

# YOUR YOGA SPACE

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## HATHA • VINYASA • JOURNEY

### **BENEFITS OF YOGA**

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### **The Many Benefits of Yoga:**

Yoga has amazing benefits for the body, mind and spirit. The lists of benefits can be found all over the internet. The best way to see how yoga can benefit you is to try a few classes. Doing two or more classes a week has a huge impact on your life. The exact benefits you will find will be unique to you.

There are many physical and mental benefits. Yoga can assist with many ailments and conditions. Most of all, it has a subtle change on the way we live our lives, improving our experience of our humanity. The changes you see in you life may be subtle at first but they are fundamental to creating a meaningful and enriched life.

### **Personal accounts:**

“Doing yoga daily makes me feel happy! I work in a very stressful environment which has often resulted in insomnia, a volatile temper and frequent illness. Since I started doing yoga, I have not had any problems sleeping and can handle stressful situations in a much more professional and constructive manner. In addition, I have also not been sick since starting yoga.” – Rachelle Brasler

“The best gift I’ve ever given myself. Calming, invigorating and self-revealing”  
– Maggie Benedict

“Yoga has been amazing, I always feel so light after a class, no matter how terrible I’m feeling it always lifts me up and gives me a boost.” – Lisa Vos

“While I have always exercised, I didn’t feel as fit and healthy – or drop a dress size! – until I started yoga with Cathy. I wish I had time to do it every day!” – Sarah Harrison

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"I'm pleasantly surprised at how much I'm enjoying Yoga. It has been wonderful in building up my body's strength after a serious car accident. My mind has also become quieter." – Geraldine McMahon

"I always feel rejuvenated after a class. Yoga has really helped me physically (I feel much stronger) and mentally (I have learnt how to focus and how to relax)." – Glynis van Dyk

"I started yoga almost 30 years ago and it has become an essential and integral part of my life. I have found that, by taking 2 classes a week, I have been able to maintain a strong and supple body as well as a general sense of well-being. My colleagues regularly comment on my calm and relaxed demeanor and when I am unable to attend my yoga classes I become more susceptible to stress. Yoga has been an important instrument in shaping who I am and how I view the world." – Fiona Rogers

"As an absolute novice...My flexibility has improved and for the first time in my life I actually look forward to doing exercise! I have also benefited from the relaxation and breathing techniques that I have learnt." – Michelle Paul

"Yoga helps me to manage my chronic illness by giving me time to reflect, de-stress and develop a sense of peace and strength in my body." – Debbie Greensmith

"Yoga is a great compliment to any physical and muscle building activity such as running and weight training. Yoga poses and stretches prepare, muscles and joints for the strain of weight bearing exercise. Yoga also keeps me supple as weight bearing exercise can lead to muscle contraction without suitable stretching." – Andrew Logue

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**Just Another Yoga Story**  
**by Lorraine Burger**  
**Your Yoga Space Yogini**



A few weeks ago I was asked to write something; just a couple of lines explaining why I find regular yoga practice beneficial. I haven't been able to save any of the WORD documents yet because every time I start I sound like one of those "yoga saved my life" articles I used to scoff at.

I don't even know why I started, just walked into Diskem one day for Buscopan (spastic freaking colon) and a migraine kit (just knock me out, please) and saw a purple mat and some weights. I skipped the weights but got the mat (and the Buscopan and the migraine kit and some dried goji berries because someone said they're good for you) and didn't quite know what to do next.

For weeks I stared at a Yoga Studio's sign across the road from my (obviously) stressful workplace. Then one evening, prompted by severe boredom and a feeling that I'd rather explode than spend one more second in my own head, I went in. Afraid of making a fool of myself, loathing the idea of having to engage with people I

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don't know and extremely grateful that the space wasn't well lit... (To read the complete story go to: <http://yogaforahealthyworld.blogspot.com/2011/03/just-another-yoga-story-by-lorraine.html> )

...The benefits are smaller than that, more intimate. Yoga has given me something to look forward to. Inexplicably it's the one thing I always feel like doing and my mat is the one place I can trust. Of course my practice has made me physically much stronger and it has given me a new respect, awe even, for my body, for the astounding things (physically and mentally) I can do and also for the things I can't do (yet).

The other day I was looking at an older woman in my class and hoped that when I'm her age I would still enjoy my practice as much as she does hers and I found myself happily time travelling to a bright yellow day when I'm 58. Recently a friend told me I look different. "Different?" I asked. "Better" she answered and luridly alluded to romance. "No" I said, "it's yoga". "Oh God" she said, "I know" I answered and we left it at that.

What I wanted to say but didn't was that my ongoing practice has given me something to aspire to. The snail like progress in certain postures has made me more determined, less likely to give up. The unexpected triumphs in other postures have left me giddy and silly and excited. It has made me excited about the one thing I thought was worth nothing. Me.

So maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I AM a better person for it. And that's my soppy "yoga saved my life" story and I can scoff at it all I want (and I do) but it's true. As I come onto all fours and exhale into the first down dog of the day I enjoy the relief of the

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stretch, the sudden rush of blood to my head and I smile to myself as I contemplate:  
who am I to belittle a life well saved, anyway.

Namaste

### **I TRIED EVERYTHING AND THEN I FOUND YOGA** **By Ria Engelbrecht, Your Yoga Space Yogini**



I've been battling with continuous back and neck pain for the past ten years. Though often disheartened, I was determined to find a solution.

In June 2010 a doctor at a wholeness centre pinpointed the problem: fibromyalgia. For years this condition was diagnosed as 'all in the mind', but luckily a few doctors and chiropractors did research and started treating patients accordingly. My 'wholeness' doctor prescribed a combination of supplements, a few lifestyle adjustments and YOGA.

And how my life changed slowly but surely. I met Cathy and, at the age of 53, started with yoga for the very first time. At first I really battled - with focusing, creating 'pictures' in my mind, unknown postures, a whole new concept - but I kept on going.

Being single (I got divorced 5 years ago), having a fulltime (wonderful) job, handling a household, garden, staff, social life, etc., can build up stress levels. I'm also relocating mid-April and my life is more hectic than ever.

I believe that, without yoga, I wouldn't have been able to manage everything and stay sane! I always look forward to my two yoga sessions every week. It keeps me focused, enables me to better handle difficult situations and stress, breath properly, roar like a brave lion and fly free like an eagle.

The purple yoga mat (bought from Cathy) is my comfort blanket. When I'm on it, I close my eyes, breath deeply, escape to green pastures in a wood, sun peeping through high treetops...and I can here Cathy's calm, strong voice ... JRia

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### YOGA TO ENHANCE SPORTS PERFORMANCE:

Most sports repeatedly use some muscles while neglecting others, in time the body moves out of balance so that some muscles are weakened and others strengthened or overworked and strained. Yoga is the ideal method for bringing the body back into balance.



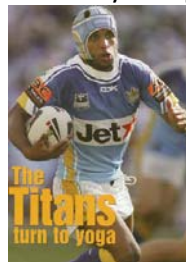
It can assist in the prevention and healing of injuries and the strengthening of weak muscles. Yoga strengthens your core muscles which are essential for all sports. Yoga postures also increase range of motion in joints and muscles. Yoga can provide many of the benefits that sports massage can and more, as it stretches muscles, releasing tension and reducing build up of lactic acid.

Holding the yoga postures builds stamina required in many sports, while the breathing exercises provide coping mechanisms for physically demanding circumstances.

Yoga also plays a mental role in sports performance as it enhances focus and concentration, relieves performance anxiety and improves self esteem.

Practising yoga as a team, especially when partner yoga techniques are incorporated into sessions, can be a great team building activity. Providing a safe space for non-competitive and supportive activities that build trust and communication.

Whether you are a weekend golfer or a professional soccer player, yoga may be what you need to enhance your sporting experience.



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