

PRACTICAL EXERCISES • NUTRITION • MINDFULNESS • LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS

YOGA MAGAZINE™

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ISSUE 260/ DECEMBER 2024

JOYFUL & MERRY CHRISTMAS

**THE
YOGA
WHEEL**



**SHARATH
JOIS**

YIN YOGA
BALANCE & RESTORATION

ayahuasca

**PERIMENOPAUSE &
yoga nidra**

**REMEMBERING
BKS IYENGAR**



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Editor's Letter

Dear Esteemed Readers,

Greetings and blessings!

As the festive season approaches, December invites us to reflect, restore, and cherish the connections that weave together the tapestry of yoga. This issue honours yoga's rich legacies while exploring its transformative potential in our modern lives.

We begin by paying tribute to two luminaries who shaped the global yoga community. Sharath Jois, the revered Ashtanga yoga guru, leaves an enduring legacy following his sudden passing. Equally inspiring is the life of B.K.S. Iyengar, a pioneer whose therapeutic innovations continue to guide practitioners worldwide. Their contributions remind us of yoga's timeless ability to heal, transform, and unite across generations.

Winter, a season of stillness, encourages us to embrace practices that nurture body and soul. Yin Yoga offers a restorative path to balance and relaxation, while Yoga Nidra provides essential support for women navigating perimenopause, fostering deep rest and hormonal harmony. For those seeking variety, our feature on the Yoga Wheel highlights creative techniques to enhance flexibility, strength, and mindfulness, enriching your practice in unique ways.

This issue also delves into yoga's emotional and spiritual depths. From a Kundalini awakening through Ayahuasca to meditative reflections on life's challenges, these stories illuminate yoga's power to guide us through profound inner transformation. The poetic musings of Savasana Serenade echo these sentiments, celebrating the wisdom of nature and the serenity found in stillness.

Yoga is a way of life, and this theme flows through our features on mindfulness, gratitude, and self-care. These teachings inspire us to live with authenticity and compassion, embodying yoga off the mat to foster resilience and joy. Personal stories of self-discovery and multi-dimensional growth encourage us to honour our truths and embrace life's complexity.



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In the spirit of the season, we highlight the Om & Bass Festival, a community-centred event blending spirituality, sustainability, and activism. Its mission to support survivors of human trafficking is a testament to yoga's potential to drive collective healing and positive change.

Finally, as festive decorations fill our homes, we explore the unexpected health effects of Christmas trees, offering tips to maintain harmony and well-being during this celebratory time.

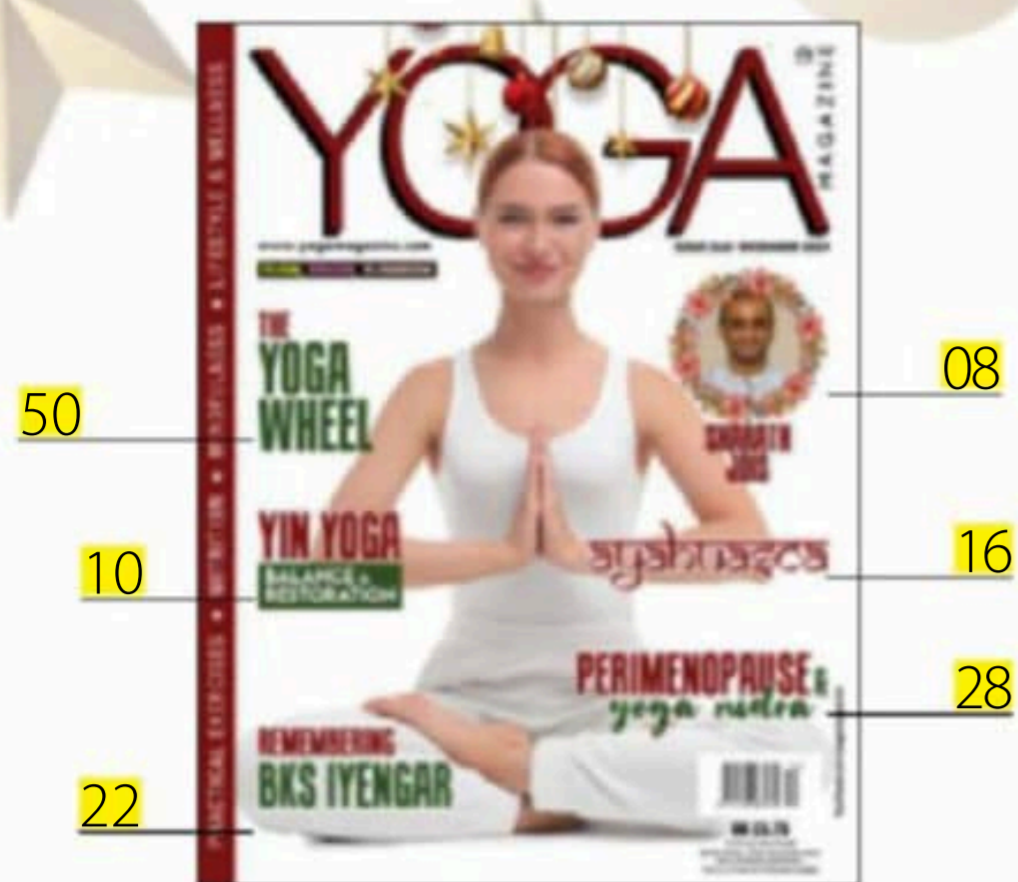
We hope this issue inspires you to embrace yoga in all its forms—its history, its practice, and its power to transform. May your December be filled with peace, joy, and gratitude.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Merry Christmas!

Yogi Maharaj Dr Malik

CONTENTS

ON THE COVER



POSE, SEQUENCE

50 THE YOGA WHEEL

An in-depth guide to using the Yoga Wheel, featuring poses, techniques, and flows to enhance flexibility, strength, balance, and mindfulness in practice.

PHILOSOPHY

28 WHAT IS YOGA NIDRA AND HOW DOES IT SUPPORT PERIMENOPAUSE?

An exploration of Yoga Nidra's transformative benefits during perimenopause, offering rest, hormonal balance, emotional support, and connection with life's natural cycles.

34 WORLD PEACE ACTIVIST: NICHIDATSU FUJII

Nichidatsu Fujii, a Buddhist monk inspired by Gandhi, promoted peace, opposed war, and built Peace Pagodas worldwide, advocating non-violence and nuclear disarmament.

42 BE KIND AND TRUE TO YOU

In this heartfelt reflection, Suzannah Ridgway shares her journey to self-discovery, focusing on the importance of being true to oneself and practising kindness.

62 WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM SIX YEARS OF DAILY MEDITATION

A personal account of embracing meditation during life's challenges, highlighting its transformative lessons in self-compassion, presence, resilience, and authentic living.



IYENGAR YOGA PAGES

22 REMEMBERING BKS IYENGAR

BKS Iyengar, a transformative figure in yoga, overcame a difficult childhood to become a global icon, pioneering therapeutic yoga and creating Iyengar Yoga's lasting legacy.

68 OUTER TEACHINGS BECOME INNER TOOLS

This exploration of imagination highlights its transformative power, blending shamanic wisdom, spiritual awakening, and practical tools to inspire conscious personal and collective evolution.

84 HONOURING THE GIFT OF YOUR MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY

A guide to honouring our multi-dimensionality through acceptance, self-awareness, and energy attunement, fostering personal growth and spiritual liberation. collective evolution.



FEATURES

16 MY KUNDALINI AWAKENING THROUGH AYAHUASCA
A spiritual journey intertwining Kundalini Yoga and Shamanism, exploring Ayahuasca's transformative power and its potential to awaken Kundalini energy, facilitating profound healing.

38 BEYOND THE MAT: PRACTISING YOGA AS A WAY OF LIFE
Jo Peters' The Little Book for Yoga Lovers explores how to integrate mindfulness, loving kindness, gratitude, and self-care into daily life for a peaceful, yogic lifestyle.

56 OM & BASS FESTIVAL: GO FOR YOU, FOR THE PLANET, AND FOR SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING
A heartfelt account of Om & Bass Festival's unique zero-waste ethos, uplifting community, spiritual moments, and its fundraising efforts for Yoga Stops Traffick.

72 SAVASANA SERENADE
A poetic reflection on connecting with nature, honouring the majestic crows, and finding peace and gratitude during Savasana in yoga.

74 THE UNEXPECTED HEALTH EFFECTS OF YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE
Christmas trees, real or artificial, can trigger allergies. Expert Max Wiseberg shares tips to minimise Christmas Tree Syndrome and enjoy festive decorations allergy-free.

TRIBUTE
08 HONOURING A LEGACY SHARATH JOIS
Sharath Jois, renowned Ashtanga yoga guru and grandson of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, leaves a lasting global legacy following his sudden passing at 53.

SERIES
78 THE KUNDALINI: MEMOIRS OF A YOGI (CHAPTER 24)
A contemplative story of spiritual growth, exploring the journey towards Samadhi through yoga, meditation, and inner guidance from a wise teacher.

READER'S STORY
66 YOGA: THERE IS NO AGE FOR STOPPING AND NO AGE FOR STARTING
A reflective yoga journey exploring ageing, resilience, and self-acceptance. Yoga's wisdom reminds us: persistence over perfection, joy over comparison.



BWY SPECIAL

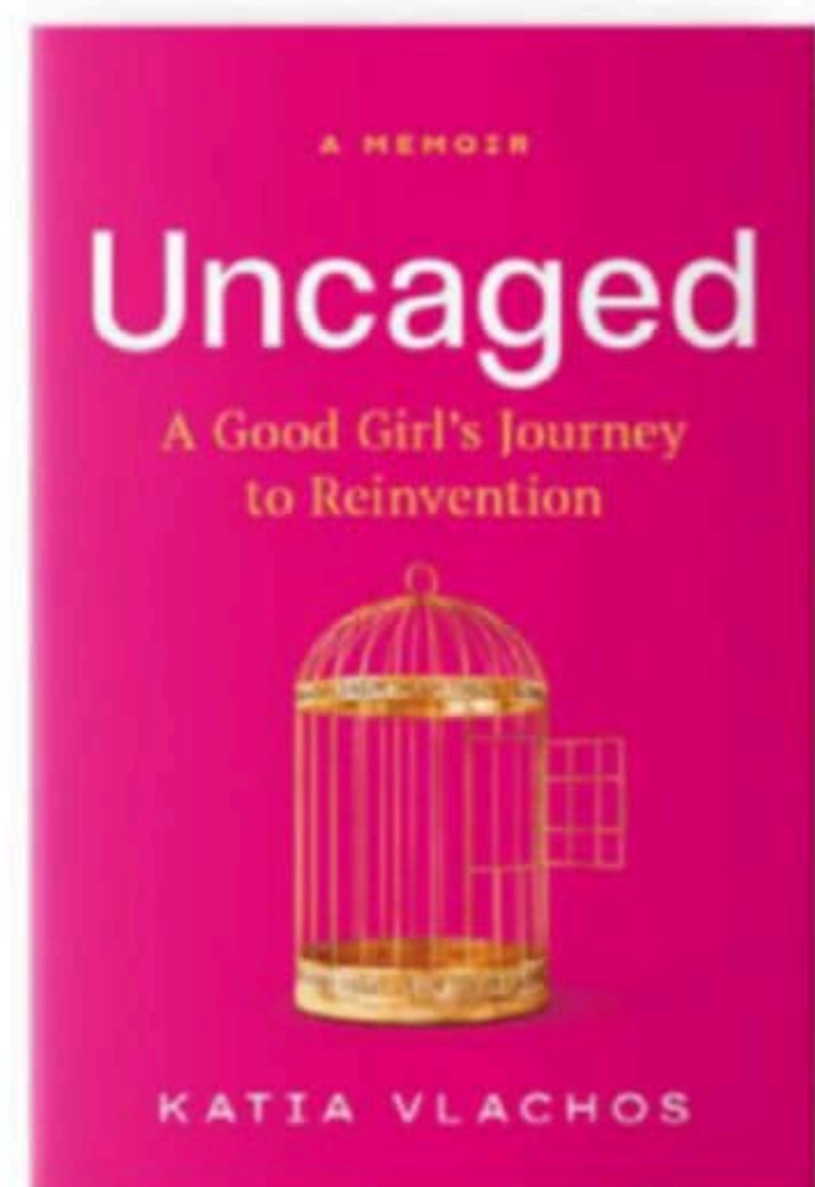
10 YIN YOGA – A PRACTISE FOR BALANCE AND RESTORATION THIS WINTER
Winter Yin yoga offers a restorative practice that targets energy meridians, releases tension, and balances Chi through long-held, gentle floor-based poses.

READER'S ASHRAM

46 ASK YOGI MAHARAJ DR MALIK
96 VEDIC ASTROLOGY

WHAT'S HOT

88 NEW BOOKS, ACCESSORIES AND PRODUCTS



YOGA Magazine

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YIN YOGA – A PRACTISE FOR BALANCE AND RESTORATION THIS WINTER

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KATE CODRINGTON
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KATIA VLACHOS
WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM SIX YEARS OF DAILY MEDITATION

LENA FRANKLIN
HONOURING THE GIFT OF YOUR MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY

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• VEDIC ASTROLOGY

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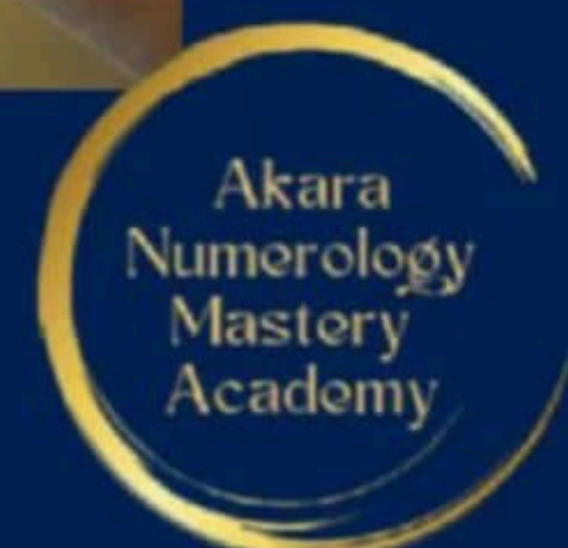


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OBITUARY HONOURING A LEGACY SHARATH JOIS

A beacon of Ashtanga Yoga and a guiding light for practitioners worldwide, has passed away at 53, leaving an indelible mark on the yoga community and beyond.



Sharath Rangaswamy Jois, an internationally acclaimed yoga guru who introduced Ashtanga yoga to thousands around the world, including celebrities like Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow, has passed away suddenly at the age of 53. Known for his profound dedication to preserving and promoting the Ashtanga tradition, Jois's influence extended far beyond his native Mysore, India, reaching a devoted global following.

Born in Mysore in 1971, Jois was the grandson of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, the legendary founder of the Ashtanga Vinyasa system. From an early age,

Jois was immersed in the practice, learning the rigorous discipline and spirituality of Ashtanga yoga directly from his grandfather.

Over time, he rose to become the torchbearer of this practice, eventually

establishing himself as a revered figure in the world of yoga.

For over two decades, Jois taught at the K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute (KPJAYI) in Mysore, where he welcomed students from all corners of the globe. Known for his exacting yet compassionate teaching style, he held his students to high standards, urging them to push the boundaries of their practice while emphasising a deep respect for the ancient roots of Ashtanga yoga. His classes were a pilgrimage for countless yogis, many traveling to India to practice under his guidance.

Jois's influence reached celebrities such as Madonna, Gwyneth Paltrow, and other high-profile figures, who sought out his expertise and transformative approach. Yet, despite his celebrity clientele, he remained grounded, constantly emphasising humility and dedication to the practice itself.

Outside of yoga, Jois was deeply spiritual and committed to the values of his lineage. His sudden passing has left a void in the yoga community, which will deeply feel the loss of his wisdom, guidance, and humility. His family, friends, and students remember him not only as a teacher but as a compassionate and humble soul who embodied the true spirit of yoga.

Sharath Jois is survived by his family and an extended global community of students and followers who will carry forward his teachings and legacy. His passing marks the end of an era, but his influence and teachings will live on in the hearts and practices of the countless individuals he touched.

YOGA Magazine pays tribute to Sharath Jois, a guiding light in the Ashtanga yoga world, whose teachings and legacy will continue to inspire generations.

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YIN YOGA

A PRACTISE FOR BALANCE & RESTORATION THIS WINTER

Words: Gillian Cawte, BWY Yin Yoga
Module Tutor





Half Caterpillar Pose



Winter is a time of hibernation in the natural world, as animals conserve their energy during the colder, darker months. Similarly, we can honour this season by turning inwards, slowing down and restoring our energy reserves. A winter Yin yoga practise can help us do just that.

WHAT IS YIN YOGA?

Yin yoga is a quiet, floor-based practise which stimulates the energy meridians within the body. Poses are held for a duration of time, usually three to five minutes or longer, allowing emotionally charged pockets of energy, or Chi, to be released from the joints and tissues.

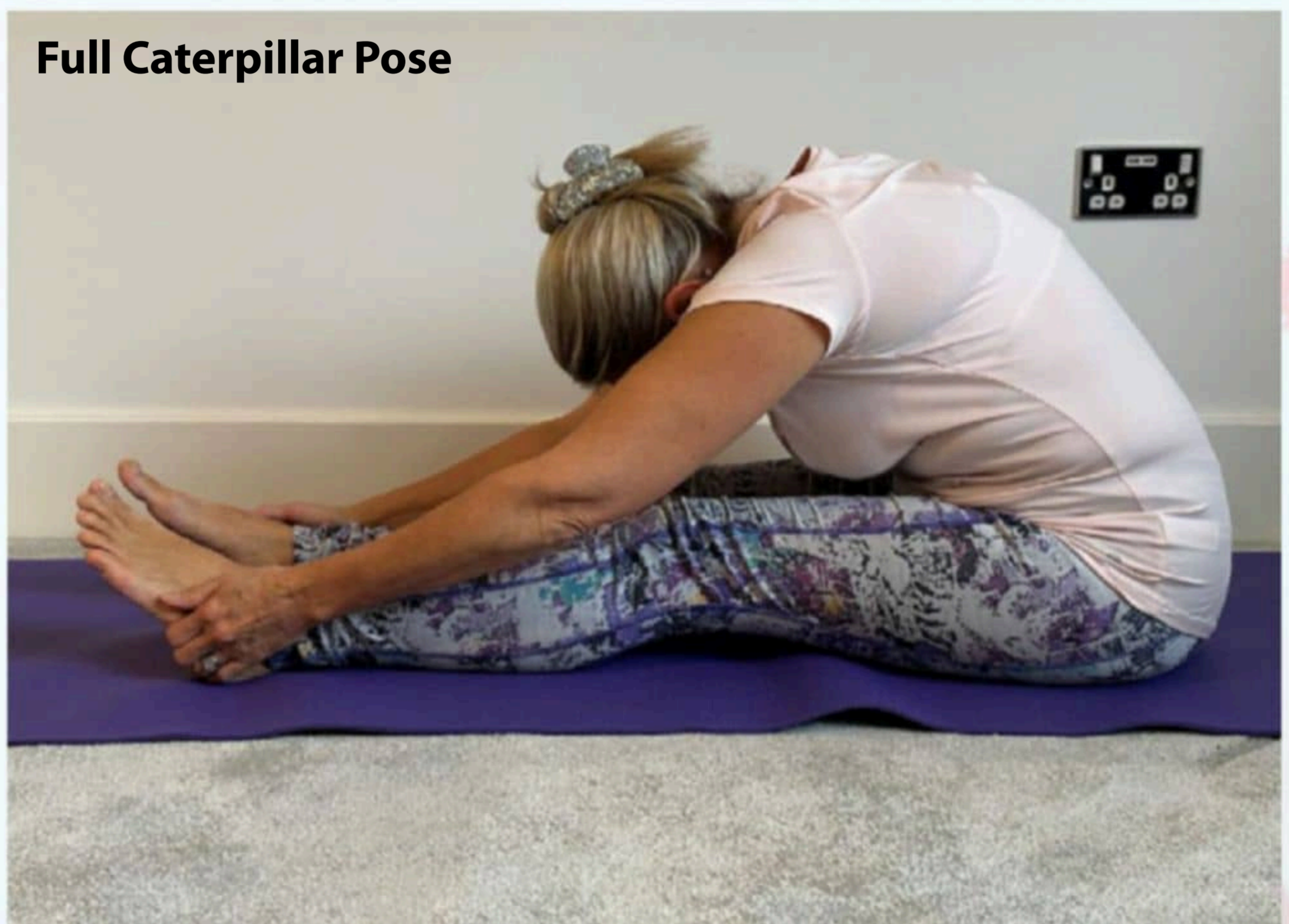
During a Yin pose, the muscles are relaxed which places gentle stress on the body's deeper connective tissues: the joints, ligaments, tendons and fascia, helping to release tension and move Chi. Yin yoga can be meditative, allowing students to soften in each pose and become curious about the sensations that arise.

It is a practise for everyone regardless of their preferred style of yoga or physical ability. Each Yin pose can be adapted to suit any body type.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Yin yoga is deeply rooted in ancient yoga traditions. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, one of the earliest texts on *Hatha* yoga, was written around 1350 C.E. by Swami Swatmarama. It describes only sixteen postures, half of which are seated and are yin-like in nature and were meant to be held for a long time. These long-held poses helped practitioners prepare their bodies for meditation.

Full Caterpillar Pose



Yin yoga, as we know it today, was popularised by my yoga teacher Paul Grilley who was inspired by the Yin and Yang principles of Chinese martial arts. While he did not invent Yin yoga, he played a pivotal role in educating International yoga teachers about its benefits. The term 'Yin yoga' was coined by his student, Sarah Powers, in 2000 to describe the quieter, more meditative style of yoga practise.

HOW TO PRACTISE YIN YOGA

There are no absolutes to practising Yin yoga. You can practise any time of the day or night whether your muscles are cool or warm. However, it is important to listen to your body and choose the right time for your practise. If you've been sitting or sedentary all day you may benefit from a more dynamic (yang) practise to move your Chi energy.

Practising Yin yoga can take you outside your comfort zone. Yin is not meant to be comfortable, unlike restorative yoga which focuses on relaxation. Yin yoga actively stresses the joints, bones, ligaments, tendons and fascia by using long-held floor-based poses that allow the muscles to relax. This exercises the ligaments at a

microscopic level and increases space and strength within the joint.

While Yin yoga focuses on connective tissues, Yang yoga, which includes *Hatha* and *Ashtanga* styles, targets the muscles through rhythmic repetitive movements to stress the muscle fibres and make them stronger.

In a Yin pose we either stretch, compress or twist the tissues while also working the fascia and energy within the meridian channels.

Ultimately the aim of yoga whether Yin or Yang is to move the Chi throughout the body. This requires us to be actively but comfortably challenged in a pose.

A balanced practise of both Yin and Yang is important and listening to your body can help guide you in finding this balance.

FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES FOR A YIN PRACTISE

Enter slowly with relaxed muscles

Ease into each pose gently with relaxed

Up Swan Pose



muscles, allowing your breath to slow down as you go. Moving without force helps you become aware of areas where there may be tension. This relaxed approach enables you to become more sensitive to where there may be tension.

Find your edge

As you settle into a Yin pose, notice where you start to feel resistance in the target area—this is your edge. Avoid pushing as deep as possible straight

away. After a few breaths, you may feel ready to go a bit further, exploring new edges within the pose. These edges may shift as you hold the pose, inviting you to move with mindfulness to a new edge.

Hold the pose for a length of time

Aim to hold each pose for 3–5 minutes, although 1–3 minutes is ideal if you're new to Yin. Holding poses longer allows you to surrender fully, giving space to observe any sensations that arise and to soften further into the experience.

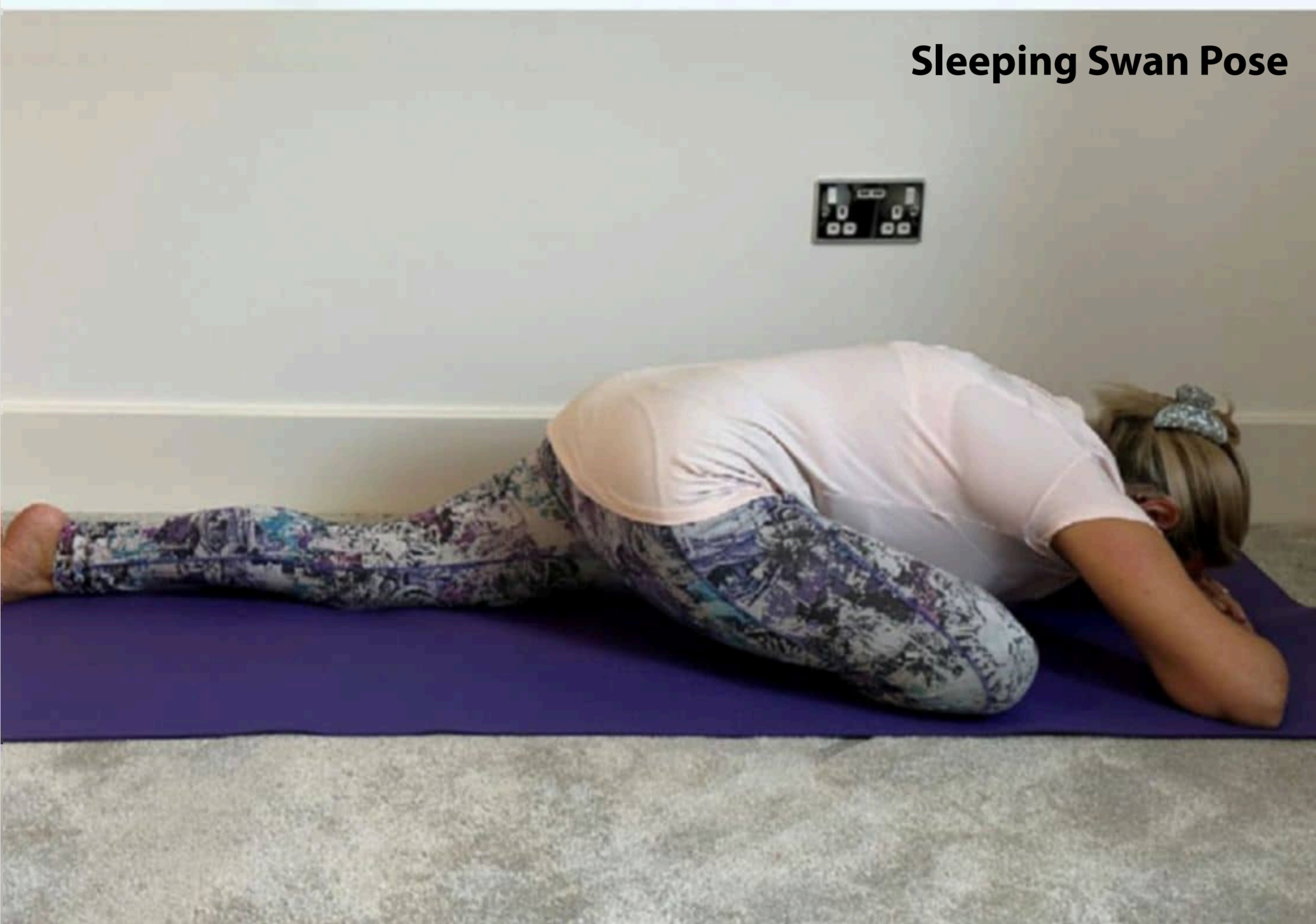
Remaining Still

Yin is a practise of stillness, so aim to hold steady in each pose, only moving if you find a new edge or experience pain. Your breath acts as an 'anchor,' grounding both body and mind. While we're not used to such stillness, resisting the urge to fidget deepens your Yin practise.

Come out slowly and feel the rebound

Transition out of each pose with mindfulness, observing any sensations that arise. You might initially feel stiff, but this quickly passes, making way for an awareness of Chi, or energy, moving through the meridians. The

Sleeping Swan Pose





rebound can bring tingling, warmth, or even a gentle vibration to the body. Close your eyes and tune into these sensations to fully experience the release.

TOP FIVE YIN POSTURES FOR WINTER

In winter, Yin yoga focuses on postures that stimulate the Kidney and Urinary Bladder meridians which are connected to the body's water element in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

These channels are associated with our vital energy reserves and are believed to help manage stress, fear and the ability to cope with life's challenges. Poses that target these meridians often include forward and backward bends.

Each of the following Yin postures encourages Chi flow, calms the mind, and enhances flexibility in the connective tissues. They allow for deeper relaxation, helping to reduce stress and create a sense of balanced energy during the winter season.

Butterfly Pose

- Sit with the soles of your feet together, letting your knees drop outwards. Round your spine as you fold forward, relaxing your head and neck.

Butterfly Pose



- Stimulates the Kidney and Urinary Bladder Meridian in the lower back and hips.
- Opens the hips, stretches the adductors and lower spine, and calms the mind.
- Rebound

Up Swan / Sleeping Swan Pose

- From all fours, bring one knee forward, placing it behind your wrist with your shin angled until you feel the gluteal muscles

- ensuring no pain in the knee. Extend your other leg back. For a deeper stretch, fold forward over the front bent leg.
- Stimulates the Kidney and Urinary Bladder Meridians, focusing on the hips and lower spine.
- Opens and stretches the hips and glutes, promoting relaxation and balance in these areas. This posture helps to lubricate the hip joints, calms the nervous system, and can aid in reducing stress and anxiety.
- Rebound

Rebound



Child Pose

- Kneel with big toes together and knees apart. Sink your hips back toward your heels, stretching your arms forward and resting your chest between your thighs.
- Stimulates the Urinary Bladder Meridian along the spine.
- Gently stretches the lower back, hips, and spine, helping to regulate Chi. This pose calms the body and mind, making it a wonderful meditation posture to help balance the yin and yang aspects of your life.

Sphinx Pose

- Lie on your belly with forearms on the floor, elbows under shoulders. Lift your chest and allow a gentle arch in the lower back.
- Stimulates the Kidney and Urinary Bladder Meridians in the spine and abdomen.
- Opens and gently compresses the lumbar spine. This pose helps to calm the nervous system, supporting a sense of emotional stability. By gently stretching the abdominal area, it also improves Chi flow through the organs.
- Rebound

Half / Full Caterpillar Pose

- Sit with one leg extended (half) or both legs straight (full). Fold forward, allowing your spine to round as you reach toward your feet.
- Stimulates the Kidney and Urinary Bladder Meridians along the back of the legs and spine.
- Stretches the spine, hamstrings, and fascia along the back body, releasing tension and aiding mobility in the spine. It encourages deep relaxation and introspection, making it a powerful pose for meditation and stress reduction.
- Rebound

CONCLUSION

Yin yoga offers a powerful counterbalance to the yang activities that often dominate our lives. By embracing Yin, we cultivate a deeper awareness of our inner landscape, opening ourselves to insights and sensations that resonate both on and off the mat. A regular Yin practise encourages us to slow down, listen to our bodies, and explore areas of stillness and tension. The true value of Yin lies in the simplicity of coming down to the floor, grounding ourselves, and practising mindfully to restore balance and resilience.

Sphinx Pose



“

While Yin yoga focuses on connective tissues, Yang yoga, which includes Hatha and Ashtanga styles, targets the muscles through rhythmic repetitive movements to stress the muscle fibres and make them stronger.

”

Join Gillian for a Yin yoga session at the BWY Winter Solstice online event on Thursday 19 December. This special day of yoga honours the shortest day of the year – a time for rest and inner reflection. Alongside Gillian, five other expert tutors will guide you through Yin yoga, Restorative yoga, Tibetan healing, breathwork, and meditation.

Tickets: £50 for non-members, £40 for BWY members. [Book here.](#)




Gillian has practised yoga since 1999. She trained at The Life Centre in London (2005–2007) and is the Yin yoga module teacher for BWY, as well as a Senior Trainer with Yoga Alliance UK. With over 1500 hours of training under Paul and Suzee Grilley, Gillian holds a Level 5 Diploma in Yin Yoga. She runs retreats and teacher training and is based in Manchester.

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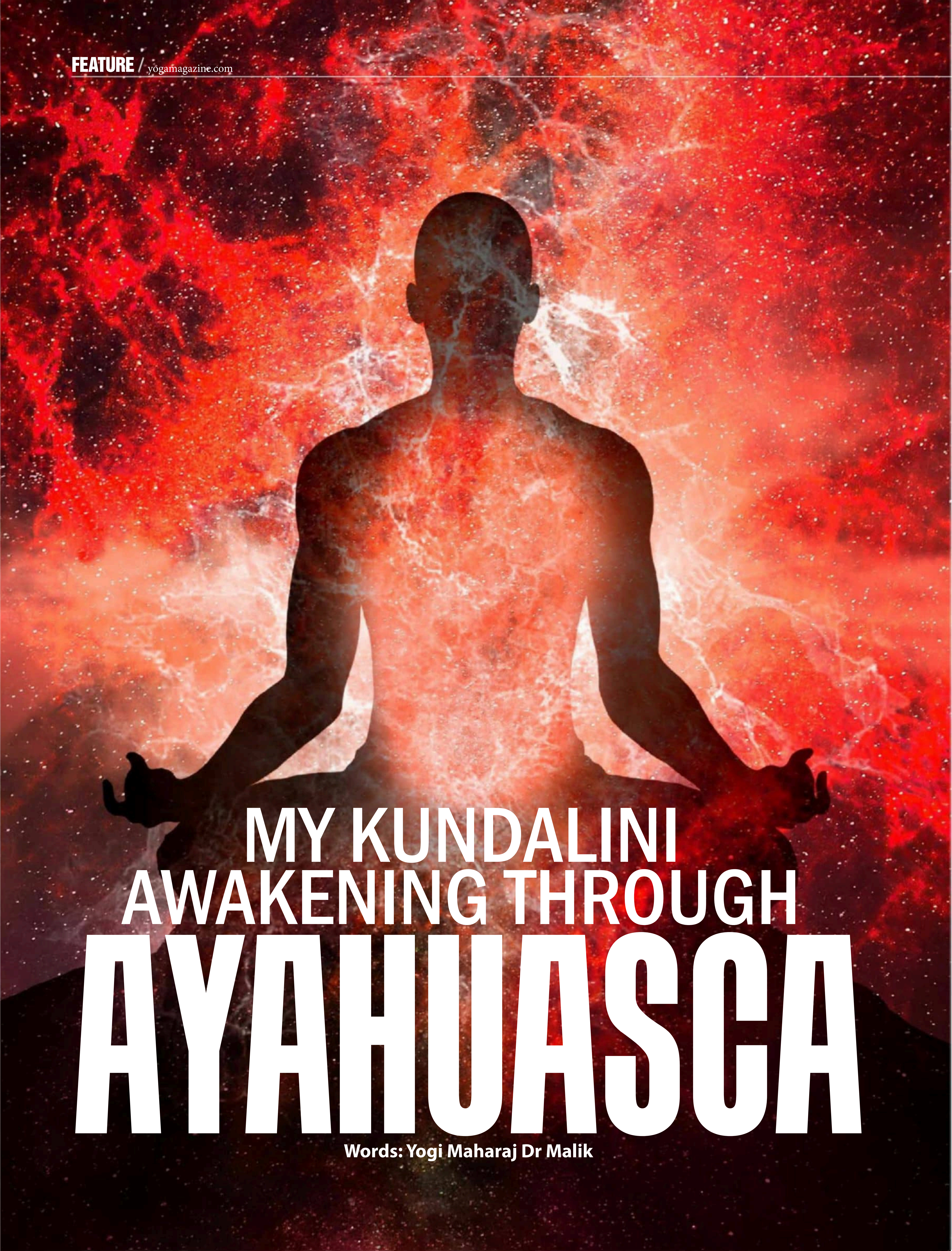


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MY KUNDALINI
AWAKENING THROUGH
AYAHUASCA

Words: Yogi Maharaj Dr Malik



Valley, stopping at sacred sites such as Pisac, an area of agricultural importance built by the Inca king Pachacutec. Here, we participated in the Karpay ceremony, which marked our first initiation into the Munay Ki with our esteemed Q'ero Maestros—Don Agustin, Dona Benita, Remigia, and Santos.

The beauty of the Inca site, Moray, was another highlight of our journey. There, we engaged in another Karpay ceremony and received two additional rites of initiation into the Munay Ki. A crowning moment was our sacred pilgrimage to Machu Picchu, one of the wonders of the world, where we received profound spiritual teachings from Don Neto. These revered locations, long honoured by local shamans, served as sacred grounds for ceremonies designed to awaken and align our chakras. The culmination of our experiences led us to the transformative ceremony with Grandmother Ayahuasca, facilitated by Shipibo Elder Maestro Pablo.

For over five decades, I've been deeply immersed in the spiritual realm, a journey that began in my childhood and shaped the course of my life. I was fascinated by the mysteries of existence, the universe, and the unseen forces that guide our lives. The search for answers led me to explore different spiritual paths, but it was the discovery of yoga, particularly Kundalini Yoga, during my teenage years that anchored my practice and philosophy. By the year 2000, I had qualified as a Kundalini Yoga teacher, honing my expertise under the guidance of Yogi Bhajan in New Mexico. This immersion led to the writing of several books, including *'Kundalini Yoga: The Fusion of Art, Science, and Spirituality'*, capturing my experiences and learnings.

Early Spiritual Exploration

In the initial stages of my spiritual exploration, I ventured into various paths, eager to uncover deeper truths. However, as time unfolded, my desire for profound knowledge evolved. A significant turning point came during a retreat in Austria, where I was introduced to Shamanism by the insightful Gabrielle Scharnitzky. Her teachings opened a new

chapter in my spiritual journey, guiding me toward Shamanic practices that resonated deeply with my soul. The connection to nature and the universe fostered by Shamanism enriched my understanding of the spiritual dimensions of life.

Meeting the Shamanic Master

My path took another transformative turn in 2019 when I met an enlightened Shamanic Master, Mr. Jeff Glattstein, during a retreat in Jamaica. Our friendship flourished, and we co-authored *'Shamanism: The Secret Path of Shamanism'*, where Jeff shared invaluable insights into Shamanic practices and invocations that continue to inform my work.

A pivotal milestone arrived when I received an invitation to attend a Shamanic retreat in Peru, organised by Lena and Jeff. The retreat was set in the Sacred Valley, a region rich in history and spiritual significance. I travelled from London to São Paulo, Brazil, followed by a flight to Lima, Peru, and finally, to Cusco. From Cusco, we ventured into the Sacred

The Spirit of Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca, often called "the vine of the soul," is a traditional Amazonian brew made from the Banisteriopsis caapi vine and the leaves of the Psychotria viridis plant. The concoction, revered by indigenous tribes for centuries, is believed to possess spiritual and medicinal properties. The active compound in Ayahuasca, DMT (dimethyltryptamine), induces profound visionary experiences, often described as a journey into the subconscious mind.

Ayahuasca ceremonies are typically led by experienced shamans who guide participants through the process of healing and self-discovery. The brew is consumed in a ceremonial setting, where the shaman uses icaros (spiritual songs)

to facilitate the journey. These songs, believed to carry the healing energy of the plant, help to navigate the participants through their visions and experiences.

During my experiences with Ayahuasca, I discovered its numerous physical and spiritual benefits. The purging process, often experienced as vomiting or other forms of release, cleansed my body of toxins and negative energies. Research suggests that Ayahuasca enhances brain function and may alleviate symptoms of depression, a sentiment I found deeply resonant with my own emotional healing journey and divine connection. The brew opened portals to spiritual realms, revealing profound insights into my life's purpose, often providing clarity and guidance along my spiritual path.

The Role of Shamanism

Shamanism places Ayahuasca at its core, with shamans employing the brew for healing and spiritual guidance. They believe that physical ailments often originate from spiritual imbalances, and Ayahuasca enables them to perceive and rectify these disturbances. The rituals surrounding Ayahuasca ceremonies are steeped in tradition, creating a sacred space for participants to navigate their personal journeys, often accompanied by the soothing melodies of icaros, spiritual songs sung to guide and protect.

As the time for the Ayahuasca ceremony approached, I prepared with deep reverence. The ritual required abstaining from red meat and adhering to a vegetarian diet in the weeks leading up to the event. On the day of the ceremony, we were instructed to fast, heightening our sensitivity to the sacred medicine.

The ceremony commenced around 7 PM, led by Maestro Pablo, whose presence radiated warmth and wisdom. Even before consuming the

brew, I felt the energy flowing through my body, activating my chakras in eager anticipation of the profound experience ahead. The atmosphere transformed as Maestro Pablo, with his three bottles of sacred liquid, meticulously prepared the brew—a mixture of three herbs boiled to create the potent elixir.

The Ayahuasca Ceremony: A Transformative Experience

When it was my turn to drink, I hesitated for a moment but eventually took a generous sip of the bitter concoction, placing the cup down with a mix of anticipation and uncertainty. Initially, the effects were subtle, but within minutes, a powerful shift began within me. Energy surged from the base of my spine, climbing upwards like a vibrant current of light. I

experienced discomfort as my body purged the medicine, and visions erupted in my mind—flames dancing upon my head, brilliant yet devoid of heat.

In that moment, the energy surged through me, awakening my cells in a vivid display of colours and patterns, as if my entire being was being reprogrammed. I understood that the Grandmother spirit of Ayahuasca was at work, revealing my weaknesses and assisting me in releasing old patterns. The energy continued to build, illuminating my consciousness and granting me insights into my life's purpose, as well as the wisdom of ancient yogic and Shamanic teachings.

As the ceremony unfolded, I felt my chakras open one by one, culminating in a profound connection with my





crown chakra. Insights flowed through me like a stream of consciousness, guiding me toward a greater understanding of my spiritual path. The grandmother spirit revealed glimpses of my future, insights about my age, and my physical and spiritual objectives, as if my DNA was being reprogrammed in real-time.

Hours passed, and I experienced waves of energy and enlightenment, a journey that felt both eternal and beautifully structured. When the ceremony finally concluded, I emerged with a profound sense of peace, clarity, and purpose, equipped with the guidance I had sought.

While some participants opted for a second cup of Ayahuasca, I felt my journey had reached its

conclusion. The experience had been transformative, filling me with renewed energy and clarity, ready to embrace my role as a spiritual teacher, healer, and guide.

A Milestone in My Spiritual Journey

This retreat marked a significant milestone in my spiritual journey, enhancing my understanding of Kundalini energy, Shamanism, and the power of plant medicine. As I continue on this path, I am filled with gratitude for the wisdom and healing I have received and am eager to share this knowledge with others. I have come to realize that my Kundalini was awakened during the ceremony, guiding me toward my true purpose within the intricate tapestry of life. The experience has not only deepened my

connection to the spiritual realm but also empowered me to assist others in their journeys toward enlightenment and healing.

After the ceremony I researched and found out that it is possible the Kundalini can be awakened through Ayahuasca which is a Path to Spiritual Transformation

In the realms of spirituality and consciousness expansion, Ayahuasca and Kundalini energy are two powerful forces that often intersect, inducing profound states of awareness and transformation. Although they originate from distinct cultural and spiritual systems—Ayahuasca stemming from indigenous shamanic practices in the Amazon and Kundalini from the ancient yogic traditions of India—interest is growing in how these two energies might work together. Specifically, can Ayahuasca trigger a Kundalini awakening?

Understanding Kundalini Energy

In the Indian yogic tradition, Kundalini is described as a dormant spiritual energy coiled like a serpent at the base of the spine, in the root chakra (*Muladhara*). When awakened, Kundalini rises through the central energy channel (*Sushumna*), ascending through the seven chakras and leading to spiritual awakening, self-realisation, and enlightenment. This process can be gradual and cultivated through disciplined practices such as meditation, pranayama (breathwork), and yoga.

However, Kundalini can also awaken spontaneously, often triggered by intense spiritual experiences, emotional or physical trauma, or even the use of plant medicines like Ayahuasca. When this energy rises too quickly or without adequate preparation, it can lead to Kundalini Syndrome—a period of physical, emotional, or psychological upheaval

as the body adjusts to the intensified energy flow.

The Power of Ayahuasca

Ayahuasca is a potent psychoactive brew made from the Banisteriopsis caapi vine and other plants, most commonly Psychotria viridis. For centuries, indigenous tribes in the Amazon have used Ayahuasca in ceremonial contexts to induce altered states of consciousness, heal emotional and physical ailments, and connect with the spiritual realm.

The primary active ingredient in Ayahuasca is DMT (dimethyltryptamine), a powerful psychedelic that generates vivid visions, deep emotional insights, and a sense of connection to the divine. When consumed in a ceremonial setting under the guidance of a shaman, Ayahuasca can facilitate profound emotional healing, spiritual awakening, and self-discovery.

The Intersection of Ayahuasca and Kundalini Energy

Though Ayahuasca and Kundalini come from different spiritual traditions, they share a commonality: both can lead to deep transformation

and expanded states of consciousness. The question of whether Ayahuasca can directly awaken Kundalini energy has piqued the interest of spiritual seekers and researchers alike.

How Ayahuasca May Awaken Kundalini Energy

While Ayahuasca is not traditionally used for Kundalini awakening, many participants report experiencing Kundalini-like sensations during ceremonies. Here are several mechanisms through which Ayahuasca may facilitate this awakening:

Purification of Energy Channels

Ayahuasca has a unique ability to bring up and release deep emotional traumas, suppressed memories, and psychological blockages. From a yogic perspective, these blockages, or *Samskaras*, obstruct the flow of energy within the body. By helping to clear these impediments, Ayahuasca may enable the free movement of energy up the spine, facilitating the rise of Kundalini.

Altered States of Consciousness

Ayahuasca induces profound altered states of consciousness, during which individuals often experience deep connections to the divine, visions

of sacred symbols, or heightened awareness of their body's energy system. These states can mimic the effects of advanced meditation or breathwork, both of which are known to activate Kundalini energy. In this heightened state, individuals may become acutely aware of their energy centres (chakras) and feel energy movement along the spine—hallmarks of Kundalini awakening.

Activation Through Shamanic Guidance

During many Ayahuasca ceremonies, shamans utilise sacred chants (icaros), rhythmic drumming, and guided meditations to move and direct the energy within participants. Although shamans may not specifically aim to awaken Kundalini, their practices can stimulate the energy body in a manner that aligns with Kundalini activation principles. For those who are energetically sensitive or already on a spiritual path, this may lead to a Kundalini awakening.

Heightened Sensitivity: Ayahuasca often enhances an individual's sensitivity to subtle energies within themselves and their environment. During the experience, participants may feel sensations of heat, vibrations, or pressure along the spine, commonly associated with Kundalini energy. These sensations may serve as initial indicators of Kundalini beginning to rise.

Case Studies and Reports

Many individuals who have undergone Ayahuasca ceremonies report experiences that resonate with traditional descriptions of Kundalini awakening. Common symptoms include, intense heat or cold moving through the body; vibrations or pulsations in the lower back or head; a sensation of energy rushing upward; visions of serpents, sacred symbols, or divine beings;





heightened emotional sensitivity or spontaneous emotional releases and a profound sense of spiritual connection. While these experiences are not universal, they highlight the potential for Ayahuasca to act as a catalyst for Kundalini awakening.

The Challenges of Kundalini Awakening Through Ayahuasca

Although the awakening of Kundalini energy can be transformative, it carries potential risks, especially if it occurs without proper preparation or guidance. Some challenges include the following.

Kundalini Syndrome

If Kundalini rises too quickly or without adequate grounding, individuals may experience Kundalini Syndrome, marked by physical discomfort, emotional upheaval, or psychological confusion. Symptoms may include uncontrollable shaking, spasms, intense heat or cold, and emotional swings. In the context of Ayahuasca, these symptoms can be amplified by the brew's psychoactive effects.

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The intersection of Ayahuasca and Kundalini energy offers a fascinating opportunity for spiritual seekers to explore deeper dimensions of consciousness and energy systems.

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Overwhelm and Disorientation

Ayahuasca ceremonies can be intense and overwhelming for some participants. Adding a Kundalini awakening to the experience can lead to even deeper transformations that may be difficult to integrate. Without proper support and integration, individuals may struggle to comprehend their experiences and incorporate the lessons into their everyday lives.

Lack of Guidance

Unlike traditional Kundalini practices, often guided by experienced teachers or gurus, Ayahuasca ceremonies may lack specific guidance for managing Kundalini energy. While shamans are skilled in navigating spiritual and energetic realms, they may not be well-versed in the nuances of Kundalini awakening, which requires a different understanding of energy work.

Conclusion: A Journey of Profound Transformation

The intersection of Ayahuasca and Kundalini energy offers a fascinating opportunity for spiritual seekers to explore deeper dimensions of

consciousness and energy systems. While Ayahuasca may not traditionally be utilised for Kundalini awakening, it has the potential to serve as a catalyst for this activation by clearing energy blockages, inducing altered states of consciousness, and enhancing sensitivity to subtle energies.

For those interested in exploring this powerful combination, approaching the experience with respect, preparation, and guidance is crucial. Engaging with both Ayahuasca and Kundalini requires a willingness to surrender to the unknown, trust the process, and participate in practices of grounding and integration after the ceremony.

Whether Kundalini awakening occurs spontaneously or through careful cultivation, both Ayahuasca and Kundalini energy provide paths for deep healing, transformation, and spiritual awakening. When approached with intention and reverence, they can lead to significant shifts in consciousness and a greater understanding of the self and the universe.



Smt. Ramamani
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REMEMBERING BKS IYENGAR

Words: Sallie Sullivan



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When BKS Iyengar died in 2014 at the age of 96, the 'London Times' devoted a two-page spread to his obituary, as did the 'Times of India' (no relation). He was certainly the best-known yogi around the globe. He was on the 'Time Magazine' USA's list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

His mastery of yoga asana had three sides: demonstration, teaching, and treating ailments. In his life he gave countless, astonishing demonstrations; he taught and also trained teachers, now with registered instructors in six continents; he pioneered yoga therapy for all manner of ailments.

A DIFFICULT CHILDHOOD

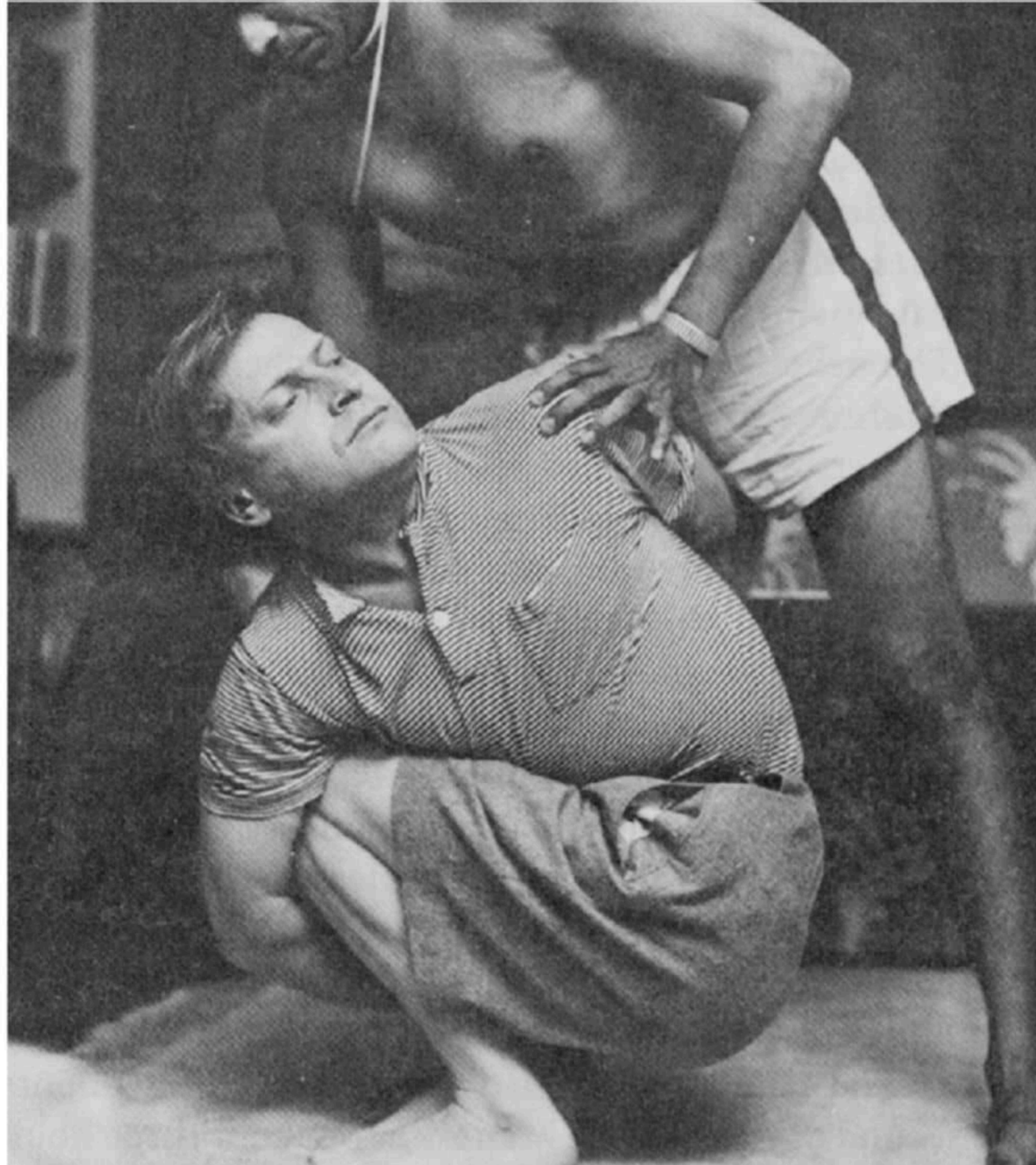
His life did not begin promisingly. It is a wonder that a puny lad from a poor, rural South Indian village, even now a bone-shaking hour's drive away from

Bangalore, became a yoga master. The village is still small, a few narrow streets of single-story homes, roughly forming a square around a temple. Many families still keep a single cow, fed on fodder carried back from the fields. He was born in 1918, a sickly child, 11th of 13 children of a village schoolmaster. He did not shine at school, due to frequent illness. At the age of 16 he was sent to stay with an older sister in Mysore in 1934. Her husband, T Krishnamacharya, was both a Vedic scholar and a yoga master.

Iyengar asked to learn yoga from his Guru Krishnamacharya. Yoga – and his strong spirit – transformed him. At first, his hands barely reached his knees when he bent down with straight legs into *Uttanasana*. Yet he proved to have aptitude and a quick intelligence.

He gave the first of innumerable asana demonstrations at the age of 17, which earned him a gift of 50 rupees from the Maharaja of Mysore. He had spent little more than two years learning asana when his Guru sent him to Pune in 1937 to teach at the Deccan Gymkhana, because he knew some English, although he did not speak the local language of Marathi.





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POVERTY, PROPS AND PERFORMANCE

He struggled for some years in great poverty, teaching both army cadets and elderly, sickly people to earn (sometimes literally) a crust. His classes for fit youngsters were fast and furious, a sweaty 'route march' of Vinyasa. He taught the elderly or infirm one-to-one. One such man being unable to stand, Iyengar adjusted his limbs into asanas like Triangle on the floor. He was caring and inventive, using items like chapatti rolling-pins, bolsters, even house bricks, as props. When discussing Iyengar yoga, we have to talk about many modes and moods, not one style.

By-the-by, using props is not a tricky invention of his – millennia ago, Buddhists hung upside down in 'bat pose' which we know as rope *Sirsasana*, although they did it over a smoky fire as a penance; centuries

ago, yogis used a yogapatta (strap) or a yogadanda (a stick) like a crutch under the armpits to support them when sitting for meditation. (See the wall paintings in the Dalai Lama's palace in Lhasa). Check out Yogadandasana in Light on Yoga page 340, and also carvings from the middle-ages, e.g. at Hampi, showing deities with straps round their back, and even blocks under their knees for sitting. There are rumours of an old book on rope work, now lost, in the palace of Mysore: 'Yoga Kurunta.'

Notable people began to get attracted by his extraordinary skill in performing the gamut of difficult asanas and by his developing skill in teaching. Gradually, along with a growing family, his reputation grew. Iyengar for years taught the philosopher and theosophist Krishnamurthi, and the great Jain Guru Bhadrakarji Maharaj in

Bombay, leading to weekend teaching visits there for many years. Swami Shivananda conferred the title 'Yogi Raja' on him in 1952.

MEETING MENUHIN

The pivotal moment for followers of yoga in the UK came that same year. Iyengar's gateway to the West was the celebrated violinist Yehudi Menuhin who was troubled by poor sleep and exhaustion while touring in India. Prime Minister Nehru recommended Iyengar, who went to Bombay to meet Menuhin. Iyengar put his fingers over Menuhin's face and head, *Shanmukhi Mudra*, whereupon he fell asleep for 40 minutes and awoke fully refreshed. They continued the lessons over the years, and remained firm friends. A young David Attenborough interviewed them both for a BBC film. Later, Menuhin gave Iyengar a watch inscribed 'to my best violin teacher BKS Iyengar' which remained a precious heirloom.

This lucky event brought Iyengar several times to Europe – first Switzerland, then London every summer, in May, for some precious years. This laid the foundation for the movement known as Iyengar Yoga – called that by us but not by him. Luckily, he also came down to Brighton to teach. I missed that, regretfully, but was taught by Rayner Curtis who studied with him then.

These UK trips led to three people being tasked to teach in-between his visits. One was Silva Mehta, who went on to be a founder of Iyengar Yoga London in Maida Vale. She conducted yoga teacher training for the Inner London Education Authority which insisted on Iyengar-trained teachers for Adult Education night classes. I first saw Mr Iyengar in Maida Vale in 1985. I was riveted, fascinated by his feet, which had more life and mobility in them than most of us have in our whole being, and by his fearsome eyebrows. I recall his instructions for *Virabhadrasana 3*, a tricky balancing



and fluency he attained in his teaching, writing and lecturing!

REVITALISING THE CLASSICS

He could speak for an hour extempore on Sage Patanjali who was his ‘prop’ in yoga. His books *‘Light on Yoga’, ‘Light on Pranayama’* and *‘Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali’* are masterful. When he taught, a single, unusual word of command or turn of phrase could transform an asana for his students, referring to ‘combing’ the skin, or ‘rinsing’ the organs in twists, or making the tailbone ‘thinner’ in Ardha Chandrasana so the brain is quiet.

The asanas that he learnt from Krishnamacharya were absent from the repertoire of other yoga schools, notably the standing poses like *Trikonasana* and the Warrior poses, and there is no earlier mention of ‘dog pose’ head up or head down. The Raja of Aundh did ‘dog pose’ as part of his *Surya Namaskar* but did not name it. There is a Tibetan description of ‘elephant pose’ which sounds like going from ‘dog down’ to ‘dog up’ in the modern jargon.

To rebut criticism of apparent innovations, Mr Iyengar later wrote “my Guru had a Guru, who had a Guru also. My practice of yoga has come from a Guru *Parampara*. My Guru learnt Yoga in Nepal, about 210 miles from Kathmandu, under the guidance of Shri Ram Mohan Brahmachari... Naturally I am tradition-bound.” Perhaps there is a Himalayan connection we know nothing of.

Had his fame depended on skill alone, its memory would fade like past glories on archive film – as happens with performers like gymnast Nadia Comaneci and ballerina Margot Fonteyn. His method has lasted because his method is transmissible. It is astonishing that in church halls,

asana: “You are all bending the knee of the top leg. Make the knee light and the foot heavy. Shoot with the little fingers”.

SPARKS OF DIVINITY

In due course he taught crowned royalty and sporting royalty, especially cricketers (he adored cricket and watched the Indian team’s matches avidly on TV). He had an audience with the Pope; more recently, teamed with the Dalai Lama for a public discourse, he explained the effects of yoga as his students did the asanas.

His live presentations were tempered with moments of humour or spiced with apparent danger: *Hanumanasana*, the splits, on Penzance harbour wall in 1985 (I was there), *Sirsasana* (head balance) in front of the Eiffel Tower, mirroring the shape of its base in the triangle of his folded arms, and

Sirsasana again, one leg forward and one back, with the body rotated by 90 degrees, on the brink of the Grand Canyon. He had an irrepressible sense of humour.

He may have attracted attention for the mastery of his demonstrations, drawing many to try yoga. However, what kept people coming back, week after week, year after year, was the accuracy, depth and effectiveness of his teaching.

After the Pune Institute building opened in 1977 more western students went to learn directly from the master, family members and local teachers, The latter first learnt their craft by assisting and then taught. I was fortunate to be taught by ‘Guruji’ as we later called him rather than ‘Sir’ or ‘Mr Iyengar’. I was astonished to learn how little schooling he had had. What skill



was that teacher, she could hardly believe that this simple family man was such a celebrity.

BKS Iyengar, despite his renown, sympathised with people of every condition. He was no 'Rolls-Royce Yogi'. He gave generously to leprosy treatment, relief from drought and earthquake. He began work to transform his birth village starting in the mid-sixties with a primary school paid for partly by UK students. Later came a health clinic, a water tank, then a fully equipped hospital. On higher ground outside the village, he established a campus giving opportunities for young people to study and to learn yoga. The secondary schools and the college each have a yoga *shala*. There are also residences for teachers, doctors and nurses. He designed a beautiful, spacious main Yoga Hall for residential courses for visiting teachers and groups. On an elevated site, open to cool breezes, it was completed after his death. Yoga has returned to the place of his birth.

“Feeling the movement of moments is wandering to the past or future. Living in the moment of movement is being in the present.” BKS Iyengar.

Sallie Sullivan is a Level 3 Iyengar yoga teacher. In 1974 Sallie was lucky to join an adult education night class in Iyengar Yoga, qualified as a teacher in 1986 and has studied at the Pune centre a dozen times. She visited Bellur in October 2004 for the inauguration of the first Sage Patanjali temple, paid for by Guruji Iyengar, and in 2015 for the opening of the Yoga Shala.

community centres and sports centres in the UK and round the world, ordinary women and men still turn up with rolled mats, sometimes with foam blocks and belts, on dark winter evenings or sunny Saturdays to learn Iyengar Yoga. When I started learning in the 1970s, there were broadly two sorts of yoga— Hatha and Iyengar. When I started teaching in the mid-eighties, one potential student asked ‘is yours the tough sort?’ and politely ducked out. Another student might enrol precisely because it was a demanding exercise, physically and mentally. There’s the clue: the asanas, well taught, gradually train the mind and senses of an attentive student to penetrate the layers towards the essential kernel of the inexpressible and eternal.

A LASTING LEGACY

Today multiple media has spread interest in yoga and many other paths to peace and wellbeing; the number of ‘yogas’ has exploded. The rather strict and non-fluffy discipline of Iyengar Yoga became just one of dozens. Its insistence on precision and alignment are off-putting but essential to its effectiveness. Iyengar said “Don’t practise for cosmetic beauty, practise for cosmic beauty – practise for inner beauty and inner light.”

A devout Hindu in the Vaishnava tradition, he taught people of different religions and none. His teachers were equally diverse. My first Iyengar teacher was Catholic; his priest arrived in his cassock and reappeared for class, from the gents, in natty shorts. Studying with ‘Guruji’ was no cult, demanding only concentration and devotion to asana and pranayama. He sometimes chatted with students in the library in the afternoon. He once talked about astrology and palm reading, which he believed in. He asked those present for their experience. I had to tell him I was sceptical, expecting maybe a put-down. “What do you do?” he asked. “I’m a school teacher” I replied. “Well, something determined you should be one” he said calmly, with no reproof in his manner.

After his cremation on 14th August 2014, his family needed to return to the local hospital that had treated him. One nurse, knowing that her late patient had been a yoga teacher, exclaimed at the coincidence that just at the time of his passing, a famous teacher of yoga had also died. She asked the family if they had seen the papers. Perhaps they knew of this famous yogi? Learning that Iyengar

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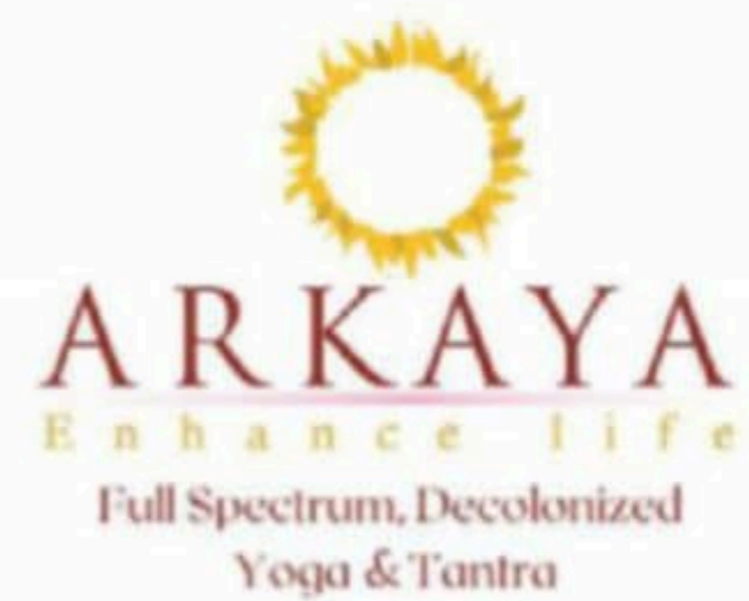
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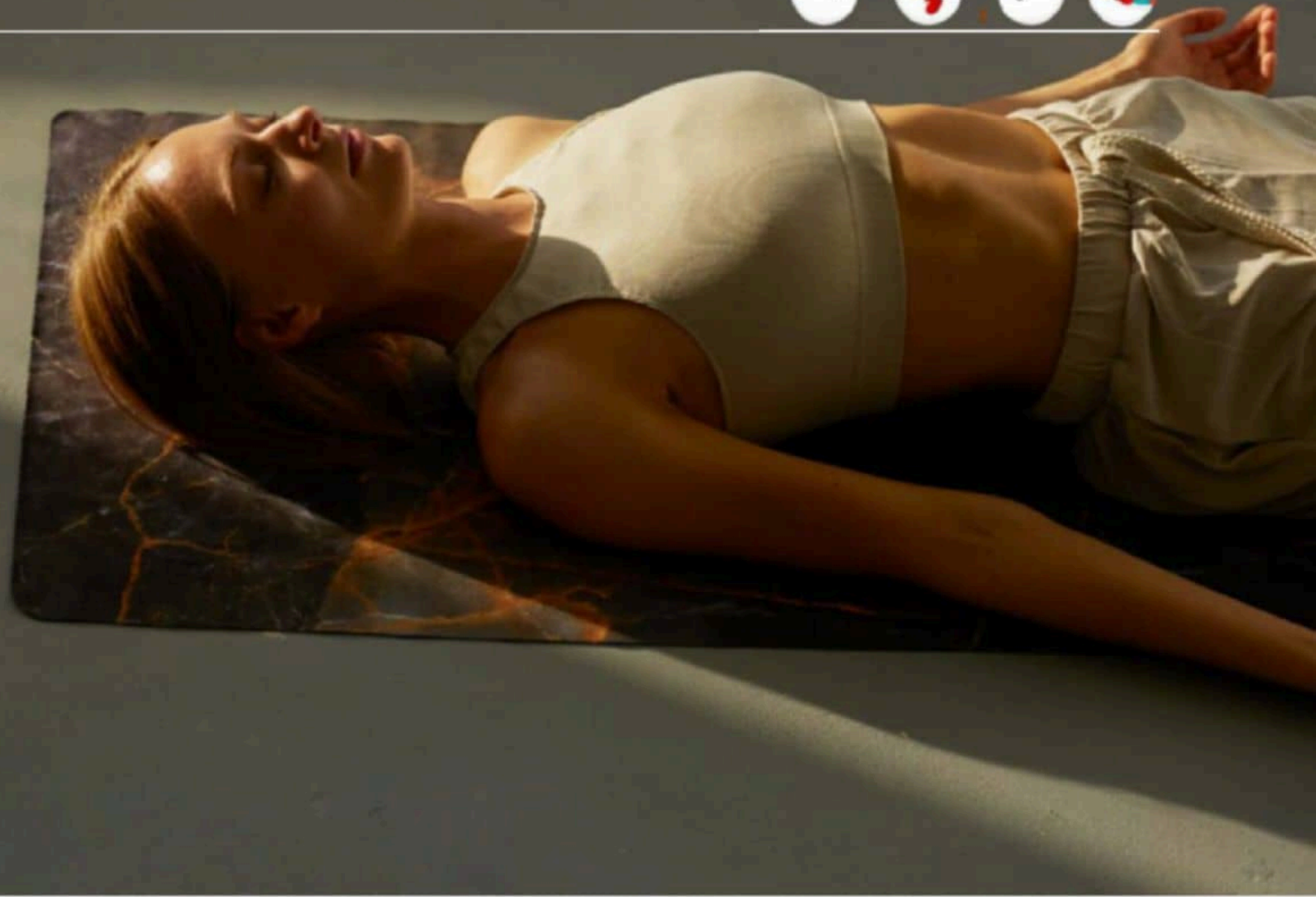
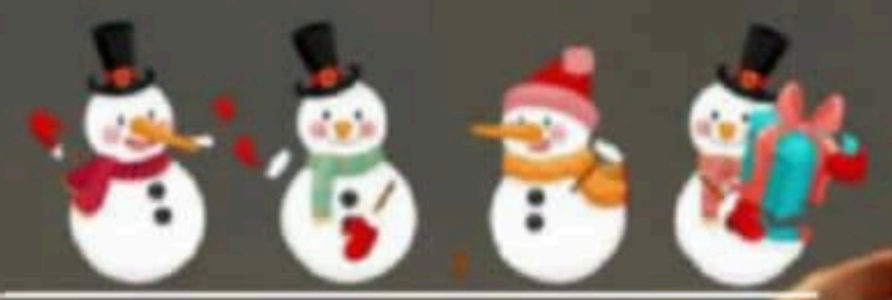
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What is
योगा नीद्रा
& how does it support
PERIMENOPAUSE?

How to understand your 'inner-seasons' so you can track your energy and find calm when you need to.

Words: Kate Codrington



It's a deep irony that the one thing that would be of most benefit in perimenopause can be the hardest to access. Not HRT, though that helps many, not education, though that's thankfully improved post-Davina. It's rest. Perimenopause asks us to release outer concerns and withdraw, exactly at the time when we likely have the most intense life-load. Consider a hypothetical peri person, the filling in a sandwich squeezed between caring for kids and parents, also trying to hold down a job in the face of deep brain fog, while being told she ought not to be 'letting herself go' and do it all with a smile. You probably know someone like her in your class, go and suggest she rests and see what reaction you get, I dare you.

THE GIFT OF YOGA NIDRA

As *Yoginis*, we have access to the most efficient, multi-tasking, powerful forms of rest in Yoga Nidra, where we dance between wake, sleep and dream states. Often perceived as an add-on at the end of class, or meditation's lazier sister, Yoga Nidra hits the spot for perimenopause as you'll see. It was first mentioned in traditional texts as a state of consciousness in itself according to Yoga Nidra teacher trainer Kahdine Morcom. Formalised into a practice

by Santyananda in the 70s, it has thankfully shed the rigid dictates of: Don't Sleep! Lie still! In *Savansana* only! In line with mainstream Yoga practices it has become increasingly trauma-friendly, permissive and adaptive to different needs in recent years.

Yoga Nidra is an accessible practice that guides us from the everyday Beta state of consciousness to the deeper Theta state, experienced by seasoned meditators. This is where we touch the subconscious realm, drifting into relaxation, and sometimes into Delta, the gateway to universal consciousness. Delivery and styles vary, but nearly always involve a rotation of awareness around the body that varies from a simple body scan to an all singing and dancing journeys into the imaginal realm. The open state that Nidra induces is akin to hypnosis and can be used to induce acceptance, abundance, compassion, emotional integration, creativity, and healing of all kinds.

THE SEASONS OF OUR LIVES

Given that rest is indicated in perimenopause, what is it that makes Nidra so supremely helpful? The easiest way to explain this is to start with a bit of seasonal knowledge.

Spring and Summer : increasingly expansive and engaged with the world

Autumn and Winter : increasingly contracting and engaged with the inner life

In the seasons of our lives, your first period is the start of Spring, heralding your journey of discovery about who you are and what the world is about. Summer is your 20s-30s is when your spirit longs to be expressed in the world and validated. Autumn is perimenopause where we become increasingly sensitive, turn inward, and let go. Winter is towards the end of menopause hibernation where we have a longing for profound rest, and a deep connection with our inner lives. In postmenopause, a Second Spring arrives where we emerge from the cave and start a journey of discovery about how to inhabit a non-menstruating body with vitality. Second Spring is followed by Second Summer, Autumn and Winter before we end our life on this earth.

You'll see how in our culture, Spring and Summer are feted as the desirable state, while Autumn and Winter are rejected and pathologised. Cycles make life sustainable, no one would suggest it could be a healthy plan

to stop sleeping and pretend it's daytime all day, or to recommend only breathing in and not out. But we are brainwashed to push through, ignore our body's signals and keep on keeping on. No wonder we arrive burnt out in perimenopause.

YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE IS TRAINING YOU

The menstrual cycle also has a seasonal map, with Winter being your period, a post-menstruation Spring, Summer around ovulation and Autumn being the much maligned premenstrual week. Just like perimenopause and menopause, the Autumn and Winter of the menstrual cycle bring us back towards our authentic selves so we can see the truth, reaffirm our boundaries and care for our inner lives, letting go of what is needed before the next cycle. Much of the raging of the premenstrual Autumn is caused by exhaustion and the expectation that we must remain biddable and in service to others at all times.

The seasons of our menstrual cycle teach us the issues that will trigger us and how we can soothe ourselves in perimenopause. If you have a menstrual cycle now, pay close attention to how you can soothe and care for yourself in your premenstrual week and your period. Make lists of supportive foods, practices, self-care and movement and ask your friends

“

Yoga Nidra with its nervous system soothing, relaxing, mind-emptying qualities has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety and this will help to regulate hormones.

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for their ideas. Autumn in a nourished and rested body gives you access to your inner strength, bringing gifts such as facing truths, affirming boundaries, editing and sorting, de-cluttering and letting go, truth-telling and line drawing. In non-menstruating bodies these are known as leadership skills.

9 WAYS YOGA NIDRA WILL SUPPORT PERIMENOPAUSE

Decrease hormone disruption

In perimenopause we are particularly susceptible to stress hormones, in a way that we weren't in our 30s. Whether we chose to take hormone therapy or not, it's the stress hormones that dramatically influence the fluctuations of oestrogen and progesterone which cause

perimenopause symptoms. Yoga Nidra with its nervous system soothing, relaxing, mind-emptying qualities has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety and this will help to regulate hormones.

Make rest do-able

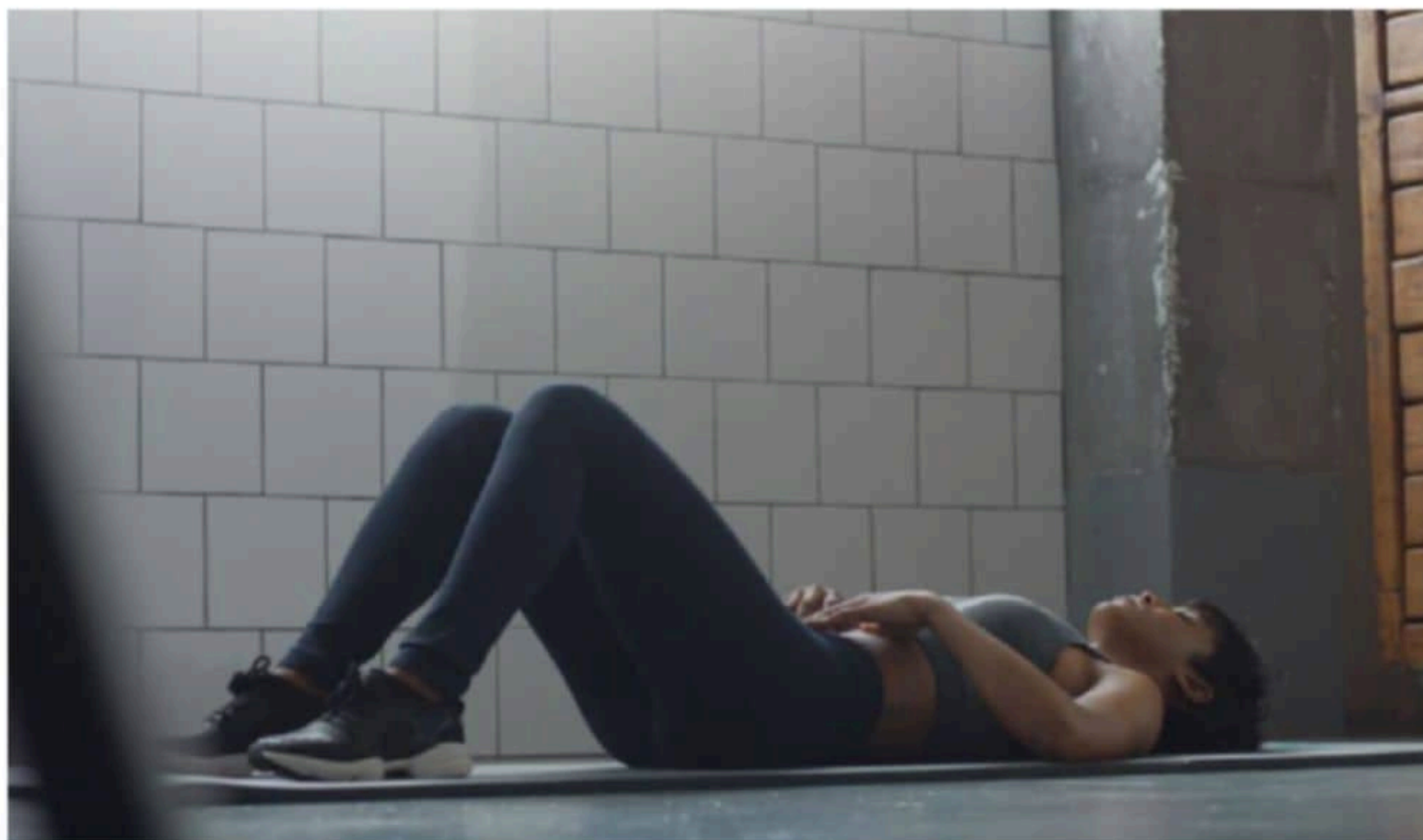
Resting is hard to access for most people. Yoga Nidra offers a time-boundaried structure, with the safety of a trusted voice. At 20-minutes long or less, the nidra structure will slow down the most hyper-alert mind and make rest do-able.

Change not-enough-ism

The exhaustion we see in perimenopause is the result of years of doing more than our share of caring, domestic tasks, emotional labour, and low paid work. When socialised as female, we enter into a life where the feeling we are 'not enough' is a life-long background hum. We adopt a default position of doubling down to work extra hard in our careers and personal lives to try to prove, we are enough. In Yoga Nidra, opening with invitations like: 'nothing has to happen here', 'you can't get this wrong', 'put down your to-do list' come as a corrective to not-enough-ism.

Trust and reassurance with nature

Using the seasons as a guide in the Nidra encourages reassurance that the process of perimenopause is purposeful. Autumn imagery is





particularly supportive, for example: leaves revealing their true colours, leaves falling, returning to nourished ground, harvesting autumn fruit. Suggestions to 'let go', 'to allow' and 'cease striving' all echo the central themes of the perimenopause process and are fed directly into the subconscious as rest deepens. Bringing awareness to the complete seasonal cycle with imagery or the breath also deepens trust in the regenerative and growthful possibilities of perimenopause and awareness that Second Spring will come.

Keeping up with change

As the body changes there are new aches, skin changes, lower energy, muscle loss, perhaps weight gain asking to be accepted and integrated. We may not be able to do the arm balance we took for granted and the temptation is to feel we're failing and all is lost. Yoga Nidra offers the opportunity to meet our body as it is now, in this moment with compassion and gratitude, bringing loving kindness to ourselves. Who knows whether the arm balance will

“

Yoga Nidra offers the opportunity to meet our body as it is now, in this moment with compassion and gratitude, bringing loving kindness to ourselves.

”

be interesting postmenopause, maybe, maybe not. But we can certainly entertain both possibilities with more love by using Yoga Nidra.

Embracing paradoxes

All change requires we work with paradoxes and perimenopause is no exception. We are asked to be vulnerable and strong. To let go and hold on. To both know and have no blooming clue! This confusing time can be made simpler when we remember we need to embrace both sides of the paradox. In the Yoga Nidra structure, there is an invitation to feel some opposites and this is where the paradoxes can be met with equanimity. We feel one, then the other, and both of them together at the same time.

A rite of passage

Perimenopause is a rite of passage marking the time where we move from one way of being: oestrogenic people-pleasing, to another: living closer to our authentic self. The fear that colours this time of life does great damage in our 40s and 50s. Yoga Nidra brings dignity and meaning to the psycho-spiritual aspect of perimenopause. In



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the Yoga Nidra state we can call in guides, spiritual and archetypal figures to journey through gateways and to find our way.

Finding ourselves in fog

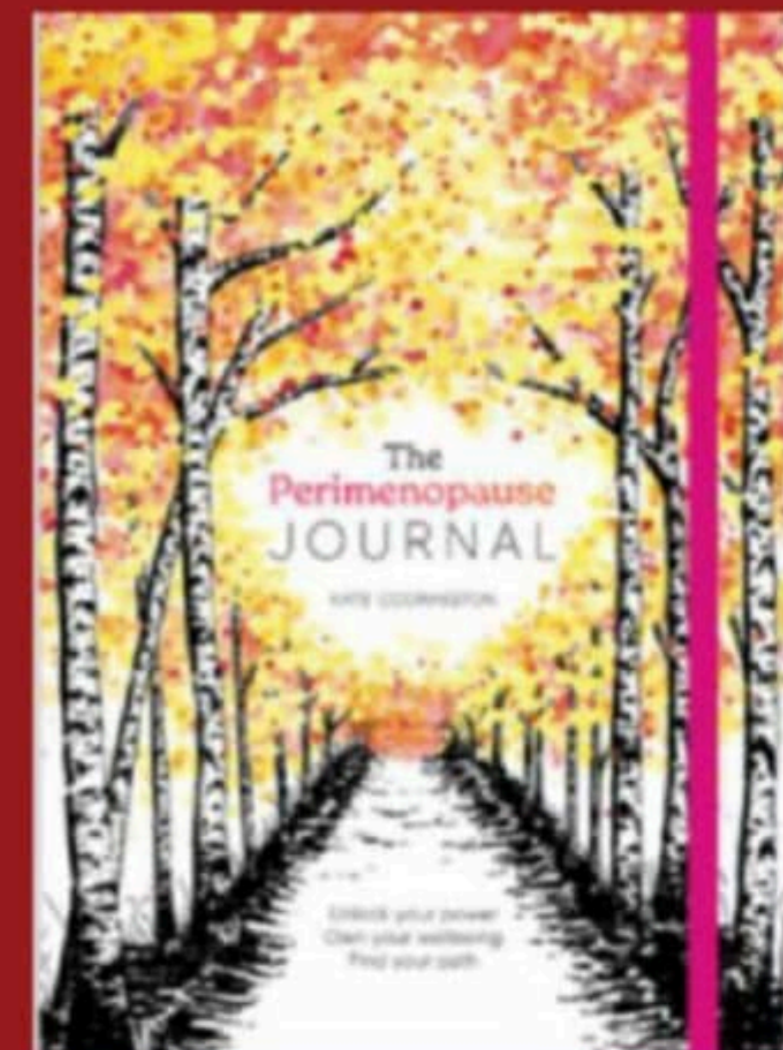
Brain fog is common in the perimenopause years, bringing fear of ageing and dementia. Partly due to the exhaustion and partly hormone fluctuations, names, words and objects all seem to be out of reach when needed and we feel that we are failing at life. As the epidemic of sleeplessness shows, the expectation to operate in a binary of being either absolutely on the ball, or total unconscious is clearly not workable; we're not machines that can switch on or off at will. Humans operate in infinite states of being. All states have values and gifts that give us access to different kinds of knowing. Yoga Nidra helps us flow between different states with less attachment.

Truth and knowing

Everyday life is so fast, noisy and overstimulating, we easily miss out on body wisdom. No wonder our bodies shout so loudly, we're too busy to listen. The slow pace of Yoga Nidra gives us space to listen, so for example the tiredness might bring you to notice your heart is aching and you need more space to grieve, that your senses are overwhelmed and you need a break, or that your feet are numb and yearning for grounding. Remember the truth-telling aspect of

perimenopause? It can come out harsh and loud for sure! But Yoga Nidra can allow space for truth to be witnessed in compassion, so it can be communicated more skilfully.

Now, exhale, get comfy, and put your to-do list to one side, remember you can't get this wrong, it's Yoga Nidra time. If you'd like to effortlessly integrate the seasons of your life, you can find a Seasonal Journey Yoga Nidra here <https://bit.ly/Kates-free-resources>



Kate Codrington is the author of *'The Perimenopause Journal and Second Spring'*. A mentor and facilitator, she also offers mentoring for wellbeing professionals and Yoga teachers who want to understand cyclical living and the growthful possibilities of menopause. You can find her at katecodrington.co.uk



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WORLD PEACE ACTIVIST NICHIDATSU FUJII

Words: Victor Parachin

Civilisation is not to kill human beings, not to destroy things, not to make war;
civilisation is to hold mutual affection and to respect one another.



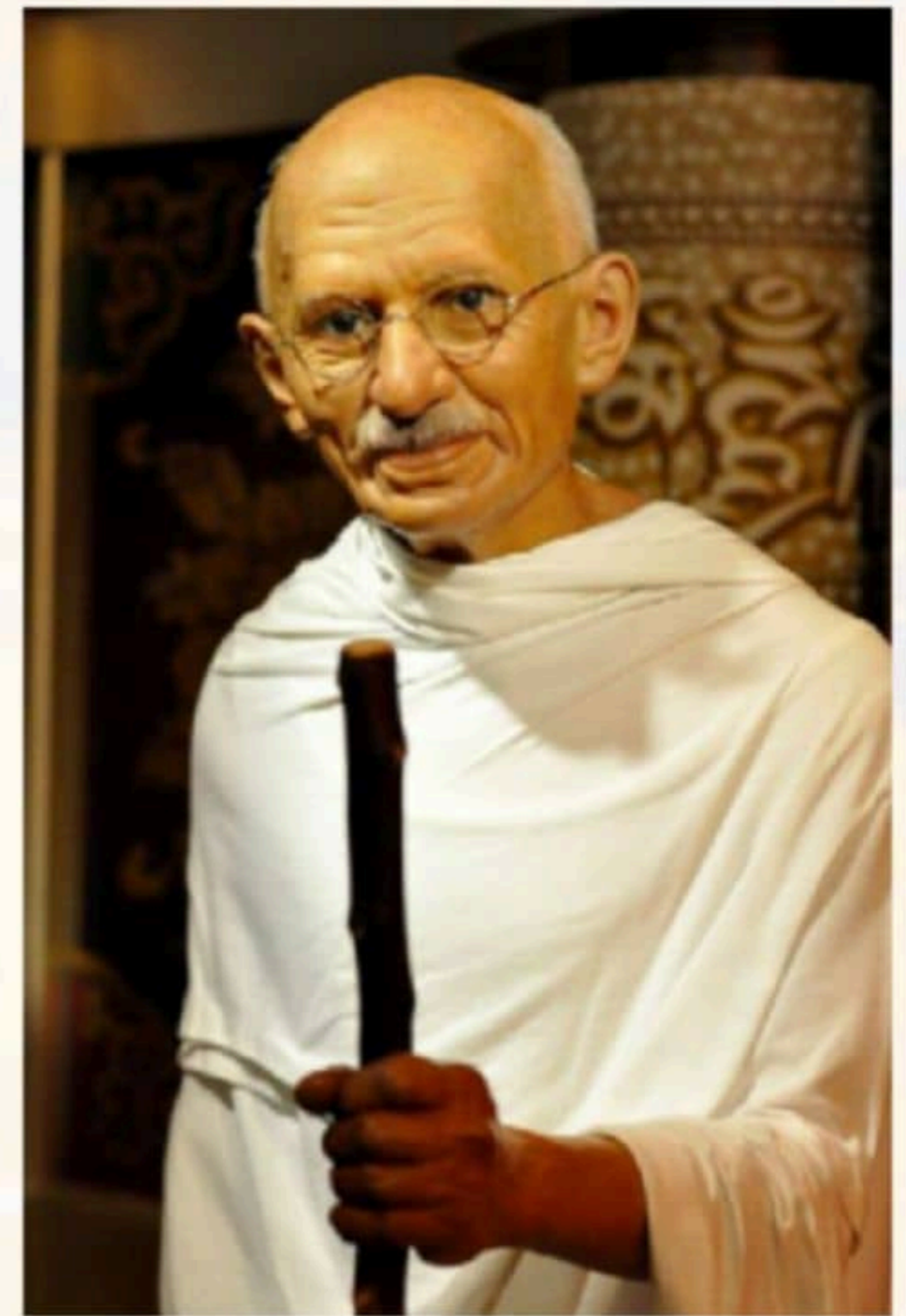
In 1933 Mahatma Gandhi welcomed a Japanese visitor to his ashram. His guest was a Buddhist monk named Nichidatsu Fujii. The two immediately established a heart connection with Fujii teaching the Indian mystic a Buddhist chant. Gandhi was so enthralled with the spiritual effect of the chant that he began including it as part of the meditation practices at his ashram while Fujii was deeply moved by Gandhi's gentle spirit and immediately embraced the Indian leader's philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience.

Nichidatsu Fujii was born on August 6, 1885, to a poor, rural family. By age nineteen he had decided on his life path and was ordained a monk in a Nichiren Buddhist lineage. In 1917 he was sent to Manchuria, China to promote Buddhism. However, in 1923 Japan experienced a horrific earthquake which destroyed much of Tokyo causing the loss of nearly 200,000 lives. Fujii returned to help with relief efforts. A few years later while reading through the thirteenth

century writings of Nichiren, came across these sentences:

“The Land of the Moon is another name for India, the place where the Buddha made his appearance in the world. The Land of the Sun is another name for Japan. Is there any reason why a sage should not appear here? The moon moves from the west eastward, a sign of how the Buddhism of India spread in an easterly direction. The sun rises in the east, an auspicious sign of how the Buddhism of Japan is destined to return to the Land of the Moon.”

Upon reading and reflecting over those sentences from Nichiren, Fujii felt a calling to fulfill Nichiren's vision of taking Buddhism back to India. At that time, Buddhism was in a major decline in India. Arriving in 1931 Fujii began teaching and promoting Buddhism, specifically his own Nichiren lineage whose main spiritual practice is meditation done by chanting the mantra - *nam myoho renge kyo*. Within a few decades, Buddhism began to



grow and flourish again in India with the Nichiren branch becoming the most practiced style of Buddhism in the country.

When World War II erupted, Fujii, greatly influenced by Gandhi's philosophy, declared himself a pacifist and traveled to Japan promoting pacifism and speaking out against the war. His opposition was viewed as treasonous and came with great personal risks. The fact that he was a Buddhist monk may have spared him from being arrested and incarcerated. Nevertheless, Fujii was driven by his convictions explaining: “The Pacific war raged ever more brutally. I could no longer...keep silent about the war, in which people were killing one another. Thus I traveled through the whole of Japan and preached resistance against the war and advocated the prayer for peace. It was a time in which any person who only spoke about resistance to the war, would go to prison because of that alone”.

Following World War II, he traveled all over Japan opposing nuclear arms, promoting peace and engaging in hunger strikes stressing non-violent solutions to national and international problems. He explained his actions



“
The illness of the modern world is serious. Not a single moment can be lost to heal this illness; the stakes are life or death.
”



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saying: “The reason I came to espouse nonviolent resistance and the antiwar, anti-arms position was not because I met with Mr. Gandhi. Rather, it was because the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing hundreds of thousands of innocent women and children, burning and poisoning [the population], a tragedy without precedent in human history, leading Japan to sue for unconditional surrender. In this we see the mad, stupid, barbaric nature of modern warfare.”

In 1947 Fujii made a decision for which he is most remembered and admired, the building of Peace Pagodas world wide. These Buddhist centres are monuments – called ‘stupas’ - designed to inspire peace providing a focus for people of all races and creeds motivating them to unite and remain committed in their search for world peace. Work began on the first Peace Pagoda in Japan which took seven years of hard labor using primitive hand tools because of the the poverty of postwar Japan. When it was finally completed, more than 100,000 people came to the opening ceremony.

Since then, nearly 100 Peace Pagodas have been built worldwide - Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States. More continue to be added.

Fujii traveled the world bringing his anti-war message and abandonment of nuclear arms warning that access to weapons of mass destruction brought grave danger to the entire planet: “Not a shred of scruples or regret, is shown in conducting warfare, in which even nuclear weapons, - weapons of mass destruction, weapons that raze cities, and are extreme in their indiscriminate brutality and inhumanity, are freely usable. In such an environment there may no longer be a way for any sentient being to live on the surface of the earth. “

A person of great energy, Fujii was lecturing in the United States at the age of 98. In Los Angeles he gave a two hour lecture on nuclear disarmament at a private home where the room was filled with Buddhist monks and laypersons. Nichidatsu Fujii died in his one hundredth year on January 9, 1985.

To his dying day, Fujii never wavered in his deep belief that Buddhist teachings could change the world and rid it of war. “The illness of the modern world is serious,” he wrote. “Not a single moment can be lost to heal this illness; the stakes are life or death. For such times of crisis, the Lord Buddha left a curative medicine over 2500 years ago - 'I will leave this good medicine here. Take it and fear not that it might not cure the illness.' ”

Victor M. Parachin, M. Div. (CYT) is an author, Vedic educator, yoga instructor, and Buddhist meditation teacher. He is the director of Tulsa Yoga Meditation Centre (USA). Victor researches and writes extensively about eastern spiritual philosophy and is the author of numerous books. His work is published regularly in YOGA Magazine. His book - *‘Think Like a Buddha: 108 Days of Mindfulness’* was published by Hohm Publishers and his latest book *‘Buddhist Wisdom for Beginners: An A-Z Guide’* is published by Sunstone Press.

tulsayogameditationcenter.com

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM **NICHIDATSU FUJII**

We can achieve interesting things, when we move people's minds. A good work is peaceful and leads to a chain of other good works.

No matter how much we change systems, or bring our brains together, there is no prospect in dispelling mutual fear and mistrust, unless people open up their door to spiritual change.

True peace is brought about when man pledges to himself never to take the lives of others and abandons the idea of killing.

Spiritual transformation is nothing to be ashamed of.

The true origin of peace does not lie in politics or in economics, but in the enhanced practice of morality and esteem for religious faith.

The United States used nuclear weapons in Asia, and subsequently has been repeatedly blackmailing the rest of humanity by publicly referring to their possible use.

Not a single religion, or any doctrine worthy of faith and acknowledgment by many people, affirms mutual mass killing.

We must work with all our might, for complete disarmament. General and complete disarmament is no longer an exercise of the mind, but is the most realistic solution.



When we believe in the goodness of others we can dispel our own fear, and we become capable of having amicable associations with them.

The source of peace exists within our innate Buddha nature. The source of war is also nothing more than the avarice and anger in our minds.

The dreadful calamities of the atomic and hydrogen warfare, we fear are an agony reflective of the disease of inner darkness.

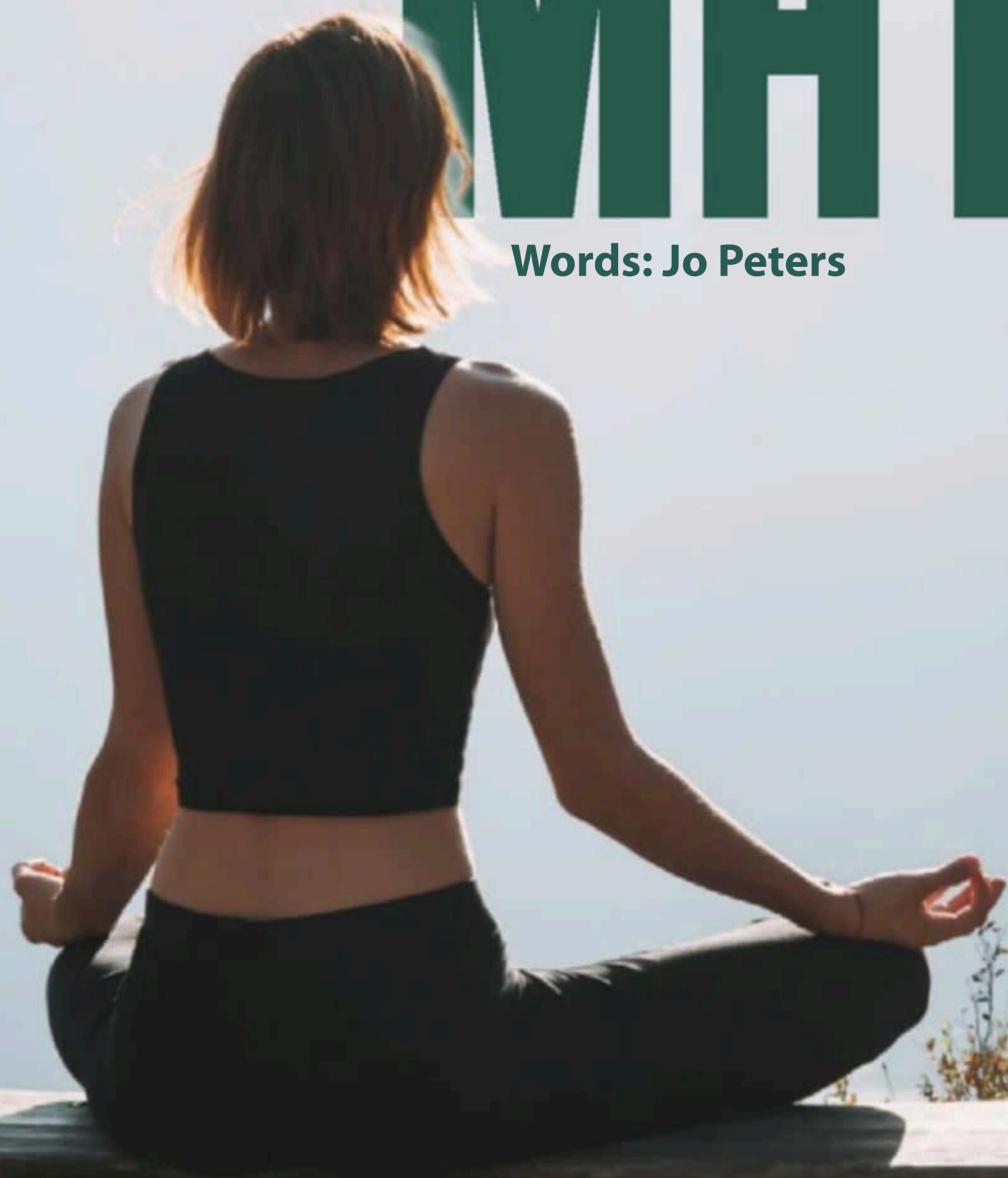
Nowhere on earth will there be war if people respect and show kindness to each other. It is not human to engage in this kind of ridiculous killing.

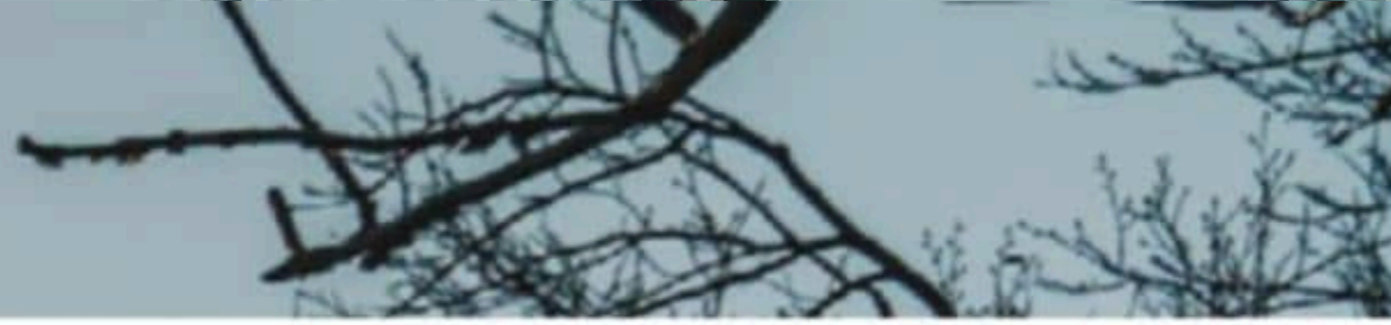
BEYOND THE

MAT

**PRACTISING YOGA
AS A WAY
OF LIFE**

Words: Jo Peters





As a yoga lover, it is likely that along your yogic journey you have encountered, and been inspired by, some other yogis who have helped you to fall further in love with the practice. Perhaps they exuded the peace, joy and generosity that arises from a dedication to yoga as a way of life, not just an exercise.

Here, Jo Peters, author of new book *'The Little Book for Yoga Lovers'* shares how you can take your love for yoga beyond the mat and into daily actions and thoughts to live a life of tranquillity, contentment and gratitude.

While it may take some time to adjust to new ways of thinking, know that you have everything you already need within you to lead a yogic life.

A YOGIC MINDSET: MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is paying attention to the truth of the present moment without judgement or interruption from distracting thoughts. In a physical yoga practice, mindfulness is being entirely present on your mat by bringing your attention to only your breath and asana alignment. It may also involve noticing how you feel internally or emotionally in the moment, without passing judgement on whether those feelings are negative or positive.

Mindfulness is a meditative habit that you can practise throughout your day by focusing solely on the moment at hand. For instance, you can eat mindfully, noticing the flavours and textures, and walk mindfully, noticing the sounds and colours around you.

When you begin to adopt a mindful outlook, you live life more wholly, fully experiencing the world around you and within you at the present moment, rather than your attitude being clouded by perceived judgements and imagined realities.



A YOGIC MINDSET: LOVING KINDNESS

Loving kindness is a way of channelling your thoughts through a lens of love and kindness to all. Employing the loving kindness mindset means being compassionate towards and sympathising with everyone, even those who hold different belief systems and morals. It is a way of sending benevolence into the world in order to heal hurt and encourage peace.

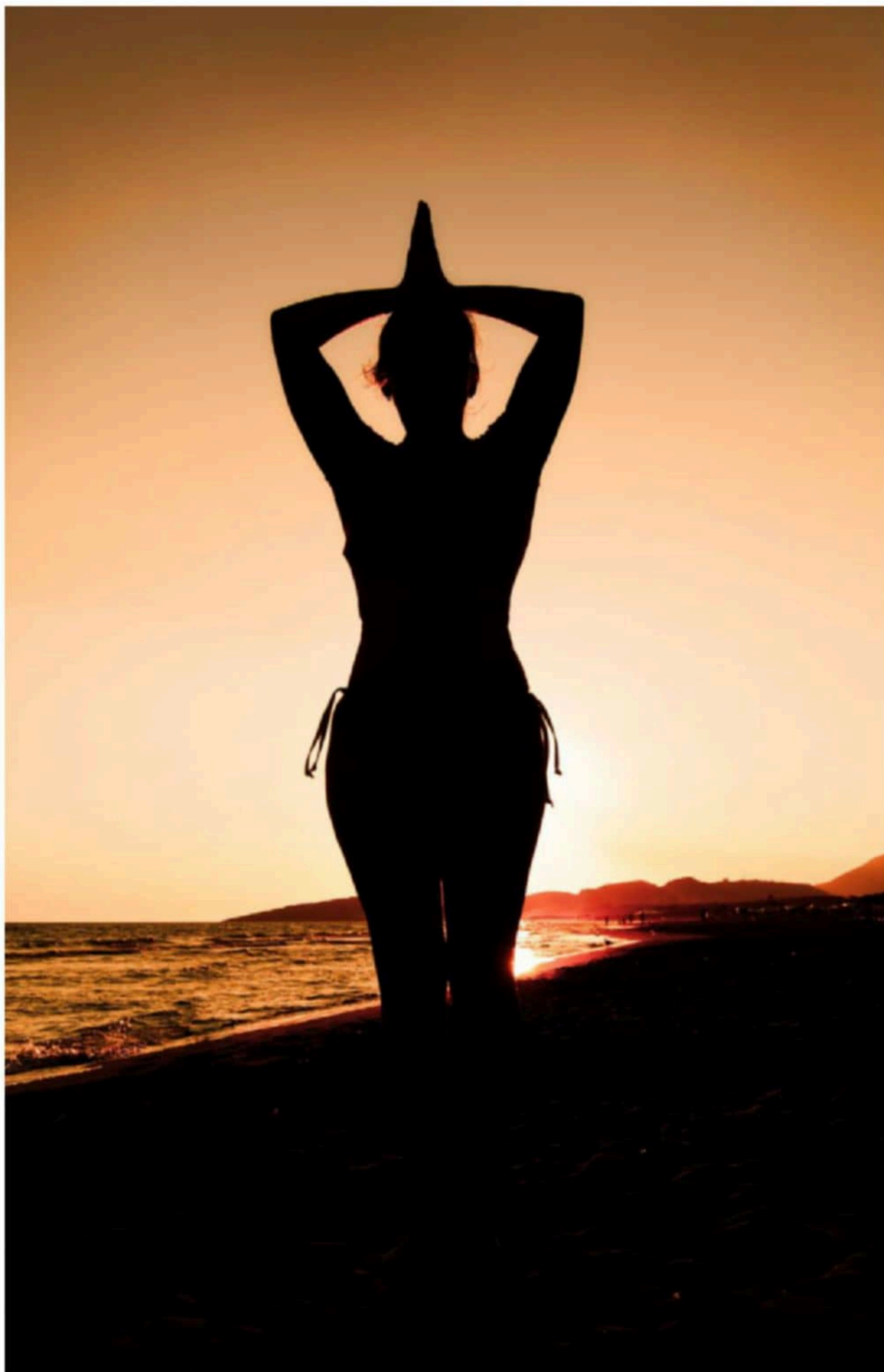
Loving kindness should also be directed towards the self to overcome negative thoughts and judgements. It can be practised within yoga by always treating your body and mind with love and respect. This means not pushing your body too far or chastising yourself if your mind wanders during meditation.

You can practise adopting this mindset through a dedicated Loving Kindness Meditation, in which you meditate on thoughts of yourself and others, allowing only loving feelings to exist. Let negative thoughts and judgements melt away and be replaced by warm kind-heartedness.

A YOGIC MINDSET: GRATITUDE

When you start to acknowledge and express gratitude towards everything that life provides you, you will likely find more and more to be grateful for.

When practising yoga, you can find gratitude for a number of things: the physical body that is strong, mobile and able to flow; the time, space and security that permits you to practise; those around you for practising with you.



Try to carry this sense of gratitude beyond the class and into your daily life, feeling grateful for the loved ones in your life, your creativity and wisdom, and the physical items that bring you comfort and joy.

You can even use gratitude to find a ray of sunshine during times of hardship. Try to counter negative spirals by expressing gratitude towards the good, no matter how small it seems, even

if that means simply being grateful for the lessons being learned during difficult times.

A YOGIC MINDSET: DROPPING THE EGO

As we have learned, a fundamental ethos behind all that yoga is built upon is acknowledging that we are all part of one whole. In order to fully understand that, we must drop away from a sense of individualism and remove the ego.

“

Mindfulness is paying attention to the truth of the present moment without judgement or interruption from distracting thoughts.

”

In a more literal sense, removing egotism from your yoga practice is hugely beneficial for both mind and body. When you let go of the need to impress others or maintain your pride, it means you start to embody a practice that is more authentically nurturing and truly nourishes the soul.

Abandoning the ego also reduces the risk of injury in yoga, since you listen to your body's boundaries and do not push yourself to accomplish something purely for self-satisfaction. You can achieve this in class by focusing only on your own mat and not comparing yourself with those around you.

KARMA YOGA

You may be familiar with the term “karma” and the idea that our actions have consequences. Karma (derived from the Sanskrit word for “action”) in yoga is the path of action that involves selfless service. It involves acting from the heart and without the anticipation of what we will receive in return. Without that expectation, there is a greater sense of peace and acceptance.



To truly practise Karma yoga involves introspection and honestly acknowledging the good deeds you carry out without any interest in personal gain. Think about how you can contribute positively to the community around you in a sincere and selfless way.

Many yoga establishments and training centres run Karma yoga schemes, in which you volunteer your time and energy to help run them, often in return for free classes or training. However, remember that your help should arise from the goodness of your heart, not the expectation of gaining something.

SELF-CARE

To lead a yogic lifestyle means finding the balance between being selfless and free of ego and treating yourself with care and compassion. The limbs of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras contain discussions of duties to ourselves, such as *saucha*, the act of cleanliness.

Yoga is a great act of self-care. By practising yoga you dedicate time to improving your mental and physical wellbeing, but it is vital to ensure that you are practising in a self-compassionate way.

Self-care within a yoga setting might mean respecting your body's limitations in asanas or choosing a restorative Yin class over an Ashtanga class if your body calls for it. By listening to your own needs and taking the necessary acts of self-care in daily life, you will in turn feel healthier, more energised and more able to fully embrace your yoga practice.

AYURVEDA

Ayurveda is often considered the "sister science" to yoga. It is a natural system of medicine that encourages the maintenance of health and the prevention of ailments through

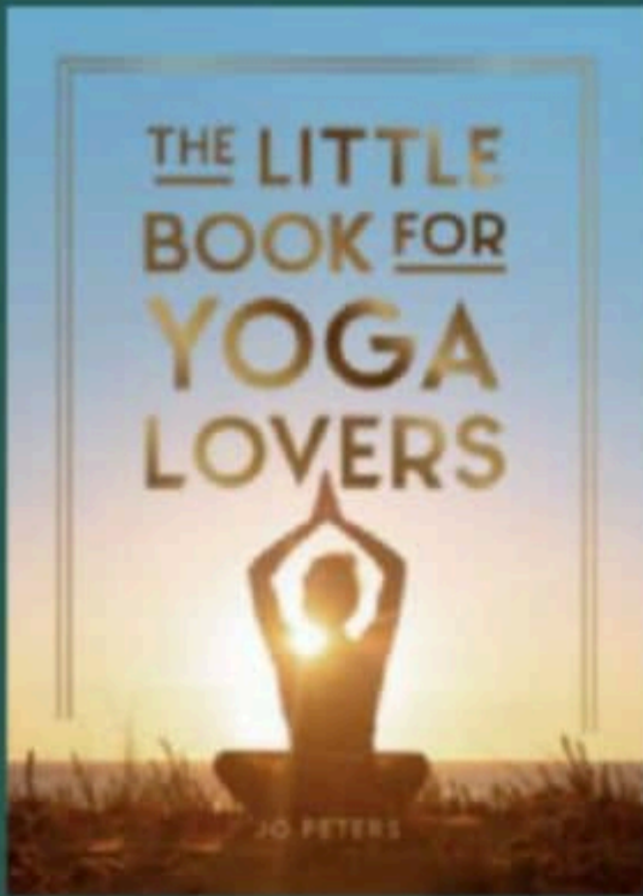


finding balance according to each individual's unique constitutional make-up.

The overarching Ayurvedic principle is that when mind, body and spirit are in harmony with the universe, you will have good health. Therefore, Ayurvedic treatment and prevention are holistic and involve addressing a person's diet, habits and way of thinking.

Ayurvedic practitioners believe every person is made up of space, air, fire, water and earth, which combine in the human body to form the "doshas": *Vata* (space and air), *Pitta* (fire and water) and *Kapha* (water and earth).

Learning which *dosha* is most dominant in you (which can be done through questionnaires) can help to address areas in which you might be imbalanced and therefore susceptible to ill-health or unwanted moods.



Extracted from 'The Little Book for Yoga Lovers' by Jo Peters. Published by Vie, £8.99

Jo Peters is a true advocate of the simple life. Once a city lawyer, she left it all behind and now lives on a small-holding in Scotland. She regularly talks in schools, educating the future generation about sustainability and caring for the environment.

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BE KIND & TRUE TO YOU

Words: Suzannah Ridgway





“Let’s challenge ourselves but gently... and with compassion”.

I have some powerful pieces of wisdom to share with you. Reaching into my precious bag, I have selected two valuable golden nuggets. These I cheerfully pass on as sharing my awareness is my calling.

Before I impart my selection, I feel it is important for me to hold my hands up. I do not consider myself to be an expert on any subject. I speak from my own personal experience. As an author, I speak from my heart. I have not been influenced by anyone. I am simply here, as you are, on Earth School to learn about myself. I have learnt many challenging lessons in my younger years from not being me and wearing the masks of pretence. Some lessons I had to repeat. After a lot of soul searching and personal growth in my 30s, I began being my TRUTH. I spent the next chapter of my life as a counsellor helping many people of all ages to love and embrace who they nakedly were. I thought I had reached a place of real personal happiness until last year.

In November 2023, I was propelled into a higher consciousness. I found myself back at nursery school learning about myself once again. More of that later.

The two gems I have chosen for you are:

- Being Your Truth – this is the hard one
- Kindness – this has many levels of joy to it

Each gives you many fabulous rewards...hurrah!

Being Your Truth

Could getting it wrong be right? Could stumbling through life, finding our way and inevitably making mistakes, actually be the way we’re supposed to live? I believe so. We are programmed from a very young age by the adults in our lives. Parental figures, teachers and those in our circles shape our perception of right and wrong. That is our ‘taught’ concept of life. We may grow up being confused by those who have been taught differently. We might change the way we behave in order to ‘fit in’.

Some of our coping strategies may be healthy and others may be unhealthy.

We might manipulate, lie or avoid people. We could also unconsciously pretend and end up forming several personalities – one for each of our environments.

The difference between how we view the world and others and how we think others see us can clash in our minds. The effect can be startling and may cause us to play games and wear masks as we struggle through suppressing feelings of awkwardness.

I saw, heard and sensed spirit as a young child. I was told that I was neurotic and that made me afraid. I hid my intuition believing that there was something wrong with me. That is just one example that began a series of negative feelings that there was something wrong with me, I never felt as though I belonged. I was different. Regardless, I remained cheerful, grateful, helpful and responsible. Other people were more important than me. In private, I would blank and at times cry feeling lonely. I never let anyone else see this. I didn’t think it was fair or right, to put my pain on them. I always sensed other people’s pain and was supportive. I didn’t want other people



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to feel alone. I knew what that was like. I would wrap my words or energy of comfort around them, hugging them safely in my warm embrace.

We have a choice. We can carry the weight of the handed down and tattered baggage from how we have been parented – our hunched shoulders pulling us down into the ground as we drag ourselves along to keep bearing the load. Or, we can learn how to return to sender, massage and ease the released shoulders, lift our heads up high, look long and forward into the road ahead wonderfully and lightly free to work out our own way and method of reliable transport.

In my opinion, being your truth is knowing who and why you are. Only then can you make conscious choices. Through reflecting we can become aware of the things we do unconsciously and we can change what we don't like while accepting what makes us human and, therefore, flawed. It takes hard work, courage and dedication to strip back the layers. You may need the help of a professional

therapist. Like searching for a good friend, look for one that you feel you can open up to.

Being your truth means being comfortable with and enjoying your character. It means smiling when you look at your reflection and it means that the person who smiles back at you is acknowledging that they are seeing a thoroughly decent human being.

Reflecting back on my life, I see just how much I have learnt so far. I understand the little girl that I was and have given time to ensuring she got what she needed. I haven't got what I needed from those that should have given it to me but that really doesn't matter anymore. The fact that I invested in her means she at least got what she deserved in her lifetime – time, acceptance, support, understanding and love.

I wrote a piece based on what I have observed about people and how I have reacted to them. It was inspired by *'The Paradoxical Commandments'* by Kent M. Keith.

IT'S OKAY

You may be selfish, mean or entitled with me.

It's okay, I choose to be kind to you.

You may judge me without the facts.

It's okay, I know my truth.

You may shout at me in anger.

It's okay, my personal space allows only peace and harmony.

You may not support or recognise me.

It's okay, I will be by your side and cheer you on.

You may not want me in your life.

It's okay, my love for you keeps us connected.

You may call me mad or crazy.

It's okay, I want to live passionately.

You may not ask after me.

It's okay, I enjoy hearing about you.

You may not like the way I look.

It's okay, I think you are beautiful.

You may say I deserve to feel hurt.

It's okay, I shall take your pain and send it back to its source.

You may say you don't love me.

It's okay, my love for you will never waver.

(Copyright © 2024 by Suzannah Ridgway "Wake Up Little Suzy")



KINDNESS

As I mentioned earlier on, I was catapulted into a higher consciousness in November 2023. I was chosen for a specific purpose. I was also given a jaw-dropping privileged blessing. I learnt that Meher Baba was my spiritual Dad. What is extraordinary is that I had never heard of Meher Baba until that date.

(Meher Baba, born Merwan Sheriar Irani (1894-1969), was a Spiritual Master described as an Avatar. He taught that God alone exists and emphasised love and selfless service)

My new-found life position has gone to a whole other level altogether. It is stratospheric. Boom boom boom...I have had one thing after another spiritually thrown at me. Lessons and tests galore. He knew I could take it. It has been quite magnificent. I thought I had reached a place of sunny happiness until now...WOW!

I am sure you have all read lots on spiritual awakening? I had read nothing. I believe, I have been guided to keep all that I speak about organic...authentic. So much has been written about spirituality. How many work daily on personal growth? It does take courage and dedication.

In my piece "It's Okay", the emphasis is on being kind. Not just to others to radiate positive energy but to ourselves to ensure we shine brightly within.

My Highest Guide is another well-known Avatar. He had one lesson that was of the highest importance for me to master...Kindness.

Kindness has depths. I have found an easy way to get to a high level...want to know?

Think of someone that has frustrated you. Feel that frustration? Now, either you had a rant with your heart racing or, you wore the mask of pretence and smiled at them? Perhaps, the chatterbox of your mind did not reflect your smile? Try this...

Get some space. Think of that person with your heart. Imagine them looking at you. You see they are carrying their own burdens. How do you respond to that? Now imagine they have tears coming down their face and they are holding a hand out to you. What do you do?

Our minds can trick us. They talk a lot and can be irrational when it comes to feelings. As a result, we may sometimes

respond to people or situations not to our favour. Thinking with our hearts is much healthier, it encourages kindness and positivity. This in turn will have a ripple effect of sparkling joy.

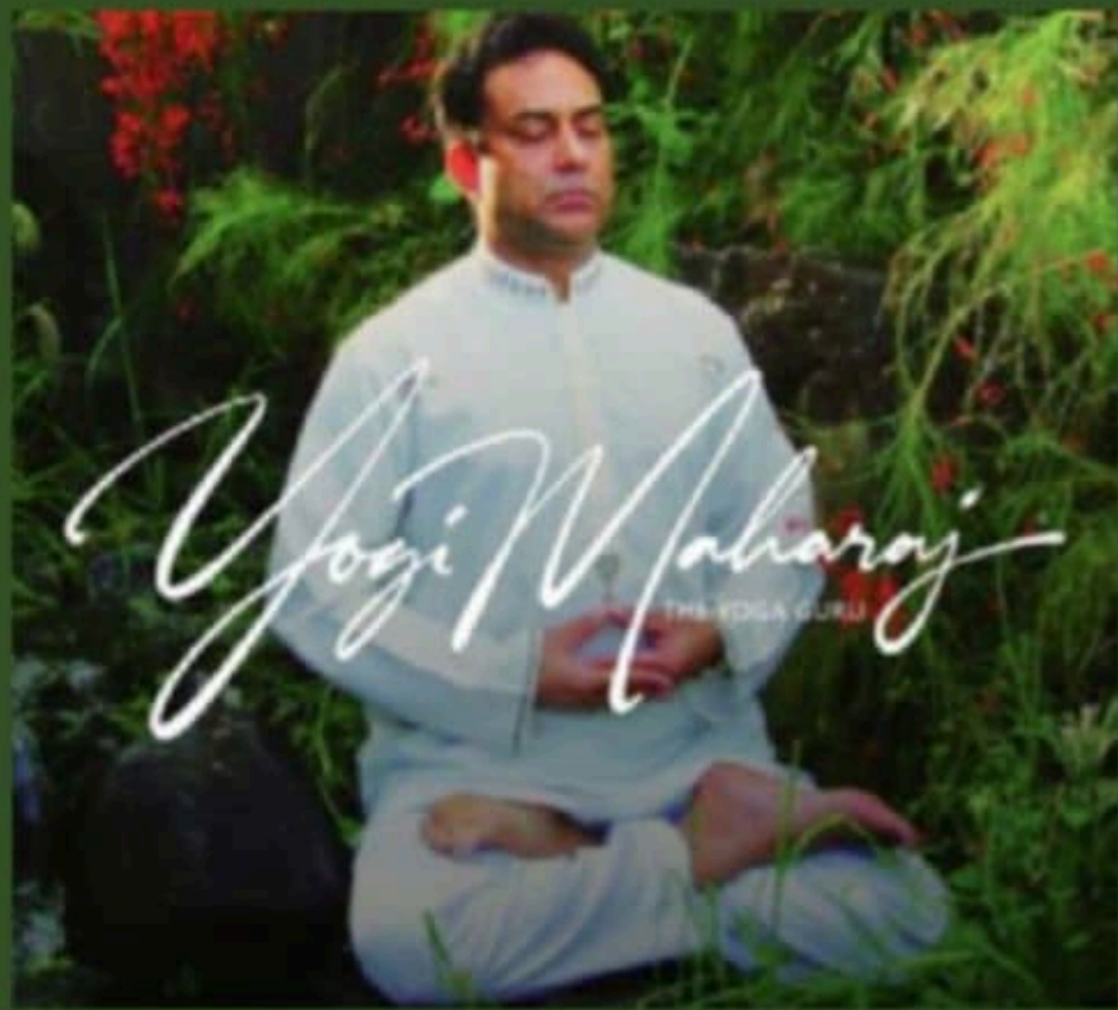
With practice, I applied that kindness to me as well as others. I put myself into my heart. I became more insistent that I was shown respect. I drew the line on those who I had always given more rope to. I found I appreciated the reality that each one of us is on our own path of self-discovery. I didn't resent that. It didn't make me angry that some people were disrespectful, mean or, lying. I began to feel sorry for them as they were on a path of negative energy. It felt very uplifting to have this polished, deeply rooted capacity. Heart thinking works wonders for me.

I really am enormously grateful for the position I am in today. Personal growth has been the most satisfying work I have ever done. I look back on this past year and realise that I am supposed to be where I am today. I was blind to who I was spiritually. I am now awake and very aware. My calling is to spread what I know to as many people as possible. Whoever you are, wherever you are and whatever your life position. Invest in you. Divine happiness awaits you all.

Suzannah Ridgway was independent from a very young age. Since she can remember, she has employed active listening and observation in understanding the true motivations of people. She has a genuine belief in our own ability to overcome, and to succeed, no matter what journey our lives have taken.

In her 30s, Suzannah became an Approved Clinical Supervisor, A Senior Accredited Counsellor and EFT Practitioner. She was the creator of a Personal Change Programme which was given status. She is now an author. www.wakeuplittlesuzy.co.uk

Ask Yogi Maharaj Dr. Malik



Yogi Maharaj Dr. Malik our Editor (since 2003) is a recognised international expert and an authority on the subject of Yoga. He started his training under the guidance of Yogis from the Himalayan region at the age of six and also received instructions from Sufis, Lamas and Sadhus. He is an accredited Yoga teacher specialising in Kundalini, Hatha and Laya Yoga.

Founder and pioneer of Yogology, a spiritual technology which combines ancient traditions and principles of Laya, Hatha, Kundalini and meditative practices, Yogi Malik began teaching this over 20 years ago. He has spent a lifetime dedicated to researching, teaching and sharing his knowledge on yoga. He is also a practitioner of related alternative therapies, including Shamanism.

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Q: Any exercise that we can practise to ward away sciatica? We are two sisters who are worried because it has already affected our parents.

B. Abbey and T. Abbey – Newcastle Upon Tyne

A: "Generally, a regular yoga practice should help ward off conditions such as sciatica. However, as we age, it is inevitable that we will be affected by age-related conditions. That said, there is absolutely no reason why you cannot help manage these conditions. It really depends on how committed you are.

If your objective is quick-fix solutions, you will not reap the full rewards of a long-term, regular yoga routine, which if done with dedication, will make you healthier both physically and mentally.

For now, you could try *Vajrasana* (Thunderbolt). I find this asana enjoyable, and my students appreciate it as well for its simplicity.

To perform *Vajrasana* (also known as Diamond Pose), sit back on your heels with your hands resting on your kneecaps, keeping your back straight and your head up.

Vajrasana is also recommended for aiding digestion and helping to manage and prevent sciatica. Regular practice massages the tissues in the knees and provides a natural stretch to the muscles in the legs and spine. This posture is also excellent for anyone suffering from creaking or crackling knee problems.

Try sitting in *Vajrasana* for at least 60 seconds to begin with and notice how it strengthens both the knees

and thighs. You can gradually increase the duration depending on your strength and comfort level.

Q: My friend suggests pouring olive oil into my ears to help clean them. She mentioned that her yoga teacher does it. Is this true, or is it simply dangerous?

H. Jovanovski – Birmingham

A: Ancient classical yoga texts describe several methods for cleansing the body, which can enhance the effectiveness of your yoga practice. Cleaning the ears is one such technique, known as *Karna Dhauti*. Traditionally, a few drops of oil are placed in the ear for cleansing.





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A simple way to incorporate this into your weekly or monthly routine is to use warm (not hot) olive oil—just $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon is needed—or any other suitable oil, such as jasmine oil.

To perform this technique, tilt your head to the side and pour the oil into your right ear. Wait a few seconds for the oil to penetrate, then repeat on the other side. Other oils can also be used. The benefits include a reduction in earwax and the release of toxins.

Q: I am trying to learn the Lotus Pose and am making some progress. My yoga teacher says that mastering the Lotus Pose can help keep me fit, active, and youthful. Should I focus on this pose or explore others instead?

P. Baerbock – Sussex

A: Your teacher is correct in their observation about *Padmasana* (Lotus

Pose). It acts as a tonic for good health. Regular practice of *Padmasana* strengthens the knees, ankles, legs, and back, while also toning the muscles of the abdomen. Lifting the feet and placing them on the thighs creates a natural stretch in the tendons and ligaments, which are the cords that hold the bones, muscles, and organs of the body. This helps to keep them elastic.

If the ligaments around the bones are weak or if the tendons hold the kneecaps loosely, they can cause severe pain. *Padmasana* strengthens the areas around the kneecaps. There are different types of ligaments in and around the kneecaps, crossing over like rubber bands. Practising this asana regularly not only strengthens your spine but also naturally improves your posture. Poor posture can increase pain not only at the base of the spine in the sacrum region but also in the shoulders and neck. A slouching spine can also give the appearance of ageing.

By aligning the spine, you reduce the risk of a slipped disc, alleviate back pain, and strengthen the bones in that area. The cartilage in the spine (discs) becomes firmer. In yogic theory, the spine is a central part of the anatomy, and exercises are designed to enhance its flexibility. If you tend to gain weight around your waist and stomach, performing this exercise daily (see suggested timetable below) is recommended. This posture is also particularly auspicious for meditation.

Since you mentioned that you are learning *Padmasana*, I would advise that you do not force yourself into this asana if you experience sharp pain. Start by loosening up the leg muscles and kneecaps. Try doing 20 squats a day, then massage some oil into your kneecaps. Sit cross-legged for at least 10 minutes, resting your right leg on your left thigh and holding it for a few seconds. Then, alternate with the other foot. If you follow this routine for at least 4

weeks, you should be ready to attempt the full pose. Ensure the base of your spine is firmly planted on the floor, with your neck held upright. Rest your arms and hands on your knees; this will help you balance properly.

To perform this pose, begin by sitting on the floor with your spine straight and your head lifted. Gently lift your right foot and carefully place it onto your left thigh, then lift your left foot onto your right thigh. Hold this position. It is good practice to stretch your arms out, resting your hands on your knees, but do so loosely to avoid straining the muscles in your arms.

Your teacher can advise on modifications and adjustments. I highly recommend that you focus on mastering this pose correctly, as it offers numerous health benefits.

Q: How can I become invisible like the yogis were able to a long time ago. If you can let me know I promise to remain ethical about it. My girlfriend is cheating on me and I want to make sure that I can catch her in the act without her knowing?

B. Kirby – California

A: I suggest you have an honest conversation with your girlfriend about how you feel. There may be an explanation she can offer that could ease your suspicions. As for invisibility, unfortunately, I cannot show you or teach you the *siddhi* (superpower) of invisibility.

However, if you'd like to learn other yoga postures, you are welcome to write to me for further guidance. The power of invisibility is described in ancient yoga texts as a consequence of a student's progress in yoga.



DISCOVER SKINLOFT

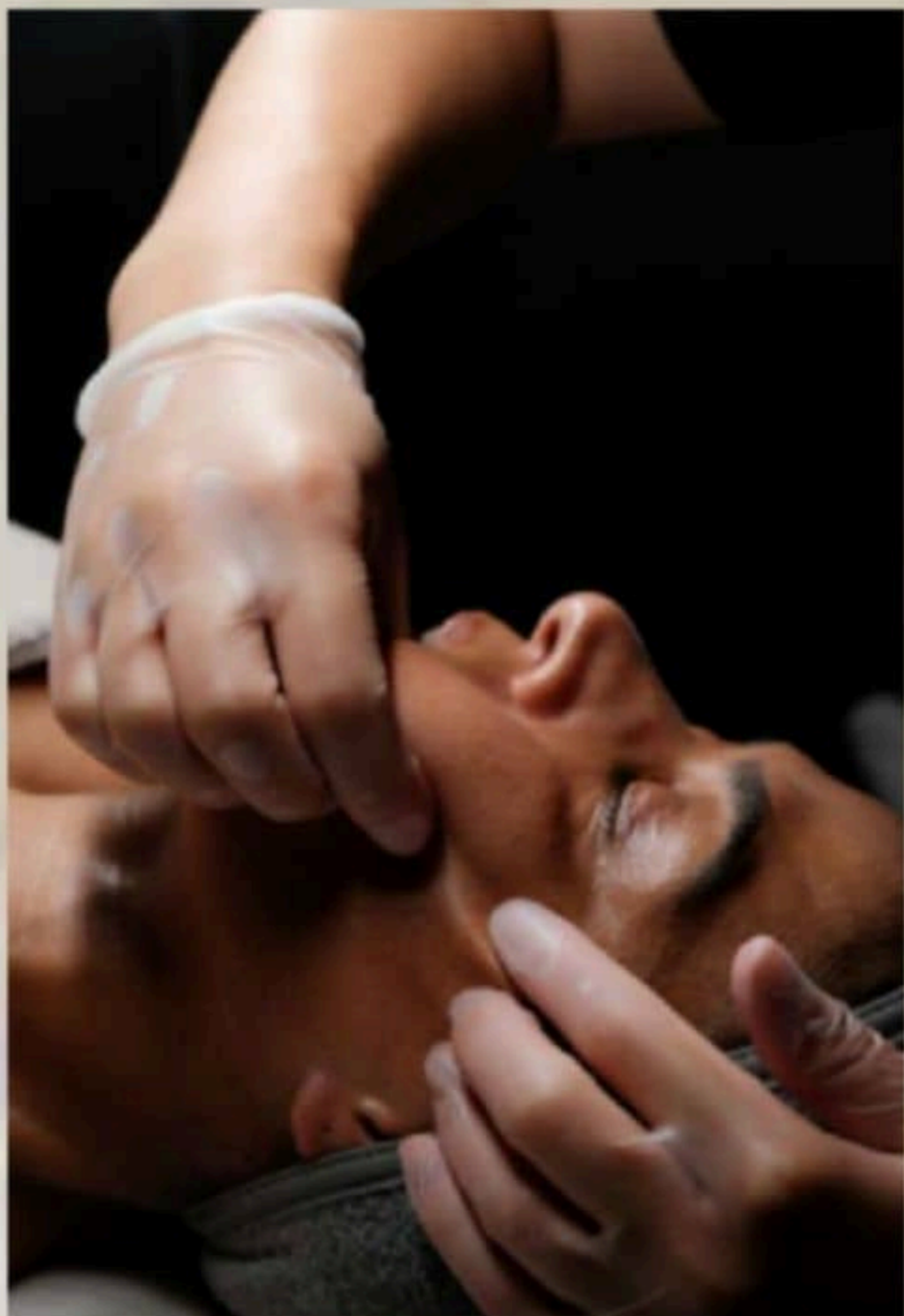
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THE YOGA WHEEL

Words: Selina Reichert



THE YOGA WHEEL

The origins of the Yoga Wheel, also known as the Dharma Yoga Wheel, reach deep into the centuries-old history of yoga. This unique tool has its roots in the original intention to support yogis on their path to achieve advanced asanas and deepen their practice.

Visionary American yoga teacher Sri Dharma Mittra has combined this ancient practice with contemporary innovation to create the Yoga Wheel. With his years of experience in yoga and his deep understanding of engineering, he wanted to develop a tool that would support yogis at all levels of experience. The wheel was designed to promote flexibility, improve balance, and stretch the spine.

The idea was born out of a desire to help yogis in advanced asanas while making the practice more accessible to beginners. Dharma Mittra founded the company Dharma Yoga Wheel, which specializes in the production and distribution of these aids. Since its introduction, the Yoga Wheel has gained popularity worldwide and is

now a commonly used tool in the yoga community.

Available in different materials and designs, from plastic to elegant wood, the diameter usually varies between 30 and 35 cm (12 and 14 in), with a width of around 12–15 cm (5–6 in). Many wheels are equipped with a soft, non-slip coating that ensures a secure grip during intensive exercises.

The variety of materials allows for different load capacities, often between 150 and 200 kg (330 and 440 lb), depending on the manufacturer's specifications. To vary the exercises, one or two yoga blocks can be used as an elevation aid or to fix the bike in place to make it easier to perform the exercises. The nature of the block, whether it is made of cork or hard foam, influences its load-bearing capacity.

Today, the Yoga Wheel and yoga block are easily available on the internet or from sports retailers. Their wide range of applications make them valued companions in yoga practice, and their use enriches the yoga journey with

joy, ease, and perhaps also spirituality. Immerse yourself in the world of the Yoga Wheel, and find out how this simple but effective tool can enrich your yoga journey.

MORE ABOUT THE YOGA WHEEL AND ITS ADVANTAGES

The Yoga Wheel, a versatile aid, opens up a world of relief and challenge in your yoga practice, not only for beginners but also for advanced practitioners. For beginners, the wheel acts as a supportive tool that makes it easier to hold certain yoga positions for longer. An example of this is its use as an elevation in Warrior variations or to relieve pressure on the shoulders and back during Forward Bends.

For advanced practitioners, the Yoga Wheel makes it easier to hold balancing poses, gradually strengthening muscles and coordination through regular practice. The wheel also supports the stretching and elongation of the thigh muscles and hips. The right breathing technique can also open up and strengthen the chest, shoulder, and back muscles.

Tension and blockages in the back can be released during training with the Yoga Wheel, resulting in improved mobility and relaxation. Heart-opening poses in particular, such as Backbends and forearm balances, are encouraged by the Yoga Wheel and take on a new dimension.

The Yoga Wheel also serves as an effective strengthening device for the core. Numerous exercises for the back and abdominal muscles can be performed using this tool, resulting in holistic strengthening and improved posture. Immerse yourself in the world of the Yoga Wheel and discover how this simple but effective device can enrich your yoga practice.

HOW DO I COMBINE INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES?

To create a harmonious yoga flow with the Yoga Wheel, it is important to master the basic seated, standing, and lying poses as well as various stretching and strengthening exercises. Start your practice with gentle warm-up exercises to prepare the body. Structure the flow so that you gradually increase the intensity by moving from basic exercises to more advanced poses. However, only do this if you feel confident in the individual poses and can perform them cleanly.

Make sure that the transitions between the individual exercises are smooth and avoid abrupt changes. If you feel unsure in some asanas, use aids and continue to practice them as individual elements.

Coordinate the movements with your breathing to create a meditative atmosphere and support the flowing transitions. Conclude the flow with calming and relaxing exercises using the Yoga Wheel for support. After you have completed the flow, reflect and make a note of which asanas worked well and which you would like to work on, and perhaps even create

your next flow. The key lies in the intuitive design, which is based on the individual needs and abilities of the participants. Experiment, be creative, and find a flow that is right for you and your practitioners.

HOW THIS BOOK IS STRUCTURED

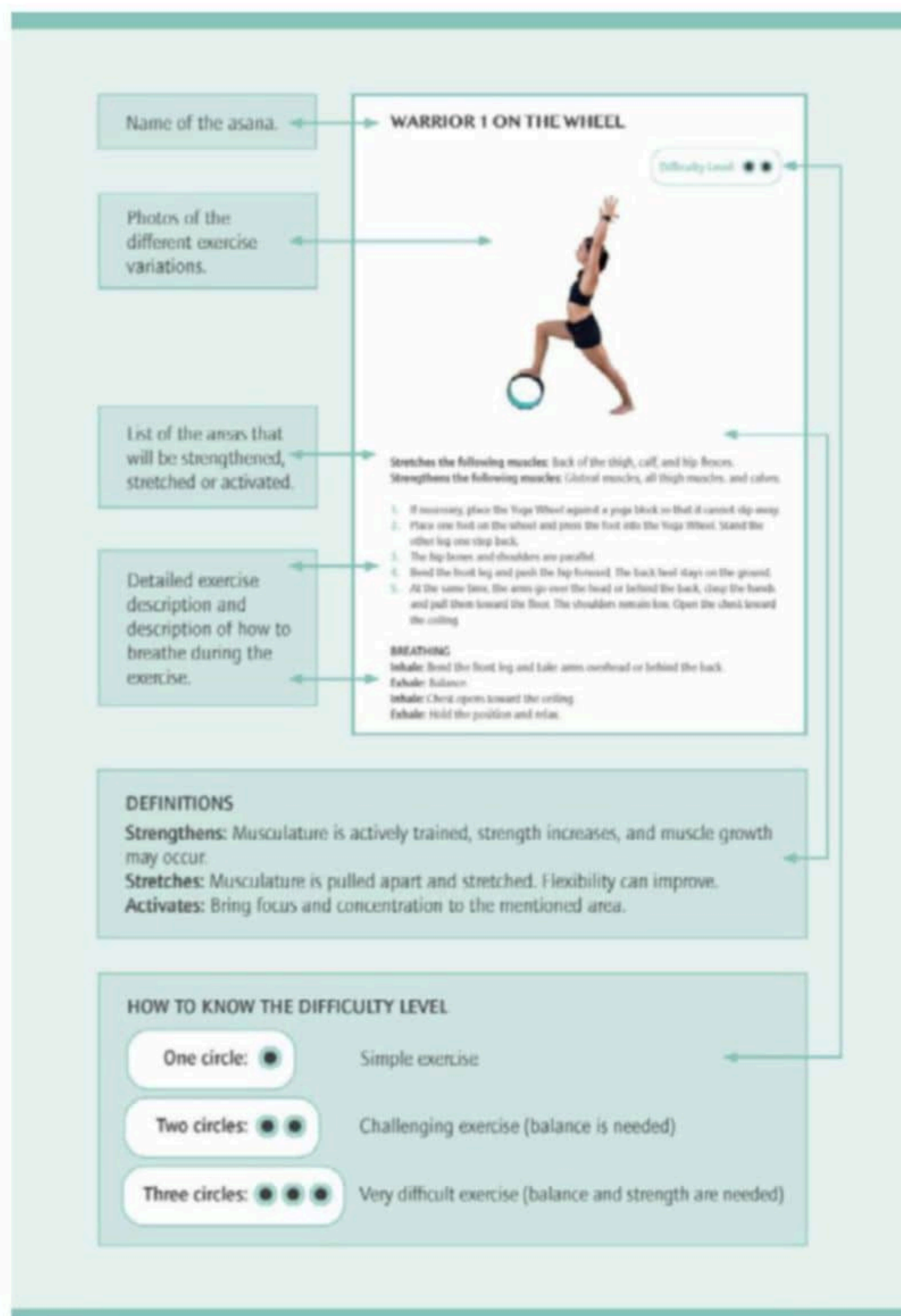
The book begins with warming up the joints and large muscle groups with the wheel (chapter 1). To minimize the risk of injury, it is advisable to warm up before each training session.

The following chapters are divided into different poses: Standing Poses, Arm Balance, Activation of the Core, Backbends, Forward Bends and Hip Openers, and Reverse Poses. The aim is to move from standing to the support and seated elements.

HOW THE EXERCISES ARE STRUCTURED

In addition to the explanatory text for each exercise, there is a brief list of which muscles are being used—that is, muscles that are stretched, activated, or strengthened. To perform the exercise correctly, it is recommended that you read the explanation in full before performing it. During the exercise, you should listen to your body's signals. The example on the following page shows how the poses are structured.

The exercises should only be performed if there is no pain and if no pain arises. When using the Yoga Wheel for the first time, a slow approach is recommended so as not to overstrain the body





STARTING POSES

These typical starting poses will appear frequently in this book.

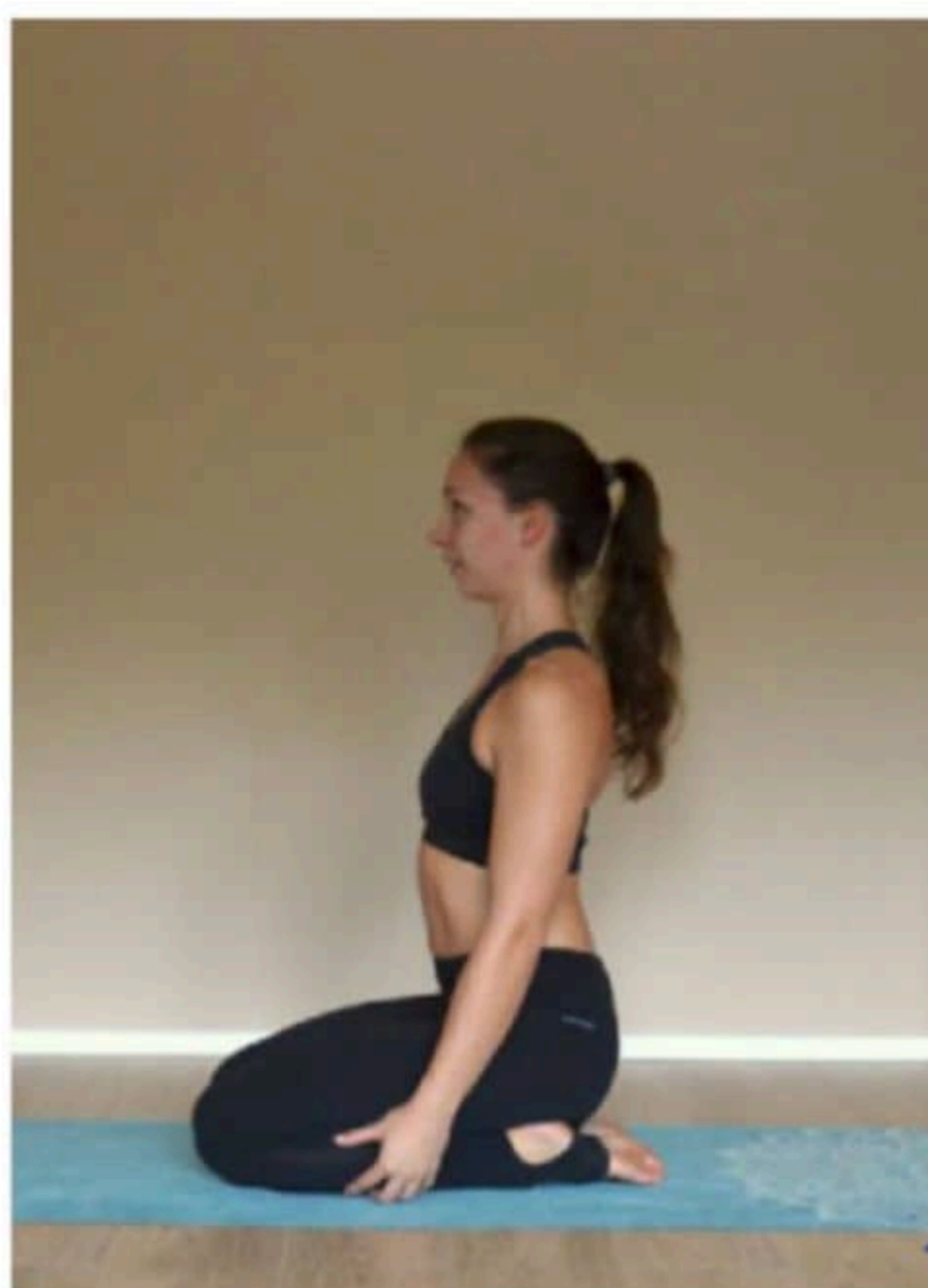
ALL FOURS

1. Place the knee joints under the hip bones.
2. The instep of the foot remains on the floor.
3. The wrists are below the shoulders.
4. The spine is in a neutral position by minimally tilting the pelvis forward and activating the building muscles.



DOWNWARD DOG

1. From the All Fours, place the tips of your feet on the floor.
2. The hands are spread wide and pressed into the floor, the knee joints are stretched at the same time.
3. The heels actively pull into the floor.
4. The head and chest move between the arms and actively pull toward the thighs.
5. The pelvis remains tilted, the back long and straight.



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KNEELING SEAT AND KNEELING STAND

1. Start in a sitting position, bend the legs, place them on one side, and lift the buttocks.
2. The legs are closed.
3. Rest the buttocks on the heels for the kneeling position and raise the torso (photo a).
4. From the kneeling position, lift the buttocks off the heels until the hips are above the knee joints (photo b).
5. Keep the upper body upright and maintain tension in the abdominal muscles.

POSES

LUNGE WITH THE WHEEL

Stretches the following muscles: Hip flexors, front of the thigh, abdominal muscles, and shoulder muscles.

1. Start in a kneeling position and place the wheel in front. Place one foot in front of the wheel. Make sure the knee is at a 90-degree angle and under the heel.
2. Move the other leg back while pushing the hip forward (photo a). The back of the thigh of the front leg now rests on the wheel, which presses against the front calf.
3. If stable enough, the back leg can be stretched over the instep or toe of the foot.
4. Bringing the arms up over the side, activate the glutes as well as lower back muscles, and move into a slight Backbend (photo b).
5. Open the chest toward the ceiling. The shoulders remain pulled low during the Backbend.

BREATHING

Inhale: Put the weight on the wheel.
Exhale: Raise the arms to the sides.

Inhale: Bend backward.

Exhale: Hold the position and relax.

SUMO SQUAT ON THE WHEEL

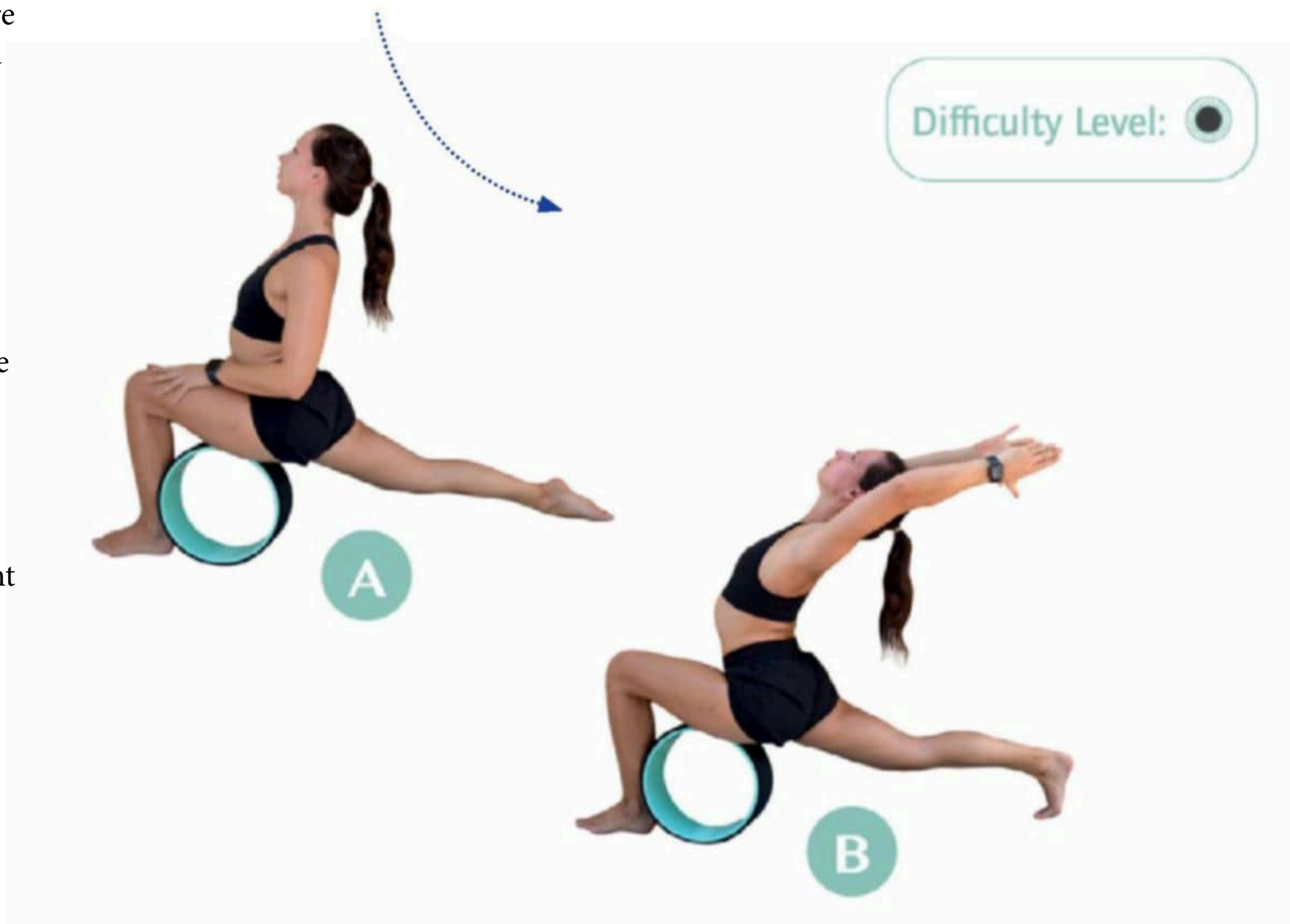
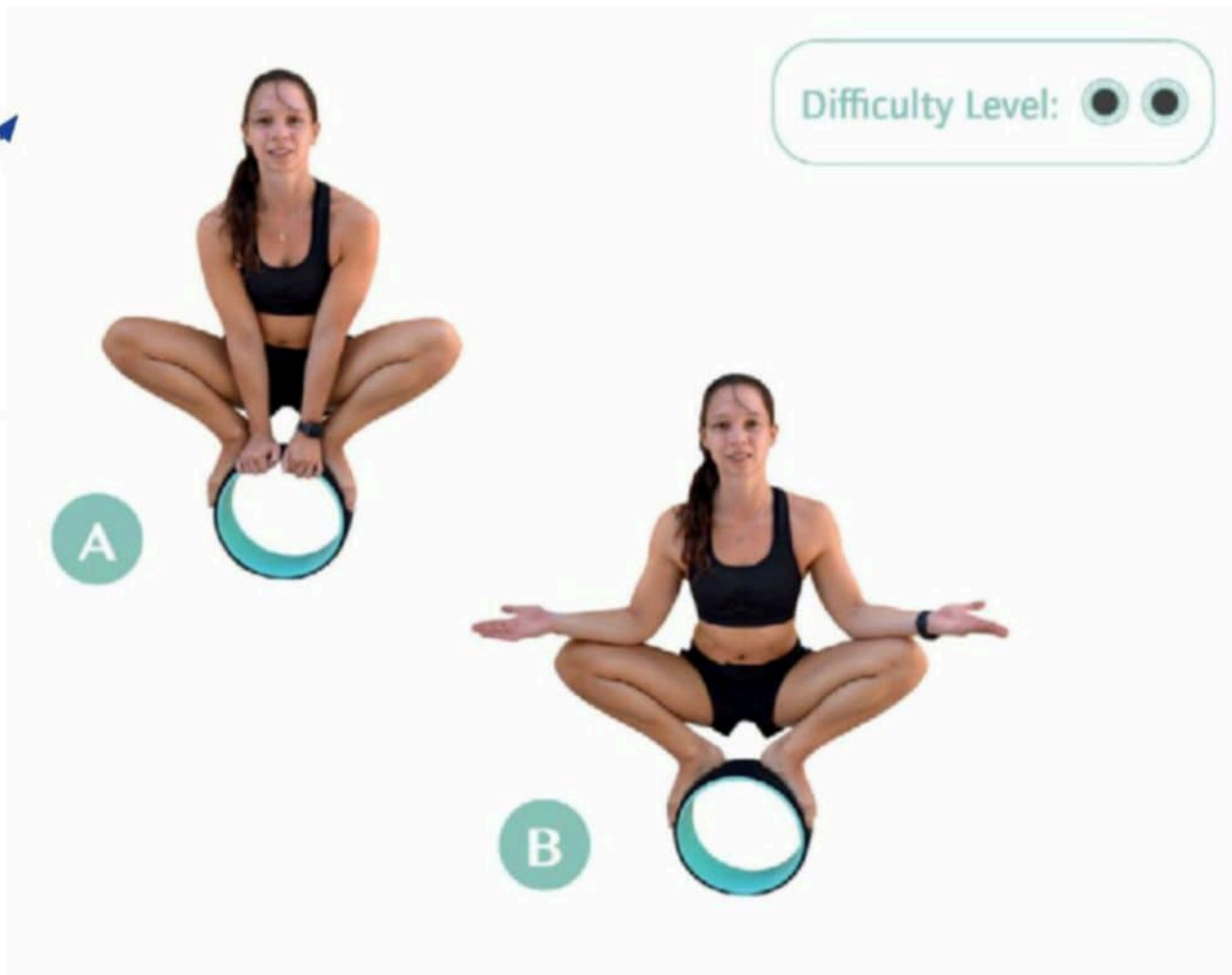
Strengthens the following muscles: Entire abdominal muscles, lower back muscles, and leg muscles.

Stretches the following muscles: Inner thigh muscles.

1. Place the hands on the middle of the wheel. Grasp the front edge of the Yoga Wheel with the fingers.
2. Bend the legs and first place one foot on the wheel. The heels should be at the same level of the hands.
3. Shift the weight onto the wheel with the foot in a controlled manner and, at the same time, push with the other hand in the direction where of the other foot. This countermovement avoids falling over to the side.
4. Place the other foot on the wheel with the heel level with the hand (photo a). Balance using the pelvis and the associated trunk muscles.
5. If balance is sufficient, the hands can be released from the wheel and placed on the legs (photo b) or raised above the head.
6. Easier alternative: place two yoga blocks next to the wheel to hold it in place. When balance is there, one yoga block can be released.

BREATHING

Regular breathing during the exercise.





BOW POSE WITH THE YOGA WHEEL

Strengthens the following muscles:
Leg muscles, gluteal muscles, all back muscles, and arm muscles.

Stretches the following muscles:
Abdominal and chest muscles, anterior shoulder muscles, and anterior thigh muscles.

1. Line in a prone position and grasp the wheel from the outside.
2. Place one foot inside the wheel, and turn the wheel so that the opening points downward.
3. Depending on flexibility, the following positions are possible:
 - a. One foot in the wheel and elbow pointing back (photo a). The front arm can be supported on the hand or forearm.
 - b. The elbow can be brought forward via shoulder rotation (photo b). The front arm can

be supported on the hand or forearm.

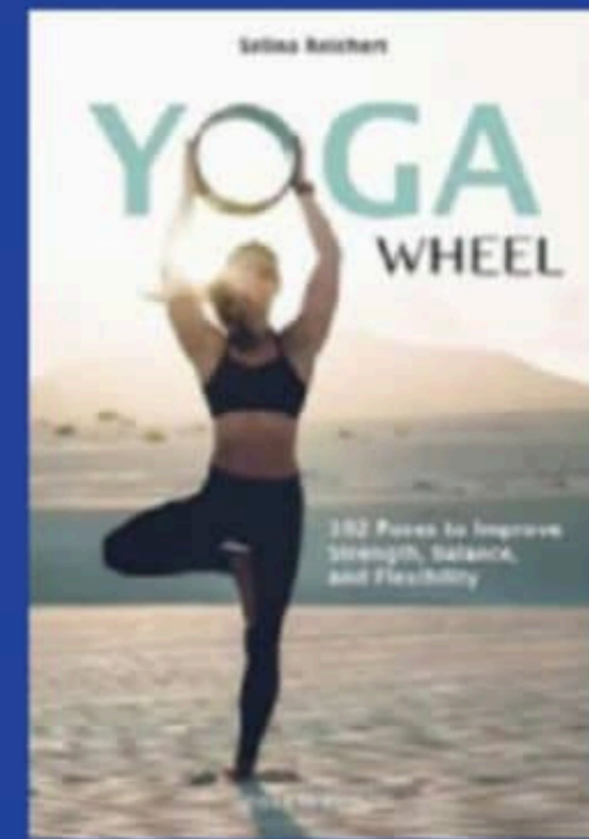
- c. In options a and b, the other foot can also be placed in the wheel (photo c).
- d. The hand that is on the floor can be guided to the wheel (photo d). This is also possible with both shoulder positions.

4. In all variations it is especially important that the buttocks are tight to relieve some pressure on the lower back and to build up strength.
5. Once the feet and arms are in place, the insteps of the feet push into the wheel, and the legs and arms pull upward. The chest lifts off the floor.

BREATHING

Inhale: Feet push into the wheel. At the same time, push the legs and arms up.

Exhale: Balance.

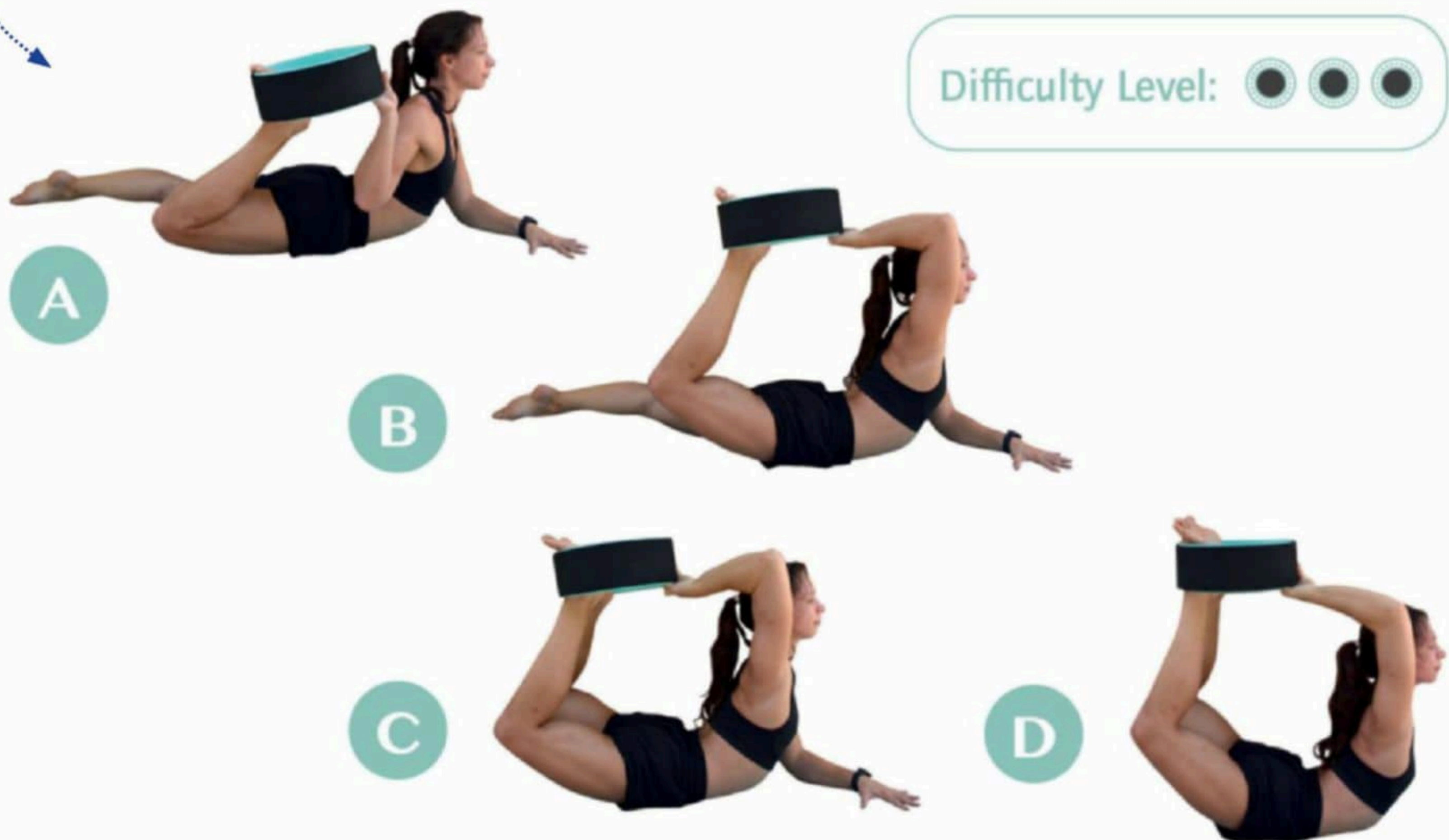


Excerpted from 'Yoga Wheel: 102 Poses to Improve Strength, Balance, and Flexibility!'

Selina Reichert is a yoga and pole sports coach and instructor. She has been teaching yoga for several years and developed her own incredibly popular yoga wheel course. Selina is founder of online studio, Yoga and Pole Art by Selina. In 2024 she came 13th in the World Pole Sports Championships.

Selina can be found at @sundreamdancer (Instagram)

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OM & BASS FESTIVAL

Go for you, for the planet,
and for survivors of human
trafficking

Words: Karina Middleton

Photos: Andrew Prod Photography for Om & Bass photos





What springs to mind if you hear (or read) the words - *Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu?*

Maybe it's the mantra you say at the start of every yoga class? Maybe it's the prayer you offer at the end of your day? Maybe you have no idea what it means? (Don't worry – I explain below!)

Every time I've heard it in the last month, I've been taken straight back to the roaring campfire under the starlit sky at Om & Bass Festival – and I wish I could transport myself back to that magical moment physically, not just in my mind.

But it didn't start that beautifully.

Do you remember the weather on Thursday 12th September? I do.

It was the day I was setting up the Yoga Stops Traffick stand for Om & Bass Festival in rural Oxfordshire. It was beautifully sunny. Then it poured with rain. Then there was a severe hailstorm which felt like sharp rocks being pelted at me from the sky – which in essence is exactly what was happening. Not the day to be putting up the world's most challenging event shelter.

Soaking, bruised and battered, myself and the two other volunteers finished and stopped to inspect our handiwork. The inspection didn't last long before the next downpour came, and we decided to make a run for it. We saw a group of people gathered next to the recently erected Reggae Dome and we ran towards them, not entirely sure why. Then a friendly Mancunian accent said, 'Do you want a free hot cacao, girls?'

This is why we had run. We just hadn't known it yet.

That friendly Mancunian accent belonged to Liam Brown of Full Power



Cacao (who recently secured three Dragons in Dragon's Den!), and the warmth and generosity he showed us in the rain was symbolic of the whole weekend. For three days, we felt like we were surrounded by the kindest and most loving human beings on the planet. Everyone was generous and gracious, accepting of each other's differences, helping each other out and living life with a smile or a laugh ready to emerge at all times. You know the saying, 'You become the average of the people you surround yourself with?' Well, the group's average frequency was so high that if someone was having a tough time, people would stop, talk, hug, and it would be minutes before

that person was laughing and smiling again.

Unlike any other festival you've been to

Om & Bass Festival brands itself as the 'single most fun and inclusive wellbeing festival on the planet.' It takes place in Oxfordshire each September, has over 150 different workshops and artists, and is a huge fundraiser for Yoga Stops Traffick – the global yoga campaign fighting against human trafficking in India.

It's also a festival whose organisers genuinely appear to care more about



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the planet than they do about their pockets: It is zero-waste, meaning everyone brings their own cups, plates and crockery. Food and drinks are served from vendors directly into your vessels, and when you're done you wash up at one of the washing up stations (only Ecover provided, of course!).

If you're anything like me, you might think to yourself, "Great in theory, but I bet it's a nightmare in practice!". Well, you, and my past judgemental self, are wrong. It takes just a minute to wash up one plate and fork; the faff is almost non-existent. You pop them back in your bag and forget about them until your next meal. Why can't all festivals be like this?

The problem is there's too much choice

This year, more than 800 wellbeing-revellers attended over the weekend, and the variety of workshops to choose from was extensive. You could spend all weekend in the Fierce Grace Yoga Barn and make it a full-blown yoga retreat taking classes such as heart opening flow, Fierce Grace primal, animal flow, strong flow and arm balances. But if you stayed in there, you'd miss the dynamic Osho meditations, drumming circles, xi

gong, tai chi, cacao ceremonies, forest bathing, painting from the heart, and so much more.

And I've not even mentioned the musicians. The live music stage had beautiful offerings in the form of spoken word, flute and song from The Northern Poet, gospel soul *kirtan* with Vaun, sacred hip hop, and tribal folk soul reggae, to name but a few.

The food and drink stands were all vegetarian and nourishing. There was no alcohol sold on site, with drinks options to power yourself

through the day and night being herbal tonics, mushroom infused alcohol-free beer and delicious cacao (don't forget your mugs!).

In the evenings, once the workshops were over, you had two options:

Option 1: head to the main Reggae Dome to let loose to artists such as drum and bass godfathers Grooverider and Nikki Blackmarket and DJ Love Alone for some reggae beats, and then sit down and snuggle up as the lineup transformed into more mellow items such as Spiritual Stand-Up Comedy with Rach Cox and Story Telling with The Northern Poet.

Option 2: You head over to the fire to talk, listen, and eventually sing along with whichever musician shares their gifts by the fireside.

One of my favourite moments (the one I alluded to earlier) was when I was sitting with 50 or so strangers around the roaring campfire, under the beautiful star-lit sky. There were three guitarists who were ping-ponging offerings to and fro, with everyone else humming along or chatting quietly in peaceful unity. A riff appeared, and the person to my right introduced himself as Vaun and said, "I feel a mantra





calling to me, some of you might know it, please join in if you do...”

“Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu. Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu.”

They sang it over and over again, and more and more people joined in: harmonising, improvising, letting go of their inhibitions and offering the mantra as a prayer to the stars above and the world around them.

‘Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu’ translates from Sanscrit as,

‘May everyone, in the whole world, be happy.’

May everyone, in the whole world, be happy.

We sang it again and again and the energy of the prayer vibrated around the circle and out into the universe. It was an incredibly powerful moment and the energy really was palpable. If only everyone in the world stopped and said these words together. If only.

Yoga Stops Traffick

One of the most amazing things about Om & Bass Festival is that it’s a fundraiser for Yoga Stops Traffick – so just by being there, you are joining a movement of people trying to end



human trafficking in India.

Yoga Stops Traffick is a campaign that was set up by a group of yogis who were spending time in Mysore when they came across Odanadi - the grassroots partner the campaign raises money for.

Odanadi rescue women and children from human trafficking rings, brothels, child marriages and sexual exploitation, in short - lives of absolute misery. They

provide shelter and therapeutic rehabilitation services to all survivors, such as counselling, yoga and karate, and they give access to education and provide vocational training classes such as bakery, beauty and mechanical engineering. The aim is to give survivors everything they need to be able to rejoin society and regain power and control over their lives.

The yogis who came across Odanadi were so moved by what they had seen, they felt compelled to do something to help, and decided to call upon their yoga networks, and the wider yoga community – to fundraise and raise awareness against the atrocities they had learned of.

Calling yoga enthusiasts all around the world – join the movement!

The campaign snowballed from this handful of yogis, into a global movement. Every year in March, there is a Yoga Stops Traffick day. In India, survivors of human trafficking



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“

'Yoga Stops Traffick' is a campaign that was set up by a group of yogis who were spending time in Mysore when they came across Odanadi - the grassroots partner the campaign raises money for.

”

along with local campaigners do 108 sun salutations outside the Mysore Palace to raise awareness and funds for the cause.

And all around the world on that same day (or during that week) yoga teachers, studios, retreats or individuals at home, hold Yoga Stops Traffick fundraiser classes where they dedicate the funds raised to Yoga Stops Traffick and set the intentions of the class to end human trafficking all over the world.

Take part in Yoga Stops Traffick Day - Saturday March 29th 2025.

How can you get involved?

- Organise a fundraiser class or event. Do 108 sun salutes or dedicate a normal class/ workshop to the cause.
- Do your own home practice and set the positive intention – donate some money if you can, but even if you can't donate, still take part and set the intention – that alone is more powerful than most people know.
- Spread the word! Share the campaign with your yoga networks around the world!



- Come on our trip to India – Yoga Stops Traffick is organising a week-long trip to Mysore which will include yoga classes, visits to the charity, time to explore Mysore, and participation in Yoga Stops Traffick Day, taking place in March 2025.
- Partner with us! Yoga Stops Traffick also has some incredible partners who have helped to propel the campaign forward – such as Yoga Studio Store, Ekhart Yoga, Yoga Easy, Jade Yoga, and of course Om and Bass Festival. We are always on the lookout for new partners to join the movement and make a real difference to the lives of victims of human trafficking. There are many different partner opportunities and options. And while we do host the Yoga Stops Traffick Day in March, we very much need support all year round – and would be so grateful

for any support whenever and however it could be offered.

- Pray – prayer and the sending of positive energy is not to be overlooked. We are grateful for each of your prayers and hopes for our campaign.

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu.

Karina Middleton is Charity Coordinator for Adventure Ashram & Yoga Stops Traffick. She is a 500-hour certified *vinyasa* flow teacher, a mum of young boys, a keen writer and a firm believer that we all need to connect more with the energetic world around us.

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karina@adventureashram.org

Yoga Stops Traffick

For more information about Yoga Stops Traffick, head to <https://yogastopstraffick.org/> @yogastopstraffick

Om & Bass

Om & Bass Festival will be taking place Sep 5-7 2025. Free tickets are available for carers and children, and parking and camping are included with tickets. There are dedicated spaces for camping or glamping for differently-abled people along with their friends or family. It is a site with fully accessible facilities.

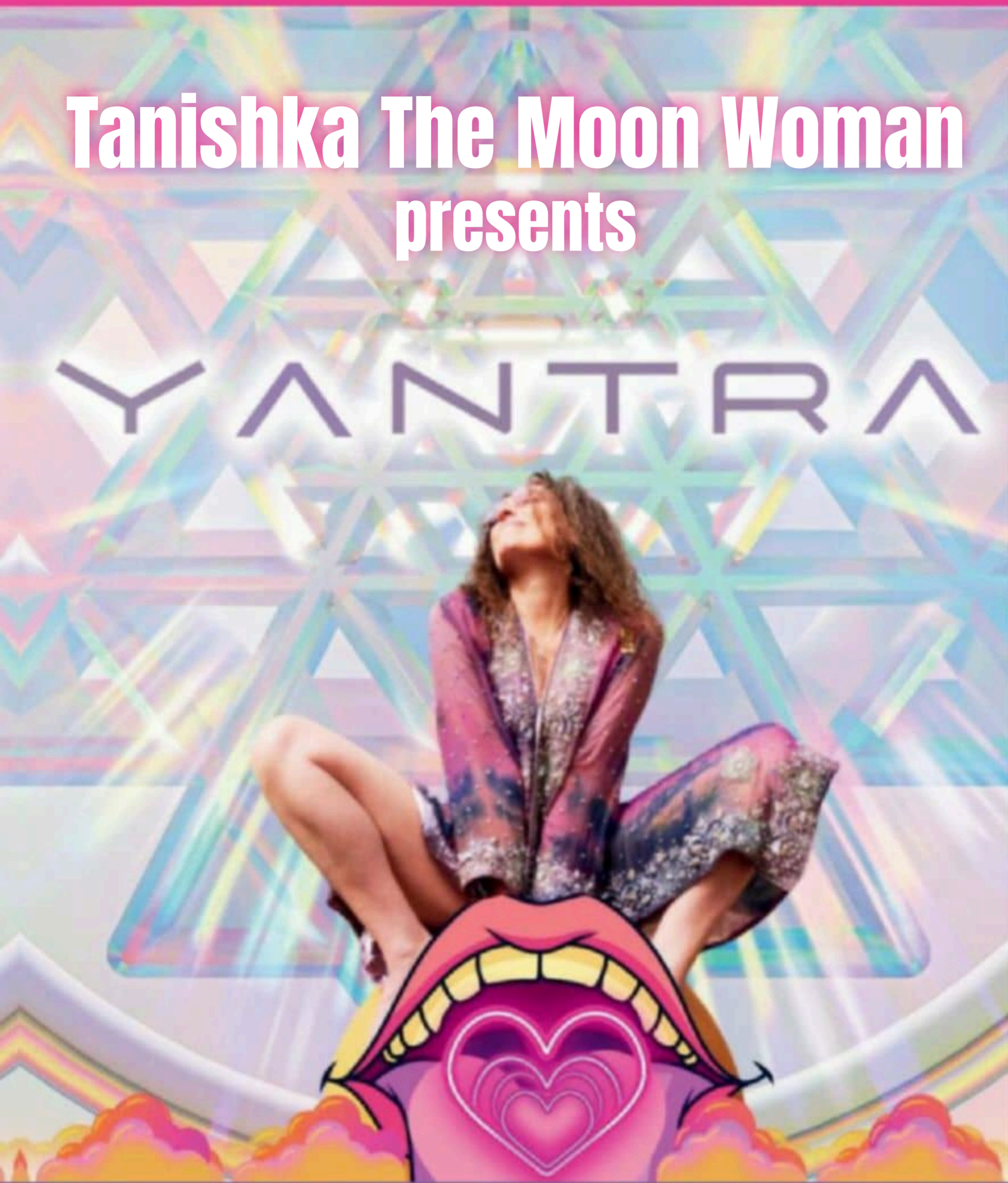
Om & Bass also do festivals all over the world: Thailand, Cyprus, Ibiza, Scotland, Malta and more!

For more information and to book tickets, head to <https://omandbass.co.uk/> @Omandbass

**THE TICKET TO LIBERATE
YOUR HEART,
MIND & SOUL!**

**Tanishka The Moon Woman
presents**

YANTRA



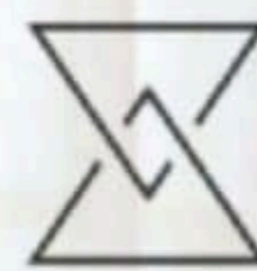
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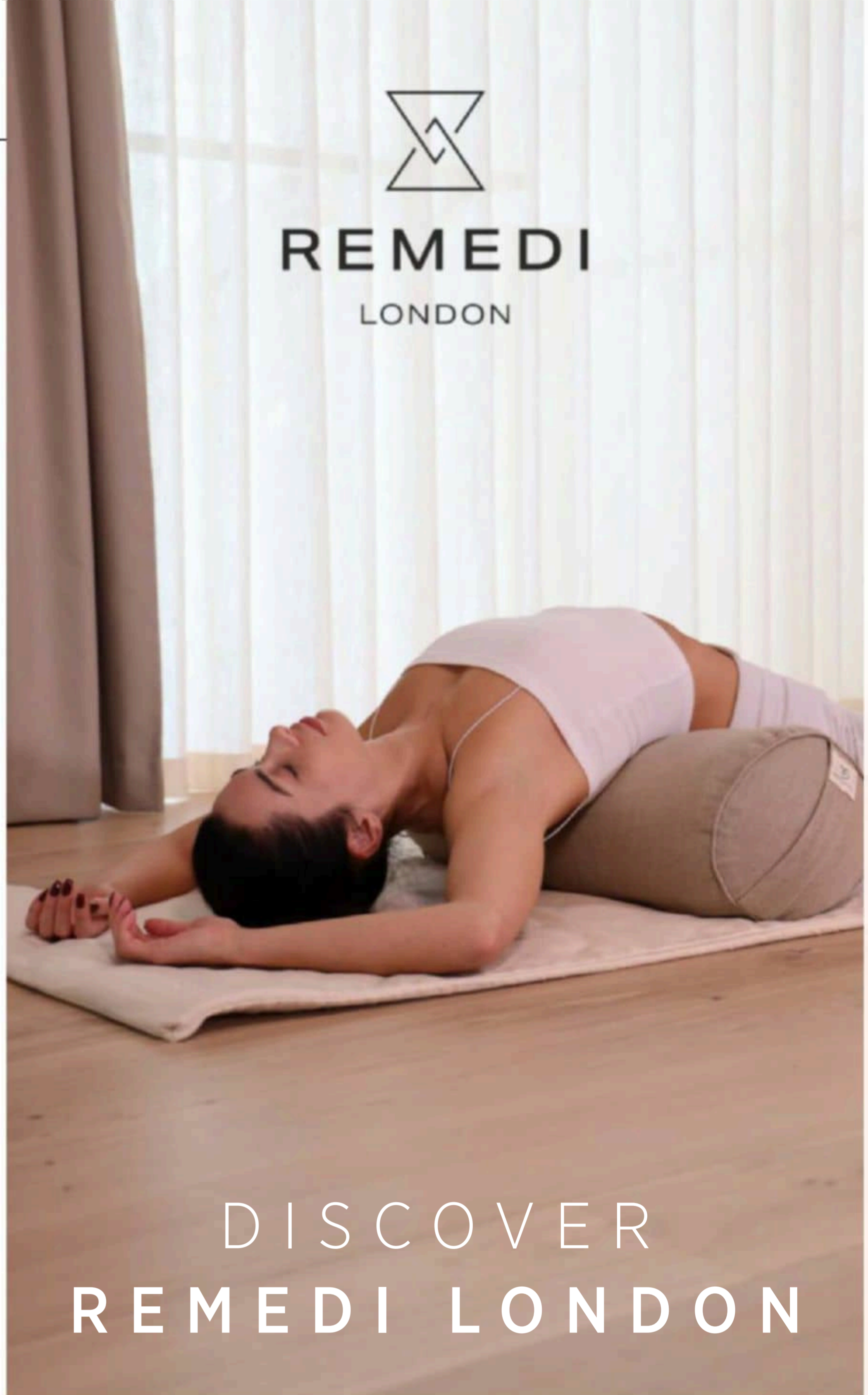
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What I've Learned from Six Years of **DAILY MEDITATION**

Words: Katia Vlachos, author of 'Uncaged: A Good Girl's Journey to Reinvention'





“

Transformation doesn't happen overnight – it's the result of small, consistent actions over time.

”



I still remember the day I decided to start meditating. It was 2019, and I was in the midst of a really challenging period in my life. I had gone through a challenging divorce that left me feeling depleted, both physically and mentally. I had done some intense personal development work that had brought to the surface hidden trauma from my past, making me acutely aware of how it had influenced my life choices and trajectory. To top it all off, I was embroiled in a legal battle with my ex-husband that filled me with anxiety about my future and continued to drain my resources.

All this emotional turmoil was showing up in my body through vertigo, headaches, and debilitating back pain. I knew I needed to find a way to calm my mind and heal my body. That's when I turned to meditation.

I started with ten minutes a day using a meditation app. But I did it every day. I had read somewhere that one must let go of any expectations about

the outcome of meditation. So I didn't expect anything at all. I simply cherished those ten minutes of peace in my day, a moment just for me. And I kept showing up.

At first, I didn't notice much change. But after a few weeks, I began to observe subtle shifts in my daily life. I became less reactive, especially with my teenagers. Where before I might have lost my temper, I found myself responding with more patience. When dealing with my ex-husband's micro-aggressions or contemptuous behaviour, I was able to choose a response that served me best, rather than reacting impulsively.

I felt calmer and more grounded, particularly when navigating the legal process. Instead of being filled with dread and anxiety, I felt more confident. I was able to take some distance from my emotions and not get carried away by them. I became more present in my daily life, more tolerant of others, and more likely to give people the benefit of the doubt.

Most importantly, I became more introspective. I was able to listen to my inner voice, to be more self-aware. I started to feel more in my power.

Over the past six years, my meditation practice has been an integral part of my journey to break free from societal expectations and live life on my own terms – what I call my "uncaged" journey. In the process, it has taught me some valuable lessons about reinvention and living authentically. Here are five lessons I've learned:

The Power of the Pause

Meditation helped me pause my autopilot existence and cultivate space in my life for stillness and silence. My meditation teacher Davidji often talks about finding the space between breaths, between thoughts. In that space lies our ability to be reflective, self-aware, creative, and to make conscious choices.

My own 'space between' allowed me to take some distance from my thoughts, circumstances, and



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especially my emotions. Instead of reacting immediately when something happened, I learned to pause, breathe, and observe. In that space I allowed myself, I had the power to choose my response, rather than being at the mercy of my knee-jerk reactions.

The biggest impact of all that for me was choosing to not be a victim; to see my challenging situations as gifts and learning opportunities; to take responsibility for my life and show up as my best self.

Letting Go of the 'Good Girl' Persona

One of the most profound impacts of my meditation practice was how it helped me let go of the 'good girl' role I

had carried with me for most of my adult life. As I became more aware of my thoughts and patterns, I realised how much of my behaviour was driven by a desire to please others and meet their expectations.

Through meditation, I learned to sit with discomfort, including the discomfort of disappointing others. Beyond that, instead of taking my cues from the outside, I began to tune into my own needs and desires – for the first time. This awareness allowed me to make choices more aligned with what was important in my life (my values, my purpose, my vision) and who I truly was, rather than the version of me I thought others wanted to see.

Living in the Present Moment

Meditation taught me how to be more present. So often, we're caught up in regrets about the past or anxieties about the future. But life happens in the now. Through my practice, I learned to anchor myself more fully in the present moment, experiencing and appreciating what was happening right now.

This shift had a profound impact on my relationships, my work, and the joy I found in my everyday life. I savoured simple moments – a cup of tea in the morning, a conversation with a friend, a playful moment with my child. This presence brought a richness and texture to my life that I had been missing before.

The Importance of Self-Compassion

As I deepened my meditation practice, I became even more acutely aware of my inner critic – that voice that was constantly judging, criticising, and finding fault. Through meditation, I learned to observe this voice without identifying with it.

More importantly, I learned to cultivate self-compassion. I realised that being kind to myself wasn't selfish or weak – it was necessary for my wellbeing and growth. This self-compassion allowed me to take risks, to make mistakes, and to grow without the crippling fear of failure that had held me back for so long.

The Power of Consistency

Perhaps the most practical lesson I learned was the power of consistency. I started with just ten minutes a day, but I did it every single day. Over time, those ten minutes grew, and so did the benefits. Transformation doesn't happen overnight – it's the result of small, consistent actions over time.



attention back to your chosen focus, without judgment. In other words, beginning again.

Meditation has been a powerful tool in my journey of self-discovery and reinvention. It has helped me navigate challenging times, break free from limiting beliefs, and live more authentically. It's taught me to pause, to choose my responses, and to live more fully in the present moment.

If you're feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or simply curious about how to live more mindfully, I encourage you to give meditation a try. Start small, be consistent, and approach it with an open mind. You might be surprised at the profound impact those few minutes of stillness each day can have on your life.

All you have to do is show up, and be prepared to continually begin again.

This lesson extended beyond my meditation practice. I began to apply this principle of consistency to other areas of my life – my relationships, my work, my personal growth. I learned that showing up, day after day, even when I didn't feel like it or couldn't see immediate results, was the key to lasting change.

The lessons I learned from meditation moved me so much that I decided to go deeper into my practice by pursuing a meditation teacher certification. The process of becoming a certified meditation teacher was transformative in itself. Not only did it deepen my own practice, it also gave me new tools to share the benefits of meditation with others. And it aligned perfectly with my coaching, allowing me to incorporate mindfulness techniques into my work with clients.

If you're inspired to start your own meditation practice, here are some tips that have helped me over the years:

Start small but show up every day

It's about consistency rather than quantity or frequency. Begin with just five minutes a day, but commit to it. Then build up from that. There's no right or wrong, there's what works for you.

Experiment with different types

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to meditation. Maybe you prefer a guided meditation, or just sitting in silence. Maybe you like using a mantra, focusing on a candle flame, or a particular sound. Find what works best for you. Again, there's no right or wrong. You can sit on your couch for 5 minutes and pay full attention to your breath and you've meditated. It's that simple. Anyone can do it.

Let go of expectations

You may not notice a difference immediately, but if you practice consistently, even a few minutes a day, I guarantee you will see changes over time. Don't let your expectations discourage you from staying consistent.

Be gentle with yourself

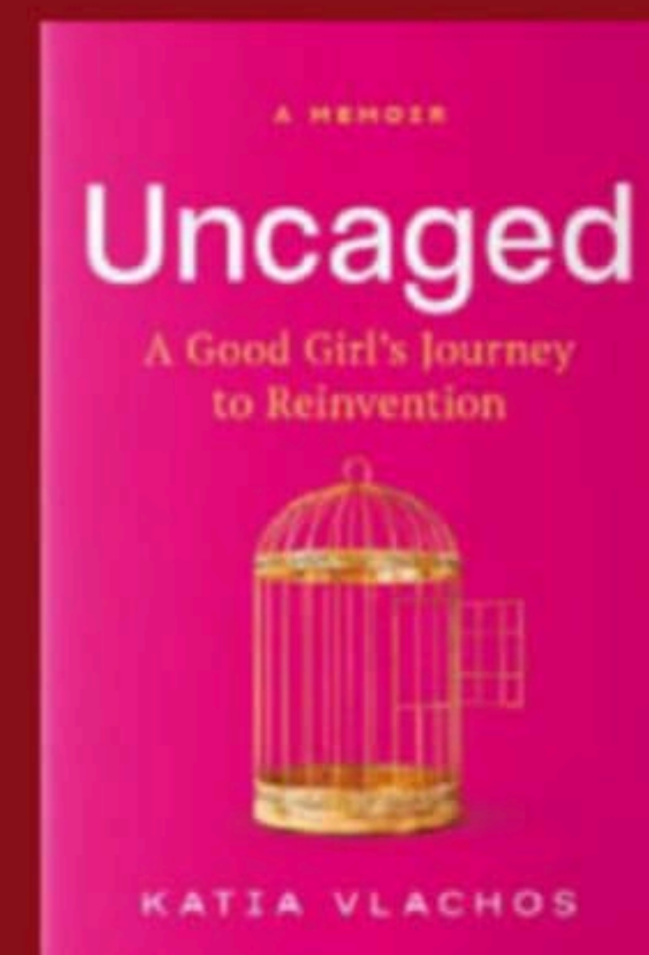
If you miss a day or find your mind wandering constantly, simply begin again, without judgment or frustration. It's the gentlest, kindest thing you can do for yourself. Meditation is a practice of continually beginning again.

Remember, meditation is not about not having thoughts

Your brain is wired to think. It's used to having about 60 to 70 thousand thoughts per day. Meditation isn't about stopping those thoughts, but about noticing when you get lost in thought and gently bringing your



Katia Vlachos is a reinvention coach, meditation teacher and author of *'Uncaged: A Good Girl's Journey to Reinvention'* (out now, Amplify Publishing)



YOGA THERE IS NO AGE FOR STOPPING AND NO AGE FOR STARTING

Words: James de Albuquerque

An online early morning Yoga class.
One is 8, one is 75 and one is 5.

I am becoming increasingly aware of the physical limitations that the ageing process imposes.

I have trawled through 'google' trying to discover what is going on. I have discovered words like 'sarcopenic' which is muscle loss due to ageing but have been left in no doubt that carrying on, even when you want to give up, is the best policy. Yoga is for everyone, regardless of age (see above). So, I soldier on, happily (mostly) but there are now moments in a class when I fear I will not be able to achieve a certain posture or hold a position when I get there with the same ease as once upon a time. Ernest Hemmingway described bankruptcy saying, "it happens gradually and then suddenly". Is this what is happening as my physical abilities deteriorate slowly?

Suddenly 'easy twisting warrior' is not so easy. When the teacher says 'we are only going to be here for a few breaths', why does it take so long? And then we tried 'baby grasshopper' – well you can imagine! I happen to know that grasshoppers are a group of insects belonging to the suborder Carliifera. They are amongst what are possibly the most ancient living groups of chewing herbivorous insects dating back to the early Triassic around 250 million years ago – I am so much younger but bend and twist and pull and balance and I was still totally unable to imitate this creature in any recognisable form.

Teachers will tell you to let go, bale out, (it's your practice), if the pose is too difficult do something else, don't overexert, it's the journey not the destination, don't compare yourself to others etc., etc., Well, the journey is presenting as many problems as the destination and

is often more of a challenge these days – and, sometimes, not such a pleasure. Am I fed up with Yoga? When you are looking at your teacher, for guidance and instruction on what you are going to try and do, and then finding you can't, one feels dejected. And, for me, it is even worse if you topple over giving it a whirl. Is this ego ?

When my nose won't reach my knee, my arm won't fold sufficiently to cradle my knee and I cannot catch hold of my foot and straighten my leg, the teacher does not mind. He/she will be relieved if you avoid sustaining an injury and would much prefer that you only go so far and no further. It is more suggestion than command, so remember this. The teacher is there to help and will not be judging you. The class doesn't mind either. In fact, they will sympathise. It's quite comforting for them on a 'there but for the grace of God go I' basis, but I mind very much. Its not an ego thing - it's more of a sadness and I really don't want to be sad in a Yoga class that I



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attend for enjoyment and for mental and physical health.

So, do I give up? I have thought about this, and the answer is 'NO' - get over yourself. Carry on.

Yoga is awash with comforting phrases and sayings and quotes to reassure and encourage.

- it is the compassionate perspective that you are doing the very best that you can
- you are loved just for being who you are (really)?
- its not about your physical flexibility but your inner resilience
- everything is your teacher
- understand that movement is life
- lets take some time for ourselves, build some compassion and find the space that we need
- our hands and feet are bio-mechanical marvels

- be present and enjoy each moment, let go of thoughts that keep you stuck
- be kind, be gentle, be considerate
- realise the impermanent nature of both pleasure and pain

So, run along and stop making such a fuss about nothing. Namaste.

If your teacher says 'you are looking a bit wonky there James' and straightens you out - this is a good thing - not a reason to plunge into a swirl of anxiety. If this happens during a straight forward Downward Facing Dog, what does the future hold for Warrior Three? Will I just be left with Mountain Pose and Supported Corpse?

The answer is 'no' - in yoga there is something for everyone. Our bodies are constantly changing and will not be the same from one day to the next. The practice of asanas/postures is not a sporting contest. Movement is

medicine. We should approach our practice with an open and gentle mind and meet ourselves exactly as we are. An American Franciscan priest called Richard Rohr, a writer on spirituality, once wrote about 'the importance of the acceptance of the full reality of what is right here and now. This will be the task of our whole lives.'

So what have I learnt - slow down and move slowly in and out of poses. Do not try to be perfect. Be patient. Move gently and remember to breathe. Keep turning up, and Yoga's magic will keep working for you. You are never too young and never too old.

"Life is a balance of holding on and letting go." (Rumi)

James is still enjoying the magic of Yoga after fourteen years of practicing. He is married with three daughters and four grandchildren and lives in Hampshire. Jamespda@lineone.net

OUTER TEACHINGS BECOME INNER TOOLS

Words: Linda Star Wolf, Ph.D., D.Min



The Importance of Imagination

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution."

Albert Einstein

If we cannot imagine it, we cannot manifest it. Without the ability to imagine and consciously create our future selves now, we only have the past as a reference point for creating our current moment. The past is largely composed of experiences, both positive and negative, locked in a feedback loop of lineage and ancestral messaging. Placing our focus on the past keeps us stuck in outworn habits and patterns, and without using imagination to envision ourselves as individuated and unique people who each have our own expression to bring forward, we will only ever be what our history told us we needed to be to survive, rather than who we're truly here to be.

Evolution will eventually bring another form of ourselves to the future regardless, without our even knowing it, but if we can flip the switch and align with our imagination, and therefore our higher consciousness, we will have a more aware, empowered, and accelerated experience of bringing our future selves to the present. Evolution takes millions of years, but we cannot wait for evolution; the survival of our planet and our species depends upon humanity bringing a more conscientious version of itself to the present time, and that begins with each of us doing our part to accelerate that mass shift.

Making these conscious, proactive, and inclusive human and planetary changes now will serve us well. With our collective imagination, we can envision the brave new world and also see our part in creating that world. Spiritual involution—the



way we imagine and then change by bringing our future, wiser selves through our current human form—is as important as evolution, the process by which outer reality and landscapes change. To be in-spirited by a vision of our collective experience speeds up our evolution. Involution is to be in-volved (engaged in your inner life), in-lightened (illuminated from within), in-livened (carrying life and vitality into our human form), and in-spired (bringing the breath of God and spirit into form). Each of these play-on-words elucidate that when consciousness shifts, time and space drop away, and change can be immediately in-bodied (embodied). We need immediate intimacy, or in-to-me-see, so that there is clarity and transparency in our illumination and we can create instant karma; that is, alter a karmic relationship in a moment. Because in the shamanic world there is the possibility of space-time hopping, a portal can be created through shape-shifting our conscious awareness that allows us to

see the whole story played out from beginning to end. I call this seeing the “bigger picture” instead of only a small fragment of reality. The instant we see the big story versus our ego’s limited story and perspective, our reality is automatically changed within our own psyche. Once this occurs everything about the situation energetically begins to change. As we transform our consciousness, bringing in this future self and future world through the imagination first, we create a quickening within our being, as with imminent birth when a woman’s body knows that the ring of fire is open and birth is happening whether she is ready or not. By definition, it is the right, or ripe, time for birth because the opening exists and nothing can stop it from happening. When we view the world from a place of love and trust, everything becomes possible—and it becomes possible right now. We personify that love, thus granting the spirit the power to accelerate consciousness and action, first in the inner world and then in the outer



world. By creating opportunity for the in-sights (inner sight) needed to bring forth the in-formation (insight brought into form) for transformation, the outer world can change in-stantly.

In life we all face significant outer-world experiences, such as the death of a loved one or loss of a job, or collective experiences like natural disasters, global warming, pandemics, and the varied reactions to all of these that cause devastation to our outer world. These experiences create a radical shift and change within, because they alter our state of consciousness. They shock and dissociate us from normal reality so something else can break through. But this type of change still comes from a place of woe. When we consciously choose to undergo a radical shift in our perspective by engaging in purposeful altered states of consciousness, as we do with shamanic initiations, we are able to use imagination to awaken our inner selves, doing so from a place of wisdom instead of woe. Either way, it is time to wake up!

One of my dearest and earliest brilliant mystical transpersonal teachers, Jacquelyn Small—founder of the

Eupsychia Institute, which focused on Integrative Breathwork—frequently used to say, “True mystery teachings can’t be taught, but they can be caught.” To “catch” them, however, we must be willing to forget everything we think we know and open ourselves to the Great Mystery. Jacquelyn believed deeply that everyone had an inner healer, no matter how lost or confused their human self had become, and that each of us just needed to find a way to wake up and remember our true self. Upon the awakening of this internal sleeping giant, all wisdom is available to all of us, not just to an elite individual or special group. It was through Jacquelyn’s profound mystery school teachings, which included learning how to journey inward with special breathing methods, symbolism, and group sharing that I was deeply touched in those early years of my searching. My faith in myself grew roots, and I discovered deep wisdom that had been buried beneath society’s repressive rules and expectations.

The inner tools of shamanism provide a map for seeking and living from a place of shamanic consciousness. To begin our discussion of these methods, I will first explore the process

“ True mystery teachings can’t be taught, but they can be caught.

”

of learning to shape-shift into and through the energetic fields of past, present, and future. To awaken the Aquarian Shaman within is to take the journey back in time to untangle energetic patterns that affect our current reality, then reclaim aspects of ourselves that were lost in childhood or even in a past life, and in so doing, recognize our own power and energise ourselves to live our current lives from a place of wholeness. When we have accessed and brought healing to pieces of the past, we begin living more fully in the present moment, and in alignment with our core values and authentic natures. From this place of alignment and personal freedom and responsibility, we can then shape-shift into our future selves and download those future selves into present time. In this way, learning to walk the spiral path of transformation becomes an accelerated process for consciously and wisely embodying the change we wish to see in the world, and more readily showing up for our deeper purpose. If every person on the planet underwent this accelerated process and lived every day from this state of awakened perspective, rather than living through shadow projections and personal wounding, the world would



become that change we wish to see. However, we cannot ask the world to magically change; the deep inner work of soulful transformation must start from within human beings, one moment at a time, and radiate outward to heal and bless all our relations.

As I began to remember my true self in my late twenties and early thirties, my life force energy woke up and became unstoppable. Prior to this awakening, I had fallen into addictions and self-defeating unconscious behaviours that created major roadblocks, keeping me stuck in low self-esteem and soul loss. I knew that something was wrong and that I felt stuck, but I was living in a dazed state, unable to access my human will to make lasting changes to old toxic patterns.

One evening I literally cried out loud for help to the universe, pleading for whatever was out there and loved me to take my life and will into its care and to show me what to do. Shortly after this, my whole world began to shift and the road before me opened. I still had to put forth the effort to take each step on that road, but I was aware that some unseen, benevolent force was traveling close by my side. I was no longer muddling through on my own, with my ego demanding that life be on its terms; instead I had entered into uncharted territory, and even though it was scary, it somehow seemed familiar, as if I had come home to a place I knew long ago. I have since had the joy and privilege of sharing this journey of discovery with countless others. It is my sincere hope and prayer that the tools and techniques offered here will help ignite the fires of your own inner shaman. May your soul's longing open the door to a heartfelt passion for life and freedom, as mine once did.

I remember, early on my path, listening over and over to a song



called “Return Again,” which spoke to how I felt inside. Below are some of the lyrics to that song. To “return” is something we do over and over as an awakened shaman, and one can feel the spiral path emerge in these simple song lyrics. I invite you to see if they awaken something in you too:

Return again . . .
Return to the land of your soul . . .
Return to where you are
Born and reborn again . . .

On the spiral path of transformation, we encounter fairly predictable cycles of change as we journey to return to ourselves. The SHIP method, which I created to support this transformation, invites us to consciously engage each life phase of dissolution and reconstruction. Once we understand how each of the cycles of change—water, earth, fire, spirit, and air—are associated with characteristic experiences and feelings, we can learn to quickly identify what cycle we are in. Having done so, we’ll know what kind of support we need and how to optimise our growth through that cycle, thus ensuring we don’t get stuck there indefinitely.



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Linda Star Wolf, Ph.D., D.Min., has been a visionary shamanic guide for more than thirty-five years. The founder of Venus Rising Association for Transformation and president of Venus Rising University for Shamanic Psychospiritual Studies, she is the creator of the Shamanic Breathwork Process, the Shamanic Ministers Global Network, and the Wise Wolf Council. She lives at Venus Rising's Elemental Temples near Asheville, North Carolina. www.shamanicbreathwork.org

Savasana Serenade

Words: Julie Hogg

*As I lay on my pink yoga
mat in Savasana
I imagine it gently lifts
and flies me out to
the stormy skies above
to the crow there
where I say hello
to him and his family
who live in the tree
behind me.
They are a raucous lot
always giving all they've got
to the neighbourhood
not thinking about should
they be so loud
or not.
They are proud
to soar above the trees
perching on the tall chimneys
of the houses there*

*majestic, black, tall
feathered
not tethered
to anything really but chose
this place
in which to grace
us with their presence.
I adore them.
I am not doing them justice
here
but if to only make one aware
of their flare for the dramatic
I will rest my case
give them space
go back to my place*

*with new observations on this
beautiful day
and wish them Namaste!*



Julie Hogg lives in a condo above the trees in Dallas, Texas, USA.

She's spent the last decade in the vintage fashion business selling to clients in the US and abroad. She loves creating gourmet plant-based dishes, writing poetry and practicing Yoga. (Her published poems can be found in books by Poets Choice.)

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The
**UNEXPECTED
HEALTH
EFFECTS
of your
CHRISTMAS
TREE**

Words: Max Wiseberg



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Bringing a Christmas Tree into your home, whether it's a real tree or an artificial one, can have unexpected effects on your health, causing sneezing, watery eyes and other hay fever like symptoms.

It may be surprising, but many people start to experience hay fever symptoms around Christmas time. So what's going on? Well those symptoms of a runny nose, sneezing, a stuffed up nose, itchy and watery or streaming eyes, nasal congestion and a general stuffed up feeling in the nose and throat could be caused by your Christmas tree and decorations. It's not that uncommon; in fact it even has its own name – Christmas Tree Syndrome.

And there have even been university studies to look at the causes. For

instance, scientists from Upstate Medical University analysed clippings from 28 Christmas trees including needles and bark, from a range of species, and found that they housed an unbelievable 53 different types of mould!¹ The study found that pollen grains are collected in the tree bark, not from the parent tree, but from other plants, which can affect hayfever sufferers. When the tree is brought indoors, the tree resin dries, releasing more pollen into the air, causing potential allergic reactions. This condition is known as Christmas Tree Syndrome. The Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology has reported that live Christmas trees collect mould. Scientists examined clippings from home Christmas trees and found they contained highly allergenic mould spores.

In addition, pollen from other trees also gets lodged in the bark of 'real' trees. And you're not 'out of the woods' if you opt for an artificial tree instead. There can be allergens such as dust and mould present on synthetic trees too, which have built up when stored. And this applies to tree and other decorations too which have been stored since last year.

This combination of allergens can take all the joy out of Christmas tree decorating. But there are things you can do to help lessen your allergic reaction. Here are my top tips to help...

- Put your tree up as late as possible to help minimise the risk of exposure to mould.
- Hose down your tree before

[1] Identification of mould on seasonal indoor coniferous trees Lawrence E. Kurlandsky, Josephine Przepiora, Scott W. Riddell, Deanna L. Kiska. Correspondence June 2011, Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Vol. 106, Issue 6, Pages 543-544



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taking it into the house, or after getting it out of storage, as this can help remove some of the mould and spores – though it's probably best to get someone who isn't allergic to do this!

- Take care when you're decorating your tree, or get someone else to do it, as allergens will be disturbed as you move the tree into position and move the branches to hang the decorations and position the lights.
- Regularly apply an allergen barrier balm around your nostrils to help stop the allergens getting up your nose and around the bones of your eyes. A product that has been proven in independent studies to trap both indoor and outdoor airborne allergens from entering the body is the HayMax organic, drug-free allergen barrier balm.² If this keeps you below your trigger level – the amount of allergen you can tolerate before your body reacts – you will have no allergic reaction.
- Use an air purifier to help clear the air of mould particles.
- Damp dust and vacuum regularly. Damp dusting will prevent allergen particles being redistributed into the air.
- Keep cuddly toys and blankets in a cupboard to prevent the build-up of allergens on them.
- Keep animals clean and well groomed, to reduce collection of allergens.

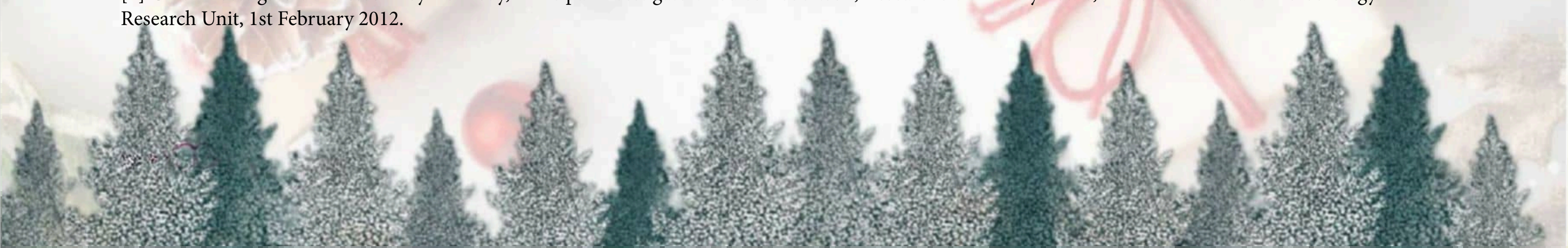


Max Wiseberg is a lifelong hay fever sufferer and airborne allergens expert (including hay fever, dust, pet, mould allergies and air pollution). He is a trusted expert who can provide in-depth comment with extensive knowledge on both conventional and complementary forms of treatment, practical lifestyle advice, as well as information and facts surrounding airborne allergens.

Max is regularly quoted in the press, in publications including The Telegraph, The Times, Daily Mirror, Daily Express, The Sun, Woman's Own, Daily Star, The Sunday Post, Country Living, Running Fitness, The Practising Midwife and numerous pharmacy magazines.

Max has been interviewed on TalkTV, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine, LBC and Sky News. He is also a popular regular guest on BBC Three Counties radio and has featured on the Zoe Ball Breakfast Show and James Whale (talkRADIO). He has appeared on BBC radio, many local radio stations, as well as The Chrissy B Show, Fitness TV and the Holiday & Cruise channel.

[2] Chief Investigator: Professor Roy Kennedy, Principal Investigator: Louise Robertson, Researcher: Dr Mary Lewis, National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit, 1st February 2012.





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The Kundalini MEMOIRS OF A YOGI

An account of how the life force power of Kundalini bestows many Siddhis and Blessings

Words: Yogi Raj Muni

Continued from the previous issue of YOGA Magazine...





One evening, as the sun dipped below the horizon, casting an orange and yellow hue across the landscape, Yogi Ji and I found ourselves by a serene lake, surrounded by towering ancient trees.

They were so tall that I believed that if I climbed them, I would surely reach the stars. Bushie, ever watchful and loyal, accompanied us. His senses were attuned to the subtleties of our surroundings.

“Muni,” Yogi Ji began, his voice a gentle whisper carried by the evening breeze, “you have grown immensely in your understanding and practice. Now, it is time to explore further one of the highest states of yogic achievement—*Samadhi*.”

I replied curiously, “Yogi Ji, I am grateful for your commitment and dedication in training me. Last time, you tried to awaken my third eye so I

could attain Samadhi by attempting to pierce it with a wooden shard!”

Yogi Ji coughed slightly in embarrassment. “Ah yes, Muni I do recall that we tried using unorthodox means. This was merely a test run and the technique I was experimenting on you, It was imparted to me by an old and trusted friend of mine – over 120 years of age – a wise Lama who had successfully conducted the procedure on his students. I may have been misinformed or, perhaps, I had not fully grasped the technique before testing it on you!”

Yogi Ji’s eyes sparkled with wisdom and excitement. “*Samadhi is the state of deep, meditative absorption where the practitioner becomes one with the object of meditation. It is where the sense of individual self dissolves into the universal consciousness. Achieving Samadhi is the culmination of dedicated practice and profound inner work.*”

I sensed that Yogi Ji might be planning to try another unorthodox technique on me – perhaps he would attempt to pierce my third eye with a metal or wooden instrument, driving a nail right through my forehead to bring me into the state of *Samadhi*. The thought frightened me. I decided in my mind that I should run away, lest Yogi Ji accidentally kills me.

Perhaps it was time for me to venture out into the wider world. I had spent many years at the Yoga Bhavan, but my heart now longed to teach and share the knowledge I had gained with others.

I felt restless and contemplated what I should do – yet I had no answers.

In that quiet moment, while Yogi Ji was busy gathering berries for our supper, I felt the soft murmur of my mother’s voice encircle and embrace me.



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I sensed her voice, even though she had long departed from her mortal body, “Muni, my child, be not restless. Now is not the time to run away from your teacher. Seek his guidance.” I felt peaceful and much relieved of the thoughts that had begun to occupy my mind.

I smiled as I watched Yogi Ji practising some hatha yoga postures.

“How do I reach this state then Yogi Ji?” I asked eagerly, feeling a mix of excitement and determination.

“There are several paths and practices that can lead one to Samadhi,” Yogi Ji explained.

“But first Muni Ji, it is essential to understand the eight limbs of yoga, as described by the sage Patanjali. He was a dear friend of mine, and I met him a few times over the centuries. Patanjali’s limbs form a comprehensive framework for spiritual growth and self-realisation.”

I had studied Patanjali’s teachings under Yogi Ji’s guidance over several years and had learnt much from his wise words. Yogi Ji and I sat cross-legged, facing each other. Bushie settled down nearby, his eyes gleaming happily.

“Let us start with the basics,” Yogi Ji said. “The eight limbs of yoga are: Yama (ethical disciplines),

Niyama (self-observances), Asana (postures), Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (absorption). Each limb prepares the practitioner for the next, guiding them towards higher states of consciousness.”

I nodded, absorbing every word. “I understand Yogi Ji. Last year you discussed Patanjali’s works with me over a period of several days and I thoroughly enjoyed learning. What practical exercises can help me on this path?”

Yogi Ji smiled. “We shall begin with three essential practices that will prepare you for deeper states of meditation and ultimately, Samadhi. However, please bear in mind that your many years of practice under my supervision has already taken you to an advanced stage – even if you are not consciously aware of this yet.”

The first exercise Yogi Ji introduced was *Trataka* (gazing meditation). He explained its significance and how it can help develop concentration and inner awareness. He also introduced several other mediation techniques which he asked me to keep strictly confidential.

“Muni, for Trataka, we will use the flame of wax flick. You can use other items such as a block dot, but we will start with the candle flame. Sit comfortably with your spine straight and place the candle at eye level about an arm’s length away. Focus your gaze on the flame without blinking for as long as you can. When tears begin to form, close your eyes, and visualise the flame at your third eye, between your eyebrows.”

Yogi Ji asked Bushie to fetch him a candle that had been gifted to him by a monk who had passed through the Yoga Bhavan some years ago.



Bushie did as Yogi Ji asked. He fetched a creamy white candle from Yogi Ji's silver box which was carefully placed on a piece of stone. We lit the candle, and I followed Yogi Ji's instructions, fixing my gaze on the steady flame.

As I concentrated, the world around him faded away, leaving only the gentle flicker of the flame.

When my eyes began to water, I closed them and saw the afterimage of the flame in my mind's eye, feeling a profound sense of stillness.

"Very good, Muni," Yogi Ji said softly. "Trataka helps to quiet the mind and enhance focus. With regular practice, it can lead to deeper states of meditation."

The next exercise Yogi Ji recommended was *Kapalbhati* (skull shining breath), a pranayama technique that energises the mind and body, preparing them for meditation.

"There are a few ways to perform this breathing and purification technique. Here is one. Sit comfortably with your spine straight," Yogi Ji instructed.

"Take a deep breath in, then exhale forcefully through your nose, pulling your navel in towards your spine with each exhalation. The inhalation will occur naturally between each exhalation. Continue this rhythmically."

I followed the instructions, feeling the powerful bursts of breath energise my entire being. After several rounds, I felt invigorated, with my mind sharp and clear.

"Kapalbhati not only cleanses the respiratory system but also invigorates the mind, making it easier to concentrate during meditation," Yogi Ji explained.

We then moved on to practise of Yoga Nidra (a psychic yogic sleep),

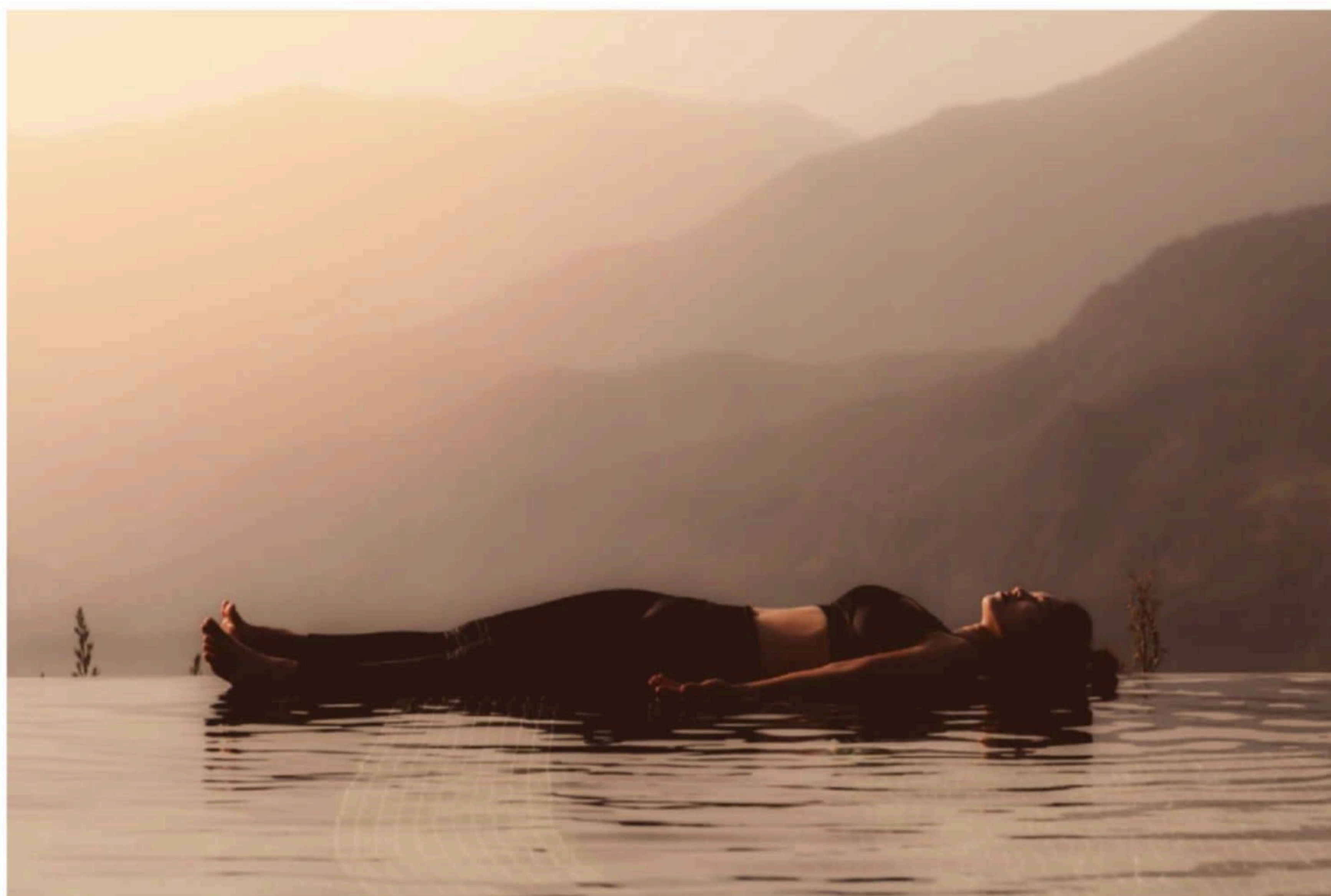
a powerful technique for deep relaxation and inner exploration.

"Lie down on your back in Shavasana, the Corpse Pose," Yogi Ji instructed.

"Close your eyes and bring your awareness to your breath, allowing your body to relax completely. I will guide you through a journey of inner awareness."

As I lay down and relaxed, Yogi Ji's soothing voice guided me through a systematic relaxation of my mind, body, and spirit. I felt a wave of tranquillity wash over me as my consciousness drifted into a state of deep, restful awareness.

"Yoga Nidra helps release deep-seated tensions and brings the mind to a state of calm, making it receptive to higher states of consciousness," Yogi Ji explained as I emerged from



the practice feeling profoundly refreshed and centred.

“Now you have had another introduction to the techniques that I have been teaching you over the years,” said Yogi Ji.

“I enjoyed learning and practicing them, Yogi Ji, and I do feel as if my consciousness has profoundly changed over the years.”

“Now Muni we will practise all the basic techniques and more over a period of forty days intensely. You will not be allowed to eat anything except for a few drops of water, and even that will be scarce” declared Yogi Ji.

“And when will the forty days start?” I wandered, peering meekly at Yogi Ji.

“There is no sense of urgency in how you speak, Muni. I get the impression that you are reluctant to invest the necessary time as suggested to bring you closer to the highest stage of Yogic practice which is Samadhi”, replied Yogi Ji looking quite disappointed.

“Yogi Ji, I am feeling weary and tired and the thought of going without even a morsel of food for forty days is already making me hungry!” Yogi Ji laughed loudly.

“Muni you rascal. Are you a karm chour? Either you want to attain the state of Samadhi or you do not? Otherwise, what are you hoping to achieve from this yoga life journey?”

Karm chour is an expression used in the Indian subcontinent to describe various behaviours, including skiving from off work duties.

Tears began to well up in my eyes. They streamed down my cheeks and onto my lap.

Bushie, the snow leopard nuzzled my face to comfort me. Yogi Ji stood up and walked away quietly.

I remained seated with Bushie wondering where my life journey was taking me. I sat for a long time and eventually reclined backwards onto my back staring up at the sky.

Rain clouds were forming above and it was becoming windy. I shuddered at the thought of going without food for forty days.

The Kundalini Memoirs of a Yogi

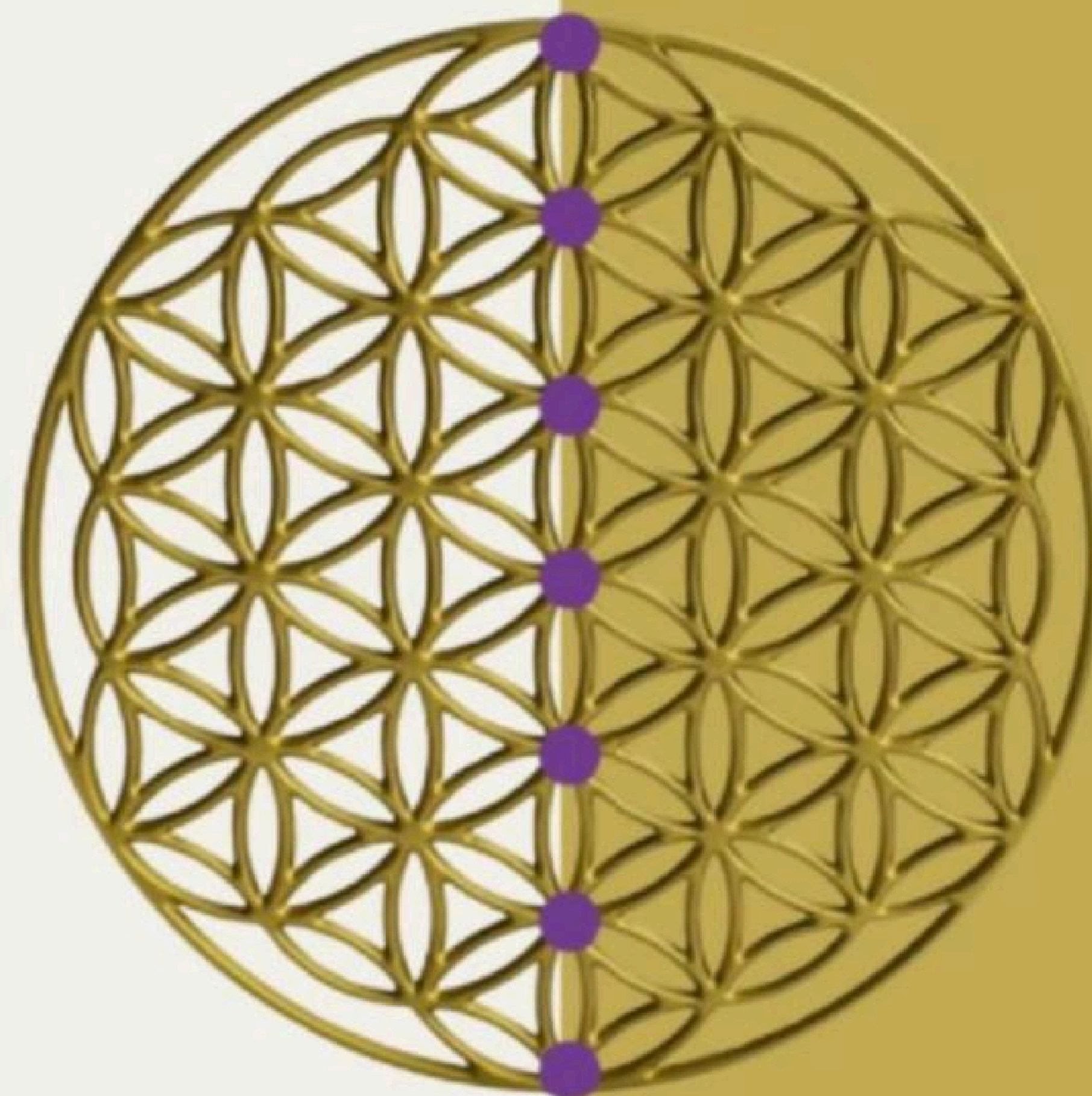
To be continued, in the next issue of YOGA Magazine...

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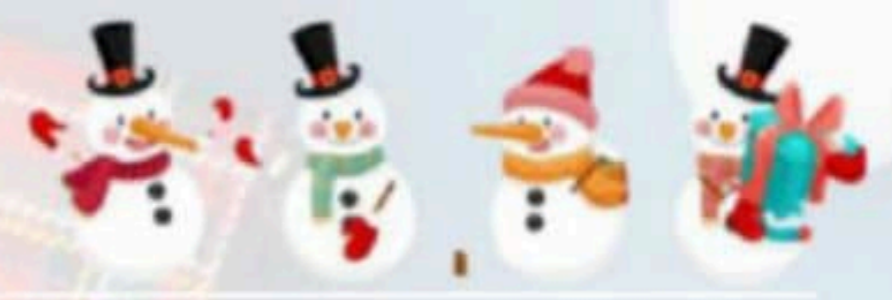
RADIANCE IS THE LIGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

RITUAL – REST – RELEASE – RADIANCE – REJUVENATION

HONOURING THE GIFT OF YOUR MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY

Words: Lena Franklin





As I sat with what to write for my December article, I asked my soul “what is one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves?” Of course, during the holiday season, there’s a lot of external focus on food, family, lights, celebration...and for others, it’s a very painful time of sadness and grief. What came through when I sat with this question is the daily practice of honouring our multi-dimensionality with care, compassion, love and acceptance. Honouring our multi-dimensionality is one of the ways we can fast track our mental, emotional and spiritual liberation, ascending into a love-based reality of Unity. Here, I share 3 Powerful Ways to Honour the Gift of Your Multi-Dimensionality:

ACCEPTANCE & COMPASSION FOR ALL ASPECTS OF YOU

As we journey on the path of our own evolution and learning, it’s important that we embrace a mindset around all is welcome here. This compassionate stance naturally expands our consciousness to become present to what’s arising within and outside of ourselves ~ no matter how uncomfortable an experience may be. Some aspects of ourselves come from the truth of our spirit and other

An essential aspect of being human is unlearning our way back to the multi-dimensionality of who we are. Humans exist in multiple dimensions simultaneously, including space, time, energy and consciousness. For the purpose of this article, in order to ground the spiritual lessons into human form, we’ll focus on the lens of what it means to be multi-dimensional as we live on Earth. So as humans, we carry all of these roles, archetypes, energies, thoughts, beliefs, desires, gifts and through the journey of life, we acquire programming that either supports our true self or suppresses it. And when I say, “true self,” I mean the essence of our soul, the immaterial and energetic aspect of ourselves that is immortal. All paths lead back to one place ~ the soul. Our soul incarnated here on Earth to learn lessons and to evolve, individually and collectively (there’s no separation here). We learn these lessons by living in these human bodies, having lives, relationships and rich experiences. One of the unique aspects of being human is that we

get to experience the spectrum of human emotion. With that in mind, it’s important to consistently rewire any “viral” conditioning around pleasant emotions being “good” and uncomfortable emotions being “bad” as all emotions are master teachers here to share profound lessons.



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aspects come from our conditioning. Presence and embodiment help us to discern what is objectively true (from the soul) and what is an aspect of our humanness (from the ego)...again, all is welcome. The more we can cultivate acceptance of this present moment, the less resistance we carry and the more we can flow with the rhythms of life. When we resist the waves of our life, we create more suffering for ourselves. You see, pain is a natural part of the human experience...we learn, evolve and grow through pain. But suffering optional because suffering is what we create for ourselves when we resist the present moment.

It can feel challenging to accept all aspects of ourselves especially in times of intense fear, anger, anxiety, sadness...and other uncomfortable

emotions. A tool that can be quite helpful in these moments is to speak directly to the emotion itself and let it know that it is welcomed, that you see it and to ask it what it's here to teach you. I also recommend using the mantra "All is well" as you're working with more challenging experiences. For example, if grief and sadness come over you, say to the emotion "I see you, grief. You are welcome here in my consciousness and body. I feel you. What are you here to teach me? All is well. I release you when you're ready."

EXCAVATE YOUR DEEP DESIRES

Believe it or not, our heart-centric desires are direct pathways into the truth of our multi-dimensionality. Collectively, we've been conditioned to tamp down and deny our physical,

mental, emotional and spiritual desires in service of others' desires and needs...in order to "fit in" and for a whole host of reasons that are rooted in viral programming of the collective consciousness. Many times, the simplest questions birth the most profound spiritual lessons. Ask yourself, what do I truly desire physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually? Be discerning about where the desire is coming from as well. Is it coming from the soul or the ego... or perhaps both? Contrary to much spiritual banter, our ego isn't our enemy...it's here to serve the visions of the heart and soul. For example, you may desire a spacious house for you and your family. Yes, this may require significant money energy. What does that money energy and house symbolise for you? Perhaps it's





spaciousness, freedom, love, family unity, connectedness...the list can go on. You see, anything we create in our physical reality stems from beliefs in our conscious or subconscious mind. The key is to continue bringing subconscious beliefs into conscious awareness so you can choose which beliefs to reprogram and which ones to claim as a part of your belief system and overall frequency.

Journaling Exercise (& don't hold back!): What does my heart and soul desire physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually? How would my life look different if these desires were manifested? How can I shift my beliefs & actions to align with these desires?

ATTUNE TO YOUR ENERGY

We are all energetic beings and the Universe is made of energy and information. The capacity to consciously direct our energy and attention is our human superpower. This energetic channeling is where manifestations come into physical reality. First, accepting the truth that you're a multi-dimensional, energetic being is key. Most of us weren't taught this as children, but we're in an era where it's essential to embrace this truth. Energy is the way of the future because more and more of humanity is waking up. It's a great gift to yourself when you begin attuning to energy. You can do this simply by cultivating a meditation practice in the morning through mindful awareness. One of my dear meditation teachers, Buddhist master, Thich Nhat Hanh offers a mantra for meditation ~ when you're inhaling, repeat in your mind "I am inhaling" and as you're exhaling, repeat "I am exhaling". This simple but impactful mantra can help to steady the mind and cultivate present moment awareness to calm an often-turbulent mind space.

Another way to attune to your energy is practice grounding which is consciously connecting to Earth energy (preferably with your bare feet



in the Earth). Feel the sensations of the Earth beneath your feet and sense the vibration and body sensations associated with channeling Earth's energy up into your own energy field. You may feel warmth, tingling, throbbing and other sensations. This awareness is YOU channeling energy. We all have this power. It's just about beginning to tap into it. The more granular you get with energy attunement...feeling the vibration of different energies and working with them...the more your unique gifts will develop.

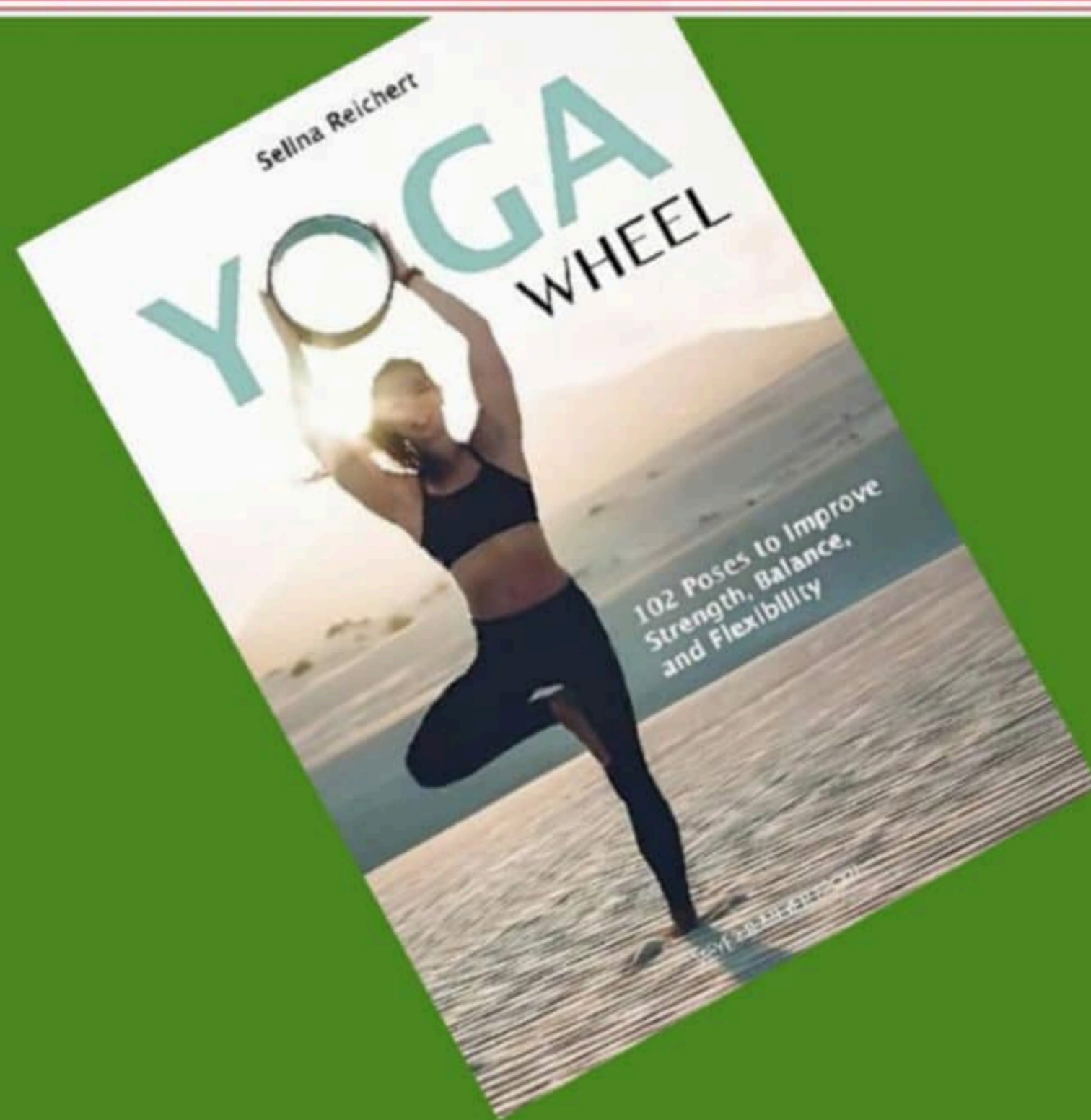
We are in a time of The Great Awakening on this planet which means more and more of humanity is waking

up to their multi-dimensionality. This process is one of the most powerful gifts you can give yourself and the world!

Lena is a Medicine Woman, Transpersonal Psychotherapist & Transformational Speaker. She's also the creator of The Meditation Membership. We invite you to join her Meditation Membership and explore her global work at www.lenafranklin.com

You can follow her work on social @iamlenafranklin

What's HOT!



Yoga Wheel: 102 Poses to Improve Strength, Balance, and Flexibility

Selina Reichert

Selina Reichert's *Yoga Wheel* is an extensive guide featuring 102 poses designed to enhance strength, balance, and flexibility using a yoga wheel. This book caters to both beginners and seasoned yogis, providing a gradual progression from simple to complex asanas. Clear, step-by-step instructions are paired with detailed photographs, ensuring that each pose can be safely mastered without the risk of injury. Reichert not only focuses on physical postures but also incorporates gentle breathing techniques, promoting a holistic approach that balances the mind and body. The yoga wheel becomes a versatile tool, aiding in deeper stretches and helping to improve alignment. Whether you're aiming to master individual asanas or looking to refine your flow sequences, this book is an essential resource for enhancing your practice.

Available from bookshop.org, RRP £19.95.

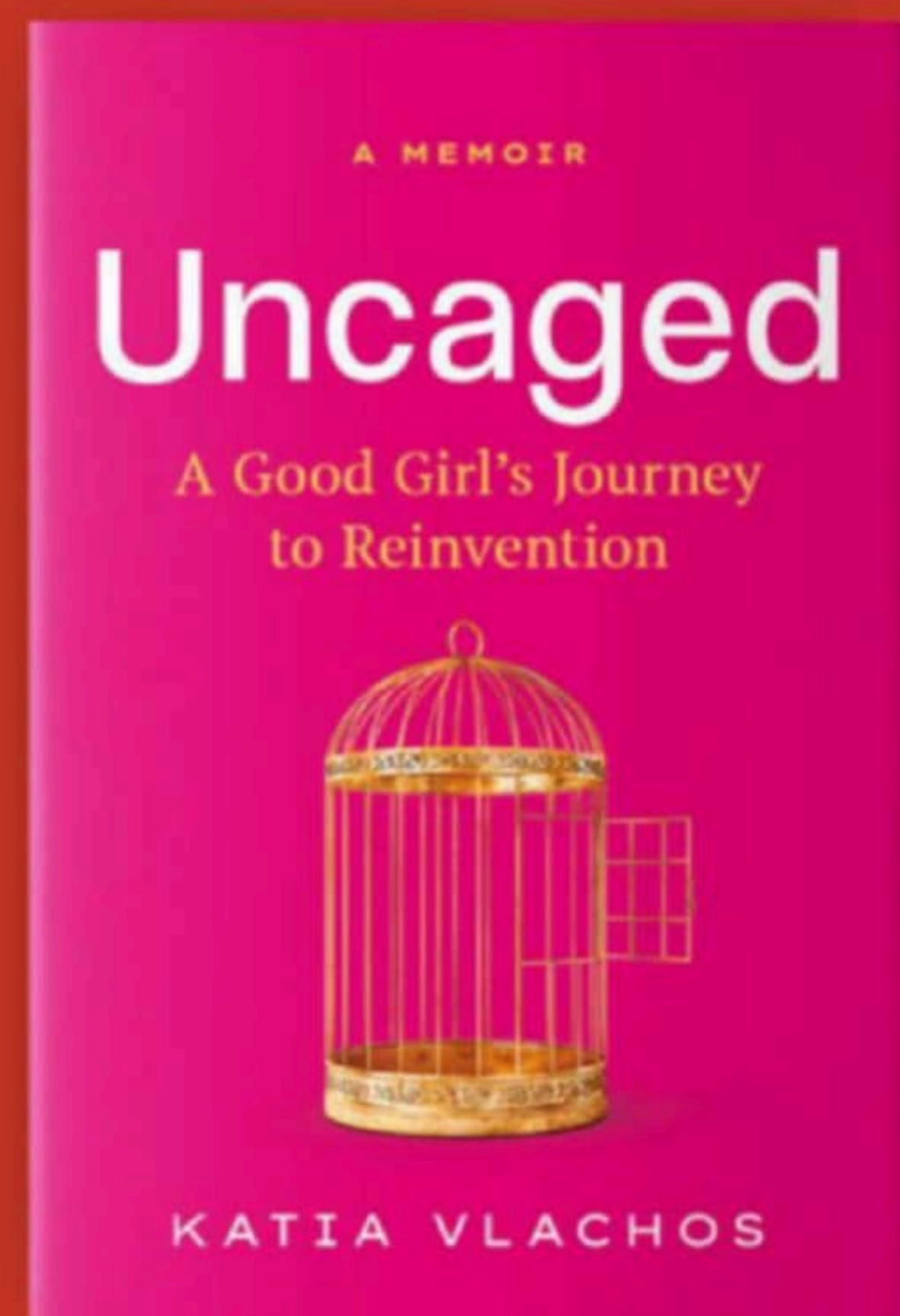
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Uncaged: A Good Girl's Journey to Reinvention

Katia Vlachos

Uncaged by Katia Vlachos is a compelling memoir that explores the journey of breaking free from societal and familial expectations. Raised in a traditional Greek household, Vlachos adhered to the conventional path of academic success, a promising career, and a picture-perfect marriage. Despite these achievements, she felt confined by the "good girl" narrative, struggling with deep-seated beliefs that prioritised others' needs over her own. Through a series of transformative experiences—riding away on a lover's Harley, navigating a painful divorce, and grieving her father's death—Vlachos finds her way to self-discovery. Her raw and honest storytelling provides insights into overcoming emotional baggage, embracing authenticity, and pursuing one's true calling. *Uncaged* serves as an inspiration for anyone looking to reinvent themselves and find genuine meaning in life.

Available from amazon.co.uk.





Guidance from Gaia Oracle: Practices and Affirmations from Spirit Animals

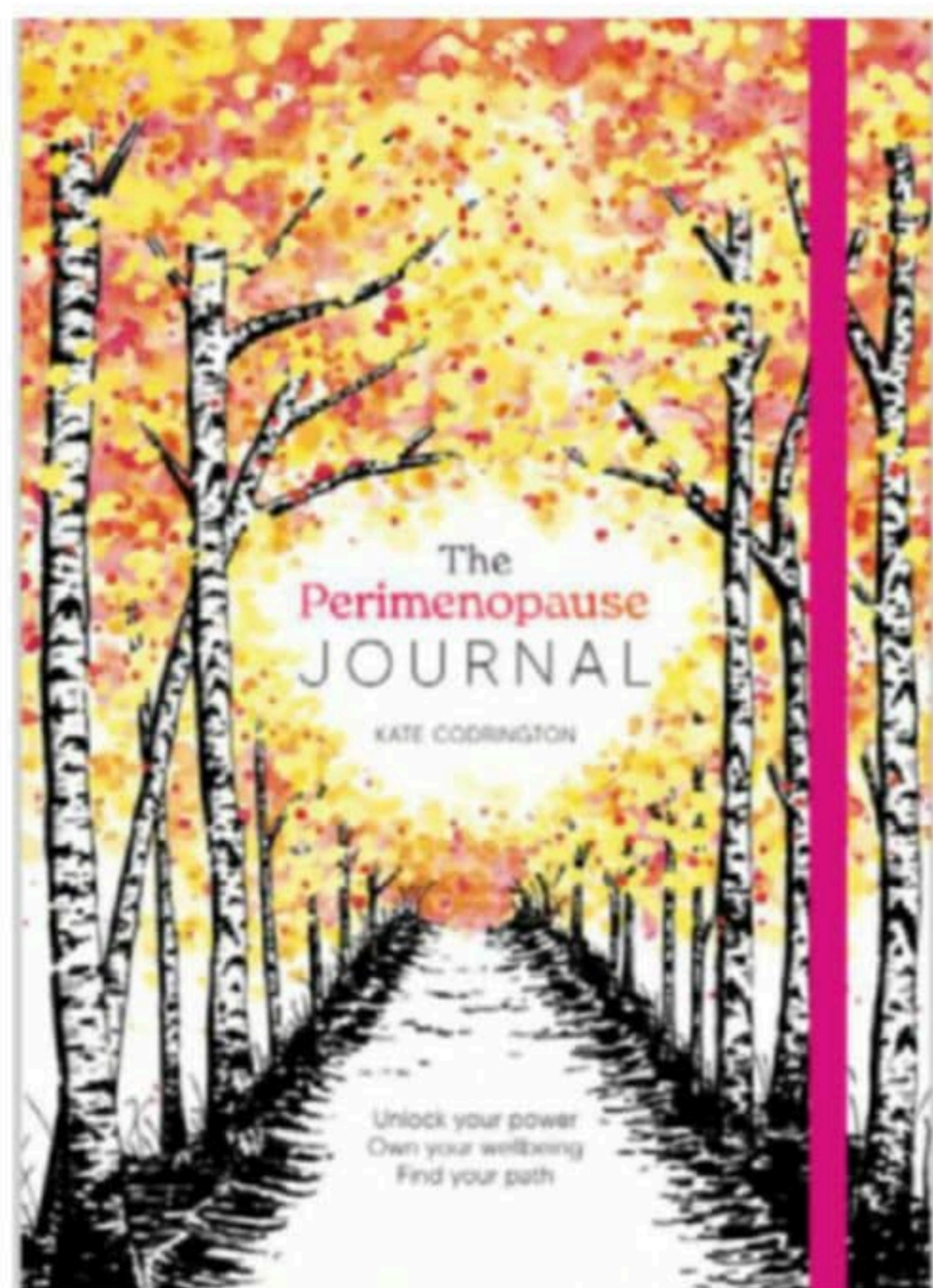
Shannon Kaiser

Shannon Kaiser's *Guidance from Gaia Oracle* is a beautifully crafted 52-card deck paired with a full-colour, 176-page guidebook designed to help users connect with the wisdom of Mother Earth through animal spirit guides. Each card, adorned with lush, intricate artwork, provides a unique message from a Guide of Gaia, an affirmation for clarity, and practical guidance for stress relief. Categorized into the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and spirit—this oracle deck offers insights that aim to balance and realign one's inner world with the natural environment. By tapping into Gaia's ancient wisdom, users can explore personal growth, enhance their well-being, and strengthen their connection to nature. This set is an excellent tool for those seeking spiritual guidance and harmony in their daily lives.



Available from www.simonandschuster.com at \$24.00.

The Perimenopause Journal: Unlock your power, own your well-being, find your path



Kate Codrington

Kate Codrington's *The Perimenopause Journal* is a transformative, undated, 52-week guide designed to support women navigating the challenging yet empowering journey of perimenopause. This beautifully illustrated journal encourages self-reflection and helps users develop a personalised self-care plan through practical prompts and monthly reflections. Codrington introduces the concept of 'inner seasons,' promoting self-compassion and helping women understand their fluctuating energy levels. The journal includes meditation guides, energy tracking with moon phases, and thoughtful enquiries aimed at easing symptoms and embracing this phase of life with confidence. Unlike traditional, often prescriptive menopause guides, this journal offers a feminist approach that prioritises self-nourishment and growth. It's a perfect gift for those seeking to transform their experience into a time of blossoming and creative exploration.

Available from amazon.co.uk at £16.99.

Mountain Warehouse

Shadow II Men's & Dawn II Women's Printed Ski Jackets



The Shadow II Men's and Dawn II Women's Printed Ski Jackets from Mountain Warehouse offer a perfect blend of style, durability, and functionality, making them essential for winter sports enthusiasts. Both jackets are crafted from tough, snowproof fabric treated with a durable water-repellent coating, providing excellent protection against moisture. Designed to withstand extreme temperatures as low as -30°C , these jackets have been rigorously thermal-tested to ensure optimal performance on the slopes.

For warmth, the jackets feature padded insulation and a soft fleece lining, providing exceptional heat retention without added bulk. The adjustable cuffs, hood, and hem allow for a custom fit, while the integrated snowskirt prevents snow from seeping in during tumbles. With multiple secure pockets, these jackets offer practical storage for your essentials. Both come with a reassuring 2-year warranty, underlining their quality and durability.

Available for **£89.99** each, the Shadow II and Dawn II jackets are reliable, stylish choices for ski season.



AcuPips: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Well-being

Rediscover calm with AcuPips, the UK's first expert-led ear seed company offering an innovative approach to stress relief rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Founded by Zoë, a seasoned acupuncturist with over a decade of clinical experience, AcuPips harnesses the power of auricular therapy. The tiny seeds are placed on specific ear points, stimulating the body's natural healing processes to address ailments like anxiety, migraines, and menopause symptoms. What sets AcuPips apart is the ongoing support and personalised ear maps provided with every kit, ensuring a safe and effective home treatment experience. This blend of aesthetics and clinical expertise makes AcuPips a trustworthy choice for those looking to take charge of their well-being in a holistic way.

Available from: acupips.com



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BAM Horizon Reflect Pants: Yoga Comfort Redefined

Experience ultimate comfort with BAM's Horizon Reflect Pants, designed for effortless movement and versatility. These harem-style yoga pants feature a supportive, double-thickness waistband that sits comfortably on your hips, ensuring a secure fit during any activity. The loose, relaxed fit tapers elegantly at the ankles, offering a flowing feel that complements your natural movements. Crafted from BAM's classic jersey fabric, these pants are exceptionally breathable and soft, making them perfect for yoga sessions, lounging, or casual outings. Functional side pockets provide handy storage for essentials, while the gathered cuffs keep the pants in place during stretches and poses. Available in striking shades like Black and Ocean Teal, these pants are a must-have staple for any activewear wardrobe, combining style, comfort, and performance seamlessly.

Available from: www.bambooclothing.co.uk at £48.00





KEEN 450 Dirt Hiking Shoe – Traverse New Trails

Step into adventure with the KEEN 450 Dirt, a revolutionary hiking shoe featuring KEEN.CURVE® technology. This innovative design delivers a fluid, propulsive stride that enhances your hiking experience, making each step feel effortless. The shoe's abrasion-resistant upper ensures durability against rugged terrains, while the KEEN.ALL-TERRAIN rubber outsole provides superior grip on any surface. The contoured fit offers excellent support, hugging your foot comfortably for maximum stability. The high-rebound cushioning in the midsole absorbs impact, reducing fatigue on long hikes, and the PFAS-free water repellency keeps your feet dry in all conditions. Available in a variety of autumnal colours, the KEEN 450 Dirt is perfect for trail enthusiasts seeking performance and comfort in every stride.



Available from www.keenfootwear.co.uk | RRP £145-£155

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Chrome District Collection – Urban Carry Meets Versatility

Elevate your daily commute with Chrome's District Collection, designed for the urban explorer. Made with 100% recycled materials, this eco-conscious range includes sleek sling bags, convertible tote-backpacks, and functional daypacks. Each piece features smart organisational pockets, a dedicated laptop sleeve, and plush knit shoulder straps for all-day comfort. The Highline, a standout from this collection, offers 20 litres of capacity with additional pockets for essentials like water bottles and sunglasses. Its compact sibling, the Camden, is perfect for lighter loads but retains all the signature Chrome durability and style. Whether you're cycling through the city or heading for a weekend getaway, the District Collection's robust design ensures you carry your essentials in style.

Available from www.chromeindustries.com | RRP from £90-£100



Zooz: The Ultimate Mushroom Wellness Drink

Say goodbye to booze with Zooz, an innovative mushroom-based wellness drink perfect for health-conscious individuals. This low-calorie beverage combines the cognitive-boosting benefits of Lion's Mane mushrooms and the endurance-enhancing effects of Cordyceps. Infused with ginseng and green coffee beans, Zooz provides a sophisticated flavour profile with zesty citrus notes, making it a refreshing alternative to sugary soft drinks. Ideal for sober-curious drinkers, it offers a complex taste without the caffeine crash. Whether enjoyed solo or as a mixer, Zooz delivers a unique drinking experience that's sure to turn heads.

Available from: zoozdrinks.com
Price: £1.95 per 250ml can



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Green People Soothing Hand Essentials: Indulge Your Hands Naturally



Treat your hands to luxury with Green People's Soothing Hand Essentials Collection. This trio of 30ml hand creams combines nature's finest organic ingredients, offering hydration and a sensory experience like no other. The set includes Ginger & Clove for an invigorating spice, Mandarin & Ho Wood for a refreshing citrus twist, and Rose & Geranium for a romantic, floral indulgence. Perfect for gifting or personal use, this collection not only moisturises but also envelops your hands in elegant, uplifting fragrances. Free from harsh chemicals and synthetic additives, it's a mindful choice for those who care about natural skincare.

Available from: greenpeople.co.uk
Price: £25.00



Elizabeth Grant Night Wonder Concentrate: The PM Skin Miracle

Transform your skin overnight with Elizabeth Grant's Night Wonder Concentrate (£54). A powerhouse treatment, it uses a unique blend of glycolic acid, Torricelumn™, and hyaluronic acid to rejuvenate and clarify your skin. This gentle yet effective formula targets large pores, smooths fine lines, and tackles blemishes without causing irritation, making it suitable for even the most sensitive skin types. The addition of aloe vera and hyaluronic acid ensures deep hydration while calming your complexion, leaving your skin clearer and more radiant. Gradually incorporating this into your routine three times a week delivers visible results and a nourished, balanced skin barrier.

Available from: ElizabethGrantUK.com

Price: £54

gazine

Sixways Hormone Balance Blend: Natural Wellness in a Cup

Say goodbye to hormone imbalances and hello to sustained energy with the Hormone Balance Blend (£35) from Sixways. Formulated by nutritionists, this all-natural, decaf coffee blend is designed to support hormonal regulation while providing lasting energy throughout the day. With ingredients like Inositol, beneficial for PCOS, this blend supports gut health, mood, and energy levels—perfect for those dealing with hormonal imbalances. Simply mix with hot water and milk for a delicious and convenient daily ritual that supports your wellness from within.

Available from: sixways.co

Price: £35





Age Defy+ Hydra-Glow Sleep Mask: Wake Up Radiant

Revitalise your skin overnight with the luxurious Age Defy+ Hydra-Glow Sleep Mask (£40). This age-defying mask combines the moisture-retaining power of hyaluronic acid with plant botanicals to deeply hydrate and plump the skin as you sleep. Designed to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, it leaves your skin glowing and rejuvenated by morning. Ideal for anyone looking to wake up with smoother, younger-looking skin, this mask is the perfect addition to your evening beauty ritual.

Available from: greenpeople.co.uk
Price: £40



facebo

HayMax Pure: Natural Relief from Allergens

HayMax Pure offers a simple, natural solution to combat pesky allergens. This drug-free, organic balm acts as a barrier against pollen, dust, and pet allergens when applied to the nostrils and eye sockets. Made from a blend of beeswax and seed oils, HayMax Pure is safe for children, pregnant, and breastfeeding women. It comes in five variants, including Aloe Vera and Lavender, each providing the same effective protection. By trapping allergens before they enter your body, HayMax significantly reduces allergic reactions, making it a must-have for hay fever and dust allergy sufferers. A tiny dab is all it takes to breathe easy and enjoy a sneeze-free day.

Available from: haymax.biz
Price: £8.49 per pot



Vedic Astrology

DECEMBER 2024

WORDS: YOGI MAHARAJ DR MALIK

ARIES (MESA)

MARCH 21 – APRIL 20

A thoughtful start to the month helps you concentrate on projects that need concluding quickly. This is an ideal time to spend time on learning a new subject or exploring any that interest you in more depth. You can negotiate your way through some hard-edged financial wrangles with poise and ease.

You will have peace of mind that your patience and perseverance bring to closure anything that is not working in your favour. This is an ideal time for detoxing anything that you want – whether it is your diet, companions and even entertainment.

TAURUS (VRSABA)

APRIL 21 – MAY 20

This is a month for reflection and self development.

This is the time to act and follow up any heart felt desires. There are many exciting opportunities and ideas to explore.

You will achieve great success in whatever you put your attention to. This is a perfect month to explore and try out therapies to help detox your body and mind.

Focus on oxygenating your body, clearing out toxins and strengthening your immune system.

GEMINI (MITHUNA)

MAY 21 – JUNE 21

The month starts on a positive note. You can expect abundance in all areas of your house and that is not just in financial matters. Being a sociable creature, you will attract all kinds of attention and friendships. These will help support you in challenging times.

Remain focused and you will find a suitable partner to share your aspirations. If involved in a long term relationship maybe you should consider taking out quality time to reflect on where you are heading with it.

Now is a good time for making future commitments. You will find the answer to the long-standing issue that is concerning a loved one. The month closes on a peaceful note.

CANCER (KARKATA)

JUNE 22 – JULY 22

A perfect time to consider whether it is time to quit a long-term relationship whether in love, career or business that is blighting your energy. Whatever decision you make be sure to check in with your gut and heart instincts. You are energetic and adventurous in matters to do with love and you can expect great blessings and love to be reciprocated as well. Remain grounded and learn to trust yourself and work with the first energy centre.

Social activities keep you busy. There's fun and excitement on the agenda. You also have the gift of intuition and may use that constructively to mix with likeminded people. The month closes on a peaceful note.

LEO (SIMHA)

JULY 22 – AUG 22

The month will open on an auspicious vibration. The influence of the stars throughout the month encourages you to work with your sixth and seventh chakras. There is plenty of time to declutter at home and bring in a new energy into your home.

This is not a time for complacency. You will summon much needed inner resources to tackle any challenges that present themselves to you. Also seek advice and guidance from friends and family.

Travel may lead you to new places and brings hope of new beginnings. You will also be encouraged to make some changes in your life, for the better. Your popularity also increases as does your social status.

VIRGO (KANYA)

AUG 23 – SEP 21

Demands are made on your time both domestically and socially. You can deliver and meet all responsibilities with ease if you plan and organise properly. Coupled with this are new responsibilities given to you at the work and domestic sides. In love matters you may be starry eyed about someone but be sure to remain cool headed.

Socially you are in demand. The stars are on your side. You can also look forward to pleasant month ahead. This is a time for rejoicing and celebrating everything that is positive and good in your life right now.



LIBRA (TULA)

SEP 22 – OCT 21

Promotional perks, uprise in salaries, a new job or relocation elsewhere will provide you with the zest to explore new ways of thinking and 'being.'

Expect a rise in fortune, a new relationship filled with hope and joy as well as new opportunities for self-development.

This is an exciting month for you. There will be support coming to you from different people. Your passion, drive, stamina, and energy will help you unlock your talents with spectacular results.

Your confidence and self-esteem will be boosted. You will remain motivated and inspired to pursue innovative, artistic, and brave innovative ideas bringing you respect and admiration from colleagues, friends, and family.

SAGITTARIUS (DHANUSA)

NOV 22 – DEC 21

New projects bring you the well-earned perks. You can expect to move happily through the month. There is plenty to do at the work and home fronts as you find there are new responsibilities placed upon you which are financially rewarding – but will require your input and energy and attention.

In love, you are lucky and find a soul mate. Socially you are in demand and you close the month on a happy note. There is plenty to keep you occupied and spiritually you keep yourself grounded.

AQUARIUS (KUMBA)

JAN 21 – FEB 19

Too many cooks can spoil the broth, or so the saying goes. And that is exactly the problem this month, if you allow it. If you are looking for advice, friendship or companionship stay close to 'home' and seek out those that you already have a connection with. This is a good month for you to expand your business projects.

Lucrative contacts are highlighted which will provide financial stability for you. You will experience stability in financial matters and will remain grounded. Make sure you invest time in your health. This is one of the biggest investments that you can make right now.

SCORPIO (VRSCIKHA)

OCT 22 – NOV 21

Start the month with meditation to clear out any energy vibration that is not in tune with your soul. This is a time to revisit any heart and love contracts that you may have made and whether you remain truthful to them. This may be a time for you to part ways. Consider performing a spring clean for ceremonial purposes – to reenergise the environment.

Surround yourself with objects, symbols and paintings that reflect the beauty of the natural world. These will motivate you and inspire you. Spend quality times working with pranayama exercises to detox, revitalise and pep up energy levels.

CAPRICORN (MAKARA)

DEC 22 – JAN 20

Emphasis this month is on reflection, contemplation, and meditation. This is a perfect time for spring cleaning the home or office, indeed any environment in which you spend time in on a regular basis. Try some decluttering and cleansing techniques. Bowls of salt, essential oil spritzers and flower should be on top of your list.

Enjoy the energetic vibrational scents that are created and the emotional uplift that arrives. You will be inspired and motivated to complete existing projects and tasks. Good news also arrives encouraging you to start up a new business or social project which is in alignment with your heart's desires.

PISCES (MINA)

FEB 20 – MAR 20

An auspicious start to the month brings with it welcome and good news. You can embrace the joys that life offers you and be grateful for everything that currently exists in your life. This in turn will help you attract better things. Treat yourself to some pampering delights as you deserve it.

Establish some boundaries with anyone that is constantly leaving you feeling drained and tired. Incorporate plenty of flower and aromatherapy this month. Fresh flowers and plants placed around the home/office will bring a new zest and energetic vibration which in turn will inspire you to start new projects and ventures. The month closes on a positively good vibrational note.

FIND
YOUR BLISS

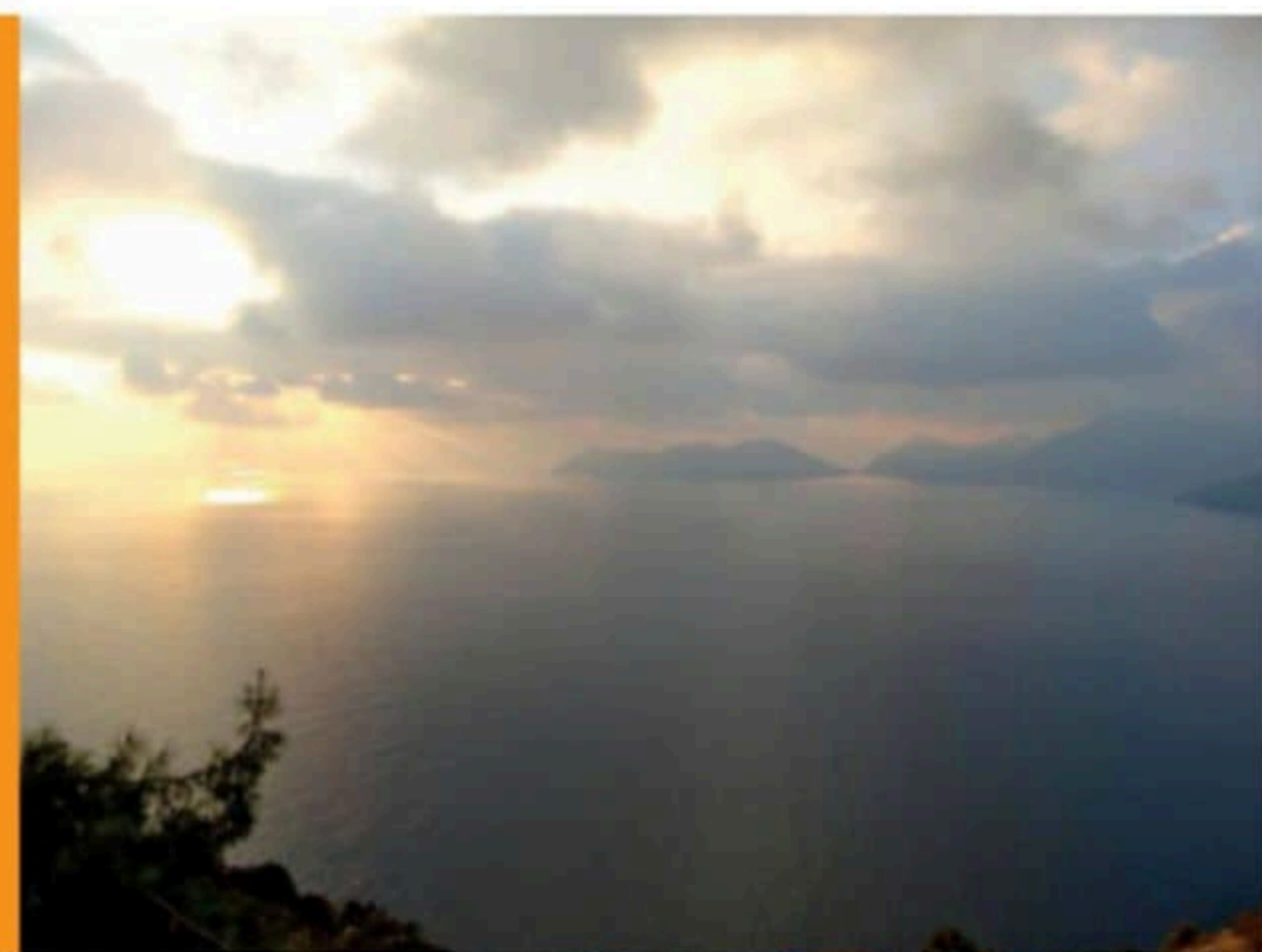


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VITAMINIS

MINI. MIGHTY. TASTY.

NO REFRIGERATION
REQUIRED

NO STRONG FLAVORS –
SMOOTH AND TASTY

NO ADDED
SUGAR

EASY TO SWALLOW
AND DIGEST

As much
zinc as
4 avocados



As much
magnesium
as 5 cups of
spinach



Delicious
**orange
pineapple**
flavor



As much
vitamin C
as 3 oranges



100%
vegan



GLUTEN
Free



VITAMIN
RICH



ALLERGY
FRIENDLY



RECYCLE



non-
GMO