer teacher in my 20s and 30s. I sometimes have an idea of a theme that I would like to share, yet usually I remind my students that it is they who are the ones bringing the theme into the room as we co-create a space for healing through asanas, breathwork and meditation. Like any of us humans, folks come in with all sorts of emotions they might be processing, energetic holdings, or physical aches and pains. So I feel it's important to acknowledge that by validating their experience by creating 'in the moment' and changing the course of the class if need be. Just last week I noticed so many tight hamstrings, and it really wasn't as apparent until we were about 25 minutes in. So we took a little detour from the vinyasa flow and laid down on our backs with a strap to mindfully open up the back of the legs while observing our breath. We were back in our flow in no time and I found it healing for us to stop and be open to change, just by pausing and being thoughtful as to the why. I also include yoga nidra in my retreats and am grateful to have learned this ancient practice from Channa Dassanayaka. In the end, I feel like I give my students what I have learnt — and



Photo: Emille Biers Photography

## Meet Mellara Gold at the OM Yoga Show

### What can people expect from your classes at the OM Yoga Show?

Lots of inspiration, love and deep feeling as we flow gently inside to our own inner landscape and truth all while creating asanas together.

### Any messages to readers who have not been to the show before?

Well, just being in the energy of so many like minds and hearts is going to be electric. And I bet it might have the opportunity to spark a light inside that can only support us in feeling good in our body, balanced in our mind, and love inside our open heart.

yoga. When we do this, the same reactions to things just don't come up; we almost rewire our whole thinking into living our yoga from the home within each one of us and out into the world and into our life.

### How has yoga helped you see yourself, your body, and your life over the years?

It has helped me to understand that all of me is loveable. I was in pain for a lot of my life, but I wasn't aware of the connection between the emotional and physical constrictions or how they have both been messengers of a deeper message. So, these pains continued appearing in new disguises. When I touched the wound of not having much emotional support, nurturing and compassion from my mum or dad, I would blame my partner (at the time) for not giving me enough attention. When I received rejection after rejection trying out for movie roles as a teen and into my 20s when I was acting in Hollywood, I thought it was something about me — my blonde hair or I was too tall or didn't have enough sass. I didn't have a foundation of self-confidence to see that blaming myself or others was off the mark, that I had deep wounds crying for my attention, that Hollywood producers had their specific needs for filling specific roles, or my boyfriends had their own needs too. It wasn't just about me and what I'd done wrong. Not understanding, I'd just get depressed, berate myself, and feel excruciating pain in my lower back. I wasn't connected to my body or heart, and I paid the price. In addition to back pain, I'd get headaches, have sluggish energy, and my heart felt heavy. I remember feeling old in a young body. When I'd tell this to my friends, they didn't know how to help. Yoga practice was my one refuge. In class, I'd be in my body for an hour and a half, and it was transformative. With each difficulty in my life

am still learning — and through my own self-discovery, acceptance and mindfulness, I become a safe haven not only for them, but for myself.

### How do you feel when you practice compared to when you haven't been on your mat?

There is a disconnection of the wholeness of who I am; mind, body and soul. It's almost like without being able to practice, on and off the mat, my mind and false ego has more of an opportunity to run the show. So without some kind of consistent asana, walking meditation and present moment awareness practice, life can feel disconnected and even uninteresting.

### Do you think anyone, at any age or ability, can enjoy the benefits of yoga?

Yes, I do, but only if it is something the individual is being called to experience. There are so many ways and paths that can connect us to our true nature and for some it is taking walks, or playing with their grandchildren, or listening to music that inspires them. Yoga is magic to those who feel it to be and to others it just might not make any sense to them in their life.

### What does yoga mean to you personally?

Yoga has changed what it means to me personally through the years. Today, I feel like we're slowly stepping into a new paradigm, moving away from a patriarchal power and toward a realisation that the power was always within each of us all along. I haven't always felt this and went on an inner journey of a lifetime by giving away my power, possibly because I didn't feel ready to hold what I knew to be true, perhaps because I didn't believe in myself. I feel that a lot of us do this in our jobs, in our relationships, and yet I know now that no outer manifestation that we might give our power to can be the all-knowing of us. It is only our inner sovereignty and heart that is our truest yoga and anchor. Although we heal in community, we are our own best teacher, healer and life guide. Yoga teachers, influencers and healers can point us to the direction of 'home' inside us, yet essentially it is the individual that has the truest connection to source energy, and that we have never been separated from it. Who I am, and who we are, is a living, breathing life form where coming from our own inner authority with self-compassion feels like true

yoga has helped me learn and grow. When I gently hold the voices that are in conflict, resolution can come. Being quiet for a while practicing yoga allows me to feel a deep connection to my intuitive intelligence and to make decisions from this place. I feel this inner knowing in my body. It's not a thought, yet words may come in to guide me, and the more I trust my feelings and sensations, the more clearly I see where I need to be and how things need to go in the moment.

**Do you have moments that you feel you are truly 'in the flow' and 'truly alive' - how can we achieve this state?**

There are moments throughout the day when I truly feel in the flow and truly alive. I think it is mostly when I am practicing mindfulness in the mundaneness of life, with a grateful and humble heart. Like washing the dishes, and truly being there with the grease or food coming off the plate, folding the laundry while feeling the sun coming through the window, or something way less mundane like making love to my husband. I truly feel alive when I am teaching yoga and am in the zone where nothing could distract me from this place, and we (the students and I) are all so connected to our inner life that a spirit-filled energy permeates through every cell of my being.

**What do you believe is your true calling in life?**

I think my purpose in life is to show up fully inside the life I am co-creating with the universe. That probably sounds very woo woo...yet woo woo works for me, if we want to call it that! It means to be grounded in my 'beingness' even though any real-life human emotions, frustrations, rage, boredom and unworthiness that can sometimes make visits. It also feels to be my calling to experience all the joys in life. And how we treat ourselves and those around us probably is our truest legacy. So I think my calling is something much less



Photo: inherimagephoto.com

grandeur and more of a moment-to-moment practice of being present. That being said I also feel I have a gift in being with folks on a private one-on-one basis. I continue to offer spiritual and mindfulness counselling, meditation coaching, and yoga with yogic breathing practices. I know that when I show up fully in my life a magical feeling touches my heart. Yet life isn't always an easy dance, as life is going to do what life is going to do. And I know now that I don't necessarily need to put myself in a cave or temple to become more peaceful, as there is simply enough juice for conflict, heartache, and heart opening right in the family that we have chosen to learn more about ourselves. I almost feel as if the hardest yoga I ever do is in the raising of my children and the nurturing of my relationships.

**How do you raise your own vibration?**

Creating, tending to myself and my home, cooking, yoga, meditating, drinking a latte, walking, laughing with my hubby and children and swimming in the ocean.


**What do you love to do when you are not practicing yoga?**

Being out in nature, watching my son Charlie play basketball, grabbing something to eat with my daughter and then going shopping, and simply going on a date night with my husband.

**What are some of your self-care practices?**

Hermit-ing or retreating to my home yoga space, Thai massage, acupuncture, going to a local yoga class, laying down in meditation at our local Salt Cave, lighting incense while saying some intentions or prayers in my own words, going to the movies with my kids and husband, shopping with my teen daughter, walking on the beach and just being kinder to myself and others.

**What are your plans for the future?**

To cultivate more inner freedom. To love and to be loved while continuing to live, share and serve my community from this energy. My forgiveness practice is something that continues to serve me too, so I hope to always remember to drop into it when life gets busy or overwhelming. I also love being a mum to my teens, Leela and Charlie, so watching them grow, learn and open themselves up to being all that they would like to be is so exciting and rewarding. 

*Mellara Gold is the author of the new book Living in Awareness: Deepening Our Daily Lives Through Prayers, Rituals, and Meditations and teaches yoga retreats worldwide. For details visit: [mellara.com](http://mellara.com)*



Photo: inherimagephoto.com

**QUICK Q&A**

**Favourite yoga, spiritual or self-improvement book?**

A Path With Heart – by Jack Kornfield

**Go-to health food or drink?**

Barley Life – Barley Leaf juice powder by AIM

**Holistic remedy you swear by?**

Acupuncture

**Favourite quote?**

“What you seek is seeking you” - Rumi. Although this quote means different things to different people it reminds me to simply show up to life with an open heart rather than push or react. I used to do all of that before I knew who I really was. In reading Rumi's words it allows me to feel more gentle with myself as I connect with the energy inside me. When I do this I feel much more peaceful and feel a real knowing sensation throughout my body, that might translate in words like 'your vibe attracts your tribe'.

**If you could take a class as a student with any teacher from anywhere and from any period of time who would it be with and why?**

So many! Anandamayi Ma. Why? Mostly because she must have been so incredible to be around and so before her time. She was a contemporary of well-known Hindu saints like Paramahansa Yogananda and Neem Karoli Baba (the guru of the late spiritual teacher Ram Dass). A central theme of her teaching is the supreme calling of every human being to aspire to self-realisation; all other obligations were secondary in her eyes. What I love is that she welcomed and conversed with devotees of different paths and religions such as tantric, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism. She also advocated spiritual equality for women; for example, she opened up to women the sacred thread ritual, which has only been performed by men for centuries. It would have been a dream to sit with her and experience her style of teaching including jokes, songs and instructions on everyday life along with silent meditation. Her name means 'Joy-Permeated Mother'.



A **360°** overview of...  
Crow Pose (Kakasana)  
**With Dr Kiki Morriss**

**Crow Pose**

Crow Pose is an advanced arm balance that requires strength, balance and alignment. At first it is a challenging pose, but learning it is like riding a bicycle. Once you know how to do it you will never forget! So keep practicing and persevering, and as you balance in the pose imagine a crow perching in a tree.

**CROW POSE (KAKASANA)**

**KAKA = CROW ASANA = POSTURE**

**MOVING INTO THE POSE**

- From a squatting position, place your hands shoulder-width apart in front of your feet.
- Bend your knees and elbows to the sides.
- Come onto the balls of your feet.
- Firmly press your knees on your upper arms.
- Tilt your torso forwards so your elbows align over your wrists.
- Gradually lift your feet and bring your big toes to touch in the balance.

**FOCUS YOUR GAZE**

- Your focal point (drishti) is at a fixed point on the ground in front of you. Do not look directly down on the ground and keep your head lifted.

**HIPS & LEGS**

- Use your psoas, adductors longus and brevis and gluteus minimus to flex your hips.
- Use your adductor muscles to squeeze your thighs towards your outer arms.
- Engage your hamstrings to bend your knees and to draw up your lower legs.

**ARMS & SHOULDERS**

- Engage your deltoid muscles to lift your body.

- Abduct your scapulae and press your hands down by engaging your serratus anterior and pectoralis major.

**FEET**

- Bring your feet together, so your big toes are touching.
- Keep your feet lifted.

**HANDS**

- Place your hands shoulder-width apart and spread your fingers wide apart.
- Use your pronator teres and quadratus and your wrist flexors to press your hands firmly onto the ground.
- Spread your weight evenly across your hands.

**BENEFITS**

- Strengthens your back, chest, hips, back of thighs and core.
- Stretches your buttocks and front of thighs.
- Improves balance.
- Focuses your mind.
- Inspires strength, stamina and confidence.

**VARIATIONS & MODIFICATIONS**

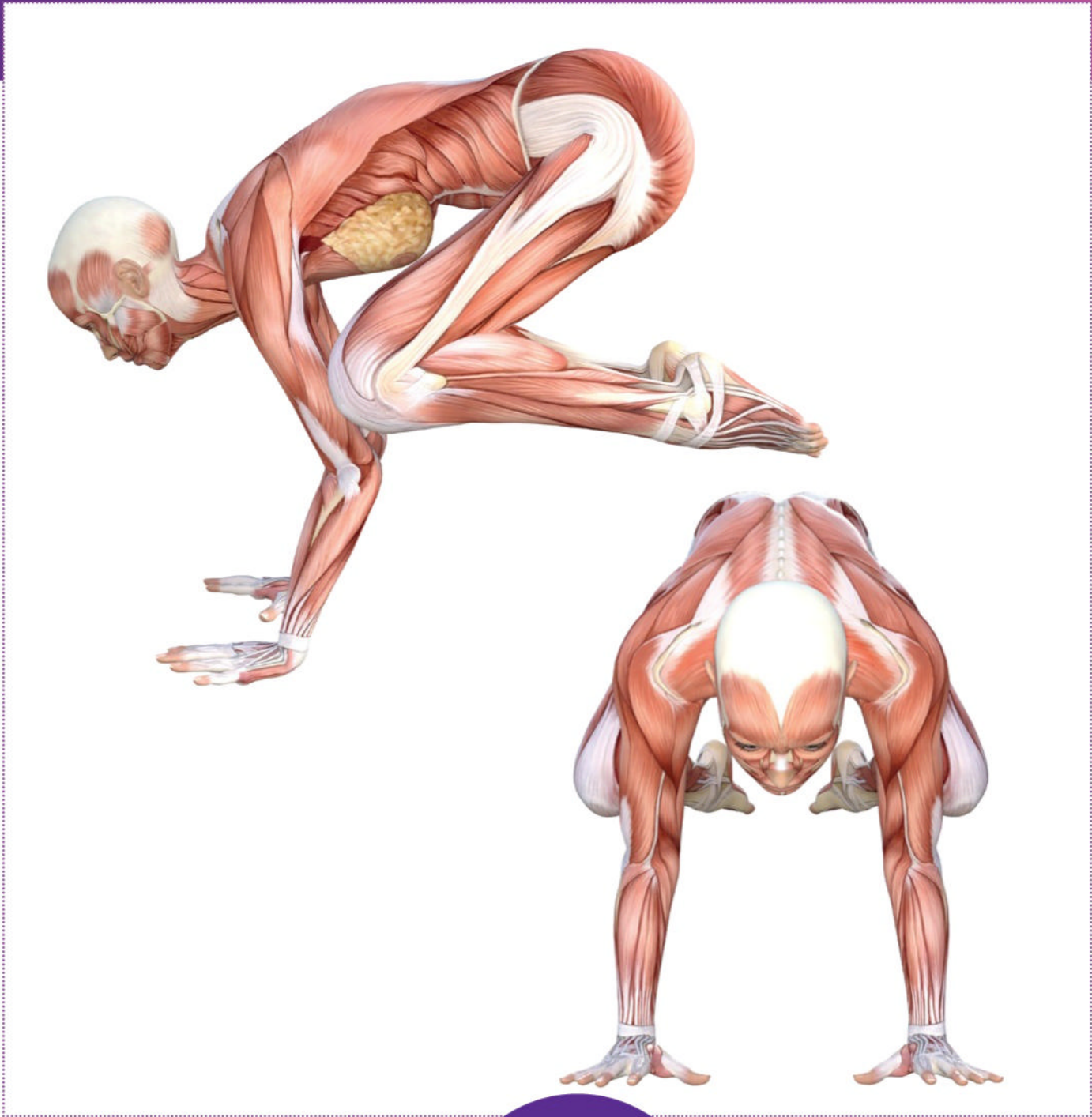
- Practice the pose slowly and patiently. Try lifting one foot up at a time as you feel your way into the pose. Work towards

lifting both feet together.

- A fear of falling is often an issue when practicing Crow Pose. If this is the case, place a cushion or folded blanket in front of you, so you have a soft landing if you do fall.
- Try reclining Crow Pose where you experience the shape of the pose whilst lying on your back.
- In Crow Pose your arms are bent and your knees are resting on your upper arms. For a similar position try Crane Pose (Bakasana) where your arms are straight and your knees are tucked closer to your underarms.
- From Crow Pose try moving into a Tripod Headstand by lowering the crown of your head onto the floor and then lifting your legs. To raise your head back into Crow Pose, lift your shoulders strongly and draw your trapezius muscles and shoulder blades down. At the same time stretch your upper arms up.

**CONTRAINDICATIONS**

- Avoid Crow pose if you have a wrist injury or issue.
- Avoid the pose if you suffer from dizziness or balance issues.
- Practice with caution if you have a back or hip injury.



To see previous 360° poses, become a member of OM Magazine today. Visit [ommagazine.com](http://ommagazine.com)

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*Doctor Kiki Morriss is a medical doctor, yoga teacher and author of 'Nurturing Your Family With Yoga'. Visit: [primrosehillyoga.com](http://primrosehillyoga.com) or Instagram @kiki.yoga*



# Happy hamstrings

A practice to stretch out your hamstrings and warm up your body. Although there seems to be a lot of focus on hamstring length in our yoga classes, we need to be careful not to overstretch them, but instead nourish and gently explore our range of movement. A great class for anyone who gets a little tight at the end of the day. **By Isabel Lankester**

Watch the mini session with Isabel Lankester on the OM website or app, brought to you in partnership with Isabel Lankester Yoga. Visit [isabellankesteryoga.com](http://isabellankesteryoga.com) for the full-length class, plus 100+ more on-demand and live stream classes.

We start our class on all fours, with the knees hip-width apart and the hands shoulder-width. Gently extend the right foot back, so the leg is straight back and you're resting on the ball of your foot. Lean forward and back into the hands to gently open up the right hamstring. After a few breaths, lower the right knee back into position and repeat on the left leg (image not shown). Here we are slowly warming up the wrists, applying pressure down the right and left side of the body to prepare for our standing practice.

Exhale start to tuck your toes, lift your knees up and gaze to the back of the mat in downward dog (adho mukha svanasana (IMAGES 1 & 2). When you are ready, lift the heels up and down, gently opening up the back of the legs. Listen to your intuition here: you might not be able to completely straighten your legs. Be patient as your body begins to stretch open. After a few moments on each leg, look



Image 1



Image 2

ahead and step forward to the top of your mat. Remain in a forward fold, inhale to Ardha Uttanasana (IMAGES 3 & 4), a half-way lift before releasing the spine completely in Uttanasana a deep forward fold (IMAGE 5). Take a pause here. Option to rest hands on blocks, finger tips on the floor — or as shown in the image, clasp the hands around the back of the ankles. After a few moments, inhale, press into your feet and raise your arms overhead, looking towards your thumbs in Urdhva Hastasana (upwards salute, image not shown). Exhale bring the hands back to your heart, begin to settle your breathing.

Inhale and reach your arms upwards to urdhva hastasana (upwards salute) (not shown), exhale as you forward fold to Uttanasana (standing forward bend) (IMAGE 5). Now heel-toe the feet hip-distance apart and start to thread the

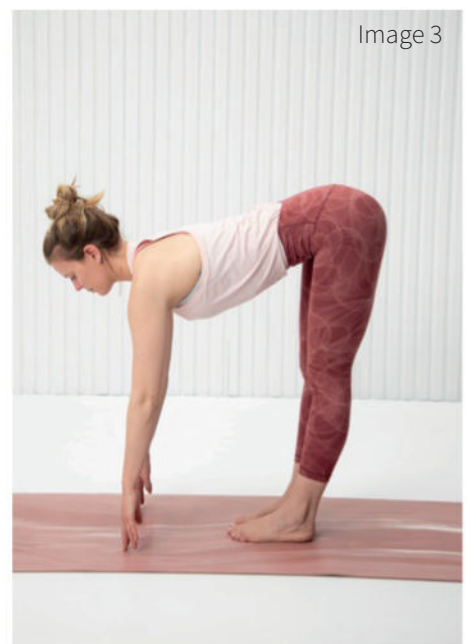


Image 3



hands underneath the feet to Padahasthasana (**IMAGE 6**). Option to use blocks in this deep forward fold. You can gently bend the knees, but feel like the hip points are reaching up as you tuck your chin into your chest.

When you're ready, release your hands and step back into plank (Phalakasana) (**IMAGE 7**) lowering down onto your knees, chest and chin. Slide onto your tummy and press into your hands. Inhale to baby cobra (Bhujangasana, image not shown). Exhale start to draw back into downward dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana) where you can walk out your legs by alternately bending your knees. This will further awaken the back of the legs. Notice how the back of the knees feel... does this differ to the back of your ankles? Notice where you feel the most tight: the glutes, upper leg or lower leg?

Image 4



Image 7



Image 5

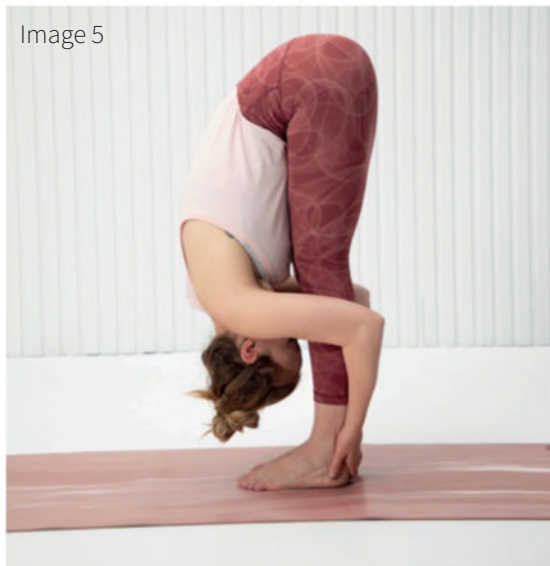


Image 6



When you're ready, reach your right leg up and back into a three-legged dog (Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana) (**IMAGE 8**). Flex the toes down here to further activate the back of the leg. This will also switch on the front of the thigh muscles. Step forward to the top of the mat, foot inbetween the hands, lower the back knee. Start to straighten the front leg into a half-split pose (Ardha Hanumanasana) (**IMAGE 9**). To bring the earth upwards towards you, use blocks under each hand. Even though you're stretching out the right hamstring, feel like you're lengthening over the leg, reaching forward with your spine and flexing the toes upwards.

After at least 10 breaths, keep the legs still, lean into your left hand and reach your right arm up into a twist. Feel like your spine is reaching up as you maintain the length on the right hamstring. Kneeling twist (image not shown). Exhale, release the pose and make your way back into downward dog.

At each opportunity of rest (like down dog) take a moment to check in with your legs, and the relationship between the leg muscles and how your jaw, neck and



Image 8

thoughts in the mind all soften. Even though we are opening up the back of the legs, we are always practicing inner alignment as well as outer.

When you're ready repeat on the left leg.

When you're ready, reach your left leg up and back into a three legged dog (Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana). Flex the toes down here to further activate the back of the leg. This will also switch on the front of the thigh muscles. Step forward to the top of the mat, foot in-between the hands, lower the back knee. Start to straighten the front leg into a half-split pose (ardha hanumanasana). To bring the earth upwards towards you, use blocks under each hand. Even though you're stretching out the right hamstring, feel like you're lengthening over the leg, reaching forward with your spine and flexing the toes upwards.

After at least 10 breaths, keep the legs still, lean into your right hand and reach your left arm up into a twist.

Finishing today's practice, make your way from downward dog into a seated position. Stretch your legs out in front of you, lift your arms up and then reach forward into Paschimottasana (not shown). Option to use a strap here to assist the spine forward over the legs. Hold for a few breaths, before softening the back of the legs, bend the knees to the chest and give yourself a well-deserved hug inwards.

For more classes with Isabel Lankester visit [isabellankesteryoga.com](http://isabellankesteryoga.com), where you'll find 100s of on-demand classes available from vinyasa to yin yoga. Each class is rooted within its own elemental series, streamed from the comfort of your own home. You can also practice live and in-person together at the OM Yoga Show in London this October.

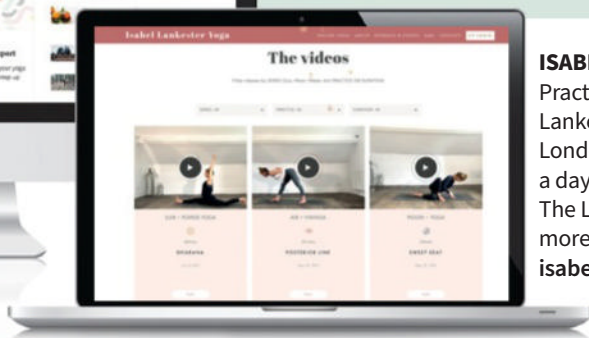


Image 9



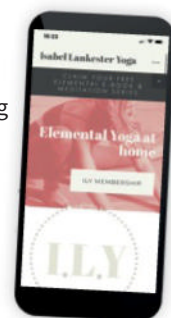
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Practice in-person with Isabelle Lankester at the OM Yoga Show in London this October. She's also hosting a day-long retreat on 23 September at The Lodge Space in London. Find out more and practice with her online at: [isabellankesteryoga.com](http://isabellankesteryoga.com)



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# YOGA

## Unpacked



## SATYA – LIVE WITH TRUTH

Ever been in a yoga class and not fully understood what the teacher is talking about? Bestselling author and creator of the top-rated Yoga Happy app, Hannah Barrett, is here to help. This month, she is unpacking the yogic concept of Satya



### What is satya?

“My thoughts, words and actions will be consistent, honest and full of love.”

Last month we broke down the first of the yamas and the concept of ahimsa, non-violence or love. The yamas are yoga’s ethical backbone — ethical considerations on how to avoid harming ourselves or others. We have the opportunity to practice the yogic philosophy concepts

through every interaction we have. The more we practice, the bigger ripple effect they will have sending positive seeds of change for all to follow.

Satya is the next of the yamas and translates to truthfulness. It is present when our thoughts, words and actions are aligned and honest. We need satya and ahimsa to sit side-by-side, as clear and honest communication prevents harm.

We also need to remember this simple reminder based on ancient philosophy:

Is it kind?

Is it true?

Is it necessary?

In this case, let us use the example of my five-year-old daughter Amelie. She comes to me with a picture of a unicorn that resembles more of a purple blob and asks me what I think. If I speak the full truth without kindness I cause her pain. In this case, is it more appropriate to remember the concept of ahimsa and use a softer approach to the truth?

### How can we apply it to life now?

The words we speak have a huge impact and hold great power. This doesn’t just relate to speaking to others but speaking to ourselves as well. Let us choose our words carefully and speak with love and truth.

A few examples of how we can practice truthfulness in our daily interactions:

**Gossip:** it’s addictive and it’s everywhere. Be aware of it, and try to distance yourself from it. Notice how speaking badly of others leaves a bad aftertaste. It lingers with you and doesn’t feel good. Can you instead ask questions, have compassion and an open mind and seek out other sides of the story before jumping to judgement?

**Nice vs real:** As humans we can be predisposed to want people to like us. It can result in us modelling ourselves into different things for different people, striving for ‘nice’ rather than real. Can you



instead aim for realness and remember that it is impossible for everyone to like us. **Heal the inner dialogue:** that voice inside you, pay attention to it. Become aware of whether it is sharing opinion or truth. If it's opinion, take a moment to consider and explore the truth of the situation. Notice how often you allow the words of others, or your own voice or emotions to cloud what is true for you.

**Time:** ever notice how much we lie to ourselves about time? Maybe it's how many to-do items we can complete in a day or how long a task will take or even how long we've spent scrolling mindlessly on our phones. Time is so valuable, practicing satya and being truthful about how much time we have and what we choose to do with it will make a huge difference to your life.

### Journal prompts

Yoga helps us connect with our true identity and journaling can be an amazing way to question our beliefs and behaviours and practice self-study.

Some journal prompts relating to satya to reflect on:

- Think of the last time you told a lie, however big or small, or pretended to know something you didn't. How did that make you feel? What stopped you from telling the truth and can you work on this going forwards?
- What un-truths make a regular occurrence in your thoughts?
- Is it ever okay to tell a lie? Where's the boundary for you?

### How can we apply satya onto the yoga mat?

Next time you step onto the yoga mat, notice where you may not be being truthful with yourself and your practice. Firstly, set an intention for your practice which is the truth as to why you are on the mat today.

Then ask yourself, are you pushing yourself too much or too little? Are you ignoring an area of pain, weakness or tightness? Or perhaps you are not modifying poses according to what your body needs. Satya teaches us to be truthful to and listen to our bodies. Whether this is through modifying a pose to allow for wrist pain or by providing that extra challenge when required too.

### Pose for satya – Ustrasana (camel pose)

Camel pose can help you open your heart and cultivate compassion, openness, vulnerability and empathy. All are essential in the practice of satya.

- Kneeling on your yoga mat with the knees hip-width apart, the toes can be



tucked or untucked. Place a blanket under the knees if you have sensitive knees.

- Place the hands on the sacrum, fingers pointing downwards and find length through the spine.
- Inhale as you lengthen through the side waist, lift the chest and squeeze the shoulder blades together and down. The glutes are engaged to help you bring a uniform curve to the spine.
- Exhale as you continue to lift the chest, gently keeping the chin tucked and extending out through the crown, keeping the spine long.
- Your hands can stay on the sacrum or you can bring them to the heels or onto blocks. The one-armed camel variation I'm showing here is a lovely way to find freedom in the heart space.

- The inner thighs hug in, glutes strong and the shoulder blades firm into the back ribs as you hold and breathe for one to five breaths.

- Inhale to slowly and mindfully come back up. Sit onto your heels with a neutral spine for a moment to notice how it felt in your body.

Strive to incorporate this mindful philosophy in your everyday life. Notice how it slowly but surely has a huge impact on your happiness and freedom — and for others too. 🌸

*If you want to understand more about satya, check out Hannah Barrett's book *Yoga Happy* and the *Yamas and Niyamas* series on her app also called *Yoga Happy*!*



# *Yin yoga* for emotion regulation

The use of yin yoga to support emotion regulation. **By Tracey Meyers**



***“When we protect ourselves so we won’t feel pain, that protection becomes like armour, like armour that imprisons the softness of the heart” ~ Pema Chodron***

For many of us, staying with uncomfortable sensations, whether they are experienced physically in the body (aches and pains) or as unpleasant emotions (fear, sadness, anger), feels difficult, if not downright impossible. As a result, we try to avoid discomfort through a variety of strategies — distractions, ignoring, and blaming to name a few of my favourites! While this is completely understandable, we also lose out on developing valuable skills to help us regulate our nervous system more effectively. In addition, by frequently avoiding discomfort, we can get stuck in maladaptive patterns including addictions, phobias, and relationship conflicts.

To develop skills to manage uncomfortable sensations, we need a practice that is safe, yet challenging to begin to expand our comfort zone.

Yin yoga is a wonderful way to work on expanding our comfort zone by learning how to turn toward the sensations in the body, explore whatever emotions may be present, and bring curiosity and kindness toward ourselves.

***“Yin yoga is a wonderful way to work on expanding our comfort zone by learning how to turn toward the sensations in the body, explore whatever emotions may be present, and bring curiosity and kindness toward ourselves.”***

## **Emotion regulation**

In yin yoga, we hold simple poses, largely on the floor, for one to 10 minutes, with five minutes as the typical length; this practice promotes healthy connective tissue, helps return the body to its natural range of motion, and develops mindfulness using breath and body awareness.

Because we hold poses for a substantial period, we can also use the practice of yin to explore more subtle aspects of the experience, including how we can work with uncomfortable sensations and emotions. This ability to turn toward our experience helps to lay the groundwork for what psychologists describe as ‘emotion regulation’.

Emotion regulation refers to the “processes by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them” (Gross, J. Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences, *Psychophysiology*, 39, (2002), 281–291). In order to successfully regulate our emotions, psychologists believe that we need to first bring attention to our emotional state, reduce physical arousal (or over-arousal) related to our threat detection system in the body, and be able to cognitively reappraise the experience so that the situation no longer feels negative (Fustos, J. Gramann, K., Herbert, B. and Pollatos, O., On the embodiment of emotion regulation: interceptive

awareness facilitates reappraisal. Scan (2012) 8, 911-917).

### An effective practice

Yin is a particularly effective practice to begin to explore and enhance our capacity to stay with sensations and emotions because we have the opportunity in each pose to mindfully attend to what is happening, use our breath to calm regulate our nervous system, and utilise positive and compassionate inner dialogue to find more self-kindness.

To illustrate the effectiveness of a yin yoga practice for emotion regulation, we will explore taking a simple yin pose – bound angle (also known as butterfly).

From a seated position with legs outstretched, balance weight equally on both sitting bones (sitting on a blanket helps). Bend knees and slide the soles of the feet together. Move the feet slightly away from the body to form a diamond shape. Allow the knees to drop out to each side. Bend forward from the hips, finding an appropriate stretch in the hips, groin and lower back. Before moving deeper in the pose, this is where it is key to pause and take a moment to tune inside and begin what I call a ‘Sensation Inquiry’.

- Notice where the sensation is.
- Notice the intensity of the sensation

(1 = no sensation/neutral; 5 = deep sensation; 10 = pain (sharp, shooting, or nerve).

- Notice qualities of the sensation (does it have shape, colour, movement?).
- Notice if the sensation changes over the duration of the pose.

**“We have the opportunity in each pose to mindfully attend to what is happening, use our breath to calm regulate our nervous system, and utilise positive and compassionate inner dialogue to find more self-kindness.”**

### Sensation inquiry

Based on what you discover here, you can respond in several different ways. You might back off if the intensity is too strong (above 5), intensify the stretch if the sensations do not provide enough interesting stimulation (below 2), or you might stay with the current level of intensity even if it is uncomfortable if the body is not in pain.

As you continue to tune into your body, you can continue inquiring into your

emotions, asking yourself if there are accompanying feelings or emotions along with the physical sensation. Just like the physical sensations, you can attend to the intensity of the emotions present through gentle and supportive self-talk, such as: “I am sorry”, “This is difficult”, or “I love you”, recognising that other people feel similarly to you with “I am not alone”, and asking yourself, “What do I need in this moment to take care of myself?”


After staying in the pose for a few minutes, you can check-in again using the sensation and emotion inquiry to see if the experience has changed in any way. Then, with care, gently come out of the pose by drawing the torso up, stretching out the legs, and pausing to reflect on how you feel.

### Inner experience

Doing poses in this way helps us to focus on our own inner experience as it is happening, moment by moment. Once we are truly tuned in, we can begin to self-regulate more and more especially when there is discomfort in the physical body or with disturbing emotions.

In addition to the supportive self-talk described earlier, we can also use the healing principles of yoga and psychology, including mindfulness of the breath (placing awareness on the physical sensations of breathing) to manage discomfort, soothing self-touch (placing a hand on the heart or other area of the body that might need support), and loving kindness phrases (Metta), such as “May I be happy”, “May I be peaceful”, “May I be free from suffering”.

No matter which practices we choose to meet our experience of discomfort, we are developing our capacity to regulate our emotions. This becomes a doorway for handling greater challenges ‘off the mat’ as well because we are learning repeatedly how to meet ourselves with curiosity, care, and compassion.

By practicing yin yoga regularly (I recommend two or three times per week), we can create a personalised, safe, and empowering therapeutic practice that provides us with some of the most valuable tools needed to cope with life’s challenges. 

*Dr. Tracey Meyers is a licensed clinical psychologist, yoga teacher, yoga therapist, and the author of the new book, Yin Yoga Therapy for Mental Health (Singing Dragon). Find out more at: [traceymeyerspsyd.com](http://traceymeyerspsyd.com)*



# Posture matters



Straighten up and avoid hunchback: top posture tips that your grandma always knew

**D**o you remember your grandma's advice to sit up straight and keep your elbows off the table? It turns out, she may have been onto something.

Physical therapist Dr Rashi Anand from CityPT ([citypt.com](http://citypt.com)) reveals the surprising health benefits of good posture and why it's essential to heed grandma's advice. "Maintaining good posture can prevent a range of health issues, from hunchback to back pain and headaches," he says. "It's never too late to start improving your

posture and reaping the benefits of a healthier, pain-free body."

## Why good posture matters

**Better breathing:** Good posture can help improve your breathing by opening up your airways and allowing you to take deeper breaths.

**Improved circulation:** Proper alignment can improve blood flow and prevent muscle tension and stiffness.

**Reduced pain:** Good posture can reduce the risk of back pain, neck pain, and headaches

caused by poor alignment and muscle strain.

## Top tips

**Proper alignment:** Good posture involves proper alignment of your head, neck, and spine. Try keeping your ears in line with your shoulders and hips, and keeping your back straight and shoulders relaxed.

**Avoid prolonged sitting:** Sitting for long periods can lead to poor posture and increased risk of hunchback. Take regular breaks and stand up to stretch and move around.

**Strengthen your core:** Building core strength can help support good posture and prevent hunchback. Try incorporating exercises like planks and bridges into your workout routine.

**Elbows off the table:** Keeping your elbows off the table can prevent slouching and encourage proper alignment of your shoulders and back.

In summary, good posture isn't just about looking good — it's essential for your overall health and wellbeing. Following grandma's advice to sit up straight and keep your elbows off the table was embedded in deep wisdom, it turns out.

So, start practicing good posture today and enjoy the benefits of a healthier, pain-free body — book your spot on the next yoga class now! 🧘





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# The beginner's mind

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Listen up, yoga newbies! Believe it or not, you are at an advantage if you are a yoga beginner. Here's why...



A lot of our troubles could be solved by one simple practice: just be a beginner. That's right, try and practice seeing your life with a beginner's mind — and take that with you to your first yoga class. You can't fail!

A lot of joy can also be found with the same practice.

Think about it: you start by seeing any activity with fresh eyes, as if you don't know what to expect, as if you haven't done it before. Living with a beginner's mindset can sharpen your experiences of life, even daily, mundane occurrences, whether that's eating breakfast or the commute to work.

In the case of yoga, entering a studio for the first time with an open mind, ready to learn and accept what the teacher has to offer, means you are a receptive student, keen and willing, and with positive intentions. When you eventually get onto your mat, appreciate every second of your time there as a gift; a temporary, fleeting and precious moment.

Not only will you be able to soak up the whole experience better, it will also mean less anxiety if you're nervous about commencing a yoga practice or stepping into a studio.

Instead of worrying about what might happen, you can open yourself up to being curious about what will happen, let go of your preconceived ideas about the outcome and instead embrace not knowing, embrace being present and finding gratitude in the moment for what you're doing. Trust the process.

Your yoga instructor wants to help you — and they're waiting to help you right now. You just need to say 'yes'.

Yoga has worked for millions of people around the world for thousands of years. It can work for you too.

### **Inside:**

- 44** 7 Days To Zen: A Mindful Week For Beginners
- 46** Flow With Conscience: Yoga Mats By Yogamatters
- 48** What Is A Yoga Practice? Essential Building Blocks
- 50** 3 Poses To Nurture Your Inner Warrior

# 7 days to zen

High Street store M&S recently partnered with yoga and fitness coach **Rosie Stockley**, founder of fitness platform Mamawell, to create a beginner's guide to help you incorporate more mindfulness and movement into your life. Try it this week and feel better after just seven days!

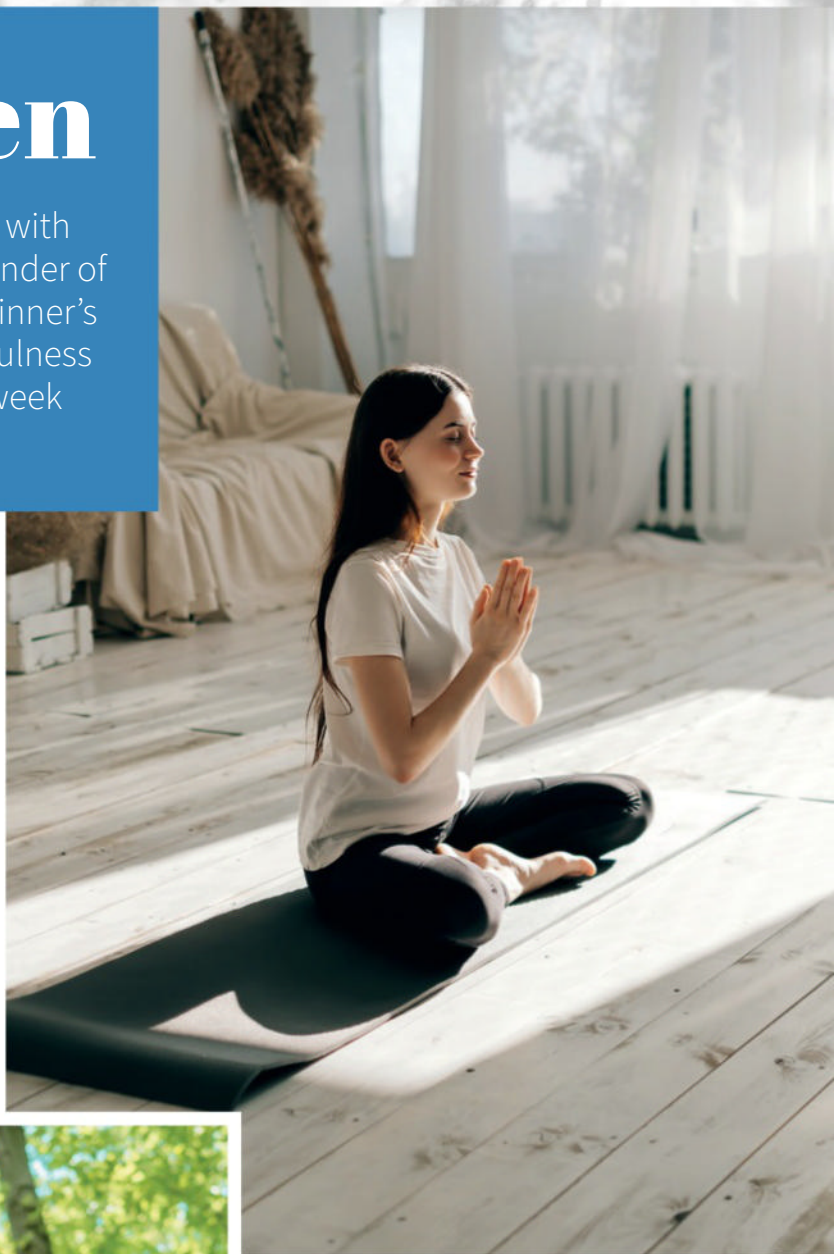
### Day 1: Breathwork

Find a quiet moment and location, and make sure you are in a comfortable position. Take some deep breaths, sighing the air out. Now focus on your breathing and slowly inhale for five counts and exhale for five counts. Try to do this for up to five minutes and notice how you feel afterwards.

**Next steps:** Come back to this breathing technique when you feel stressed or unsettled.

### Day 2: Mindful Movement

Embrace slow movement, like a gentle yoga sequence or stretches, and use this time to focus on nourishing your body. Movement can really help shift the energy out of your busy day and onto yourself for a few minutes. This practice can help to calm or energise you and is a great little time-out just for you.



### Day 3: Outdoor Mindfulness

Head out when you know you have time and won't feel rushed. Try to walk without headphones, but if you need music choose something calming, avoid podcasts. Be aware of your surroundings and activate your senses: your eyes, smell, sounds and try to feel things like the air or temperature on your skin.

**Next steps:** Add your breathing exercise to keep you grounded.

### Day 4: Bodyscan

Get to a comfortable seated or lying position and close your eyes. Start a slow body scan from your head down to your feet. Notice any sensations in each body part, and relax each area imagining the muscles melting away. After your scan, try to remain still for a few more



minutes. Notice how you feel when you open your eyes...refreshed, energised, or maybe tired and emotional, all feelings are valid!

## Day 5: Mindful Eating

We often eat our meals multitasking at our desks, on the go, or scrolling on our phones. A lot of enjoyment from food is derived from experiencing it with multiple senses. Today, try to have devices out of reach and sit at the table. Notice what's on your plate and how focusing on your meal makes you feel afterwards.

## Day 6: Breathwork

Today we bring the focus back to breathing but in a different position. Lie flat on your back near a wall with your head furthest away from the wall. Bring your legs up the wall, nearly straight and hip width apart, and move your hips as close to the wall as it feels comfortable. Arms slightly away from the body and palms facing up, stay here for about five minutes using the breathing technique from Day 1.

## Day 7: Mindful Moments

Finding moments of mindfulness throughout our day is the goal for today and moving forwards. You won't be following a routine, but try to add some of the practices into your day. Maybe it's doing some stretches, having a mindful walk or doing a few mindful breathing exercises.



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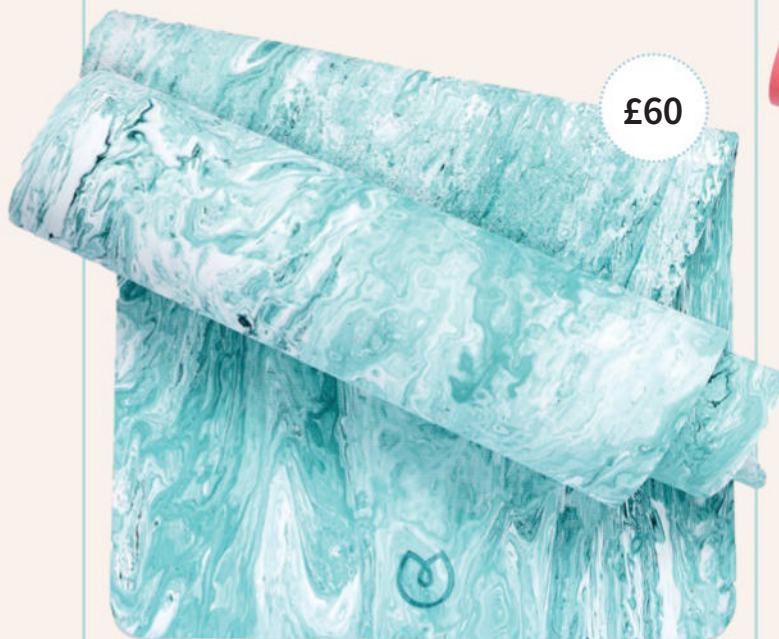
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## What is a yoga practice?

Kelsey Taylor outlines the basic building blocks of a simple yoga practice



**Y**oga dates back thousands of years and, traditionally, the act of performing yoga is referred to as a 'yoga practice'.

Yoga practices come in many forms, the more commonly known ones are asana (poses of the physical body), pranayama (vital energy control using breathing techniques) and dhyana (meditation, to support quietening and focusing the mind), but there are many more you may wish to explore. Each practice has different benefits to the mind and body; they may be practiced alone, but they also are often practiced together.

It is important to understand that the term 'practice' is not used in reference to 'practice makes perfect'. We are not looking to perfect a pose or breathing technique and then practice it in the same way forever, as this would become repetitive; it is rather an opportunity for self-improvement through exploration, growth, and acceptance.

Developing a strong practice takes time and commitment and although yoga is often taught in a group environment the practice of yoga is a very personal experience. To allow your own practice to develop consider the following:



# Yoga for Beginners



## Physical practices

These are often the practices that many people experience first. They are performed with the intention to strengthen and stretch the physical body so that it is strong and healthy enough to enhance other practices such as sitting in meditation. Everyone's mind and body are different: therefore, your practice will look and feel very different to the person sitting next to you during practice.

## Non-judgement and self-acceptance

You should not compare your practice to anyone else nor should you have expectations of what each practice will bring. Each practice is a unique experience of its own; you may find a practice easy one week but struggle the next. You will always encounter struggles, distractions, and discomfort, so it is not realistic to think you are capable of improvement every single practice.

## You are forever a student

Your yoga practice will continue to

evolve as you change and grow, it is a continuous loop of learning, practicing, improving, and learning some more. Initially, as you learn, you watch and listen to your teachers intensively, trying to follow their guidance as they lead you through the practice; your mind is alert as new information is received and you may struggle to hold the pose or to control the breath as you listen and react.

Over time you will start to notice small improvements, maybe you are able to balance with less of a wobble, inhale, and exhale more deeply, or keep your focus for longer without the mind becoming busy or distracted.

Each practice brings familiarity and confidence; there is an inner knowledge and comfort as we improve. You may also outgrow a practice in the search for a deeper connection to yourself or need a new teacher to learn other techniques from.

*Kelsey Taylor is a senior yoga teacher and teacher trainer based in Staffordshire. She runs courses and training on women's hormonal health and wellness. Find out more at: [flowwomenswellness.com](http://flowwomenswellness.com)*



## Yoga for hormonal health. Teacher Training

Support women to deal with the fluctuations of hormonal changes from Menarche to Menopause

In-person and online dates are available



Find out more via our new website  
[www.flowwomenswellness.com](http://www.flowwomenswellness.com)



Have a question? Email us at [hello@flowwomenswellness.com](mailto:hello@flowwomenswellness.com)

Online classes and courses coming soon



# 3 poses to nurture your inner warrior

Master three of yoga's most iconic poses for an instant energy and mental boost.

By Sarah Highfield

One of the many wonderful benefits of yoga is its ability to transform your mind and body. On days when you need to calm down after a stressful day of work, you might turn to yin yoga or yoga nidra, and on days when you need to energise and lift your mood, you might turn to vinyasa flow yoga or chanting. Similarly, on days that you need to feel strong and powerful, you can practice various warrior poses to help you embody those emotions.

As with all yoga, transformation takes place from within. By simply adopting the warrior stances and channelling your energy throughout your entire body, you will instantly feel empowered and ready for anything.

Here are three variations of warrior pose to help you thrive:



**WARRIOR I**

## WARRIOR 1

**Benefits of this pose:** This pose helps to strengthen your lower body, as well as offers the benefits of a mild backbend. It also stretches the front of your body and creates a gentle twist in your spine. Mentally, it helps you to feel grounded and powerful.

**How to do it:** Stand with your left foot forward and your right foot behind. With an inhalation, bend your front knee and extend your arms up above your head. Keep your core lightly engaged, rotate your torso forward, rotate your shoulders so your armpits face one another and reach up high through your fingertips. Hold the pose for five deep breaths in and out of your nose and then repeat on the second side.

## WARRIOR 2

**Benefits of this pose:** This pose provides a deep hip stretch and strengthens your core and upper body. It helps to build awareness of your whole body, as well as develops mental stamina and concentration.

**How to do it:** Start with your left foot forward and your right foot behind, look down at your feet to check that your heels are roughly in line. With an inhalation, lift your arms up so they are parallel to the floor and with an exhalation, bend your left knee so that it is above your left heel. Keep your core lightly engaged, soften your shoulders away from your ears and extend out through your fingertips. Hold the pose for five deep breaths in and out of your nose and then repeat on the second side.

## WARRIOR 3

**Benefits of this pose:** This pose works to grow your sense of stability and balance. It also trains the small muscles of your feet and ankles, and helps your mind to stay calm under pressure.

**How to do it:** Start in mountain pose with your hands in prayer

## WARRIOR 2



## WARRIOR 3

position at your heart centre. On an inhalation, lightly engage your core and lengthen your spine, and on an exhalation, transfer your weight into your left foot and slowly tilt forward while raising your right leg backwards. Come into a 'T' shape, flex your back foot, and square your hips towards the floor. Hold the pose for five deep breaths in and out of your nose and then repeat on the second side.

*Sarah Highfield is an international yoga teacher and writer as well as a three-time OM cover model and frequent contributor. Visit: [yogagise.com](http://yogagise.com) or find her on Instagram @Yogagise*

OMFM

# OMFM

**OM FOR MEN**

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# MAN ON THE MAT

## WITH RAVI DIXIT

### HASTA UTTANASANA (RAISED ARMS POSE)



This standing posture is the second and eleventh pose of the Surya Namaskara sequence (sun salutation). In Sanskrit, 'hasta' refers to the hands and 'uttana' means upward. In this asana, arms rise up in salute to the sun, opening the heart to receiving its energy.

#### BENEFITS

- Although this looks like a simple pose, it's an important posture to warm up the body before a more advanced asana practice.
- Hasta Uttanasana strengthens the muscles that support the spine, gives a nice stretch to

the abdomen and opens the chest to create space for the heart and lungs to allow for deep and full breaths.

- Many of us spend hours working on computers and phones, creating a habit of rounding the shoulders and upper back. This asana can help as a counterpose. It stretches out areas where many of us hold tension, like the upper back, head and shoulders. Also, when we move our spine in a way that it's not used to, we boost our system with fresh blood circulation and prana energy.
- Lengthens and strengthens the back muscles and spine.

- Stretches the arms, shoulders and muscles of the abdomen.
- Expands the chest and the rib cage, improving lung capacity and oxygen flow.
- Improves digestion and supports a healthy kidney function.

#### MISTAKES

- Bending the knees: the knees should be straight.
- Putting too much pressure on the lower back. When leaning back, start gently and avoid hanging into your lower back as this will compress the spine and can cause back pain.
- Bending the elbows and not expanding the chest. Keep the elbows straight, open the chest and don't shrug the shoulders up, but actively draw them down.

#### TIPS

- Before you stretch up, focus on grounding your feet first. Press the toes onto the ground to find stability before you lean back. This will help to keep your balance.
- Don't lean too far backwards at first. Focus on the correct alignment in the upward stretch and once you feel stable and comfortable, lean back a few centimetres at the same time.
- This pose is a great practice to start with when you want to learn standing wheel pose (Urdhva Dhanurasana) or any other advanced backbends.

#### AWARENESS

- Spiritual awareness is on the heart centre, releasing emotions and opening the heart to receiving.
- Physical awareness is on the whole body, with extra awareness towards the feet and hands. ☯

*Ravi Dixit is an Indian yoga teacher living in London, passionate about making traditional yoga understandable for everyone. You can practice with him at this year's OM Yoga Show. Visit: [ravi.yoga](http://ravi.yoga) or connect on Instagram @raviyoga\_goa*





# PRISON YOGA: A BEACON OF LIGHT

Yoga was a ‘beacon of light’ in prison for former prisoner, Richard, who will be sharing his experiences at the OM Yoga Show in London this year alongside The Prison Phoenix Trust



**R**ichard is one of two men who will be speaking about their experiences of learning yoga and meditation while in prison at the OM Yoga Show later this year. He describes yoga as a “beacon of light” during his time behind bars after being introduced to the practice by a charity, The Prison Phoenix Trust (PPT).

Richard spent most of his early life in ‘the system’ — growing up in care, getting into trouble, serving time in detention centres and borstal, and eventually prison. During one five-year sentence he was moved 12 times. It was during a move to a new prison, at three in the morning, crammed into a prison van with six officers, blue lights flashing, that he decided something had to change.

“I was looking around me thinking: how have I got into this situation? This is a battle I’m losing. I realised I needed to change the battle plan and look at why I’m here,” he tells OM.

He reached out for help to The Prison Phoenix Trust, the UK’s leading charity supporting yoga and meditation in

prisons. He took the initiative and wrote to the charity, who then wrote back, offering to support and guide him from afar as he explored the healing practices of yoga and meditation.

“Prison isn’t a good place to drop your guard,” he recalls, “but through the letters I could talk more openly and look at myself more. I could put my emotions down on paper, things that I couldn’t say out loud to anyone.”

That was in 2011. In some of the prisons he was moved to there were in-person yoga classes, taught by yoga teachers trained and supported by The PPT.

“I was on a journey of total change and yoga helped to support it. The yoga classes in HMP Winchester every Tuesday and Thursday were fantastic and meant that I could keep going with stronger yoga that kept flowing. It got to the stage that when I was being moved to another

prison, I’d be thinking, I really hope they’ve got yoga classes here.”

## The work of The PPT

There are currently yoga classes in more than 50 prisons across the UK and Ireland, supported by The Prison Phoenix Trust. The charity trains and supports teachers to adapt their classes for the prison environment, says The PPT’s director, Selina Sasse.

“There are high levels of trauma, physical and mental ill-health and neuro-diversity among people in prison and it’s important that yoga teachers are skilled at adapting their classes to make them accessible to all,” she says.

“It’s also important that teachers understand prison security, can recognise



signs of conditioning (grooming) and know how to keep themselves and their prison students safe. Prisons rely on The Prison Phoenix Trust to ensure yoga teachers working inside are well prepared. It's challenging work, but also the most rewarding."

As well as yoga classes, The PPT produces specialist resources, including handouts, books, DVDs and CDs to help people continue their yoga and meditation practice in their cells. The charity has grown to become an essential 'beacon of hope' for many others, while its work is increasingly recognised by experts and insiders familiar with the prison system. Here's what some people familiar with The PPT's work have said:

*"I don't think people realise how keen male prisoners are to do yoga. On our drug-free wing, they've set aside time to do yoga together using The Prison Phoenix Trust DVDs in the evening. They are very popular." ~ The head of drug strategy provision at a male prison in England*

*"Over many years working in prisons, I have seen people benefit from yoga and meditation. It has helped them on their journey towards health, happiness and realising their potential." ~ Jamie Bennett, former prison governor and consultant to The PPT*

### Life on the outside

For Richard, the yoga and meditation he learned in prison also helped him to make the transition to life on the outside.

"As I got to the end of my sentence, yoga and meditation really helped. I'd do 12 rounds of sun salutations on the exercise yard every day and tell myself as I walked around, 'Keep your feet on the ground.' I knew my challenges on

release were going to be massive. I had no home, relationships or anything for five years, and I knew this was going to be some journey. Whenever my mind started worrying, yoga helped massively, it kept me in my body."

The challenges and obstacles faced by so many on release were all there for Richard as well. "I was lost and desperately looking for things to return to. I'd caused my family so much pain and when I came out it was difficult for them. I needed to be mindful of the suffering that I'd put my family through. It took about a year to start to rebuild those connections. I had to start a new life in a new town. I was 50 and had to start my whole life again. The Prison Phoenix Trust was a beacon of light that got me through some very difficult inner battles with myself. But it stayed with me wherever I went and it still does to this very day."

His experiences and understanding have helped in other ways too, bringing respite and relief during periods when he was unable to do a physical yoga practice. "Life has a way of slowing us down," he says. "I had a prolapsed disc and had to stop training for two years, including yoga. But I carried on with the meditation. Even if you physically can't do yoga, meditation helps you take every day as it comes, and keep your feet firmly on the ground. When you've done a long sentence you're going to need many tools to keep you going, to take responsibility and to keep your feet on the ground. Now I'm back to yoga classes again but I'm more about calm, meditation, reading, and just listening." 🧘

Support the work of The Prison Phoenix Trust at: [theppt.org.uk](http://theppt.org.uk)



### MEET RICHARD AT THE OM YOGA SHOW

Come and meet The Prison Phoenix Trust at the OM Yoga Show in London this October. Hear Richard speak about how yoga changed his life in prison at 1pm on Saturday 14th October. You can also sign up for the workshop 'Teaching Yoga in Prisons' with The PPT on Friday 13th October 2023 (details below). This workshop is an introduction to prison yoga teaching, and will cover a former prisoner's experience, a taster practice of prison yoga, adapting your own teaching, and how The PPT can support you as a prison yoga teacher.

**Friday 13th October, 2023**

**15.15 -16.45 Ticket cost £15**

**Tickets available from [omyogashow.com](http://omyogashow.com)**





# I am the breath on your lips

Paying attention to our breath can connect us to the rich fullness of life. **By Lauren Bloxham**

**E**ach breath is a love note, a blessing, a precious and exquisite merging of life into the very fabric of our bones.

Breath is the connection we have to the wider whole, beyond our human form and the boundaries of our skin. Each breath is a drink from the ancient and infinite expanse of life; the same life that gave rise to planets and stars, the same life that gave rise to our ancestors, the very same cup that we each drink from, the shared source and space that gives rise to us all. Each of us, without exception.

Each breath arrives at our lips like an eager lover, of all the particles of air in the whole of the universe, this breath arrives just for us. Each breath being a celebration of connection, an exquisite reminder that we are loved and worthy of life. There is no shortage of breath, no breath reluctant to be breathed. Each breath arrives like the birth of a new baby, full of possibility, filled with hope. Filling our lungs with the affirmation “I am alive”.

Living is built on each and every single breath that we draw. Our first and most vital form of nourishment, it can be savoured

like fine wine, like warm sunshine, like cool, clear water washing our feet. Breath becomes us, alive and precious. Breath reminds us that everything that ever was and everything that will ever be, is already right here, in every moment we breathe.

“Each breath is a love note, a blessing, a precious and exquisite merging of life into the very fabric of our bones.”

There is freedom on the breath...expansive freedom. A merging into the rich fullness of life...an acceptance of love that whispers: “you matter, and I am here for you”. Breath’s only request is that we accept its sweet gentle caress, so subtle it could be taken for granted, yet so powerful it is the animating force within us all. Expanding into the wholeness of each subtle breath, breath whispers lessons of reciprocity.

Breath says... “Honour me by being present” ... “Seek me out in spaces where I am pure and I will drench you with love;



a breath by the ocean, mineral rich, fuel for tears and the blood in the veins"... "Breathe me in the mountains and I will fill your heart and mind with spaciousness, vast cool peace becomes you" ... "Breathe me in the forest and you will never feel alone".

*“Each breath arrives at our lips like an eager lover, of all the particles of air in the whole of the universe, this breath arrives just for us.”*

There is wisdom on the breath: the ancient wisdom of time, wisdom beyond humanity, but wisdom that can be accessed by awakening thankfulness for breath. Time to sit to savour to explore breath. Time to be nourished and thankful for the precious gift of life. As we bring our presence to breath, breath animates with anticipation... molecules of breath chatter to each other as they bundle ever closer... their leap of faith is their re-birth... no longer in the atmosphere, breath takes a courageous journey inward, merging and morphing with skin, lungs, and heart... may we courageously return our exhalations to the infinite wisdom beyond... No longer ours to hold, the exhalation is a release and letting go, an outward journey of deep gratitude for the life it has lived within us.

The exhalation leaves our lips with a fond goodbye, merging with the wider whole... carrying its wisdom, its experience, its capacity for transformation. The exhalation finds and takes on

new life beyond us, melding and morphing, being swept away on the wind, the breath of the gods and landing at the lips of you, my distant friend. The exhalation travels on the wings of murmurations of starlings and soars with birds of prey. The exhalation becomes clouds in the atmosphere and is carried on the rain to become rivers and oceans, rising again to be breathed on the shoreline by basking seals and ball chasing dogs. To be breathed by you as you drink the wild air on a blustery spring walk, or to arrive at your lips warmed by summer sun.

Is there a breath that hasn't yet been breathed, or is every breath as ancient as time? Am I made of Stone Age breath, enriched by the multitude of transformations that each breath has already undertaken? Am I breathing the first breath of life at the birth of the universe? Am I made of the exhalation of the whale that surfaces in the bay, carrying stories from the ocean depths? Am I fresh from the cedar or the oak? Am I morphing with the wisdom of plants and trees who tell tales of the deep black soil of earth and the birds who nest in their branches? Am I breathing you who sits close to me, your inner world so full and furious, your story engorged with sorrow and doubt? Am I breathing you in who is leaving me, or loving me, or healing me or holding me? Am I breathing the first breath of the new-born baby or the last breath of the dying man? I am. I am the breath on your lips. 🌀

*Practice yoga with Lauren Bloxham online at: [blackdogliving.com](http://blackdogliving.com) or connect on Instagram @blackdogliving*





**Stevington Windmill:** Stevington, Bedfordshire — Amar Sood

“It was a tempestuous summer evening, the forecast wasn’t great but I had a feeling there would be a break in the cloud around sunset,” says photographer Amar Sood. “It was a good opportunity to visit Stevington Windmill, a location which I’d been meaning to get to for some time. I’m glad I took the risk as conditions turned out even better than I imagined. The break in the cloud came and the scene was bathed in glorious warm light.”

## Bring the outdoors into your home

Soothe your soul with outdoor art: stunning landscape photography that can melt away the stress and tensions of daily life

**S**cientific research has shown that placing large photographs of the outdoors in our homes, in particular landscape and nature photography, can have a significant impact on our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Photographs of nature may also reduce pain, anxiety and stress and have even been shown to improve the recovery of patients in hospitals. So much so that a number of the major hospitals in London have started a trial of placing framed landscape photography in critical wards to help support patient recovery.

We all discovered first-hand during the pandemic the impact that not being able to spend time outdoors and in nature can have on our mental health. But not many people realise that if you can’t physically get outside, or if you live in an urban environment, you can still get many of the same benefits of the outdoors by including nature and landscape photography as part of your interiors.

The process of taking landscape photography can also be incredibly beneficial for mental health as the direct connection to nature and the outdoors creates a meditative state that can soothe the mind. So feast your eyes on some of the amazing landscape artwork here, compiled as part of the Landscape Photographer of the Year project, which was started 15 years ago by world-renowned photographer Charlie Waite.



**Before the Harvest:** Therfield, Hertfordshire — Peter North

“Taken in late July, this is a long depth-of-field shot of some wheat fields taken at Therfield, Herts,” says photographer Peter North. “I wanted the image to show each individual ear of wheat in the foreground all the way through to the distant hills on the horizon. The rolling hills in the middle distance had pronounced tractor lines and subtle colour variations emphasising their form. The whole landscape had many textures, tones and topography but I wanted a composition that held all these elements together.”



**Brecon in Winter:** Brecon Beacons National Park, Wales  
— Will Davies

“Dawn sunlight warms up a winter’s morning in the Brecon Beacons,” says photographer Will Davies. “This image was taken from the Pen-y-Crug hillfort which provides a spectacular panorama of Brecon and the surrounding mountains. On this December morning, sunlight broke through a clearing snowstorm, adding a wonderful burst of warmth and colour to the scene.”



**Durdle Door Night Lights:**

Durdle Door, Dorset — Callum White

“I was in the middle of shooting a panorama of the arch of the Milky Way, when some people down on the beach started using their bright phone lights while wandering around on the beach,” says photographer Callum White. “Thinking they were about to ruin the entire night of photography for me I wondered what to do – then, having clearly found enough firewood, they started a fire which transformed the scene. I abandoned the panorama for the moment and took a ‘vertorama’ to capture the foreground and the Milky Way rising above Durdle Door. It was an amazing night of photography and I thoroughly enjoyed spending a night under the stars. If you look closely, you can also see Jupiter and Saturn which are the two bright stars near the horizon to the left hand side of the shot.”



**Conifer Tree:** Leith Hill, Surrey — Marcus King

“This beautifully twisted conifer on the top of Leith Hill has been a favourite photographic subject for many years in all seasons,” says photographer Marcus King. “This particular misty morning was ideal to show off the tree in all its glory against the rusty red of the autumn bracken.”

*For more information about the Landscape Photographer of the Year competition visit: [lpoty.co.uk/competition](http://lpoty.co.uk/competition)*

# 3 things to do every day to make your life better



You have the power within you to live your life with confidence, clarity, and grace. You are beautiful, talented, and worthy of receiving any goal that you desire. Just follow these three easy steps to enhance your life today and every day. **By Phoebe Garnsworthy**

**W**hat if I told you that the pathway to living your ultimate life can be achieved by implementing three simple changes into your day? And that not only are these techniques free and easy to incorporate, but you can also complete each one within 15 minutes or less.

All these practices have compelling, scientific evidence to back up their productivity, as well as spiritual philosophy to amplify their intention of harmonising the flow of energy between your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

I will explain all of this in detail below so you can understand why we incorporate these practices into our lives and the benefits they create. When we know the ‘why’ behind our actions, we can consistently adapt variations of that same practice. And whenever we practice something consistently, we develop a positive habit, thus igniting a wonderful new beginning of change.

And you can implement these incredible transformational techniques right now.

All you need is the intention to see them through and be open to allowing your spiritual self transcend beyond what the eye can see. Let’s begin!

## **1. Connect with your soul through meditation**

Through meditation, we are able to cultivate profound spiritual healing and transformation. This ancient practice of spending time alone and soaking up the loving vibrations of our own energy brings forth clarity and wisdom in both our unique selves and our life purpose. Through meditation, we channel our soul in the unseen realms, deepening our connection with this spiritual space and strengthening our intuition channel. This process reminds us that our experience in this life is not by chance and that there is a mystical interconnectedness at play. And so, when we exit this transcendent space of meditation, we are able to see the world with a new outlook and a new perception — one that supports our greater good and mission to live a life filled with sweet rewards and impactful experiences. The spiritual

technique of meditation encourages mindfulness, compassion, and kindness in every area of our life. We can harness spiritual energy and utilise it to manifest bountiful gifts around us.

When practiced regularly, meditation is scientifically proven to reduce stress, calm anxiety, enhance self-esteem, lower blood pressure, and ease depression. It is also known to boost our immunity and calm our emotional wellbeing, as well as provide us with mental clarity, focus, and support.

**How to use meditation to connect with your soul:** Start by finding some alone time to connect with your energy. Focus your attention on your breath and allow your thoughts to simply melt away. If any worries or feelings arise, be at peace with them. Acknowledge their existence but choose to let them go and move past them. If you repeat this every day for 10 minutes, you will deepen the connection with your soul and strengthen the communication channel of your intuition.

## **2. Practice positive self-talk**

Every conversation with yourself is a

conversation with the universe. If you choose to speak words of love, positivity, and peace, you will attract those same high vibrational energies in return. Everything within and around you is vibrating energy. You have the power to influence that energy to be positive or negative based on the words you use. When we choose words that promote self-love and self-care, we are literally changing the vibrational frequency of our mind, body, and soul. Self-love improves self-esteem and self-worth, which, in turn, creates confidence and motivation to achieve our goals for we believe that we are worthy of receiving them.

Through regular practice, we can establish healthy boundaries and develop long-lasting relationships in every area of our lives. When we love ourselves unconditionally, there is no limit to what we can achieve. Our resilience grows fiercely, as does our courage to combat problems, and we confidently take life by the hand to tell it what we want.

But positive self-talk doesn't mean ignoring our past mistakes. Instead, it allows us to reflect on them and see the lessons we've learned as a result. This supports our emotional wellbeing by easing depression and anxiety that arises from facing problems that we cannot control. For we will now hold a new outlook, seeing them as opportunities for personal growth rather than obstacles to be feared.

**To practice positive self-talk:** Find time alone and select your favourite outlet to communicate with your soul. It could be looking in the mirror to tell yourself words of encouragement or journalling through the ideas in your mind for self-reflection and self-awareness. You can incorporate this practice before or after meditation. Start by reciting your favourite affirmations and desired goals for yourself, the universe, and your soul. Next, remind yourself of all

the wonderful accomplishments you have achieved in your life and the incredible blessings that exist in your world today.

**“Always remember that everything in the universe is vibrating energy. The energy that we hold in our body and mind is under our power to transform.”**

### **3. Heal and rejuvenate your energy with nature**

You are constantly surrounded by an abundance of harmonising vibrations from mother nature. Her energy has the power to instantly soothe your soul and calm your emotions with deep peace. She creates a safe space for you to heal whatever troubles you are experiencing in your life, and she holds you tightly, nurturing your energy and providing you with wisdom and tranquility.

The heightened sensations that we experience when connecting with nature — such as the smell of flowers, the earth beneath our feet, or the sounds of birds — brings our awareness into the present moment and grounds our soul into our body. This grounding energy cleanses the lens of our perceived reality, reminding us of our integral place in the universe and our importance to the entire cosmic collective. This awareness of the now creates a blank canvas to solve problems while setting our intentions to live the life that we desire. Here, in this space, we are free to be ourselves while deepening our connection to the spirit world.

**To heal and rejuvenate your energy with nature:** Allocate time outdoors in a natural environment. Depending on

your surroundings that may be your own backyard or a walk in the park, a local beach, or a rainforest. Go wherever there is the natural growth of mother earth, wild birds or animals. Tune into yourself to see if there is anything you need to release, heal, or harness. And ask mother nature to assist you in doing so. As you immerse yourself in the energy of her blessings, you will feel an instant connection of spiritual peace and vitality. Your mood will be lifted, your vibrations calmed and your emotional self soothed. You will find yourself rejuvenated, rested, and inspired to continue on your life path with enthusiasm and motivation.

### **Everything is energy**

Always remember that everything in the universe is vibrating energy. The energy that we hold in our body and mind is under our power to transform. We choose what vibrations we wish to attract or let go of. We can invite happiness and peace into our lives, or we can run away from them. When we practice meditation, positive self-talk, and connecting with nature, we are strengthening our ability to transmute our energy into whatever we wish.

There are many spiritual tools you can incorporate into your life. And you may find that some will have a stronger impact than others. Now that you understand the reasons why, try to adapt and experiment to find your own rhythm in life. For example, you may know that you want to connect with your soul, but you prefer dancing to clear the channel of your intuition rather than sitting in silence with meditative breathing. Or perhaps you enjoy a walking meditation while being outside in the forest, combining both exercises of mindfulness with the connection of nature. Always experiment and try different things while having a clear intention in your mind of what you are hoping to achieve.

Each of the above spiritual practices supports the harmonisation of energy flowing within you and around you, while nurturing self-love, healing, and confidence. By turning your attention to flow with your life — rather than against it — you utilise the incredible gifts at your fingertips and can create a life filled with love, abundance, and serenity. You are simply one choice away from creating your ultimate life. So, today, try at least one of these practices knowing they are supporting you in stepping closer to your higher self. 🧘

*Phoebe Garnsworthy writes books that speak to your soul. Through the power of self-love and self-care, she uses affirmations, daily rituals, spiritual practices, journalling and meditation to guide others in finding their sacred space within. Visit: [phoebegarnsworthy.com](http://phoebegarnsworthy.com)*



# Yoga's symphony of movement

The soulful urge to let love fall.

By Gregory Ormson



**W**hen you engage with yoga, you are fastened into a deep and wide health corps, one steered by the way of breath and meditation, shaped by the forces of hatha and time. Neither you or I can remain in a yoga session or meditation session without breath and patience, but when we attend to our guru – the breath – we are renewed, inspired, and transformed.

When led by a good yoga teacher, we'll find words of encouragement and encounter something that we will not hear in other places. This 'something' is embedded deep in yoga's reforming curriculum where we find asana a positive but not necessarily easy pursuit. Yoga's teaching of ethics contains many ingredients. One not often talked of, but present like the yeast in bread – a small ingredient that raises the dough – is love. Love is the dynamic force of yoga's recipe

for change, the ingredient which creates healing for mind, body, and spirit. One key aspect of this ingredient proclaims to us that we are worthy of self-care while simultaneously teaching us what it is and how to apply it in our lives.

In savasana, yogis dip into a deep pool of love as they sink into the mat and their full bodyweight rests heavy and still. That's when we remind ourselves to replace thoughts of self-recrimination and judgement with thoughts of praise and even love for self and others. Recently, as the class released into a state of savasana, the teacher said: "Let love fall upon your spine."

Think about the powerful impact of this idea; the kind of thing yogis regularly hear during the marvellous privilege of practicing yoga, during which we absorb yoga's ministry of spirit and its medicine for body and mind. Love's reach, and love's world-changing impact is profound. A yoga teacher once told me: "I remember

lying in savasana one time and saying to myself that I could die for everyone in this room right now and I'd be okay with it." Everyone, not just some of the people. That's love, and that's the kind of sacrifice love can and does engender.

To let love fall upon us is a central tenet in the yoga curriculum, the unvarnished core of which is the art of pure care for the mind, body, and spirit. And how does this happen? It happens naturally when we are opened by yoga; it can't be prescribed like a medication because releasing into the trust of an ongoing evolution is individual and unique.

We were born of love, and love seeks to sustain all life. It is natural to us, and when we realise that we are both objects and subjects of this love, everything changes, and we learn to trust a higher and deeper love, a love that also resides within us.

When by necessity or choice your soulful urge leads you to yoga, your moving meditation and breath will be part of a

loving integration for body, mind, and spirit. Like yeast in bread, a small but necessary ingredient, love will raise the yogi into becoming a new being. And what can this code of love do? It can keep your spine supple and healthy, and it can connect you to the power of yoga for transformation. It's the power of love. I can say that yoga love fixed my back, but that was just the start.

Yes, there are many forms of caring and medicine for us. Chiropractic medicine works on the spine with hands-on manipulations called adjustments. There is a time and place for this medical practice, I think, but adjustments in yoga are your self-generated miracle that happen when we release and let love fall upon us. Letting love fall upon our spine becomes a self-generating renewal.

In an Institute of Medicine survey, 'Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research,' 27% of all respondents said they suffered specifically from lower back pain. That's nearly 90 million Americans directly identifying lower back issues. Yoga works on back pain, but I've found it's only the beginning of what happens when the upright human being meets love in this ancient transformational science.

From the first hint of life, our spine, which is a combination of both hard and soft tissue and bone, is constantly changing. At first, the human spine looks no different than many animals, and in utero the human spine is shaped as one simple curve which is called the primary curve. When we make our way through birth trauma, our cervical spine begins its evolutionary corrective which allows us to stand upright, and this shape-shifting of



the spine continues throughout our lives – although in small degrees.

After several months and into our early years, we develop a second curve in the thoracic spine trailing down to the lumbar spine. This secondary spinal curve serves us well until we turn to later years and begin to stoop (if we don't keep bending backwards and maintain good posture). In some cases, then, the spine begins to look more and more like it was when we were infants as the older adult stoops forward.

But the spine is designed to bend and flex; it's designed to extend and handle compression, designed to rotate, and support, it's designed to adjust and keep adjusting through life. Yoga's curriculum teaches us to bend and flex the spine, in concert with breath intake and exhale while moving deliberately to build a supple and strong spine.

Yoga is a martial art of the soul; when

doing it we feel alive and challenged. When alive and challenged, we exert effort to do the pose, and over time we attempt to do better while being more at ease. We aim to move into better alignment, better breath management, better love for our spine and our life. Yogis know love is a powerful medicine, and it's the core of a yoga spirituality. In yoga, we receive the best – love – and to be our best we take it in and then pass it on.

Yoga and love are potent forces that will lead you down the road of change where you enter the realm of the marvellous. There, your most intimate guru (your breath) will bring renewal; your spine will adjust millimetre by millimetre, and you will find healing.

When it comes to self-care, think for a moment not about food, or sleep, or intimacy, or community; think now about the powerful effect of letting love fall upon your spine, your heart, your life.

This is something worth hearing; it's also worth remembering. It gets quickly to the heart of practice; for yoga goes beyond achieving to receiving; in yoga, we let something therapeutic happen. This 'something happening' is not easily described but yogis know what it is because they experience it, and they know it's more precious than gold; and therefore, something to prize and prioritise.

Never mind that nobody can tell you exactly how to do this, because it is your soulful urge, and in the symphony of asana, if you listen close, you will hear it in these words: 'Let love fall upon you.' ॐ

*Gregory Ormson is a writer and yoga teacher who leads workshops on mobilising prana through a breath-centric practice. Visit: [gregoryormson.com](http://gregoryormson.com) #motorcyclingyogig*



# Why learn *Sanskrit*?



The ancient wisdom of Sanskrit asana names:  
Enhancing yoga teaching and deepening personal practice. **By Tom Williams**

**Y**oga, an ancient practice that has transcended time and space, continues to offer physical, mental, and spiritual benefits to its practitioners.

At the heart of this practice lies the Sanskrit language, which holds the keys to understanding the depth and richness of yoga.

As a yoga teacher, mastering the Sanskrit asana names can offer numerous benefits, from enhancing your teaching abilities to deepening your personal practice. It can also offer valuable insight for all student practitioners as well.

Here, we explore the wisdom behind learning Sanskrit posture names and the unique advantages of incorporating this ancient language into your practice and your classes.

## The importance of learning Sanskrit asana names

**Connection to yoga's roots:** Sanskrit is the language of yoga, and learning the asana names in their original form helps you connect with the ancient wisdom and tradition. This deeper connection can enrich your practice and teaching, providing a more authentic and profound experience for you and your students.

**Precise instruction:** Using the Sanskrit asana names ensures that you're providing clear and accurate guidance to your students. By understanding the meaning behind each term, you can guide them through each pose with confidence, ensuring they experience the full benefits of their practice.

**Enhance communication:** Many experienced practitioners and teachers are familiar with the Sanskrit asana names. By using these terms in your classes, you'll foster a sense of unity and shared understanding among your students, creating a supportive and inclusive environment.

**Develop a deeper understanding:** The Sanskrit language is rich in meaning, and by learning the asana names, you'll uncover layers of knowledge about each pose. This deeper understanding can help you teach more effectively and inspire your students to explore their practice on a more profound level.

## The benefits of mastering Sanskrit asana names

**Improved mental flexibility:** Learning a new language, especially one as intricate

as Sanskrit, can help improve your mental agility. This enhanced mental flexibility can have a positive impact on your problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities, both on and off the mat.

**Increased retention:** Mastering the Sanskrit asana names will improve your ability to retain information, allowing you to teach with confidence and accurately guide your students through each pose.

**Enhanced creativity:** Engaging with the Sanskrit language encourages the use of imagination and visualisation, leading to new ideas and insights that can enrich your teaching and personal practice.

**Professional development:** As a yoga teacher, your commitment to continuous learning and growth sets you apart. Mastering the Sanskrit asana names demonstrates your dedication to the craft, and can make you more attractive to potential employers and clients.

One of the most effective ways to memorise the Sanskrit asana names and enhance your practice is by using the LOCI Memory Palace technique. This powerful mnemonic device has been used for centuries to



improve memory and information recall. The technique involves creating a mental image of a familiar place, such as your childhood home or a favourite park, and associating different pieces of information with specific parts of that place. This creates a 'memory palace' that you can easily navigate in your mind, allowing for quick and efficient recall of the Sanskrit asana names.

The 'Mastering Sanskrit Asana Names' course offered by Yoga Soda (yogasoda.co) incorporates this effective memory technique, enabling students to deepen their understanding of yoga and its ancient roots. By learning the Sanskrit asana names through the LOCI Memory Palace technique, you can significantly improve your ability to recall information and bring greater focus and clarity to your practice.

The comprehensive course is designed to be easily accessible and visually engaging, making it an invaluable resource for yoga teachers and practitioners seeking to enhance their knowledge and teaching skills.

By incorporating the LOCI Memory Palace technique and enrolling in a Sanskrit course you can unlock the full potential of your yoga practice and teaching abilities. The ancient wisdom of Sanskrit asana names, combined with this powerful



memory technique, will enable you to connect more deeply with the roots of yoga, offer precise instruction, and foster a sense of unity and shared understanding among your students.

The wisdom of learning Sanskrit asana names extends far beyond the yoga mat, offering numerous benefits that can enhance your teaching abilities and deepen your personal practice. Embedding this ancient language into your classes, you'll be better equipped to guide your students through a meaningful and transformative

yoga journey.

Embrace the beauty and complexity of Sanskrit and unlock new levels of understanding, connection, and growth in your practice. ॐ

*Tom Williams OBE is a certified yoga teacher from the UK with a passion for Ashtanga and classic Hatha yoga who runs the Mastering Sanskrit Asana Names course at Yoga Soda (yogasoda.co). Say hello on Instagram @loveyogasoda*

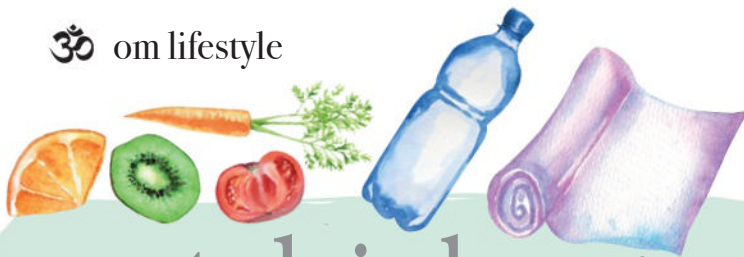
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# eat drink *yoga*

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Most traditional jams contain more sugar than fruit (in fact, some contain up to 70% sugar!) — but Fearne & Rosie Jams are different, packing in more fruit and reducing the sugar. The jams contain 70% fruit (which is 50% more fruit than the market leader) with 40% less sugar than an average jar of jam too. Bursting with natural fruity goodness, spread the love with delicious Strawberry, Strawberry Super Berry (containing strawberries, blackcurrants and blueberries), Blackcurrant & Cherry varieties. Vegan with all natural ingredients and no concentrates or palm oil. Available from Ocado, Waitrose and online.

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[fearneandrosie.co.uk](http://fearneandrosie.co.uk)

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A special edition chutney from Tracklements launching in July, just in time to spruce up those picnics. This vegan and gluten free chutney is made with rhubarb gathered from a family farm in Norfolk. Delicately pink, the tart, intensely fruity rhubarb is gently balanced with warm ginger, sweet sultanas and carefully selected aromatic spices including nutmeg, cinnamon and allspice. The chutney pairs perfectly with almost anything, adding tangy sweetness to crumbly cheeses and remarkable with poppadoms, onion bhajis or with any curry you fancy. Find it in fine food delis and farm shops nationwide or online.

**£3.75 (200g)**

[tracklements.co.uk](http://tracklements.co.uk)



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**£3.95 (1x single big bar, 85g) £24.99 (6x 85g bar luxury gift boxes)**

[pureheavenly.com](http://pureheavenly.com)

# Plant-based delicious

Healthy, feel-good vegan recipes you'll want to make again and again, from the wonderful new book, *Plant-Based Delicious*, by Ashley Madden

## Fudgy Beet Brownies

### MAKES 12 TO 16 BROWNIES

Roasted beets do some heavy lifting in these rich and dense brownies. They add texture, moisture and a tempting red velvet hue without any of the earthy beet flavour you might anticipate.

- 10oz (300g) beets (2 small to medium-sized beets), scrubbed and chopped into 2" (5cm) chunks (2 cups chopped)
- 1 cup (97g) chickpea flour
- ¾ cup (75g) gluten-free oat flour
- 1 cup (144g) coconut sugar
- 1 cup (86g) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tsp (9g) baking powder
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 cup (100g) walnuts, divided
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ¾ cup (175ml) unsweetened almond milk or organic soy milk
- ½ cup (88g) mini vegan chocolate chips, plus more for garnish

1. First, roast the beets: Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Remove any gnarly stems or thick-skinned areas from the beets. Place the beets in a small casserole dish and pour a little bit of water into the bottom of the dish, just enough to cover the bottom. Cover the dish tightly with tinfoil and roast the beets for 45 to 60 minutes. They're done when they're fork-tender. Remove the beets from the oven and keep the tinfoil on for 15 minutes so they continue to steam. Then, remove the foil and let cool completely. I like to turn the oven off at this point and come back to the brownies a few hours later. Once the beets are cooled, peel off the skins.
2. Start making the brownies: Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4. Line an 8-inch (20.5-cm) square baking pan with parchment paper so that the parchment hangs out over two opposing sides.
3. In a large bowl, mix together the chickpea and oat flours, coconut sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. Be sure to break up any clumps of coconut sugar.
4. Set aside ¼ cup (25g) of the walnuts (we'll use these to garnish the brownies). In a high-speed blender, combine the remaining ¾ cup (75g) of walnuts, vanilla, milk and roasted beets, and blend until completely smooth. It will resemble a hot pink milkshake.
5. Add the blended mixture to the bowl of dry ingredients and mix until well combined. The batter will be thick. Fold in the chocolate chips.
6. Transfer the batter to the prepared baking pan and smooth out the surface. Chop the reserved walnuts and scatter them over the top of the brownies, lightly pressing them into the batter. You can also sprinkle some additional chocolate chips on the surface, if desired. Bake for 27 to 30 minutes. The brownies are done when small cracks appear on the surface and the middle is just about firm.
7. Remove the brownies from the oven and let them cool completely in the pan on a cooling rack. Once cooled, lift the brownies out of the pan by pulling on the parchment paper, and transfer them to a cutting board. Cut into 12 to 16 brownies. These brownies are super fudgy, so be sure to wipe the knife clean with a damp cloth between each cut for nicely shaped brownies.
8. These will keep in the fridge in a tightly sealed container for up to 3 days. Otherwise, keep in the freezer for up to 3 months.



### NOTE

You can soak the walnuts for 4 to 6 hours for easier digestion and blending, if desired. Drain before using. If vegan chocolate chips aren't in your diet, omit.



## One Pot Tuscan Pasta

### MAKES 4 SERVINGS

This pasta is guaranteed to please everyone at the table. The Italian-inspired tomato sauce, mushrooms and pasta are cooked together simultaneously and served hot right from the pot.

- 1 leek, dark green tips and root removed and discarded, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 10oz (280g) portobello mushrooms, thinly sliced (4 portobellos)
- 1 tbsp (6g) Italian seasoning (see Notes to make your own)
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 (15-oz [425g]) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (15-oz [425g]) can tomato sauce or passata
- 2¾ cups (650ml) low-sodium vegetable stock
- ½ tsp sea salt, or to taste
- 10 oz (280g) dried brown rice spaghetti or linguine
- 1½ cups (273g) cooked or canned borlotti,

navy or (384 g) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

- 1 tsp coconut sugar (optional)
  - 1½ cups packed (60g) baby spinach (optional)
  - 3 tbsp (12g) nutritional yeast
  - 1 tsp red wine vinegar
  - Freshly ground black pepper
- Optional garnish**
- Fresh thyme or oregano

1. In a Dutch oven or soup pot, sauté the leeks and garlic with a few tablespoons (about 30 ml) of water over medium heat for 5 minutes or until softened. Add water, as needed, to prevent burning.
2. Add the mushrooms, Italian seasoning and red pepper flakes, and continue to sauté for another 5 minutes, or until the mushrooms have shrunk in size and begin releasing their juices. Now, add the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, vegetable stock and salt, and bring to a boil. Crack the pasta in half and add to the pot along with the beans. Lower the heat to a rapid simmer and simmer,

uncovered, for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the pasta is tender and the sauce has thickened. Stir often to prevent the noodles from sticking together or to the bottom of the pot and make sure the noodles are always submerged in the sauce. Toward the end of the cooking time and as the sauce thickens, it might start sputtering and splashing. If so, partially cover the pot to avoid a mess.

3. Turn off the heat. Stir in the coconut sugar (if using), spinach (if using), nutritional yeast and vinegar. Taste and reseason with pepper and salt, as needed, and divide among bowls. Garnish with fresh thyme, if desired.

### NOTES

- If you don't have leeks, use one large yellow onion, diced.
- If you eat gluten, you can use an equal amount of wholewheat spaghetti or linguine.
- To make your own Italian seasoning, mix together: 1 teaspoon dried basil, ¾ teaspoon dried oregano, ¾ teaspoon dried parsley and ½ teaspoon dried rosemary.

# Spicy Sheet Pan Cauliflower Tacos

## MAKES 8 TACOS

These tacos are sheet pan–easy while still having all the flavor, texture and messiness required from a tasty taco. The cauliflower and beans are tossed in hot sauce and spices and then baked. After spooning the filling into tortillas, layer them generously with all the toppings—it's all about the toppings!

### Spice blend

- 2 tbsp (8g) nutritional yeast
- 1 tbsp (8g) chili powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder

- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

### Cauliflower and black bean filling

- 1 medium-sized head cauliflower, cut into 1" (2.5cm) florets (about 5 cups [500g])
- 1½ cups (258g) cooked or canned black beans or chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup (60ml) vinegar-based hot sauce (e.g., Frank's Red Hot)

### To serve

- 8 (5" [12.5-cm]) corn tortillas, or sturdy lettuce leaves
- 1 head leafy green lettuce, chopped, or ¼

- head purple or green cabbage, shredded
- 2 cups (520g) salsa of choice
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 2 avocados, pitted and peeled, sliced or diced
- Cashew sour cream (optional)
- 3 limes, sliced into wedges

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6 and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Make the spice blend: In a small bowl, combine the nutritional yeast, chili powder, cumin, onion and garlic powders, paprika and pepper, and set aside.
3. Make the filling: In a large bowl, combine the cauliflower florets and beans. Drizzle the hot sauce over the top and toss to coat everything evenly. Now, spread half of the spice blend over the top and mix again. Then, add the rest of the spice blend and mix again until all the cauliflower and beans are coated.
4. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Flip and redistribute in a single layer, then bake for another 10 to 15 minutes, or until the cauliflower is fork-tender and might be beginning to char on the edges.
5. Meanwhile, warm the corn tortillas in the oven or in a large sauté pan over medium heat.
6. Layer each tortilla with lettuce, salsa, spicy cauliflower and black bean filling, onion, tomato, avocado, cashew sour cream (if using) and a generous squeeze of lime juice.



Reprinted with permission from Plant-Based Delicious by Ashley Madden. Page Street Publishing Co. 2023. Photo credit: Ashley Madden.

# Post-workout power meals

Unlock the power of post-workout meals: exclusive veggie and vegan recipes to enhance physique and health from The Kitchen Community

**S**ome yoga sessions can be blissfully soothing...but some can be tough! A well-balanced post-workout meal containing a combination of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats can optimise muscle recovery, promote muscle growth, and prevent muscle breakdown. And you'll have deserved every mouthful!

A study by The Kitchen Community emphasises the importance of consuming meals with a proper balance of nutrients within 30-45 minutes after exercise to maximise the benefits.

To help fitness enthusiasts harness the power of post-workout nutrition, it has created three exclusive recipes, tailored to address fitness goals and health requirements. The recipes include a range of nutrient-rich ingredients, such as lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats, to ensure a balanced and delicious meal.

"In today's fast-paced world, it's crucial for yoga and all fitness enthusiasts to fuel their bodies with the right nutrients after a strenuous workout," said Cassie Marshall, founder of The Kitchen Community. "That's why we have crafted these exclusive, nutrient-rich recipes that are perfect for optimising recovery and physique enhancement."



## Power-Up Quinoa Salad

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup diced cucumber
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tbsp chopped walnuts
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

In a large bowl, combine quinoa, kale, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, and red onion. In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Pour the dressing over the salad and mix well.



Top with crumbled feta cheese and chopped walnuts.

### Benefits:

This high-protein, fibre-rich meal is perfect for promoting muscle recovery and boosting metabolism. Quinoa provides a complete source of plant-based protein, while kale offers essential vitamins and minerals. The healthy fats from walnuts and olive oil help with nutrient absorption, and feta cheese adds a delicious flavour boost.

## Muscle-Building Greek Yoghurt Parfait

### Ingredients:

1 cup non-fat Greek yoghurt  
 1/2 cup fresh mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)  
 1/4 cup granola  
 1 tbsp honey  
 1 tbsp chia seeds

### Instructions:

In a glass or bowl, layer half of the Greek yoghurt.

Add half of the mixed berries and half of the granola.

Layer the remaining yoghurt, followed by the remaining berries and granola.

Drizzle honey over the top and sprinkle with chia seeds.

### Benefits:

This high-protein, low-fat meal is ideal for supporting muscle growth and recovery. Greek yoghurt is packed with essential amino acids and antioxidants, while the mixed berries provide essential vitamins and minerals. Granola offers a crunchy texture and a source of complex carbohydrates, and chia seeds add extra protein, fibre, and omega-3 fatty acids.



“Some yoga sessions can be blissfully soothing...but some can be tough! A well-balanced post-workout meal containing a combination of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats can optimise muscle recovery, promote muscle growth, and prevent muscle breakdown. And you’ll have deserved every mouthful!”



## Energising Sweet Potato & Black Bean Bowl

### Ingredients:

1 medium sweet potato, diced and roasted  
 1 cup cooked black beans  
 1/2 cup cooked brown rice  
 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper  
 1/4 cup diced red onion  
 1/4 cup chopped cilantro  
 1/2 avocado, sliced  
 2 tbsp lime juice  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions:

In a bowl, combine roasted sweet potato, black beans, brown rice, red bell pepper, and red onion.

Drizzle lime juice over the top and season with salt and pepper.

Gently mix the ingredients together.

Top with sliced avocado and chopped cilantro.

### Benefits:

This meal features a perfect blend of complex carbohydrates and plant-based protein to replenish energy stores and support muscle repair. Sweet potatoes are rich in beta-carotene and fibre, while black beans provide protein and essential amino acids. Brown rice and avocado add extra nutrients and healthy fats to the dish.

TEACHER ZONE

# TEACHER ZONE

A deeper understanding of yoga... for teachers, by teachers

**Inside:**

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**76 Confessions Of A  
Newly-Qualified Yoga  
Teacher**

**78 Teachers' Tales**

**79 OM Books**





# MyYogaBiz

Tips from the experts to help you grow the yoga business of your dreams

## THIS MONTH'S MENTOR:

**Sarah Mangan @SarahManganYoga based in Birkdale, north-west England**

### Does a YTT set you up for running your own business?

Teacher training in India was a truly incredible experience, but like everyone else on the planet, I didn't see the pandemic and all its consequences on my yoga horizon. Subject matter expertise in yoga alone was not going to be enough to start and sustain my business. All the ideas I had worked on to position and promote my business were, rather ironically, turned on their head by the lockdown in 2020. Frankly, without having had previous business experience, I would have found it incredibly tough.

The choices were mind-blowing: online during lockdown...but how? What tech did I need? Would the quality be good enough? Would clients have an enjoyable experience? Then how best to market my services, defining and refining how I articulate the value that yoga practice brings. This meant overcoming a lot of preconceived ideas and stereotypes about yoga. That being said, it also allowed me to deepen my knowledge, and continue with my yoga studies, which I believe is essential as the initial 200 hours is really only the beginning.

### Your niche?

I'm a bit of cheat here as I have two passions: functional movement yoga and rocket yoga. I love these as they allow me to focus on strength, mobility and performance. It's great learning the biomechanics and physiology that underpin my teaching. I mostly work with athletes and sports teams as I know how valuable yoga practice could be in preventing and the rehabilitation of injury. My work supporting athletes in their performance means I operate alongside physiotherapists and strength and conditioning coaches as part of a professional team. In addition to my sports-specific work, I deliver regular rocket classes in a number of studios around the area. I also focus on breathwork and meditation and have been privileged to work in local schools and businesses using these techniques to maintain calm and focus. Yoga is for everyone and being in a position to champion its benefits is something I really enjoy, wherever that may be. This diversity ensures my business has a solid and broad foundation.

### Business plan?

I have written a new business plan every year since starting out and



I have already learned that it is almost 50% obsolete as soon as I've written it! I believe balance is important as things change (especially economically right now) so be prepared to pivot and adapt your plans accordingly. Pragmatism is

a useful thing in business and so whilst I maintain functional yoga and rocket yoga as my focus, I am grateful for the variety of client relationships I have established.

### Who do you admire?

I've had the pleasure of spending time with and learning from Sarah Ramsden. I really admire her and how she has blazed a trail for yoga in sports and in football in particular. The work Sarah did with elite players has really given yoga a credibility at all levels of the game. This is so important, as there sadly remain some stereotypes around yoga practice that undermine its credibility as part of an athletes training regime.

### Hardest lesson?

The toughest lesson I have learned is to keep pricing simple. Structuring pricing around number of attendees, session duration and commitment on number of sessions creates a matrix that can be off-putting. But we must remember to know our worth! 🙌

*Written and compiled by Claudia Brown. If you'd like to be featured in this column connect via Instagram @YogaByClaudia*



# Yoga studio *heroes*

10 things I've learnt in 10 years running one of Yorkshire's largest yoga studios.  
By Holly McFee, founder of Yoga Hero in Leeds

**T**he past 10 years have seen their fair share of historical events, making it no easy task to guide a small business through it all. For yoga and wellness businesses, the lack of funding and support made the years during and since the pandemic particularly tough.

Keeping the studio doors open and maintaining a yoga haven for our heroes

hasn't always been easy and, in fact, at times it's seemed impossible. The power of yoga prevails, though! Hopefully, the bits I've learnt along the way can help others to thrive so we can keep offering yoga to those who need it.

Now celebrating a decade since Yoga Hero first opened its doors in Leeds, here are the 10 most important lessons I've learnt over the years:

## 1. Everything costs, and costs more than you think

Straight in with the fun stuff. Sadly, money really does make the world go around and without it things can get really tough. Rent, rates, utilities, insurance, staff, equipment, refunds... and oh so much more. Budget for what you think you need — and then budget some more. Where possible, try and keep something aside for the unexpected costs because they always come at you when you really could do without.

## 2. Downtime away from 'work' doesn't just happen on its own

Running a studio means you'll likely have classes running every day, workshops to plan or manage, plus all your general day-to-day responsibilities just to keep things ticking over. You'll constantly be thinking about how to make the studio the best it can possibly be and that takes enormous effort every day. Practice what you preach: consciously make time for rest and try not to let your own yoga practice fall by the wayside. It truly is the tool that will help you ride the waves when they come along.



### 3. Savasana = Marmite

Believe it or not, not everybody loves Savasana! I know, unbelievable! Your yogis will either love it or hate it. We, of course, know it's so important, so encourage it wherever you can, but appreciate that some people struggle with stillness, and our job isn't to force that.

### 4. People are exceptionally kind

This became abundantly clear during Covid. People were getting in touch to ask if they could pay more for memberships, if they could donate or help out in other ways than financially. People went out of their way to explain what Yoga Hero (and yoga, in general) meant to them. This is always what shattered those thoughts of giving up during what was such a hard time.

### 5. People can also be exceptionally mean

The less said about this one the better. This is why we practice yoga, right?

### 6. People moult... a lot

Be prepared to spend a good amount of your time sweeping and hoovering only to still find hairs on the studio floor. We spend a disproportionate amount of time



sweeping up hair compared to the number of people who actually pass through every day.

### 7. There is just nothing like yoga philosophy for coping with the challenges of everyday life

We teach it day in, day out, but honestly the lessons we find in yoga philosophy are invaluable. There's no shying away from the fact that the past few years have been exceptionally tough, and we're not out of the woods yet, but I can guarantee you that you'll almost always find the right guidance and wisdom from a yoga text.

*“We see yoga's impact every single day in the studio, in every single class. Whether it's respite from a stressful job during a lunchtime class, or a powerful emotional release that was just oh so needed, it's such a beautiful thing being able to share this practice with others.”*

### 8. Prepare to explain, almost daily, that you definitely don't have to be able to touch your toes to do yoga

Many of our yogis struggle with mobility and flexibility for varying reasons. In fact, quite a few of our teachers do as well.

A physical yoga practice will of course improve flexibility and strength over time and with consistency (depending on the root cause, of course), however, try and see that as a happy by-product and not the number one aim of yoga. It is so much more than being a bendy Wendy.

### 9. Yoga absolutely changes lives on a daily basis

We often hear our teacher trainees say their 200-hour training changed their lives. While this is definitely true, it isn't just the chunky training courses that have this impact. We see yoga's impact every single day in the studio, in every single class. Whether it's respite from a stressful job during a lunchtime class, or a powerful emotional release that was just oh so needed, it's such a beautiful thing being able to share this practice with others.

### 10. There is genuinely nothing like it

Yoga just has this way of bringing people together and helping them to feel their best; mentally and physically. Never has this been more important. Finding that community, sense of calm and acceptance, and perhaps most importantly kindness, can all go such a long way in this day and age. Having a space that facilitates all of that... well, there's just nothing like it. It's the stuff that melts my heart! 🧡

*Become a yoga hero yourself and book onto a class or course at Yoga Hero in Leeds. Visit: [yogahero.co.uk](http://yogahero.co.uk)*



# Confessions of a newly-qualified yoga teacher

Five surprising realities of being a yoga teacher that I was blissfully unaware of as a student. **By Brandi Rima**

I stumbled across an email announcement for yoga teacher training while unapologetically hiding from my kids. The training was in a neighbouring town, scheduled on a day that I didn't have to work and my husband could be a solo parent, and there were only a few spots left. Call it intuition or a need to throw myself into something completely my own, I felt an overwhelming urge to claim a spot right then. I waited maybe 24 hours before signing up and dusting off a used copy of the Bhagavad Gita.

If I had one, the plan was not to end up actually teaching yoga. I already had a full-time gig as a college professor. I love teaching, but I did enough of it. Yoga was my self-care go-to that I wished to keep to myself. Plus my husband and I were still deep in the trenches of parenting our little kids. A new commitment like teaching yoga was just too big to squeeze into my packed life. Teacher training was exciting because it was a short-term way to revitalise my practice and

give it new meaning. Maybe I'd also make a friend or two.

Six months of teacher training did bring all of the above and, (un)surprisingly, a call to teach that I could not ignore. At first, I taught one class a week to feel out if teaching was the right fit. With every class I taught though, I fell more and more in love with the art of teaching yoga. Teaching didn't replace my own practice, but it was a sweet complement to the work I did on my own mat. In one year, my yoga business has grown to teaching at least three studio classes a week, hosting events and retreats, and writing about all things yoga.

If it appears magical, trust that going all in with a yoga business

**“If it appears magical, trust that going all in with a yoga business has not been only sparkles and sunshine. In my 12 years coming to the mat as a student I was blissfully unaware of what it took to be a yoga teacher.”**

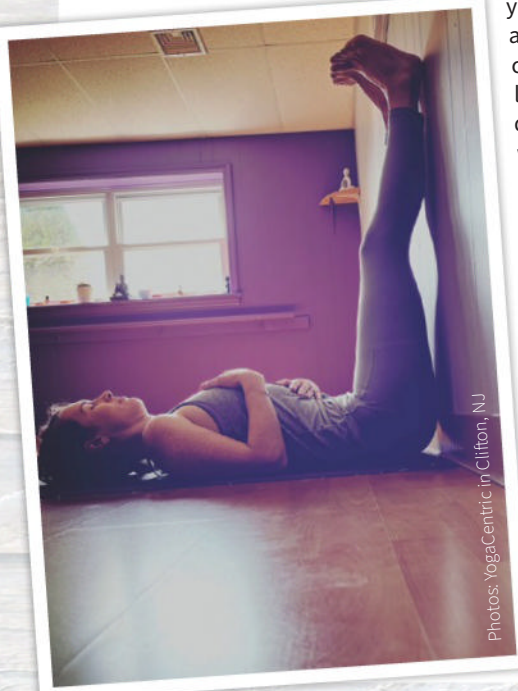
has not been only sparkles and sunshine. In my 12 years coming to the mat as a student I was blissfully unaware of what it took to be a yoga teacher. It seemed like a very fun job with perks, like wearing cute leggings to work. The realities of being a yoga teacher, however — and a new one at that — only come to the surface when we are living them ourselves.

These are the five most surprising realisations of my first year teaching yoga:

## 1. It's not about the teacher

In reality, it is all about the students. I used to idolise my yoga teachers as if they were super-humans who were kind enough to share their wisdom. In reality, most teachers are just trying

Photo: James Ziobro



Photos: YogaCentric in Clifton, NJ

to figure out how to help their students feel better than they did before class. Although they may, students are not there to brighten our day or applaud our teaching. They are there for themselves and we are there for them. A teacher's relationship to their teaching cannot be dependent upon whether students say hello or thank you, smile, make conversation, keep to themselves, or quietly disappear out the door after class. Most of the time, how students behave in class is about them and whatever is circling around in their lives at the moment.

## 2. Trust is earned

Having the teaching certification in hand and landing a spot on the studio's schedule are only the very start of the work. Students gravitate toward teachers they trust. It takes time, effort and constant showing up to foster trusting social connections. Some students hesitate or even downright refuse to take a class with a new teacher. Their trust may have to be built through interactions in classes taught by other teachers, in the studio lobby, and on social media. This can mean being present and available as a teacher even when we are off the clock.

## 3. The anxiety in the first year is real, but it subsides

I've heard yoga teachers being praised for being forever calm and grounded, but in my first year of teaching yoga the anxiety was off the charts. I worried about getting the inspiration for new sequences, the number of students showing up to class, whether the studio would keep me on the schedule or not, stumbling over my words and forgetting my cues, and on and on and on. If yoga philosophy teaches us to calm the mind and make peace with acceptance, the start of a teaching career is the true test of these practices. The good news is that the anxiety does subside over time. My feelings of



Photo: Catherine Emporellis & Flux Yoga

uneasiness have slowly blossomed into confidence, self-love and gratitude for my gifts as a teacher.

## 4. Extraversion is required

There is little room to be shy in the business of yoga. At my core, I am an introvert needing ample quiet time devoid of social interactions. Before becoming a teacher, I would sneak in and out of class with only an exchange of hello and thank you. I would sit on the sidelines of post-class conversations weaving my way around chatty yogis to find the fastest way out the door. That is okay for a student, but not a teacher. Teachers have to get comfortable with being seen and heard often, initiating and keeping conversations, and making social connections among students.

## 5. Teachers are their best advocates

There are mentors, clients and colleagues of course, but the best advocate of a yoga business is the owner themselves. We may be tempted to rely on the optimistic belief that opportunities will come to us because we are good teachers, and sometimes this is true. But more often, new opportunities become a reality through intentionally taking steps to bring them into fruition. If we want to teach a class, get more client reviews, run an event, or have any new opportunity that will propel a yoga business forward, then we have to step into the driver's seat to make it happen.

It took me an entire year of teaching to come to these realisations. I wish I had known of them as a student though. It would not have deterred me from signing up for yoga teacher training or starting a yoga business, but rather, it would have given me a more enlightened sense of gratitude and appreciation for my teachers. 🙏

*Brandi Rima is a vinyasa and restorative instructor (RYT-200) and professor of Applied Social Psychology at Bronx Community College of the City University of New York. She lives in Montclair, NJ with her husband James, four children Joe, Nick, Genevieve and Gemma, and two dogs Ziggy and Betty. Find her at: [privateyogamtcnj.com](http://privateyogamtcnj.com) or connect on IG @rimabirdyoga*



Photos: YogaCentric in Clifton, NJ



## Navigating negativity bias

You can't please everyone and there's no point dwelling on it. **By Paula Hines**

**P**icture the scene: You've just taught a class. You chat to several people afterwards and they each tell you how much they enjoyed the class. Then one person lets you know they didn't like it. How do you feel?

The above is quite a simplistic example, but if you've been teaching for a number of years, the chances are you've experienced a version of this scenario at least once.

You could receive 100% positive feedback for 99 days then on Day 100, out of a large group, you get a negative response from one person. The likelihood is that your mind will get stuck on the one, single negative response. As humans we're hard-wired to focus on the negative over the positive: the negativity bias.

It's not that we should be seeking out praise and that all negative responses must be dismissed. Instead, consider

examining where the negative response may be coming from and whether behind it is something we ought to address or not.

In one instance, I remember someone attending my class for the first time complaining afterwards that my voice was too quiet. Yet, everyone else, including the people at the very back of the room expressed that they could hear me perfectly well. For context, the person who complained had placed their mat directly in front of me and very close to my own mat. I'd also checked beforehand that everyone could hear me.

If this person had said something during the class I could have addressed their concern. Unfortunately, they did not. That said, the implication here was that the level of my voice was probably not the issue in that moment. Some months later my suspicions were confirmed when the same person returned to class, apologised and revealed learning that they had some

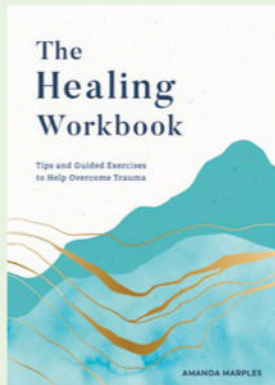
hearing loss.

There's an added layer when the negative response is from another teacher. My experience of this has been rare, but from what I've witnessed and anecdotally, this tends to be more about someone having their own ideas of how things 'should' be done, particularly when coming from different schools of yoga.

My thoughts? Note the negative to ascertain any constructive feedback, but try not to ruminate on it. Address what you can where possible and have compassion for others. But also know that sometimes, it's really not even about you or your teaching at all. You won't please everyone and that's okay. ☸

*Paula Hines is a London-based yoga teacher and writer. Her new book *Rest + Calm* (Green Tree, Bloomsbury Publishing) is out now in paperback, audiobook and Kindle/eBook. Find out more at: [ucanyoga.co.uk](http://ucanyoga.co.uk)*

# Om books



**The Healing Workbook: Tips And Guided Exercises To Help Overcome Trauma**  
Amanda Marples  
£12.99  
VIE Books (Summersdale Publishers)

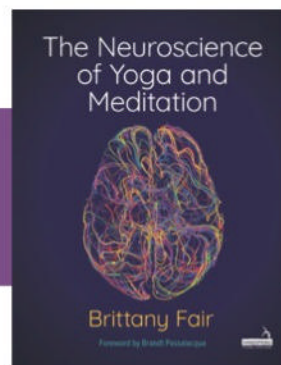
Trauma may seem a daunting word, but it can cover many distressing events, from negative childhood experiences to the ordeal of living through a pandemic. It is often at the source of our fears and anxieties and can affect the way we live our lives. This book is full of practical advice, effective tips and guided exercises based on trusted cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to help readers begin the process of recovery from their trauma and to find a way back to themselves and a life where they can flourish and thrive.

## FURTHER READING



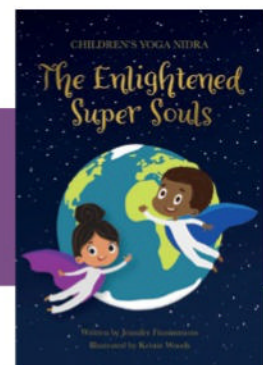
**Recipes To Reconnect: Food And Conversations To Re-establish The Relationship Between Nature, Food And Self**  
Anna Boglione  
£35  
Kyle Books

We have lost touch with the planet that feeds us and its relationship to our health, happiness and climate. Through thought-provoking conversations with inspiring thinkers and writers, and seasonal recipes created alongside leading chefs, this book provides a blueprint for a better way of eating and living. Recipe and conversation pairings cover such topics as regenerative farming and rewilding, foraged dishes, microbes, and even lucid dreaming for a good night's sleep.



**The Neuroscience of Yoga And Meditation**  
Brittany Fair  
£35  
Handspring Publishing

Publishing July 21, The Neuroscience of Yoga and Meditation presents a comprehensive review of scientific research on the effects of yoga and meditation on the brain. The author offers tools for interpreting scientific literature and explores the current limitations in studying these practices. She also includes examples of meditations and movement routines that activate the brain to decrease stress and improve wellbeing. A must-have for any yoga teacher, therapist or student interested in how contemplative practices affect the brain.



**Children's Yoga Nidra: The Enlightened Super Souls**  
Jennifer Fitzsimmons  
(Illustrated by Kristie Woods)  
£25  
Reach Publishers

Introduce your children to the soothing gift that is yoga nidra. This book includes yoga nidra scripts for children as bedtime stories, also available in audio. The author also provides a brief summary for adults, along with the teachings of life in the language of youngsters on how to take care of their thoughts and feelings. Helps parents build or reinstate strong, balanced minds and calm, healthy and happy emotions in their children – to bring back the joy of being a child.



# Yoga is for every body

Your pictures. Your community



Brandi Rima and her kids at Skaneateles, NY, USA



Bea Durinikova in Jubrique, Spain



Malissa Whited doing what she loves, in a place she loves - Hawaii



Sari Grandstaff in Dorado, Puerto Rico



Chloe Mountfield in Greece



Jack Keher - Alanya, Turkey

### We want your photos!

Send us happy shots, fun pics, great asana (or bad asana!), big smiley faces, anything at all – and see them in OM Magazine. It doesn't have to be you doing a yoga pose either. We want to see your yoga life: a pre-class group hug, a cup of tea after class, what you got up to at the weekend, send them all via email to: [jane@primeimpact.co.uk](mailto:jane@primeimpact.co.uk)

# The Great Outdoors



**Take your yoga practice outside this summer for a double health boost, where you can stretch away as you soak up the splendour of Mother Nature all around**

Imagine the healing powers of nature and the amazing therapeutic, life-affirming benefits of yoga combined — what a powerful double act!

This summer, you can have it all, simply take your practice out into the big wide world.

And we don't just mean land-based practices either. You can get your yoga fix anywhere, from the deep blue sea to the dizzying heights of London's iconic O2 venue. Yoga is such an adaptable, versatile and portable practice that it suits almost any occasion, even if it's just a few mindful breaths, or simple stretches. Summer yoga festivals are a great place to get your outdoor fix and have some fun, whilst keeping your practice going. If that appeals, then the OM & Bass Festival could be just what you need.

Maybe you're a water baby and need to feel that connection with the sea.

There are so many ways you can experience that aquatic magic, from pool-based classes to the challenges of SUP Yoga. Or go on the adventure of a lifetime with a unique sailing and yoga holiday on the high seas, where you'll feel the wind in your hair and breathe the saltwater air as you get your stretch on.

For those with a head for heights, rooftop terrace classes abound in the big cities during the summer months. Check out the O2 charity yoga classes held in May for some panoramic inspiration.



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  - 96** Yoga & Sailing



# Aqua Yoga 101

Take your yoga practice into the water and open up a whole new world of fun, healthy possibilities. Renowned expert **Christa Fairbrother** takes you through the basics



**W**hat exactly is aqua yoga or water yoga? At its simplest, aqua yoga is moving your yoga practice into the water. But by taking advantage of the medium of water, it can be so much more than that.

In land yoga, your poses are confined to the mat, and your movements happen parallel to the mat's edges. In the pool, 360° of movement are available. Warrior I can become a curtsy, providing valuable proprioceptive feedback by crossing the midline behind you. Balance postures can include movement on the water's surface in the transverse plane, which gets neglected on the mat.

Being in the water can transform how you think about applying yoga philosophy to your practice. The properties of water can flip how you feel about ahimsa and tapas, for example. In the water, simply standing in mountain pose is hard because of the movement of the water around you. Yet the water supports you. When standing at the ideal water depth for aqua yoga, mid-chest height, you offload approximately 70% of your weight. That makes Warrior III pose less tiring for your legs.

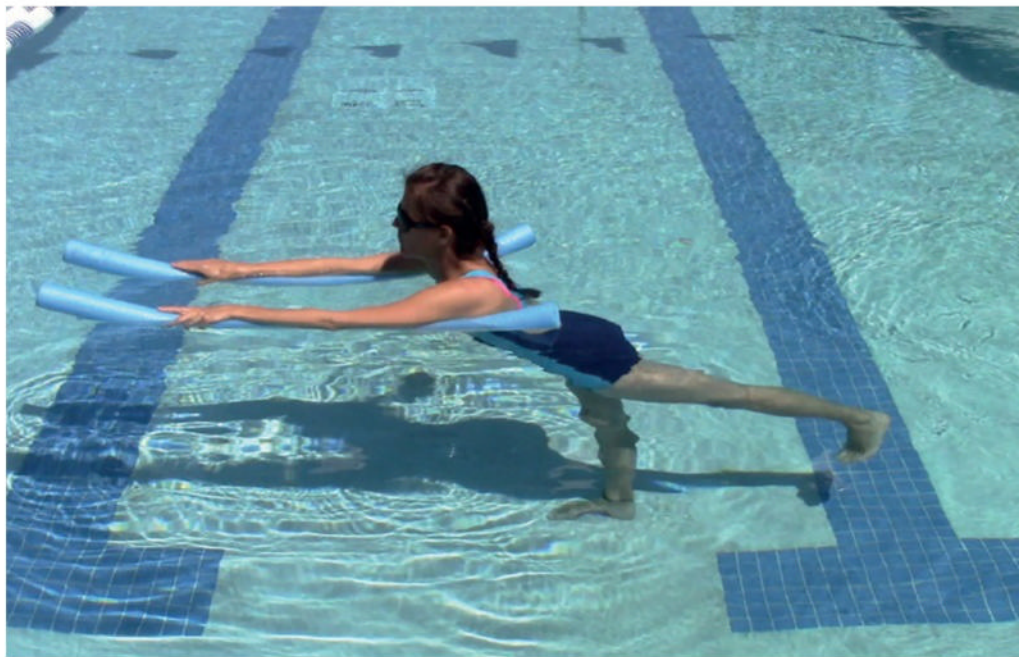
If you want to recreate the tapas element of Warrior III, you can use the viscosity of the water. Water is denser than air. It's not like you're doing yoga in a vat of honey, but moving any limb dynamically through the water in a posture is harder than moving the limb on land. If, while in Warrior III, you move your arms straight down to flank your standing leg, then rotate your palms face up and bring your arms back to the water's surface, it's a challenge. Doing it with straight arms is more challenging than bending your elbows.

## Health benefits

Aqua yoga is also accessible to more people. I live with multiple kinds of arthritis, and my journey with that diagnosis is why I teach aqua yoga. I want to help people who live with the symptoms of arthritis be more comfortable in their bodies. In mat yoga, many people have to give up a practice or don't even start because they have to get on and off the ground or bear weight on their knees or hands. Since aqua yoga is done standing, or with buoyant equipment for seated postures, none of those are an issue.

Of course, much of the difference is due to the medium of water. Immersion has distinct physiological effects on your body. Hydrostatic pressure is the inward squeezing force you feel when you get in the water as if you slipped inside a warm wet sock.

Hydrostatic pressure makes breathing more effort, so your pranayama, or breath work, practices are more intense. Also, your blood cycles through your kidneys faster. That's why everyone has to use the bathroom after being in the pool. Being in the water also reduces pain, lowers your



blood pressure, and reduces swelling, all adding to the potential benefits you gain through an aqua yoga practice.

## Mindful practice

An aquatic environment also enhances your pratyahara and dharana practices. Hydrostatic pressure dampens your nervous system responses, which facilitate drawing your awareness inward. Increasing your inner concentration helps your focus and transition into your meditation. Pools can be noisy, distracting places. If you can concentrate and meditate there, you can do it anywhere! Aqua yoga philosophy includes applied mindfulness skills that you can use to navigate the challenges of your daily life. Taking your yoga practice out of the pool (or off the mat) and using the skills to improve your daily life is truly

the overall point.

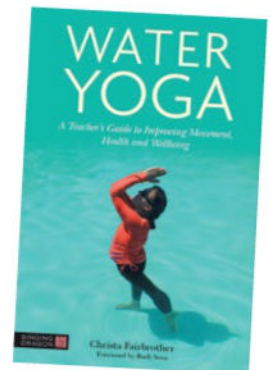
Like on land, an aqua yoga practice concludes with a meditation. Though, instead of lying on a concrete floor for a savasana practice, you can bliss out with a floating meditation. Using pool noodles to support you, you're fully suspended and buoyed to let your nervous system truly relax.

The number one question people have about aqua yoga is how do you do down dog? While you can do inversions like handstand or peacock pose the same as on land, you can picture the challenges. Instead, aqua down dog is like a wide-legged forward fold.

Try aqua yoga for yourself. Take your yoga practice to the pool or on holiday this summer. Experiment with the differences between practicing yoga surrounded by water instead of air. You'll have a great time and learn something new about yourself and your yoga practice.



*Christa Fairbrother, ERYT 200/500, ATRIC, AFP, AFAP, is an internationally recognised aqua yoga coach and trainer who helps people and pros worldwide learn to practice and teach aqua yoga. She is also the author of Water Yoga (Singing Dragon, 2022)*





## Connecting with nature

The transformative power of coastal wellbeing practices:  
the work of **Dr Alicia Ray**

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, it can be easy to forget the incredible power of nature to rejuvenate our minds, bodies, and spirits. Dr Alicia Ray, a yoga teacher, international retreat host, and clinical psychologist based in Cornwall, is on a mission to remind us of the profound benefits of reconnecting with the great outdoors. Through her unique blend of coastal and outdoor wellbeing practices, she helps people find balance, serenity, and a sense of connection with the natural world.

Her journey began when she completed her yoga teacher trainings in the lush, biodiverse landscapes of Costa Rica and the Philippines. Immersed in nature, she found inspiration in the breath-taking surroundings and the rich spiritual traditions of her training sites. Upon returning home to Cornwall, she felt compelled to share the transformative power of nature with others, and so Gwithian Beach Yoga was born in May 2018.

The idyllic Gwithian Beach, with its vast stretches of sand and invigorating sea breeze, provides the perfect setting for weekly yoga classes. Students are encouraged to tap into the raw elements of the ocean, allowing the rhythmic sound of the waves to guide their breath and the ebb and flow of the tide to mirror the fluctuations of their own emotions. This focus on connecting with nature during

practice not only fosters a deep sense of mindfulness but also helps to cultivate a genuine appreciation for the beauty and resilience of the environment.

But Alicia's offerings don't stop at beach yoga. Over the years, she has also hosted bespoke surf and yoga experiences, retreats, trainings and workshops that combine insights from psychology, yoga, and mindfulness. These immersive experiences provide participants with the opportunity to engage in a range of activities designed to nurture their physical, emotional, and spiritual health; enhancing awareness and self-compassion, while simultaneously forging a powerful bond with the natural world.

One of the core components of her approach is the infusion of Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine that emphasises the importance of aligning with the universal elements. This holistic approach to wellness ensures that each individual's needs are met, and that the journey towards optimal health is both fulfilling and sustainable. By incorporating Ayurvedic principles into her coastal wellbeing practices, Alicia helps students discover their unique constitution, or 'tri-dosha', and teaches them how to achieve balance through customised lifestyle choices, diet, and self-care routines.

In addition to her work as a yoga teacher and retreat host, she also works as a clinical psychologist for the NHS, where she



continues to draw upon her deep understanding of the human psyche and her passion for nature to promote mental and emotional wellbeing. Through her multi-faceted career, she is a living testament to the transformative power of connecting with the natural world, and her coastal wellbeing practices serve as an invaluable resource for those seeking solace, balance, and a renewed sense of unity with their environment.

As our modern lives become increasingly disconnected from nature, people like Alicia Ray serve to remind us that the path to true wellbeing often lies in the simple act of stepping outside and immersing ourselves in the world's most breath-taking landscapes. Through her unique blend of coastal and outdoor wellbeing practices, she is helping to heal, inspire, and empower countless individuals, one sun salutation at a time.

Join the upcoming, immersive wellbeing retreat at St. Nectan's Glen, Cornwall on 1-3rd September, or for other beach yoga, surf & yoga experiences and wellbeing retreat days visit: [aliciaray.uk](http://aliciaray.uk) Connect on Instagram @aliciaraywellbeing @gwithianbeachyoga



# ALICIARAY

WELLBEING

A holistic approach to wellbeing : Aligning body and mind  
Psychology - Yoga - Ayurveda - Yoga Therapy - Mindfulness  
CONNECTION - AWARENESS - BALANCE - SELF COMPASSION



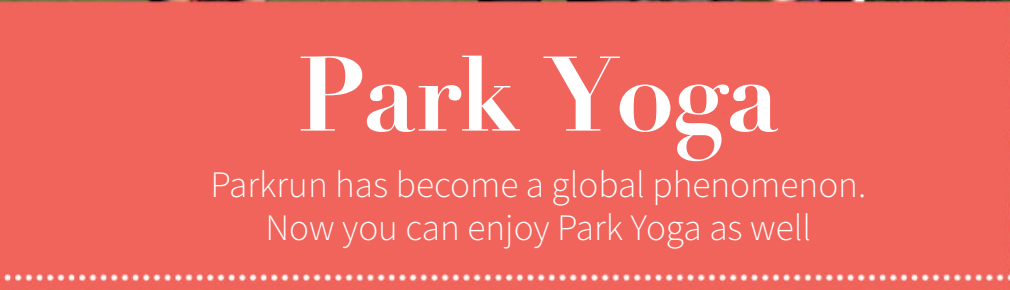
Cornwall : International Retreats : Weekly Yoga Classes : Gwithian Beach Yoga : Trainings  
Wellbeing Workshops : Surf & Yoga Experiences : Silent Disco Beach Yoga : Yoga Therapy  
One to One / Group : Bespoke Packages : Half Day / Full Day / Weekend





# Park Yoga

Parkrun has become a global phenomenon. Now you can enjoy Park Yoga as well



Every Saturday morning, Parkrun attracts thousands of runners up and down the country for a free 5km that's fun, sociable, and a great workout. Best of all: it's totally free!

Now there is Park Yoga too, where you can get your stretch on over the local park in a free session with lots of other likeminded yogis.

A Park Yoga session is a free, hour-long, yoga session held in a local greenspace on Sunday mornings from May to September. It's all put together by a small charity, Park Yoga, that wants to make yoga inclusive and accessible for all. The goal is to improve health and wellbeing by providing free yoga sessions in open spaces for everyone. All are welcome; regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity or ability.

Just like the Parkrun phenomenon has attracted more and more interest, Park Yoga is growing strongly too.

It dates back to 2017, with the first Park Yoga sessions held in Dorset

(where Park Yoga HQ is).

This year it has 32 locations, including nine new venues – still mainly situated across the south west of England – plus one new one in Lancashire!

The new venues are: Barnstaple, Bodmin, Burnley, Chippenham, Dorchester, Par, Wanborough, Weston-super-Mare and Whiteley.

But the organisers hope that more venues are on their way as part of efforts to spread the yoga love right across Britain.

It's all totally free (although please do consider a donation if you're able to) and all levels, ages and abilities are welcome – Park Yoga is a great way to try yoga for the first time!

*If you are a venue and would like to be considered for Park Yoga in the future, or if you are a yoga instructor who believes that Park Yoga could make a real difference in your community, then get in touch at: parkyoga.co*





## ZenBoat

First there was the Love Boat...now there's the ZenBoat!

**U**nearth your inner zen with ZenBoat, a brand-new Greek vintage yacht experience with a holistic approach launching this September.

Sail the magical Greek islands on a classic gulet, with daily light exercise plus delicious Mediterranean cuisine.

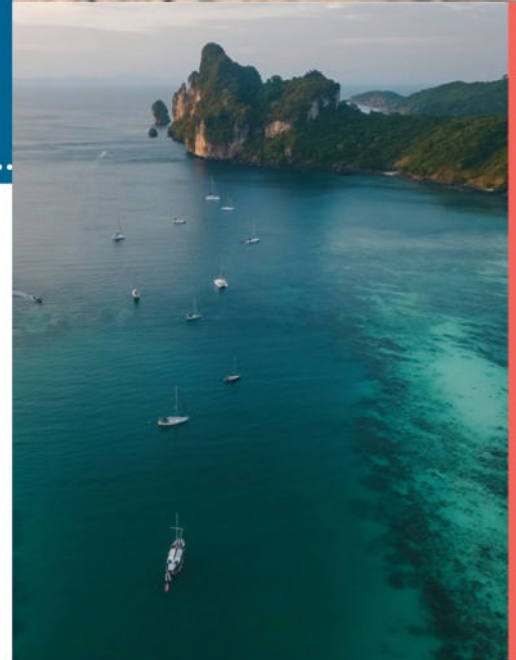
Traditional gulets, originally built as fishing boats, have been luxuriously re-fitted for comfort and relaxation, each with an onboard health coach and its own chef.

Itineraries take in spectacular islands,

from the mystical Ionian islands to the magical Peloponnese coastline, and the delightful and little-known Saronic Islands en route to Athens.

During the day, the on-board health coach will organise a light physical programme with activities such as yoga, pilates, aqua gym and calisthenics to keep you on your toes and feeling fine.

Evenings will see the gulet moored at a different location every night, with guests strolling to local tavernas, giving them the opportunity to experience authentic local Greek cuisine.



ZenBoat is the vision of Swiss chef, Louis Papadopoulos, and his wife, Lisa, a trained nutritional therapist, who together run The Maya Boutique Hotel, a small, sustainable self-built hotel in Nax, Switzerland, which provide retreats specialising in nutrition and fasting.

“Life isn't about the destination – it's about the journey,” says Louise. “ZenBoat is about both!”

For further information and sailings visit:  
[zen-boat.com](http://zen-boat.com)



## Om & Bass festival

Join the yoga party in Oxfordshire this September as one of Britain's top wellness festivals celebrates its 10th anniversary

**T**he wellness world seems to be exploding with events — but it can be hard to know which ones are truly rooted in the eight limbs of yoga and intent on looking after the planet and its inhabitants.

Om & Bass is one that is dedicated to staying true to yoga's core values. Later this summer, it will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. Expect around 150 workshops during the September weekend in Oxfordshire plus some incredible live artists and DJs — and, of course, lots of yoga too.

But that's not all. The festival blends modern morals and ancient ethics into the mix, and has even attracted the attentions

of Greenpeace, who have recognised Om & Bass's extraordinary efforts with regard to the environment.

This year's line-up is still taking shape but over the years, fundraising for the charity Yoga Stops Traffick has enticed various collaborations with well-known teachers and gurus such as Wim Hof, Stewart Gilchrist, David Sye, Kino MacGregor, Shaman Durek, Dianne Bondi, Simon Borg, Duncan Wong, Marc Laws, Andrew Sealy, Sadie Nardini, among many others.

All classes and workshops are delivered by experts with years of experience in their field, and all levels are welcome — there's no spiritual snobbery or lack of inclusion, which is reflected in the diversity of the festival team, says founder Rach Cox. "This level of diversity is what makes the event 'pop' in terms of fun, inclusion and accessibility," she says. "From diverse backgrounds (LGBTQIA+, neuro diverse, differently abled, body positive, people of colour and working class people), the team is a strong force of nature which delivers the healing power of yoga to those who really need it."

The event aims to be financially inclusive too, ensuring that those on low or no

income are not excluded from the wellness fun, with concessions available to those who need them. There are free children's tickets for single parent families, for example, and free passes for carers.

Om & Bass also goes big on green, says Cox. "The festival loos and showers are all eco off-grid and environmentally epic and accessible to all. The site itself is a 'zero single use plastic site' for all participants and stalls, which is kind of unheard of for most festivals."

She says the festival is also 100% vegan and sober. "Om & Bass is sober, simply because it aligns perfectly with ancient precepts of yoga. There's nothing wrong with individual choices and lifestyles, but an event in the name of yoga, wellness and spirituality is probably better off being sober, raising consciousness — and make us actually feel well!"

*Om & Bass Festival takes place on September 8th-10th in Oxfordshire, just 45 minutes from London, or 2.5 hours from Manchester. Early bird tickets £150 (secured with £75 deposit). Use code OMYOGAMAG to get 15% off your tickets. Visit: [omandbass.co.uk](http://omandbass.co.uk) or follow the build-up on social media IG: @omandbass and FB: omandbassfestival*



# Try SUP Yoga

Enrico Tambellini explains why SUP Yoga is every bit as good your traditional land-based mat yoga

I have been on a personal crusade to introduce as many people to yoga as possible — no matter what the avenue of this introduction is.

Being a teacher and trainer of SUP Yoga, I often come across students who have never paddled or done yoga before. I think being introduced to yoga through SUP yoga is great point of entry.

Is SUP Yoga ‘real’ yoga you might ask yourself? Definitely! SUP Yoga takes mindfulness to a whole new level. You will pay attention to your breath with a new-found concentration. Muscle strength is improved as you will be using muscles that are not normally used in a land-based class as you need to constantly balance and activate your muscles to stay on your board. SUP Yoga keeps you present and focused on your ‘mat’ — or your board in this case — as any lack of concentration or wandering of the mind may result in a splash!

This activity is a great workout and SUP Yoga specifically targets your core. By adding the balancing aspect you will have a great workout! Simple poses on a board are up to four times more difficult than on land so even the most basic flow will help you to keep your balance and gain body awareness.

SUP Yoga helps to improve your technique, thereby refining your practice allowing you to concentrate on alignment and really getting into your practice in a fun and beneficial way. No, SUP yoga is not a traditional land-based form of yoga, it’s true. However, the asanas, pranayama and meditation remain much the same. Our ‘studio’ is just out in nature and yogis have been practicing yoga out in Mother Nature for thousands of years.

And, as you can see from the photo, you can even take your puppy out on the board with you! Why not give it a try?



## om yoga show

Sunday 15th October 10.30 - 11.30



### An Elemental Flow - Finding Inner Alignment with Isabel Lankester

In this workshop, we’ll explore how the elements are integrated into Chinese medicine, seasonal shifts and the cylindrical shifts within us. It will be a warm and enriching practice.

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# Yoga for the soul

**India Pearson** describes her journey from a yoga mat in London to the great open yoga studio outdoors, supplied by Mother Nature, where nourishment for body, mind and soul is always freely available



**W**hen somebody provokes your anger, the only reason you get angry is because you're holding on to how you think something is supposed to be. You're denying how it is. Then you see it's the expectations of your own mind that are creating your own hell. When you get frustrated because something isn't the way you thought it would be, examine the way you thought, not just the thing that frustrates you. You'll see that a lot of your emotional suffering is created by your models of how you think the universe should be and your inability to allow it to be as it is." — **Ram Dass**

This quote takes me back to my early 20's, I was fresh out of university, living in London, and auditioning for performing jobs. I had done a dance degree, so felt I 'should' work in the industry I had trained in and believed London was the place to make that happen. I chose to study at Chichester University because it was close to the sea and as a child it had always been a dream of mine to live close to the coast. But somewhere along the way I had completely lost sight of what fuelled my soul and began listening to outside voices, society's pressures and my own preconceived expectations of what you 'should do' as a university graduate.

It didn't take long for busy city life

and the unforgiving pressures that can be felt in the performance industry to have a negative effect on my mind and body. I remember my skin looked grey, my mood was down and I was frustrated by life because I wasn't getting anything back from the tick box 'model' I had followed. At this point my anxiety had reached an all-time high; I couldn't control my breathing, it was short, and constantly in my chest. I remember speaking to a friend about it and she recommended I try yoga. So the very next day I took myself off to a class at my local studio.

## A yoga journey

I wasn't totally new to yoga; as a dancer I had always viewed the few classes I had gone to purely for exercise to help improve and maintain my strength, flexibility and balance. The thought that someone might do yoga to help with mental wellbeing had never crossed my mind, but I was willing to give it a go.

The class began with us sitting on the mat, my legs crossed and I followed the teacher's direction, asking us to place one hand on the heart and one hand on the stomach. She asked us to listen to the rise and fall of our breath and visualise the waves as they build with the inhale, and fall to the shore line with the exhale. This visualisation took me back to my childhood: my breath was mimicking the sound of the sea and I was transported back being about eight years old, jumping in the waves on holiday in Cornwall feeling such joy and contentment. The teacher soon took us out of the meditation and into asana practice but that feeling of heart-warming joy stuck with me and as I left the yoga class I knew I had to revisit a place that gave me such joy as a child — the ocean was calling my soul and I had to follow it.

## Call of nature

I already had friends living on the Kent coast that I could flat share with so within a month of that yoga class, I handed in my notice on my London flat, packed up my Fiat 500 and headed down to the seaside town of Folkestone with one focus: to follow what was fuelling my soul, instead of what felt expected.

I continued to do yoga, but my practice grew and developed as I did. I found myself spending more and more time outdoors and in nature, incorporating meditation into my daily walks along the seafront, rolling my yoga mat out on the beach, and playing around with yoga poses on my paddleboard.

Practicing yoga in nature was giving me



“Practicing yoga in nature was giving me a place where I could move with the grace and power that I enjoyed as a dancer, but without any judgement, a similar feeling that I had as an eight-year-old child jumping in the waves. I had found my soul's home again.”

a place where I could move with the grace and power that I enjoyed as a dancer, but without any judgement, a similar feeling that I had as an eight-year-old child jumping in the waves. I had found my soul's home again.

## Mother Nature

I have now been teaching yoga for seven years and Mother Nature is still very much at the heart of my classes. During the spring and summer I teach outside as much as I can, both on land and water. Teaching SUP Yoga (yoga on a stand-up paddleboard) is a real passion project of mine as it fuels my soul in the most unique way. You are so focused on staying on the board, becoming aware of your breath, your body, the sounds of nature around you, that during your time on the board, nothing else matters.

After all my outdoor yoga classes I encourage my students to spend a couple of minutes litter picking to give back to our great earth and thank her for giving us the most beautiful yoga studio we could ever ask for!

Nowadays, as a mum to my one-year-old daughter, listening to my soul and connecting to nature has been more important than ever. Each time I step on the mat I'm reminded of where I started and where I am now. I still start my classes the same way I started that pinnacle class in London that brought me where I am today — placing one hand on my belly, one hand on my heart, taking a deep breath and listening in to what my soul is saying.

Practice yoga with India Pearson at: [finandflow.co.uk](http://finandflow.co.uk) or connect on Instagram @with\_india



# Sky-high yoga at The O2

A pocket of peace whilst soaking up panoramic views of London



**B**rilliant views and brilliant vibes were on offer at the iconic The O2 earlier this summer. Up at The O2 hosted a number of sky-high yoga sessions at its world-famous roof venue back in May to mark Mental Health Awareness Week.

Along with a guided climb up and over the roof of the popular music and entertainment venue, climbers got to enjoy extended sky time with a 20-minute yoga class at the summit.

The classes were hosted by Lucy Sesto, a former Great Britain acrobatic gymnast who has channelled her passion for movement into a career as a yoga teacher. As well as teaching public classes and online via The Body Coach app she also hosts retreats, in the UK and abroad.

With its highest point at 52m above ground level, yogis got to enjoy incredible 360° views of Greenwich, Canary Wharf and the Olympic Park — all the while raising funds for The O2's official charity YoungMinds, which supports children and young people's mental health.

"Yoga has undeniable benefits for our mental health, and we're proud to be donating all proceeds from these climbs to our official venue charity YoungMinds, who do vital work for young people and families all over the country," said Dan Hurst, head of attractions at Up at The O2.



# Get your walking boots on

Yoga offers something for everyone, but sometimes a good walk outside is all you need to boost fitness and mood. Whatever you do, be sure you enjoy it

**T**he health benefits of simply moving your body — whether that's through yoga, walking or sky diving — are simply huge. An average of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity walking per week, for example, can lead to significant benefits, including improved cardio health, enhanced mood and increased longevity.

A study released by ExerciseWithStyle.com revealed the minimum amount of exercise needed for a healthy lifestyle, with a specific focus on walking — though stretching and flexibility were equally important:

**Stretching and flexibility:** Flexibility is often overlooked in fitness routines, but it's crucial for maintaining your range of motion and preventing injuries, says expert fitness writer Jesse Hyson. "Stretching shouldn't be confined to your workouts; consider incorporating a daily stretching routine or practices like yoga or pilates to keep your muscles flexible and healthy."

**Walking:** a low-impact, accessible form of exercise that's great for health. Aim for

150 minutes a week, broken down into 30 minutes a day for five days. Walking can be done anywhere, from city streets to country trails, and doesn't require any special equipment. "The best part is that it's accessible to almost everyone, regardless of fitness level or age," says Hyson. "Just remember: consistency is key!"

**Strength training:** this helps build muscle mass, which is crucial for metabolism and physical strength. It doesn't necessarily require heavy weights; bodyweight exercises like squats or push-ups, resistance bands, or light dumbbells can all be effective. "Strength training isn't just for bodybuilders, it's a vital part of a balanced fitness routine," says Hyson. "As we age, we naturally lose muscle mass, which can affect our metabolism, physical strength, and even bone health. Including strength training exercises in your routine can help counteract these effects."

**Tips to make exercise more fun & engaging:**

**Explore different scenery:** Changing your walking route keeps things interesting and

can make your walks more enjoyable. Try exploring different parks, neighbourhoods, or trails in your area.

**Walking groups:** Walking with others can make the activity more fun and provide a source of social support. Look for local walking groups in your community, or start your own with friends or family.

**Music and audiobooks:** For some, listening to music, audiobooks, or podcasts can make walks more enjoyable and provide a mental distraction if you find the activity boring.

**Interval walking:** Interval walking involves changing your walking speed at regular intervals. For example, you might walk at a moderate pace for five minutes, then speed up to a brisk pace for one minute, and repeat. This can make your walks more challenging and interesting.

**Fitness tracker:** Using a fitness tracker can help you stay motivated by letting you monitor your progress. Set daily or weekly goals for steps or distance, and celebrate when you achieve them.



## Yoga & sailing

Enjoy life on the ocean waves with a yoga and sailing holiday

**S**tar Clippers still has lots of yoga-themed sailings planned for summer 2023.

The tall-ship cruise line offers a trip of a lifetime sailing the seas and stretching out on deck under the expert eye of the qualified instructors on board.

Guests can take part in complimentary daily classes throughout various sailings through to October, visiting ports of call in

the Western Mediterranean.

Confirmed yoga-themed departures include 8th July, 15th July, 29th July and 7th October 2023.

Star Clippers is represented in the UK by General Sales Agent Fred Olsen Travel and any packages or offers are for UK passengers and trade.

“We are delighted to welcome back yoga instructors for our summer 2023 departures,” said Fay McCormack, general manager of the UK GSA. “Whilst we have been offering this on board our ships for many years, today’s ever-increasing awareness of the positive effects of yoga on mental wellbeing reaffirms why we choose to offer this service to our guests.”

Star Clippers operates three of the world’s largest and tallest fully-crewed sailing vessels. The ships can drop anchor in smaller harbours and visit ports often untouched by larger cruise ships and providing guests with the amenities and atmosphere of a private yacht.

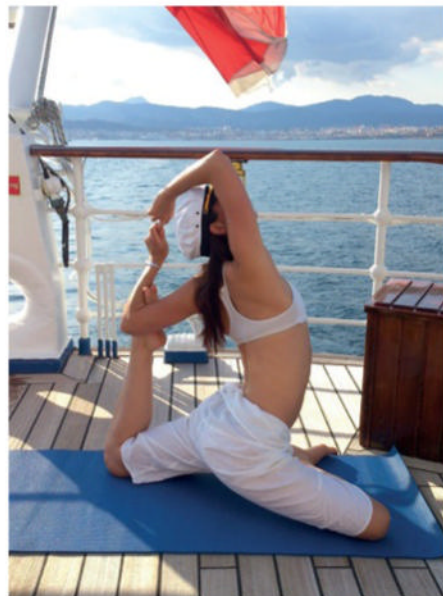
Its two smaller ships, Star Flyer and Star Clipper take 166 guests each, with a crew of 74, while Royal Clipper carries 227 with a crew of 106.

High standards of service are provided by an attentive crew and all three ships have expansive teak decks, swimming



pools, informal dining, a convivial Tropical Bar on deck and a comfortable piano bar and are large enough to offer first class accommodation and dining.

*Cruise-only prices start at £1630pp, based on 2 adults sharing a category 6 cabin. An example itinerary based on 15th July 2023 departure sees Star Clipper visiting Cannes, Portofino, L’Île Rousse, Calvi, Plage Saint Antoine, Le Lavandou and St Tropez. Visit: [starclippers.co.uk](http://starclippers.co.uk)*





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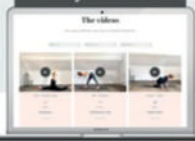
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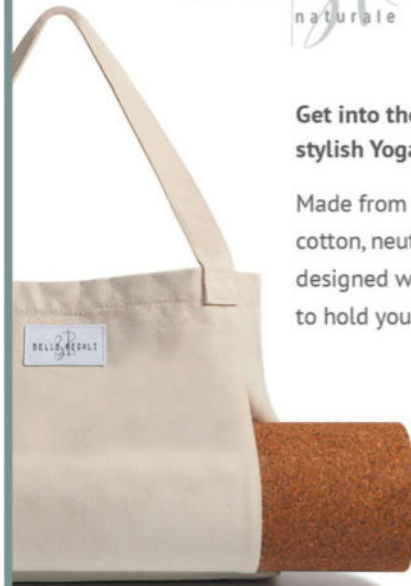


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# The ridiculous joy of laughter yoga

Whoever said that laughter is the best medicine was right! **By Sarah Highfield**

**T**hink back to when you were a child and if you were ever in a bad mood, a family member might have started to make silly faces and sounds, or tell you jokes until you laughed so much that you forgot about your bad mood — sound familiar?


Well, here is the good news: that method still works as an adult. Just like yawning, laughter is contagious, and if you are not already aware of it, there is such a thing called ‘laughter yoga.’

Laughter yoga was created in 1995 by Dr Madan Kataria and is essentially a practice of prolonged induced laughter. It is believed that deliberate laughter is equally as effective as natural laughter when it comes to both the psychological and physiological benefits. The practice increases oxygen flow to the brain and helps to relax the body through happiness, playfulness, and bonding. It takes people into a space where there is freedom to laugh at the silliest things, and leaves them with big wide smiles and full of endorphins.

I have been in both laughter yoga classes as a student and taught it to others, and admittedly, it looks and feels very childish, but it is the best remedy to a bad day or even moments of uncertainty or loneliness. It is suitable for everyone, no matter

what their yoga experience is, and I personally wish that there were more laughter yoga classes on studio timetables.

If you are wondering how it is done, there are several methods which are popular, with my favourite being straightforward spontaneous laughter. This is done whereby participants lie on the floor in a circle with their heads close to one another; one person needs to start by letting out a big, hearty belly laugh, which will result in the other people starting to laugh. Before you know it, a laughter chain has been set off, spreading throughout the whole group. Even if the first laugh is a little forced, genuine laughter will follow (I promise!). Other widespread methods are “Ho-ho. Ha-ha-ha” chanting, talking gibberish to one another, and gradient laughter.

In conclusion, let this be your sign to try a laughter yoga class if you are new to it, or go back to one if you have been before. Now is just as good a time as any to embrace the absurdity of the world, step outside of your comfort zone, and find more reasons to smile. 

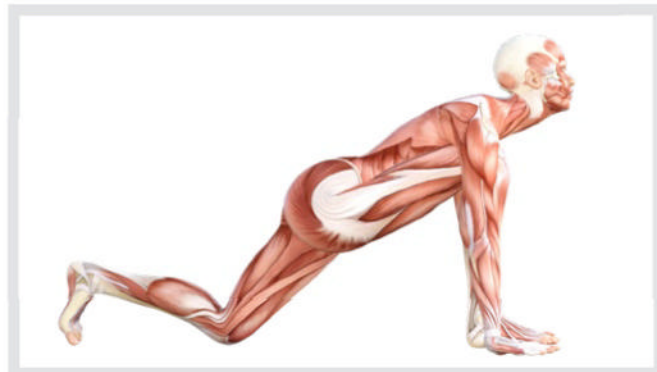
*Sarah Highfield is a yoga teacher, three-time OM cover model and regular contributor. Visit: [yogagise.com](http://yogagise.com) or find her on Instagram @Yogagise and at the OM Yoga Show.*

# Great reasons to *subscribe*



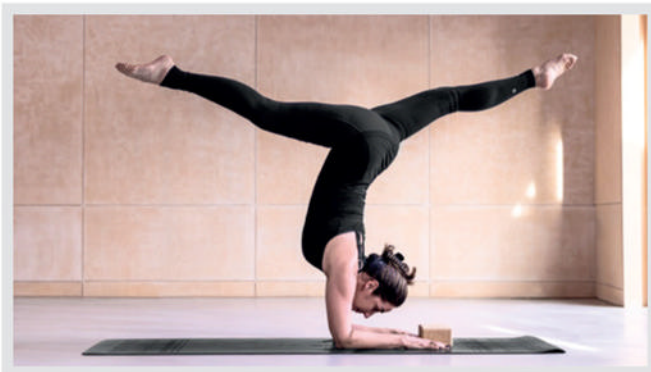
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