

YogaToday



Spring 2017 : Volume 20

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MARCH 16-18
2018

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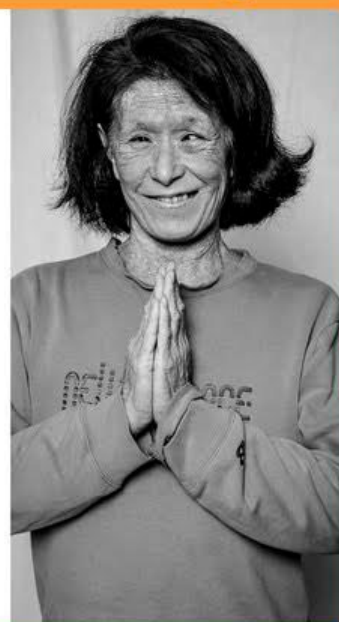
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LEANNE DAVIS

YOGA AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND PRESIDENT

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF YOGA TODAY.

IN KEEPING WITH THE SEASON, YOGA AUSTRALIA IS BLOSSOMING WITH GROWTH AND FRESH ENERGY.

Excitement is building as the planning for the March 16-18, 2018 "The Modern World of Yoga" conference gains momentum. This conference promises to be a timely reflection and education on both the traditional teachings of yoga based on its ancient texts as well as all that is new in yoga from current innovations and research. It's the perfect way to secure your Continuing Professional Development for the year while learning from esteemed teachers such as Michael Lee, Michael de Manincor, Leigh Blashki and others.

Never before in the history of humankind have so many people practised yoga in so many diverse ways. This conference will offer an opportunity for teachers to feel secure about what it means to be a yoga professional at this time. Now is a great time to take advantage of the early bird registration that has opened and continues until November 22nd.

Thank you to our strong and creative Conference Committee volunteers under the leadership of

Gabrielle Boswell and Ann Marie Johnston who are giving up their time to bring this event to fruition. Read more about the Conference and Conference Committee here: yogaaustraliaconference.org.au/.

The past few months have seen changes and developments in the office. Shyamala will give you a full update in the CEO report but I would like to acknowledge the contribution that Phoebe Jamieson has made to Yoga Australia. Phoebe has been Yoga Australia's Marketing and Communications Manager for the past 2 and a bit years but in August left to pursue another opportunity. On behalf of the office staff, committees and members, I would like to thank Phoebe for the way she modernised the presence of Yoga Australia and opened the Association to a stronger professional profile. Phoebe's invaluable perspective and work led to the success and dynamism of the past two conferences and I personally learned a great deal from her in the areas of business of marketing and technology. We wish you every success in your new role Phoebe.

As always thank you to Shyamala who has maintained her state of Yoga and provided her usual steady guidance of members, staff and volunteers through the office transitions.

In July, the Executive Committee and CEO met at the Yoga Australia office in Melbourne for two days of meetings to review the strategic plan for Yoga Australia for the

next year and beyond. These few days were comprised of some very intense and creative brainstorming by the team. The goal is to ensure that Yoga Australia upholds the standards and advocacy for yoga professionals in the most beneficial way for our members and the broader community. Thank you to the members of the Executive Committee for volunteering your time to this weekend. We are very confident that Yoga Australia is growing and keeping abreast with the needs of the profession and its members. The outcome of the strategic plan is reflected in the work done by the Working Group volunteers. Please take some time to read the Working Group reports to understand the progress that the Association is making in various areas.

Many thanks to the growing team of volunteers on the National Management Committee, State Management Committees and co-opted volunteers who help offer their skills and expertise to contribute to the Working Groups. It is also through the work of many of these volunteers in organising and attending state events that the results of the projects can be shared with members.

YOGA AUSTRALIA INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

I mentioned in the Winter President's report that I was about to attend the Symposium of Yoga Therapy and Research (SYTAR)

offered by the International Association of Yoga Therapy in California, USA. I am pleased to say it was an inspiring and fruitful time and has flowed into new worldwide collegial relationships and initiatives that benefit Yoga Australia members and Registered Yoga Australia yoga therapists.

A most pleasing outcome from SYTAR was the chance to encourage an Australian yogi living in the U.S, Michael Lee, to come home for a visit and present at our conference. We are also talking to other internationally known yoga therapists about providing post graduate opportunities to our members.

I am honoured to announce that while I was at SYTAR I met with the IAYT Certification Committee and I have been selected to serve on the committee for a 3 year term.

IAYT was founded in 1989 and has been accrediting Yoga Therapy training schools, using education guidelines closely aligned to Yoga Australia, since 2014. In 2016 IAYT commenced certification of individual yoga therapists. As of 2017, IAYT has over 4,000 individual members from over 50 countries, and over 175 member schools. There are also 27 IAYT accredited yoga therapy training programs, with over 20 under review.

This appointment keeps Yoga Australia linked to the global

yoga community through monthly phone meetings and two face-to-face meetings in the USA each year including attendance at SYTAR. I am delighted to serve with this dedicated team that is committed to ensuring high standards of educational guidelines, furthering the role of yoga therapy in mainstream healthcare and education and increasing the accessibility of yoga therapy to a broader reach of the public.

I would also like to acknowledge that in serving on the Certification Committee I will be continuing the close relationship between the International Yoga Therapy Association and Yoga Australia that was established by former Yoga Australia President, Leigh Blashki. Leigh has served on the IAYT Standards Committee, the Accreditation Committee and will step down from his role on the Certification Committee in October. Thank you, Leigh for your efforts in the growth of yoga therapy worldwide and representing Australia in the international yoga community for the past decades.

GRANDPARENTING OF YOGA THERAPISTS

IAYT closed applications for grandparenting pathways for yoga therapists in June 2017. Please know that Yoga Australia will also conclude the option of a grandparenting pathway after December 30, 2017. After this time to

become a registered Yoga Australia Yoga therapist you will be required to complete Yoga Therapy training that meets with Yoga Australia's current education standards for Yoga Therapist. These standards can be found on our website. If you have any questions about this please contact me on leanne@yogaaustralia.org.au.

Thank you all for taking the time to attend the many gatherings for Yoga Australia over the winter, for your communication with the office and committees and for taking the time to keep up to date by reading this publication. I am sure you will enjoy reading the Spring edition of Yoga Today.

Leanne Davis ॐ



CEO's REPORT

SHYAMALA BENAKOVIC

YOGA AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND CEO

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new". - Socrates

Spring is a time for new beginnings. For more than two years now, Yoga Australia has not had many changes to its office team but this quarter we have some happy and sad news to share.

CHANGES TO OFFICE STAFF

If you have been following our monthly newsletters, you will know that our Marketing and Communications Manager, Phoebe Jamieson left us in August to pursue another opportunity. We were all sad to see her go but we are sure that she will continue to be a strong advocate of Yoga Australia. Phoebe has been the driving force in significantly enhancing the professionalism of the Association and educating the wider community on the importance of a qualified yoga teacher. She worked hard to increase the profile of Yoga Australia registered teachers with her "You are in Safe Hands" campaign and she implemented many member benefits to ensure our members were supported. We will miss Phoebe but once a friend of Yoga Australia, always a friend of Yoga Australia.

During the month of September, we will say goodbye to Jackie Rogers, our Office Manager. The smooth running of the Yoga Australia office is a credit to Jackie's diligent management of all our office systems and processes. In her two

years with Yoga Australia she has made significant improvements to membership, financial and other operational processes. Jackie departs on Maternity Leave at the end of September and we hope to see her back in the office in 2018.

And the happy news is that we now have a new office team bringing with them fresh ideas and strategies to continue to support our membership. Our current office team consists of:

1. Kate Beath – our new Marketing and Communications manager who takes the reigns from Phoebe. Kate comes to us with qualifications and experience in marketing, communication, PR and Project Management. She also has a Masters in Human Nutrition.
2. Amy Witnish – our Admin and Volunteer Manager who looks after our accounts and supports our volunteers. Amy has a strong background in the health and fitness industry and comes to us with nine years experience in administration, operations and business development.
3. Nidhi Chopra – our Admin Assistant who works with Amy to manage our accounts and will take on some of the office management tasks that Jackie was looking after. Nidhi's experience in IT and Project Management in varied industries and economies will bring a fresh perspective to Yoga Australia. She is a vibrant and responsible person

with exceptional organisational skills.

4. Valeria Ryavkina – Most of you will know Val, who has been with Yoga Australia for two years. Val is our Digital Marketing Assistant who looks after communications to members, subscribers and the wider community. She is our social media champion and ensures all our members are kept informed.

5. Shamiso Muradzikwa – our new Client Relationship and Sales Executive. Shamiso comes to us with significant experience in customer relationships and providing customised solution to customers. She will work well with Yoga Australia teachers and training providers to promote their classes, workshops and training.

6. Nathan Collis – our Marketing Assistant who will work alongside Kate in all our marketing activities. Nathan's main focus will be Marketing, Communications and Events for Yoga New Zealand as well as the social platforms that keep Yoga New Zealand members up to date on all things yoga.

Please welcome our office team and know that they have your best interest in their minds and hearts. Over time we will build on the new ideas our team bring to the running of the Association and implementation of its strategic objectives. All our staff work part-time so please take note of their office hours on the Yoga Australia

website. A reminder that our offices are open Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm.

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VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

In other news, our Executive Committee, Management Committee and Working Group members have been working hard to form strategic partnerships, maintain international connections and address the terms of their respective working groups. Please take time to read the working group reports and contact the respective Chairs if you have specific questions or ideas.

Our State Committees are continuing to engage with members. This being the last quarter of the year, most States will be hosting their final events. Please check out the Yoga Australia website for Yoga Australia hosted events in your respective State. A reminder that our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in Adelaide this year on Sunday 12th November. Please mark this event in your diaries if you will be in Adelaide during this time. Invitations to the AGM and relevant notices will be sent during the first week in October to all our members.

The continued growth and accomplishment of Yoga Australia is largely due to our dedicated and committed group of volunteers. From the Executive Committee to the Working Groups to the State and Regional Committees, we have a team who invest a lot of their personal time and energy to ensure that our vision and objectives are met and our members are fully supported. As we approach the final quarter of the year and our AGM, I would like to personally acknowledge the work of all our volunteers. Thank you to a great team of dedicated and skilled yoga professionals who work hard to ensure that the yoga industry remains true to the practice of yoga.

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MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

In April 2017, we conducted a Membership Survey. Thank you to

all those members who provided valuable feedback. In summary, here is what you told us:

YOGA AUSTRALIA SERVICES THAT YOU RATE HIGHLY:

- 1. Yoga Today Magazine
- 2. Office and Member Support
- 3. Application and renewal process
- 4. Annual Conference
- 5. Professional Support
- 6. CPD Opportunities
- 7. Website
- 8. Personal profile page
- 9. Networking
- 10. State Events

TOP FIVE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- 1. Continuing Professional Development Opportunities
- 2. Your Yoga Australia Profile page
- 3. Yoga Australia website
- 4. Industry Advocacy
- 5. Public Liability Insurance and Health Insurance Rebates

BUSINESS OF YOGA, TOP FIVE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1. Having access to legal and business compliance advice and support
- 2. Developing and executing marketing strategy
- 3. Business development ideas and execution
- 4. Managing and implementing technology
- 5. Networking

In addition to the above in relation to Business of Yoga, most of you have told us that you are confident in the running of your yoga studios and businesses.

WHAT YOU NEED FROM YOGA AUSTRALIA TO SUPPORT YOU AS YOGA TEACHERS:

- 1. More marketing and promotion of registered yoga teachers and

teacher training courses.

2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for regional members.

3. Partnerships with organisations to promote corporate yoga.

4. Business networking events.

5. High education standards.

6. Streamlining processes for membership upgrades.

You will see from the working group reports that we are working on addressing your priorities and needs. In particular we have:

1. The Yoga Therapy and Training working group continuing to maintain high education standards and provide many education opportunities for yoga professionals;

2. The Peak Body working group working on statements and strategies to start advocating to relevant stakeholders;

3. The Yoga for Children working group providing tools and education opportunities for teachers interested in this area;

4. The Health Funds working group recruiting more health funds to pay rebates for yoga;

5. The Industry Intelligence working group providing important analysis and summary of the Roy Morgan yoga participation report; and

6. The Business of Yoga working group are working on identifying resources and tools to support yoga professionals in the running of their studios and businesses.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Yoga Today, pulled together by our new Marketing and Communications Manager, Kate Beath and Marketing Assistant Nathan Collis with the help of all our volunteers who have provided their reports, and members who have very kindly provided great articles that address the current successes and challenges in the yoga industry.

Namaste,

Shyamala Benakovic ॐ

YOGA AUSTRALIA WORKING GROUP REPORTS

BUSINESS OF YOGA WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Business of Yoga Working Group has been busy compiling a Business Basics Listing - we're scouring free resources we can point members to that provide business directions we think are useful. We're assessing educational opportunities so that members can get help addressing the business issues they face when it comes to marketing and business development, as identified as key target areas drawn from our member survey.

We're exploring HR advice for members and examining ways of compiling responses and business resources, as well as best delivery options for members to have their business questions answered.

Lyn Romeo has come across to this working group, presenting her Part 3 Discussion Point on the under-representation in yoga participation in the Roy Morgan survey. To read further, please see page 14 in this issue of Yoga Today.

For more information:

tamara@yogaaustralia.org.au

INDUSTRY INTELLIGENCE WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Industry Intelligence Working Group has undergone a change in committee and is revising its terms of reference to now focus only on scientific evidence based research for yoga. This working group will accordingly now be called Research.

Changes to this group include moving all industry data work, driven by the work of Lynn Romeo through the Roy Morgan report and member survey analysis, across to the Business of Yoga Working Group going forward.

More to follow regarding pushing ahead with Industry Intelligence and Research activities into the future

now these changes are in place. Stay tuned!

For more information: tamara@yogaaustralia.org.au

PEAK BODY WORKING GROUP REPORT

This quarter the Peak Body Working Group has been working hard on a stakeholder mapping analysis. We are also in the process of refining the Peak Body Statement. In November we will be meeting further to talk through each of the Peak Body documents as a Working Group and will keep members informed of our progress.

Both the new Governance Framework and the Advocacy Statement are now available. Please visit online and take a look: yogaaustralia.org.au/governance-statement/ and yogaaustralia.org.au/advocacy-statement/

We have now developed a media statement on NDIS and have written to the NDIS CEO lobbying for yoga and yoga therapy categories and ways of streamlining processes with the NDIS.

We have successfully updated the terms of reference for 2017-18 for this working group and are considering changes to the Yoga Australia Vision Statement. You can find the current Vision Statement online here: <https://www.yogaaustralia.org.au/about-us/about-yoga-australia/>

For more information:

robyn@yogaaustralia.org.au

YOGA FOR CHILDREN WORKING GROUP REPORT

We are pleased to report we have now successfully developed and uploaded all nine Yoga for Children Fact Sheets to the Yoga Australia website. Visit yogaaustralia.org.au, go to About Us, click Children's Yoga and download from there: [https://](https://www.yogaaustralia.org.au/post-graduate-qualifications-2/childrens-yoga-teacher/)

www.yogaaustralia.org.au/post-graduate-qualifications-2/childrens-yoga-teacher/. These Fact Sheets are invaluable resources and essential reading and support for all Children's Yoga teachers. We encourage everyone to download and make use of them.

Fact Sheet 1: Research on Children's Yoga

Fact Sheet 2: Duty of Care

Fact Sheet 3: Required Documentation

Fact Sheet 4: Top Things to Know

Fact Sheet 5: Teaching Yoga to Children with Special Needs

Fact Sheet 6: Classroom Management

Fact Sheet 7: How to Approach and Market to Schools

Fact Sheet 8: Development of Programs Linked to Curriculum

Fact Sheet 9: Understanding the Australian Curriculum

This quarter the Yoga for Children Working Group have successfully refined the terms of reference for 2017-2018, and we have also made the CPD (Continuing Professional Development) documents for Children's Yoga available on the Yoga Australia website, listed just above the new Fact Sheets online.

In September, a digital Yoga for Children's Forum was held, free to all registered Children's Yoga teachers, using the platform Zoom. This was our second digital forum this year, with 20 teachers registering. During the forum we discussed ways of linking yoga programs to the Australian curriculum and outlined the new fact sheets, and those attending loved this forum. We plan on continuing quarterly digital forums in 2018 that provide information to members and keep children's yoga teachers up-to-date. We encourage you as members to take part... Stay tuned!

We have now completed the grant funding activities that were available

to us through VicHealth. This grant has been amazing to help refine the digital product we're developing and we're on the hunt for more grants. We're looking to broaden grant funding opportunities outside of Victoria into other states.

This working group has been busy working on a new Communications Strategy as well as updating the website, identifying new fact sheet topics and new grant funding opportunities overall in all jurisdictions.

Please look out for announcements in the next issue for our 2018 Forum dates!

Keep abreast on Children's Yoga at yogaaustralia.org.au/post-graduate-qualifications-2/childrens-yoga-teacher.

For more information:
robyn@yogaaustralia.org.au

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HEALTH FUNDS WORKING GROUP REPORT

This working group aims to strengthen relationships with yoga friendly health funds and educate them about the yoga industry. We also aim to work with non-yoga friendly funds and encourage them to revisit their policy on providing rebates for yoga.

A direct benefit of being a Yoga Australia member is offering clients the opportunity to receive rebates from yoga friendly health funds. We are so pleased to announce that our new updates on the reviewed health funds table now include yoga friendly health funds, and removes all health funds that no longer provide a rebate. The new table includes the latest updates and changes to existing health fund information. See page 16 for a full list of the participating health funds. A downloadable printable table is now available on the website at:

yogaaustralia.org.au/health-funds.

We are excited to report that the

list of yoga friendly funds has dramatically increased since the table was first developed. We previously had 15, and now have 26 yoga friendly funds.

Please note that BUPA has decided to no longer provide rebates for yoga and other physical activities due to administration burdens.

We encourage all members to print this table and display it at their studio to help communicate to clients the opportunity to access rebates from yoga friendly health funds. We encourage you as members to share the link to the table on your Facebook pages. yogaaustralia.org.au/health-funds/

We are currently working on inducting more health funds, creating a portfolio/business case for health funds, and increasing communications about the role of Yoga Australia within the health sector. We're working on collaborating with primary health networks.

We like to thank Patti McBain and Liama Aesha McConachie who have stepped down from the Health Funds Working Group. Thank you Patti and Liama for all your fantastic work over the year in helping to form the direction of the working group and updating the yoga friendly health funds table on the Yoga Australia website.

For more information:
katie@yogaaustralia.org.au

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TEACHER TRAINING WORKING GROUP REPORT

We've had a busy quarter in the Teacher Training Working Group. Our terms of reference have been updated. We're currently in the process of emailing letters to all training providers regarding our plans to conduct desktop audits. In the coming months, we'll be contacting all training providers who have registered courses with us to see where they may need assistance conforming to the Yoga Australia

style guide when promoting their courses. This will be done prior to the desktop audit process for all registered teacher training courses. Registered Training providers are welcome to have a look at the style guides here:

yogaaustralia.org.au/yoga-resources/

We've put together a competency document that recognises prior learning and formalises all prior learning that meets our educational standards. This document will be invaluable for trainers to assess competencies and award recognition for prior learning in students coming into their courses.

We've prepared registration guidelines to approve Professional Development courses. These are being prepared for implementation and once this is ready, we will communicate the guidelines to all our members and training providers.

We're also in the process of communicating with all teacher training schools to see how we can best support each school and their students on their learning journeys. We aim to visit all training providers, meet with the students and actively engage members as we increase our communication strategies. We aim to talk with students coming into the yoga teacher training courses about becoming associate members of Yoga Australia, and then about becoming Level 1 teachers, and discussing how Yoga Australia can best support them.

For more information:
leanne@yogaaustralia.org.au

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YOGA THERAPY WORKING GROUP REPORT

We've been busy with communications this quarter in the Yoga Therapy Working Group. We've now updated the terms of reference

and have extended the group to welcome additional members.

We've been working to book dates for both the Community of Practice and Yoga Therapy Presentations for 2018, to be announced in the Summer 2018 issue of Yoga Today. Please stay tuned! These presentations provide support and benefits to your registration as a Yoga Therapist.

Initially, Yoga Australia began registering Yoga Therapists in Dec 2016, accepting an old standard during this first phase 12 month period. As of December 2017, Yoga Australia concludes the grandparenting pathway - ceasing to use the old standard - and officially replaces it with Yoga Australia's Educational Standards across the board, including a requirement of 650 hours of yoga therapy training. Please see our Yoga Therapy Educational Standards available on the website: yogaaustralia.org.au/post-graduate-qualifications-2/registered-yoga-therapist/

This working group is supporting our registered yoga therapy training providers by actively communicating with trainers that are not registered as yoga therapy courses to discuss their terminology in their advertising.

We have also been liaising with the Australasian Integrative Medicine Association (AIMA). We are so pleased to be developing a relationship with the AIMA, to work with professionals in the integrative medical community who choose registered yoga therapists. Thanks to Kym McDonald who travelled from Newcastle to Sydney to represent Yoga Australia at the AIMA event and build relationships and communications for our members with the AIMA.

In other exciting news, as mentioned in the President's report, Leanne has been selected to serve on the Certification Committee of International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) for a three year term. This is significant for Yoga Australia Yoga Therapists, as her involvement links us internationally to the global yoga community,

and helps build international support and develops international standards for our members. Leanne will be joining the monthly meetings with the IAYT and attending in person twice yearly. It is a tremendous honour to be taking up the legacy and continue building on from the relationships former Yoga Australia President, Leigh Blashki established in his presidential role and while serving on the Certification Committee himself. Thank you Leigh for representing Australia in the international yoga community for the past decades.

For more information:

leanne@yogaaustralia.org.au

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POP-UP REPORT

What is Pop Up?

Yoga Australia's Pop Up Yoga Studio in Melbourne gives recently graduated yoga teachers, the opportunity to take a 10 week teaching stint, often at the beginning of their teaching pathway, to consolidate new learning. Pop Up Studio offers an affordable, intimate and rewarding yoga experience for the yoga teacher and general public, and is a pay-as-you-feel yoga studio. Customers give what they feel the class is worth, and have the opportunity to contribute towards a world where respect, generosity, trust, equality, freedom and kindness rule.

In this issue of Yoga Today, we hear from two Yoga Australia members, Amy Goodwin and Lou Desroches, about their Pop Up teaching experiences.

Amy Goodwin, what did you want to gain from this experience of teaching at Pop Up, and did you manage to achieve your goals?

"I had wanted to do yoga teacher training for years, both for professional development and to study something I loved. The thought of teaching yoga made me extremely nervous as I'd always struggled with public speaking. My training with the Australian Yoga Academy required us to teach at a couple of Karma Classes

throughout the year and it was a great starting point. I really wanted to delve further into this, to find my voice and confidence and to see if teaching yoga was something I really wanted to do. Teaching two classes a week, for three months at the Pop-Up Studio really gave me this opportunity. And as suspected, once my nerves subsided, I did fall madly in love with teaching!"

What did you learn?

"I think the biggest thing I learnt was that once I got out of my head, words just flowed. For me it was about letting go and trusting that I have knowledge inside me. I also learnt to be flexible with my class plans, and to let go if what I planned wasn't suitable for the people who turned up to class. One time I planned a dynamic vinyasa class and only one person arrived, and they had never practised yoga before. So instead, we spent the hour going through the basics at a much slower pace, in a one-on-one environment."

Is there any advice you'd like to give to recent teacher training graduates?

"Take time to think and plan your classes and make them meaningful to you. Keep up your own practice, and at the same time, attend your favourite teacher's classes. I found I was most motivated to teach when I was doing this. Try not to be disheartened if no one shows up - it's a nice opportunity for self-practice and to test out a new class plan."

Lou Desroches

"I have been lucky enough to be teaching at the Pop-Up Studio at Yoga Australia on Chapel Street for 10 weeks and it has been amazing. When you become a yoga teacher, I think it is very hard to start your own teaching journey. Often you have a lot of doubt and although you feel full of great knowledge, there is nothing better than experience. Teaching opportunities get you more confident and help you find your own self and style.

Starting my journey with the opportunity to run classes on donation twice a week in such a

beautiful space was truly a blessing. The team at Yoga Australia provide a safe and supportive environment, so one can find their own path as a yoga teacher. It is extremely rewarding to be a part of a project that offers yoga to a larger part of the community that is donation based.

I have grown so much as a teacher, refined my skills and got a lot more confident, met amazing people, and found who I wanted to be as a teacher and what I could offer. I can't imagine a better way to start my yoga journey than this.

Thank you, Yoga Australia, and thanks to all my students that came along".

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CONFERENCE

The Yoga Australia Conference Committee is excited to announce that that our program for the March 2018 Yoga Australia Conference - The Modern World of Yoga, March 16-18, is in the process of being finalised. The event will be held at the Crown Towers and a block of rooms have been organised at a reduced rate.

We were delighted to have both national & international speakers submit to be key note presenters at our conference and we're thrilled to announce that Michael Lee (The Founder of Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy, a leading edge yoga based modality in body-mind therapy) and Nikki Myers (Yoga of 12 Step Recovery - addressing the physical, mental and spiritual disease of addiction) both from the US will be joining in with Yoga Australia past presidents, Leigh Blashki (Founder of Australian Institute Yoga Therapy, Yoga Australia Senior Registered Teacher and Certified Registered Yoga Therapist with the IAYT) and Michael de Manincor (Director of the Yoga Institute and Founder & Executive Director of the Yoga Foundation).

We are also, this year, excited to advise that we're extending the conference to include a half day of presentations on Friday afternoon. The conference will kick off at 12:00

with your choice to attend one of three CICs (Common Interest Communities). This concept has been borrowed from the IAYT's Symposium of Yoga Therapy & Research - and proves to be a fun and engaging way to learn, connect and network with fellow colleagues with similar interests.

There will be two panel presentations throughout the conference, sure to draw strong attendance. 'Hands on Assisting, to adjust or not' and 'Marketing in the Modern Age'.

Early bird tickets have gone on sale and will be available at their reduced rate until November 22nd (and it's not too late to join in as a sponsor for this event, either!). We hope to see you there!

Ann Marie Johnston & Gabrielle Boswell

YOGA AUSTRALIA COMMITTEE REPORTS

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VIC REPORT

In July, Yoga Australia had the pleasure of hosting a Yoga for Diabetes with Rachel Zinman workshop at Prana House. Rachel shared significant knowledge and practices for members so that teachers can understand and help students in yoga who may be suffering from diabetes. The workshop included discussions around understanding diabetes, an autoimmune disorder and the different types of diabetes and warning signs. Rachel presented on how yoga helps increase sensitivity to insulin, the correlation between stress and disease management, how yoga can help manage blood glucose levels and work with muscles to help increase the uptake of glucose, taking pressure off the pancreas. Rachel highlighted the many benefits of yoga for diabetes, including increases in circulation, calming of the central nervous system, and what to consider for students. This was a wonderful workshop, and like all our state

events, was free for members.

Attending workshops like this provides fantastic educational opportunities and the chance to participate in discussions with fellow teachers while earning your CPD points.

We have a few presentations already planned for 2018 and will be announcing those shortly. Please mark our events in your diary and get along to workshops on offer through your membership with Yoga Australia. Next up in October is:

The Bendigo Yoga Teachers Meeting and Mudra Workshop with Gina Macauley

Sunday 22 October 2017

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

At Yoga Hara

1A King Street

Bendigo, VIC 3550

If you have a venue/studio that you feel would be suitable for a Yoga Australia event, and/or would like to offer a workshop, please email: gabrielle@yogaaustralia.org.au

Don't forget, the 2018 Yoga Australia Conference will be held in Melbourne on 16-18 March 2018. Please mark this out in your diaries now, so you can come and be with your peers and fellow members at this wonderful conference event.

For more information:

vic@yogaaustralia.org.au

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SA REPORT

Thank you to all who attended the International Day of Yoga in Adelaide and for providing feedback on this fantastic day-long event featuring different styles of yoga. We would like to extend acknowledgements to Kate O'Leary-Wroblewski and Jacqui Teusner for their efforts in putting

on the International Day of Yoga event.

Thank you all who came along to the South Australia State meeting held this quarter and were actively involved. We value our members so much and the more participation we receive from members the more you will feel connected to Yoga Australia and the support we give.

We are excited to be organising the Yoga Australia Annual General Meeting here in Adelaide on 12 November 2017. We hope to see as many of you there as we can. We'll be sharing reports on the work of the committee and conducting elections for positions on the Executive and National Management Committee. The event includes a CPD presentation. Hope to see you in November!

For more information:

sa@yogaaustralia.org.au

WA REPORT

Our final CPD event for the year will be held on 4th November at Off the Wall Yoga studio, East Fremantle. This event is about Moving into Stillness - Immersing Yourself into Dru Yoga. Aileen Emery is your presenter for this one and Aileen is a Dru Yoga Teacher Trainer in WA.

The half day workshop will be a great experience to come and relax, experience Dru's unique Energy Block Release Sequence, discover powerful techniques for inner clarity and calm, and simply recharge while being in great company of other Yoga Australia members. Dru yoga is a graceful yet potent style of yoga, combining dynamic, flowing movements with directed breathing and visualisations. Dru offers simple techniques to help you navigate everyday challenges with calm, clarity and ease. If you've never experienced Dru Yoga before, and especially if you have, you won't want to miss the free Yoga Australia event and collect your CPD points in November. As always, don't forget to book in!

For more information:

wa@yogaaustralia.org.au

ACT REPORT

The Yoga Australia ACT 2017 annual Pot Luck meeting will be held on Saturday 21 October 2017 at 11 Couvreur St, Garran between 6:15 pm and 9:00 pm. Mr Darryl Alexander will be presenting at this event. You might remember Darryl from 2015, as he led the first ACT International Yoga Day presentation that year. Soon after that Darryl experienced a near death accident and major head injury while attending a yoga training centre in India. He's still in the process of recovery and recuperation, yet he'll be with us to share how yoga has been of enormous benefit to him in the face of the unexpected, and how yoga is helping him move forward with life. He'll also be talking about his experiences growing up with yoga and how he became a yoga teacher in the first place. We would love to see as many Yoga Australia members at this event as we can.

We would like to take the opportunity in this issue of Yoga Today to express gratitude to all the Yoga Australia ACT members and partnering organisations for their continued efforts and support in volunteering and collaborating with the various activities held throughout the year.

Special thanks goes to the Hindu Temple & Cultural Centre Canberra (HTCC) of the ACT with their invitation for a talk and involvement with Yoga Australia ACT for the celebrations of their 30th anniversary on 25 March 2017 and affiliated open Yoga Day program. We would also like to thank The High Commission of India's collaborative approach with the Yoga Australia ACT for the 2016 and 2017 June successful International Day of Yoga ACT celebration, and The GOPIO, Yoga Mandir and other organisations with the 2017 International Day of Yoga Events.

We've had some wonderful talks this year including Mr Nachiketa

Jha, High Commission of India's talk on "Yoga & India – its impacts on adults and children around the world" at the 1st 2017 Yoga Australia ACT meeting for the year. Thanks also to Kendra Boone for her talk on the yoga journey and her yoga therapy studies at the 2017 2nd Yoga Australia ACT meeting on 27 May 2017. We also would like to thank Ms Robyn Lewis for her stage sequential routines at the main International Yoga Day event at the Albert Hall, and thank you to YA ACT members offering of free classes and presentation at their own studios/different locations/schools. Thank you everyone! We look forward to bringing more talks and events to members going forward.

For more information:

act@yogaaustralia.org.au

TAS REPORT

Many Tasmanian members gathered in Hobart in May at the beautiful new Hara studio. Gabe Gartrell, an Iyengar Yoga teacher, gave an informative workshop in 'Adjustment in Asana' with a useful Q & A afterwards during which the diversity of teachers present respectfully shared a range of different perspectives in practising asana in general. Lynn updated us on what is happening in Yoga Australia at a national level and we enjoyed the opportunity to network over cups of tea.

On September 23rd Julia and Maddy will be heading north to Launceston, together with a few other southerners to meet some of our northern members.

Kinga Kielar-Coe has generously offered us her Satsang studio for a workshop where she will present 'Joint Safety in Asana' and Maddy and Julia will offer their ideas on the value of including Mindfulness in yoga classes.

We recognise the industry has taken off in recent years, with a wide variety of styles of yoga now being accessible across our community.

Many people are receiving the benefits of yoga and it remains in our hands as teachers to maintain a balance of content in our classes in order for students to acquire a holistic practice.

Later in the year we are planning a workshop which will include a practical component followed by a presentation from Lynn on Ethics in teaching and mentoring new teachers. Please stay tuned for announcements.

For more information:

tas@yogaaustralia.org.au

QLD REPORT

In July on the Gold Coast, at the Yoga Therapy Community of Practice session, Trish David presented "Burnout, Rekindling the Flame." Drawn from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and her years of experience working with clients, a robust discussion followed, indicating a common thread for many of our clients. Thanks to Robyn Clatworthy for hosting this meeting at her home.

The QLD Committee, namely Robyn Raneng and Carmel Gannon (NMC QLD) have also been actively supporting the NSW committee for events in the Northern NSW region in June 2017 in Byron Bay, NSW for the Yoga Therapy Community of Practice.

Trish Crossley presented "Darsanam of Breath" - characteristics of breath at rest as an assessment tool in yoga therapy.

Please mark in your diaries the QLD State Meeting on Sun 12 Nov 2017. The CPD Presentation will be Yoga for Strong Bones (assist with osteoporosis & osteopenia).

Our presenter will be James Bone BSc BAppSc (Physio) Dip Bowen Adv Cert Ayurveda, Member Level 3 YA, Yoga Therapist member YA, Member AAYT, Member APA.

James, a physiotherapist, yoga teacher and yoga therapist with over 20 years of experience, has been a facilitator for Osteoporosis education with Osteoporosis Australia. He has completed extra studies in Yoga for Bones with Dr Loren Fishman & Ellen Saltonstall,

authors of "Yoga for Osteoporosis".

Lastly, we would absolutely love to have your involvement on the committee. Please have a think and do get in touch if you would like to help out by volunteering, as we could always do with more volunteers. We are also looking for venues on the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast or Brisbane where we can hold our state meetings, so if you have a venue, that would be wonderful. If you have a CPD topic you would like to present at a state meeting, we would love to chat with you about it, and if you would like to lead an interactive workshop for teachers at a state meeting that would be superb. Please email qld@yogaaustralia.org.au and we will be in touch.

Thank you to Carmel Gannon for your support and leadership as NMC QLD. Thanks also to Robyn Raneng for helping with both the QLD & NSW Committee with events. And thanks to all our members, please continue your support with attendance and feedback at our state meetings. Thank you.

For more information:

qld@yogaaustralia.org.au

NSW REPORT

On Sunday 30 July, nearly 30 yogis gathered in the Ray of Light Studio in Bulli, NSW to listen to Rachel Nokes share The Vinyasa of Learning and Teaching. Yogis from as far afield as Sawtell (near Coffs Harbour), Emu Plains and Newcastle travelled to participate in this enriching event.

Merry Lee Perez represented the Yoga Australia Executive Team and explained the goals within the Strategic Plan and provided an update on the activities of the Committees. Of particular interest to the group was the upcoming Children's Yoga Pilot Program – which several of the teachers in attendance hope to become engaged with. The group then relocated onto the deck, in the lush sub-tropical forest surrounding Rachel's amazing studio and home, to network over refreshments. This was a lively gathering with yogis catching up with those they've met before, and making new

connections.

Rachel opened the teaching part of the day's activities by leading the group through the Om Saha Navavatu invocation. Explaining the qualities of teachers and archarya, as in keeping with the Krishnamacharya lineage, Rachel then guided the attendees through the seven steps; the Vinyasa Krama, of learning and teaching: Sravanam, Grahanam, Mananam, Nidithyasanam, Anubhava, Pariksa, Pracaranam. During the teaching Rachel led the attendees in a practice to master the sense of hearing and then closed the formalities with a Kirtan chanting session and meditation. A lively discussion followed with yogis sharing the insights, ideas and challenges they've experienced as teachers. Feedback on the day was extremely positive with attendees sharing how their expanded knowledge of learning and teaching will enhance their personal practice and their ability to teach others.

Next up, was a gathering at the Yogic Wisdom Studio in Boolaroo (Lake Macquarie region) with around 35 yogis coming along to hear Kate O'Donahue from Frontline Yoga share her experience and wisdom around working with students who've experienced trauma. Kate shared how to tailor classes to ensure those with conditions such as depression, PTSD, and anxiety can gain a greater sense of calm and peace from participating in these uniquely formed classes. Kym McDonald, the founder of Yogic Wisdom and NSW representative for Yoga Australia also spoke, sharing the aims and accomplishments of Yoga Australia. The afternoon was riveting and topped off with a scrumptious afternoon tea provided by several of Kym's Yoga Teacher Training students.

Please mark in your diaries the first weekend of November for Yoga Australia, as interested yogis are invited to attend a session in Emu Plains with Gemma Perry. Gemma will share the science of mantra and meditation and how this can help students heal and increase their overall wellness. Gemma is dedicated to the science of mantra and completed her Honours in Psychology in 2015 during which she investigated the physiological

and cognitive effects of chanting mantras. The invitation will be posted on the Yoga Australia website in the next few days, so please watch this space if you would like to attend!

For more information:

nsw@yogaaustralia.org.au

NZ REPORT

We have had our busiest few months at Yoga New Zealand so far! Thanks to Robyn Lewis and a team of resourceful volunteers, YNZ meetings on 'Inclusive Yoga' will be held in Auckland on 30th September and in Wellington on 1st October. Please mark these dates in your diary as we would love to see you there!

We are looking to grow both our volunteer and membership base, especially in the South Island and outside of the main centres. Please contact us if you want to connect and bring events and meetings to your town. New application forms and guides are available for New Zealand membership and Yoga New Zealand is keen to register kiwi teacher training courses.

Isabelle Major, based in Auckland, provides support for membership and volunteers through membership@yoganewzealand.org.nz. Please do get in touch!

We are starting to plan our 2018 events soon, so we encourage all New Zealand members to let us know if they are interested in hosting an event at their studio, and to tell us what you'd be most interested in attending Yoga New Zealand workshops on, and what aspects of yoga interest you the most. We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information:

nz@yoganewzealand.org.nz



some moments from the Newcastle Yoga Teachers Meeting and CPD Workshop with Kate O'Donoghue

Why become a Yoga Australia member



Yoga Australia is the peak body representing & advocating on behalf of the yoga industry.

By joining Yoga Australia, you gain access to a range of products and services both locally and interstate that will support you in developing and maintaining professional and ethical standards of practice throughout your career. Membership of Yoga Australia illustrates your personal commitment to upholding the values of the association. Your membership will help support the ongoing promotion, lobbying and representation of your interests as a yoga professional.



To view the full range of member benefits
or to apply for membership, visit:

www.yogaaustralia.org.au

Yoga Australia and Health Funds

For more comprehensive information of the Health Funds available please visit yogaaustralia.org.au/about-us/health-funds/

Fund Name	What are the requirements of the Yoga Teacher?	What are the requirements of the Yoga Student?	National or State only Fund
AHM Health Insurance ahm.com.au	An official receipt must be provided.	AHM members with an eligible level of cover and who have served the relevant waiting periods may claim for yoga classes when a medical practitioner refers them to yoga to address a specific health condition.	National
Australian Unity australianunity.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	A Health Management Form completed by a GP, Physio or Chiro is to be provided to the Fund.	National
CBHS Corporate Health cbhscorporatehealth.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	A Health Management Form completed by a GP, Physio or Chiro is to be provided to the Fund.	National
CBHS Health Fund cbhs.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	A Health Management Form completed by a GP, Physio or Chiro is to be provided to the Fund.	National
CUA cua.com.au	An official receipt must be provided.	A Health Management Approval Form completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund.	National
Doctors' Health Fund doctorshealthfund.com.au	Rebates are not provided specifically for yoga classes however they are provided for Gym Membership. To obtain a rebate for Gym Membership, yoga teachers must be delivering yoga in a Gym registered with Fitness Australia.	A Health Management Program Form completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund.	National
GMF Health gmfhealth.com.au/	Now part of HBF Health Insurance. Please refer to HBF.	Now part of HBF Health Insurance. Please refer to HBF.	National
GU Health guhealth.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	A Health Management Form completed by a GP, Physio or Chiro is to be provided to the Fund.	National
HBF hbf.com.au	"HBF provides a rebate for eight yoga sessions when completed within a three month period. An official receipt with your HBF Provider Number and dates of sessions that the student attended must be provided."	Eight yoga sessions must be attended within a three month period.	National
HCF hcf.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	"HCF members with an eligible level of cover and who have served the relevant waiting periods may claim for yoga classes when a medical practitioner refers them to yoga to address a specific health condition. To make a claim, complete an Exercise and gym benefits authorisation claim form from: www.hcf.com.au/pdf/Exercise_Gym_Form.pdf and submit a receipt."	National
Health Insurance Fund of Australia Limited hif.com.au	Must be Registered with Yoga Australia.	A Health Management Form completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund.	National
Health Partners AHSA healthpartners.com.au/Rnew	Must be Registered with Yoga Australia.	A Health Management Form completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund.	National

"Please note that Yoga Australia works with HealthFunds to provide up-to-date information in this table. Information may be subject to change, and Yoga Australia recommends that yoga students contact Health Funds directly for the most current rebate information available. Table current as of September 2017."



Fund Name	What are the requirements of the Yoga Teacher?	What are the requirements of the Yoga Student?	National or State only Fund
Health.com.au health.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	A Health Management Claim Form completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund. The form is kept on file for 12 months then needs to be renewed.	National
Mildura Health Fund mildurahealthfund.com.au	An official receipt with the clients names, dates of sessions that the student attended and description of the services provided (e.g. yoga classes) must be provided.	The program must be approved by a GP and be to treat a medical condition.	National
NIB nib.com.au	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number and NIB registration number must be provided.	A Health Management Program completed by a GP, Physio or Chiro is to be provided to the Fund.	National
Nurses & Midwives Health nmhealth.com.au	An official receipt must be provided.	Student must have been referred to yoga by a GP/Physio/Chiro to ameliorate a specific medical condition.	National
One Medi Fund (National Health Benefits Australia) onemedifund.com.au	An official receipt with the clients date of birth, teacher's name and teacher's business name must be provided.	Student must a referral to yoga from an allied health professional to assist with a specific health issue. Please note pregnancy is not a health issue.	National
Peoplecare peoplecare.com.au	An official receipt with the client's date of birth, teacher's name and teacher's business name must be provided.	Student must a referral to yoga from an allied health professional to assist with a specific health issue. Please note pregnancy is not a health issue.	National
Phoenix Health Fund phoenixhealthfund.com.au	An official receipt must be provided.	A Health Lifestyle Treatment Plan completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund.	National
Queensland Country Health Fund qldcountryhealth.com.au	An official receipt with your ABN and Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number must be provided.	Student must a referral to yoga from a health care professional to assist with a specific health issue. - Approval form	Qld & NT
Railway and Transport Health Fund Limited AHSA rthealthfund.com.au	Rebates are not provided specifically for yoga classes however they are provided for Gym Membership. To obtain a rebate for Gym Membership, yoga teachers must be delivering yoga in a Gym registered with Fitness Australia.	Student must have a referral to the Gym from a GP.	National
Reserve Bank Health Society myrbhs.com.au/	An official receipt with the client's date of birth, teacher's name and teacher's business name must be provided.	Student must a referral to yoga from an allied health professional to assist with a specific health issue. Please note pregnancy is not a health issue.	National
Teachers Health teachershealth.com.au/	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number, ABN, address and description of the services provided (e.g. yoga classes) must be provided.	"A Health Lifesyle Form from a GP/Physio/Chiro completed by a GP, Physio or Chiro confirming that attending yoga classes will help prevent or ameliorate a specific medical condition is to be provided to the Fund." "	National
Transport Health transporthealth.com.au/	An official receipt with the name of your client must be provided.		National
TUH Health Fund tuh.com.au/	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number and ABN must be provided.	TUH members with an eligible level of cover and who have served the relevant waiting periods may claim for yoga classes when a medical practitioner refers them to yoga to address a specific health condition.	National
Westfund Health Insurance westfund.com.au/	An official receipt with your Yoga Australia registered teacher membership number and the dates of the classes attended must be provided.	A Health Management Program completed by a GP is to be provided to the Fund.	National

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS: YOGA AND RELIGION

YOGA IN THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the year the discussion on yoga as a religion and yoga in conflict with religious institutions has been prominent. It seems that there is much confusion about this amongst yoga teachers.

IS YOGA A RELIGION?

No. The authoritative text on yoga is Patanjali Yoga Sutra. In chapter one Patanjali states that yoga is to quieten the fluctuations of the mind so that the mind does not only conform to the thought waves but has an ability to link to a deeper unchanging state of mind. In sutras 1.23-1.29 he suggests that one of the OPTIONAL ways that we may still the thought waves is to devote our thoughts to an entity that does not suffer from the same mental afflictions that we might, is not effected by the consequences of actions, is the knower of all knowledge and original teacher of true knowledge.

IS YOGA HINDUISM?

Yes. In the context that Hinduism is a term that refers to anything that has evolved from the culture of people who originated in the Indus Valley of what was formerly North India. The teachings of that time are passed on through the four Vedas which thousands of years later were condensed into six scientific systems to understand their meaning. The sixth of those sciences is Yoga. Another of these systems is Vedanta which forms the basis of what is referred to as Hindu religion. Here we find God as sustainer, creator and destroyer. Many people have been exposed to the teachings of yoga as a blend between Yoga and Vedanta which does lead to confusion.

To answer people saying that yoga emerges from the same origins as Hindu and other eastern religious belief systems, the answer is yes that is correct, though the practices and goals of yoga differ.

WHAT IF WE JUST TEACH THE POSTURES AND BREATHING OF YOGA?

According to Patanjali for the mind to reach the state of yoga the body may need to be prepared. In Chapter 2 verse 46-47 he says the practice of asana leads to the loosening of physical resistance in the body so that we may focus on the infinite. Then in Chapter 2 verse 50 the breath becomes long and subtle so that the mind and senses are prepared for concentration (Chapter 3, verse 1) which leads to Chapter 3 verse 3, Samadhi a transcendental state of mind.

Technically if a physical, breathing or meditative practice is not leading to an inner state that transcends our usual patterns of thought it is not yoga. Most yoga teachers will correctly teach that our practice is helping us to recognise our inner spiritual nature. As teachers, we need to respect that this is contrary to most religious belief systems who will be guiding their followers to look outside of themselves and towards a preferred God.

WHAT DO WE DO?

The path of yoga is one of respect for each other's relationship to our own individual beliefs. It is important that we know the origins and cultural context of the science of yoga and then be honest and open minded

on how and when we teach in different settings to different students. Let's take opportunities to communicate openly with churches and those who may have concerns about the teaching of yoga to their followers and find ways that we can direct our teaching of yoga to help people move closer to their chosen faith without any spiritual confusion. We also need to be open to the fact that yoga, including the physical practices alone, may not always be the path of choice for everyone.

As I have been writing this report I came across a post by Michael Lee quoting the Buddha (Magandiya Sutra), "Those who cling to perception and views wander the world offending people". Let us share the light of yoga in the ways that best serve our communities and respects each individual's choices.

Leanne Davis ॐ

President Yoga Australia



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For more information, contact:

Simone Slattery



Tel: 02 8274 8100

Email: yoga@gsaib.com.au



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www.gsaib.com.au

GSA would like to thank all Yoga Australia members who participated in the early bird promotion and renewed their policy with GSA.

We had an overwhelming response and are pleased to congratulate **Anne Middleton** on winning the \$1,000 Webjet Travel Voucher.

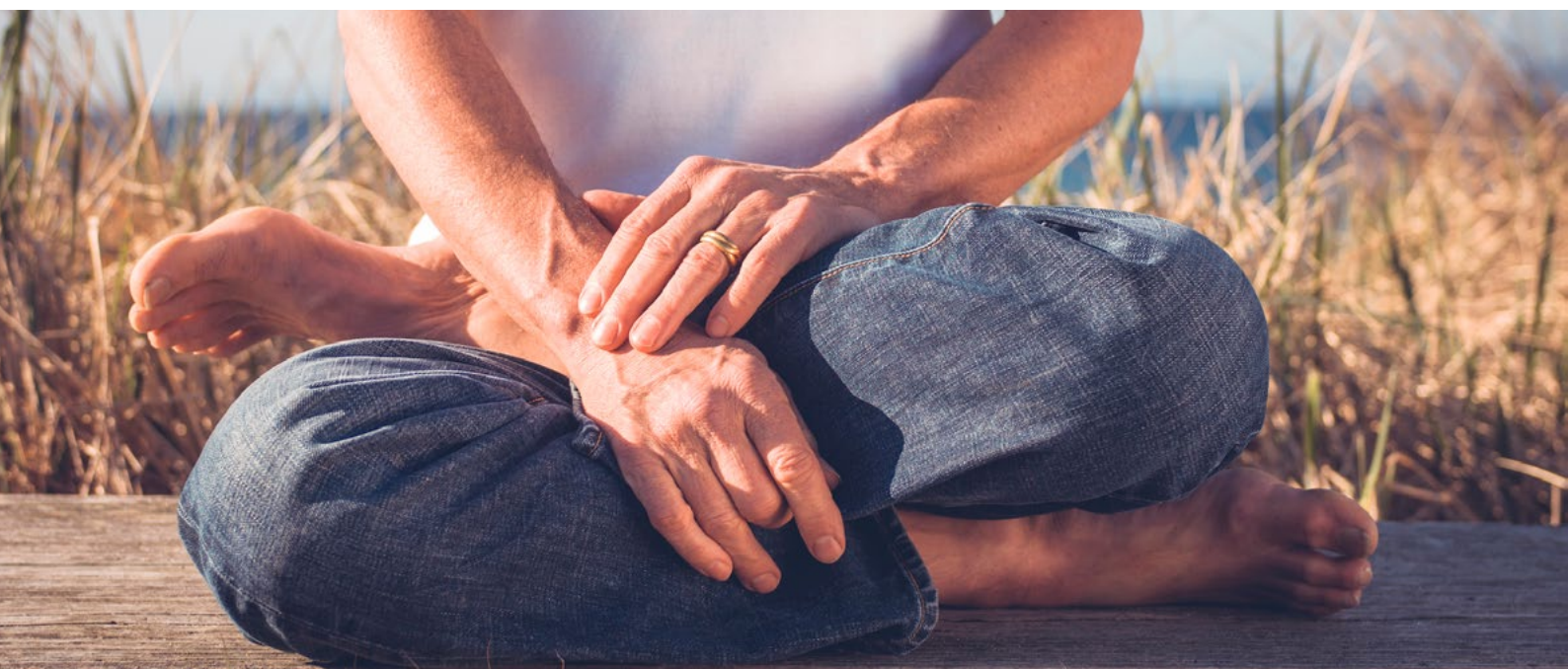
¹ Cover can only be taken out when you purchase a policy through Yoga Australia and GSA

² Yoga Australia recommends a minimum of \$5m PI and \$10m Public Liability

³ Must relate to a policy coverage issue

INDUSTRY INTELLIGENCE & BUSINESS OF YOGA: DISCUSSION POINT - TOWARDS MORE DIVERSE PARTICIPATION IN YOGA

ARE WE TEACHING PEOPLE WHO ARE THE SAME AS US?



BACKGROUND

In early 2017 Yoga Australia purchased the 'Yoga Participants Profile' report from Roy Morgan Research. This report is based on data extracted from a wider survey of 20,000 Australians (via face-to face interviews and self-completion questionnaires) over the period July 2015 to June 2016. It gives us information about the characteristics of the 1,240 participants who listed yoga as one of their sport/recreation activities and compares them to the general Australian population.

Yoga Australia's response to this report, via the Industry Intelligence and now also the Business of Yoga Working Groups has been in 3 parts. Part 1 - 'Yoga Participants: Who Are They In Australia?' focused on the demographic data and appeared in Yoga Today, Autumn 2017 and part 2, 'When The Teacher Is Ready

The Students Will Be There' was in the Winter edition of Yoga Today and grappled with issues around marketing, profiles and knowing our purpose as teachers.

As a third part of our response, this paper highlights the populations that seem to be under-represented in yoga participation and raises questions about what this might mean and what we are doing to reach out.

POPULATIONS LESS LIKELY TO DO YOGA

The Morgan Yoga Participants Profile shows us certain age ranges, geographic areas, personal characteristics, social/economic/educational groups that are over-represented in the 1,240 yoga participants surveyed and some that are significantly under-represented.

Remembering that this

research cannot tell us specific relationships or causes, and that there are limitations in the study (for example, 'yoga' was not defined), here is a list of populations that were deemed significantly less likely to be participating in yoga than the general Australian population (this list includes only those identified as at least 15% less likely).

- Men (53% less likely)
- 50-64 years old (16% less likely)
- 65 & over (68% less likely)
- Tasmanian (49% less likely to do yoga than the average Australian)¹
- Northern Territory (results too low to be reliable ... but 56% less likely)¹
- People with a secondary education of year 11 or below (45% less likely)
- People with no secondary education (91% less likely).

- People who are retired or not employed (52-62% less likely)
- People who are NOT professionals, managers, white collar workers (ie skilled/part skilled/unskilled workers) are up to 48% less likely. (People who are professionals/managers are 33% more likely to do yoga, white collar workers 49% more likely).
- Income/socio-economic status - not surprisingly, people with less discretionary expenditure were less likely to do yoga (37%) and people from low socio-economic backgrounds were 50% less likely to do yoga

1 Possibly reflects rural/low density population?

2 Possibly reflects age/disability?

3. Note: there is no data on race/ cultural background in this profile report

ARE WE TEACHING PEOPLE WHO ARE THE SAME AS US?

It is interesting to consider whether this list of characteristics is the opposite of the key characteristics of yoga teachers.

We might not have current hard data but there is significant evidence to suggest that yoga teachers are predominantly women. The 'Yoga in Australia Study', for instance, found that 82.6% of teachers were female [Penman 2006:119]. It would be interesting to find out the age statistics for yoga teachers. Are there significantly more teachers who are under 50? Our 2017 member survey might indicate not – 60% of respondents to this year's survey were between 45 and 64 and only 6.25 % were below 34. (This might reflect a different propensity to fill in surveys or it might reflect the age range of teachers rather than an accurate representation of the age of yoga teachers). On the other hand, the 2006 yoga study found that 82% of teachers were 25-54 yo and generally speaking students and teachers were spread similarly across age groups. [Penman – P112]. Are yoga teachers more likely to have higher secondary and tertiary education and are they more likely to live in cities/ more densely populated areas?

In the 2006 study, level of education was similar between teachers and students (p136), as was marital status (p128). The same study looked at 'rurality' [p 116] and found that teachers were slightly less likely to live in capital cities and slightly more likely to live in remote areas or rural centres than students, otherwise a similar percentage of students and teachers live in metro and large rural centres [p 137]. As far as employment status was concerned in 2006, teachers were significantly more likely to be self-employed than their students and less likely to be employed full-time – otherwise similar. [p139] "Teachers were more likely to have a lower household income, and twice as likely as their students to have a household income of \$30,000 or less".

It seems the evidence suggests that, except in a few areas, yoga students and teachers are likely to mirror each other's characteristics. Thus it is no surprise that male, older, less educated, blue collar and geographically isolated populations aren't finding their way to yoga classes.

Many of us teach the people who are attracted to us. Perhaps this means we mostly teach people who move in similar circles to us. If we teach from the 'livingness of our being' then as a matter of course this may be so.

ARE WE ACTIVELY REACHING OUT?

If we are to make yoga more accessible to the populations who are currently missing out we need to consciously reach beyond our familiar zones – something that is intrinsic to the nature of yoga, one would think. This is what teachers are doing when they offer time or classes for free or at reduced cost in what can be variously termed as 'karma yoga', 'philanthropic outreach', or 'pro bono' classes.

This year's YA members survey showed us that 50% of the 208 teachers who responded offered some form of free yoga and 17% said they would like to. And a quick scan of the Yoga Australia website, reveals articles and blogs with encouraging titles such as:

- 'There Will Be Diversity And The Revolution Will Not Be Televised'

- 'Yoga For People Experiencing Disadvantage'
- 'Indigenous Storytelling In Yoga'
- 'Why Boys Need Yoga'
- 'Why Don't More Men Practice Yoga?'

In addition there are articles and blogs looking at the value and feasibility of yoga in PTSD, surviving stroke, diabetes, anxiety and depression, chronic pain, people who are deaf, war veterans, to name just a few.

CAN WE CHALLENGE THESE STATISTICS?

We know that statistics often don't give us a true picture of the world we live and breathe in. Perhaps you have stories of yoga in your area that is accessible to diverse populations? At the very least, Yoga Australia can be a forum for yoga teachers and students to share wisdom, experiences and strategies as we take the wellbeing and personal expansion that yoga can bring to more corners of the world.

REFERENCES

YOGA PARTICIPANTS PROFILE, July 2015 – June 2016, Roy Morgan Research

YOGA IN AUSTRALIA: Results of A National Survey, 2008 Stephen Penman, <https://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/eserv/rmit:6110/Penman.pdf>

Lynn Romeo is a Gita-trained teacher and social worker who has taught for over 25 years in Melbourne and Hobart. She is currently the Tasmanian representative on our National Management Committee, mentors yoga teachers/trainees and brings together human service workers and yoga teachers to explore partnerships and understandings in using yoga to release the effects of trauma and thus heal the causes of most of the world's personal, health and social problems.

What's On

Your guide to the member workshops & events

OCTOBER 2017

13-15 OCTOBER

CELEBRATE DEEPAVALI WITH US AT SWAN FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS IN PERTH THIS OCTOBER

Deepavali is a celebration of the joys of life through the presentation of Indian fine arts and culture to the public. Every year the festival attracts 25,000+ people over its three day duration. Yoga Space: West Perth, Maylands & Carine have kindly offered to run yoga sessions on behalf of Yoga Australia. Sessions will be:

- Friday Gentle All Levels Hatha Flow with Jean Byrne PhD
- Saturday Gentle All Levels

Hatha Flow with Michelle Papa

- Sunday Gentle All Levels Hatha Flow with Odette Beswick. For more information visit

sfol.com.au/

21 OCTOBER

ACT ANNUAL POT LUCK DINNER WITH DARRYL ALEXANDER

Inviting all yoga teachers and teacher trainees to join Yoga Australia ACT Annual Potluck meeting on Saturday 21 October. As a part of the meeting, we will be planning for the 2018 - Yoga Australia ACT ventures and Darryl Alexander will be talking about his life experiences of growing up with the yoga tradition, practicing yoga and becoming a yoga teacher and how yoga assisted him to face the unexpected and move forward with everyday life.

22 OCTOBER

BENDIGO YOGA TEACHERS MEETING AND MUDRA WORKSHOP WITH GINA MACCAULAY

Inviting all yoga teachers to attend Yoga Australia Teachers Meeting and Mudra Workshop with Gina Macauley in Bendigo! In this workshop Gina will share with you three simple and fun ways to work with mudras in your own practice and with your students. Sometimes mudras can be a little subtle for beginners, so this workshop will explore working in ways that are more available for people new to mudras. And for those who love chanting, we will earn the mudras for the Gayatri mantra. "I love working with mudras in my personal practice as they can

really help me to focus and I find that most students love them too, especially the mudra meditation focusing on the breath. I am looking forward to sharing this with you too."

NOVEMBER 2017

4 NOVEMBER

WA CPD EVENT - MOVING INTO STILLNESS – IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE GREAT EXPERIENCE OF DRU YOGA

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12 NOVEMBER

YOGA AUSTRALIA ANNUAL MEETING

State Meeting & Workshop, Melbourne, Victoria

At the meeting, there will be a report on the work of the committee over the last 12 months, a financial report and elections for positions on the Executive and National Management

Committee. The nomination process will be communicated in August. The Annual General Meeting will be the last national meeting we will have with our members for 2017. It is a place to share with other members of the association and contribute to ongoing discussions. The meeting will also include a CPD presentation "Business of Yoga".

DECEMBER 2018

No events planned at this stage.

JANUARY 2018

No events planned at this stage.

FEBRUARY 2018

No events planned at this stage.

MARCH 2018

16 - 18 MARCH

**THE MODERN WORLD OF YOGA
YOGA AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE**

Melbourne, Victoria

The conference will be a vibrant forum appealing to a broad range of interests with full days of concurrent presentations and ample opportunities for information sharing and networking.

For more information visit:

yogaaustraliaconference.org.au

State group meetings are an excellent way to meet other teachers in your area; gain extra CPD points, share ideas, build competencies and make new friends. We encourage you to make the most of your membership and attend one of the upcoming state meetings. We hope to see you there!

Pictured Below: Queensland state event



STAY INFORMED

To find out more about these events, or others in your area, please visit our website:

AUSTRALIA

www.yogaaustralia.org.au

NEW ZEALAND

www.yoganewzealand.org.nz

FIND YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE WITH VEDIC CHANTING

THE ANCIENT WISDOM OF VEDIC CHANTING

Remembering the first class I taught fills me with emotion. I felt a mixture of nerves and strident passion, as I struggled for the right words to guide the students in front of me. I was teaching a group of older men at the Centre for Positive Living in Prahran and they were much more confident with their yoga practice than I was with my teaching.

Your voice reflects who you are and must be congruent with your inner self, or your message will not ring true. Good teaching requires focus, clarity and gentle instructions delivered with an authentic, not mechanical voice.

My confidence, my communication skills and my voice have developed through practice and study of one of the oldest uses of sound, chanting the mantras of the Vedas. Chanting can be the most sublime way to clear your head and still your mind, allowing time and space for your own unique authentic voice to evolve.

Chanting is a powerful tool of yoga for health and healing. The Vedas are the most important collection of ancient wisdom and sacred texts of India. The language of the Vedas is Sanskrit and the specific vibrations of the sounds have a powerful positive effect on you at a physical, energetic, mental and emotional level. The Vedas form the foundation of all Indian philosophy. The mantras or verses of the Vedas have been transmitted over generations from teacher to student through an oral tradition, by call and response. The relationship between teacher and student plays an important role because something unique happens when the teacher recites and the student receives; when the student listens and then is listened to.

The Sanskrit word for chanting

is *adhyayanam* and this means to move towards your inner self, to connect you with your heart creating a sacred thread from your innermost being which binds you emotionally to your voice.

Among the benefits of chanting Vedic mantras are:

- Improved pronunciation and strengthening of your voice
- Better listening skills and improved ability to concentrate
- Better memory and increased confidence
- Integration of body, voice, mind and emotion which creates resilience and inner strength
- Relief of stress and anxiety

Vedic chanting helped me find my voice and express myself in ways beyond anything I could ever have imagined. I now have the confidence to teach and became acutely aware of my progress recently when I did an extended interview about Vedic chanting for ABC radio. I would have been unable to do this a few years ago. My heart would have been pounding, my mouth full of glue, and my tongue so twisted I wouldn't have been able to speak. Now I'm able to take such things in my stride.

For 12 years now I've consistently studied Vedic chanting. During this time I travelled to Chennai to complete a formal two-year teacher training program, and attended the Australian National University to extend my knowledge of the Sanskrit language. This training has given me a strong technical foundation, but most importantly it's helped me realise I have a true love of chanting. In an effort to expand and deepen the knowledge

of Vedic chanting throughout Australia, I have developed a dedicated Melbourne-based Vedic chant teacher training program beginning in February 2018.



Debby Badger is a Yoga and Vedic Chant Teacher. She runs individual and group yoga and chanting classes at Indi House Yoga & Vedic chanting in Melbourne. Find her at vedicchanting.com.au

Facebook :

Debby Badger Chanting

Email :

debbybadger336@gmail.com

The ABC Radio interview - vedicchanting.com.au/media/

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- ♥ Maintain a healthy immune system
- ♥ As a Qi strengthening tonic

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Traditionally used in Ayurvedic medicine to help:

- ♥ Relief of occasional constipation
- ♥ Relieve mild abdominal pain & flatulence
- ♥ Relieve mild heart burn associated with non-specific indigestion

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- ♥ Increase vitality & energy (Ginseng)
- ♥ Adapt to mild stress (Ginseng)

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^Matcha - Traditional Japanese medicine, Ginseng - Traditional Chinese medicine. *After periods of mental & physical exertion.
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YOGA THERAPY

RELIEVING THE IMPACT OF CANCER TREATMENT



Yoga therapy is a wonderful complementary discipline not yet fully recognized by the medical world and by the general public. Although it is not a panacea for every condition, it offers an evidence informed science to fill in the gaps in conventional medicine – such as cancer care.

Typically, after surgery, cancer patients undergo chemotherapy and radiation, which may last from a few weeks to a few years. Often such intensive treatments result in severe side effects – mental and physical fatigue, cognitive dysfunction (brain fog), depression, mental confusion and loss of short-term memory.

Such was my case. At the end of my treatment in 2008, my body was completely exhausted and my mind was shut down. I couldn't focus enough to read a paragraph in a book. I was severely depressed and I had no awareness of it. I was fatigued and strangely had no short-term memory. I was wondering – how am I going to live the rest of my life? When my oncologist said to me "This is the end of the treatment – we did everything we could for you. Now it is time for you to live your life again!" I looked at him and wondered – WHAT LIFE?

The end of the treatment means usually an accumulation of toxicity

in the body, which results in the most severe side effects. The treatments are long and the side effects creep in on us very slowly, and so we often have very little awareness of our state. No wonder that over 80% of patients suffer from depression after ending their treatments. We feel terrible for a long time and we do not know if/when we will feel any better – nor do we know where to look for the relief.

My presence at the Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute in India in 2013 opened up an opportunity to fill this gap by creating a comprehensive program based on yoga principles – Beyond Cancer – Healing the Whole Being (www.kdham.com/cancer). This is a residential program for cancer patients who have finished the treatments. We have been running these retreats for four years now, with wonderful effects. My mission now is to take these retreats out of India and make them available in other countries (see www.yogaforhealth.institute).

Here is a true story reflecting how much yoga has to offer to the cancer patient:

Jyotsna, a 35-year-old Indian homemaker from Delhi was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 33. She did not have an operation or radiation however

she did endure 32 chemotherapy sessions. She joined the retreat with no experience of yoga or meditation at all.

Her initial test scores for Anger, Tension, Depression, Fatigue and Confusion were fairly high. She participated in our program diligently but being shy very rarely shared anything during the classes. After 3 weeks of retreat she showed the best improvements in all test values compared to others in the group. She reported feeling renewed and rejuvenated with a new lease on life.

After the program ended I had not heard from her for a long time. I knew that she went for another round of chemo as the cancer became active and I worried how she was taking it. She had already endured so much!

3 months went by and it was time for follow up tests. I sent them to everyone and waited, wondering how she was doing. In my two years of running the program the best I saw in 3 months follow up was when patients maintained the 20th day result. Jyotsna's results left me speechless.

Despite doing yet another round of chemotherapy Jyotsna managed to improve her 20th day result!!

Her Tension, Depression, Fatigue and Vigor values improved. Her Anger increased, which I often see as a simple reflection of a patient's higher awareness of their emotional state. Her Anxiety and Depression score also decreased. Overall POMS and HADS total scores improved dramatically.

I wrote to her asking how she is doing and here is her beautiful verbatim response:

"Hi Lee

I am glad that I am showing improved results, despite being on chemo again. I will have my second last chemo on 20th of this month and the last in the month of August, my birthday month.

The retreat has propelled me on a path of self-discovery. I understand my body, my feelings, and my needs in a much better way now.... I am more aware of my emotions

astonished by my own replies... that I can even say these things.

I have let down most of my guard and I feel so much at ease with myself. It has really improved my relationship with him. I also enjoy time spent with my son more.

I do meditate regularly. There are days when I can't even close my eyes because I am scared. There are days when I cry. I started a diary where I write every day... it has enabled me to mirror myself and look at myself and accept all my emotions with love and appreciation."

This testimonial speaks to the effectiveness of yoga in improving the quality of life for someone under extreme emotional, physical and psychological stress.

Lee Majewski, M.A., DEd, C-IAYT

Lee is a Senior Yoga Therapist at Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, the world's oldest Yoga centre in Lonavla, India. She creates and teaches therapy programs for cancer survivors and psychosomatic chronic diseases. These customized programs help to increase awareness of one's spiritual nature and self-healing power.

lamaconsulting.com

kdham.com/cancer and www.kdham.com/chroniccures

Jyotsna's Results	Day 1	Day 20	3 months
POMS PROFILE OF MOOD STATES			
Tension	14	5	3
Depression	27	3	1
Anger	22	4	8
Vigor	23	23	30
Fatigue	13	6	2
Confusion	14	3	3
Total score	57	-2	-13

Jyotsna's Results	Day 1	Day 20	3 months
HADS HOSPITAL ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION SCALE			
Anxiety	14	5	3
Depression	27	3	1
Total Score	12	6	2

lethargy ... thirst... anxiousness ... anger... jealousy... and the best part is that I am accepting my feelings now. In a nutshell I understand myself now.

My relationship with my husband has reached a new level. I am able to say things to him I would have never said before. I am often

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HAVAN

FEEDING THE GODS

It is early morning. Way too early to be up and about, if you ask me. Yet here I am, bundled up in my car with the heater blasting. It is still dark outside.

I am on the way to meet Anthony Zafer, a Yoga Australia teacher from Western Australia and practitioner of tantric rituals and rites. Today I will sit alongside him as he performs havan, a yogic fire ceremony. I glance at my watch. 5.30am. I am on time. Turning into the quiet, leafy street, I pull up alongside his house.

I step out of the car and grab the recording equipment and camera from the back seat. Heading up the stone pathway to the front door, I knock lightly.

Next to me sits a portly Ganesha statue, adorned with flowers. Wisps of fragrant bluish smoke waft upwards from a nearby stick of agarbatti. The door opens and I am met by Anthony's partner, who leads me through the living room and outside to the balcony, where the ringing of bells, Sanskrit chanting and heavy aroma of burning ghee

and mango wood is thick in the air.

Anthony lifts his gaze as we enter the area, smiles at me, then returns to the ritual before him with reverence. The area past the balcony is engulfed in darkness, a striking scene as the flames dance and leap upward to receive every offering. I quietly settle onto the cushions a few metres away.

In the half-light, Anthony sits erect on a deerskin, wrapped in a white cotton dhoti and shawl, with malas of rudrakshas on his chest and vibhuti on his arms. The havan kunda, a pit for invoking the fire god Agni, sits before him. The paraphernalia required for this ritual surrounds him – bells, incense, herbs, flowers and wood from sacred trees.

There is a tangible sense of something in the atmosphere. With every libation of clarified butter into the flames, every mudra of the hands and mantra uttered, I become more entranced by the beauty of this ancient ritual. Minutes turn into an hour.

As the ceremony approaches its conclusion, Anthony holds up a burgundy silk pouch containing seeds, herbs and dried fruit. Dipping it in the ghee pot, he begins ringing a large brass bell, and with the final 'Swaha', the offering is placed into the fire. More ringing of bells, waving of lamps and hand gestures, and the ritual is over.

I shuffle closer, and turn on my recording equipment.

I come to know that in 1996, Anthony travelled the whole length of India in search of an accomplished teacher. A sequence of events led him to a Yogini who had emerged from a decade of silent meditation in the forests of Andhra Pradesh.

Anthony settled into a nearby bunker and commenced his sadhana under her guidance. For the next 2 years, from 3am to 8pm, he alternated long rounds of meditation with pranayama, mantra japa and tantric rituals. He taught in Asia for 6 years before returning to Perth. Twenty years later, Anthony continues to teach and practice. He



visits India twice a year.

I used mantra for a while but gave up, as I could not feel the benefit. What are your thoughts on this?

‘Practices always bear fruit, though each person’s experience will differ. If we commence with a heavy karmic load, it will take longer before we feel the benefits, as we first need to purify the system. Patience and commitment are required. Some people are like dry wood. They have done much sadhana in the past lives. Their karmic burden is light. They approach the fire and are instantly ablaze. Others are like wet wood. They too sit by the fire but are only in the process of drying. It takes a little longer for them.’

Can you tell a little about this Havan ritual that you are performing?

Here is the kunda, the fire pit. We start with mantras for invocation, protection and blessing of the space. We purify ourselves with mudras, mantras, sipping and sprinkling of water. We also state our intention, our sankalpa, addressing the devas and those to be blessed.

We light the fire, and invite Lord Agni into the kunda. This becomes the ‘mouth of the gods.’ Agni consumes the offerings and transports them into the heavens. There is a reciprocal blessing from the gods.

The subtle beings exist in a spiritual body, so they cannot eat gross food as we do. The devas ‘eat’ through sound, vibration and scent. This

is why we offer the foods with mantra into the fire. This is also why we find chanting, hymns, bells, incense, resins, flowers, herbs and fire throughout all world religions and esoteric traditions. These are all forms of nourishment for the gods.

What are some of the benefits of a yogic fire ritual?

This ceremony brings both material and spiritual benefits. It is also important for burning off karma and for achieving mantra siddhi.

Anthony glances up at the clock mounted on the wall and smiles. It is time for us to depart.

‘Come back again when you have time,’ Anthony says, as he ties a raksha, a blessed cotton bracelet, around my right wrist.

‘Yes, I would like that very much,’ I reply, as we make our way to the door.

Back in the car, I take a few moments just to sit in silence. I wind down the window, close my eyes and breathe in the fresh morning air. I can smell the scent of pine trees. There is a curious but pleasant humming sensation through my body. I feel lighter. Quieter.

Somehow, I feel that I’ll be meeting Anthony again before too long.



Anthony Zafer is a Physiotherapist and Senior Instructor with Yoga Australia. He delivers Higher Limbs CPD Workshops for Yoga teachers and conducts yogic fire rituals for studios, events and retreats.

He is also a Corporate Wellness Presenter through his company, Present Minds Australia.

Email: Anthonyzafer@hotmail.com

Facebook: Sacred Fires Yoga

Website: www.present-minds.org

MINDFULNESS, MEDITATION AND THE COMPLETE ATHLETE

A STUDY ON THE APPLICATION OF MINDFULNESS IN SPORT



pictured above (from left to right): Maisey Gibson, Lauren Smith, Ryan Hadley, Param Uppal and Jason Sangha

In March 2017 Shaun Martyn and Greg Wythes were invited to introduce mindfulness training to a group of emerging young players from Cricket NSW, and to assess its influence on their performance.

THE PROGRAM

The program we outlined to Cricket NSW was an 8-week program focusing on Communication, Mindfulness and Movement, with a 2-hour session each week.

Communication: The DISC program helps to identify communication styles. It allows the individual to identify the communication styles of others, and adapt one's own style to the circumstances.

Mindfulness: The mindfulness techniques we chose were based in yogic and Buddhist meditation practices, but condensed, without most of their cultural or religious features.

Movement: Because we were working with athletes we wanted

to introduce the concept of Mindfulness in Action.

Cricket NSW had chosen 8 players from their Elite Pathway program: 4 men and 4 women.

THE APPLICATION

Early in March we met the players for the first time and spent the first 15 minutes outlining the program.

Shaun took them through the DISC approach and their level of engagement lifted the players recognised themselves in the profile it returned. This made it more personal and the ensuing discussion was open and lively. They were interested.

Later we introduced them to a body scan and a method of using the breath with the aim of becoming more attuned to natural sensations of the body generally outside of awareness.

What we soon began to recognize as each session progressed,

was that these players were busy, - studying or working, with lots of training and practice sessions built around their outside commitments. When the players came to us at 6pm we were the last item on their schedule for the day.

So we cut each session back to around 60 to 90 minutes, dropped the Movement component and reduced DISC. Each session had a similar structure. A discussion of what they had practised since the previous session. A video, an episode from the ABC's Catalyst or a TED lectures where an athlete or coach outlined how mindfulness had transformed performance. Then further discussion of each of these videos and lots of questions.

One question that came up early was about thinking. We explained that there is a common misconception that the purpose of Mindfulness is to stop thinking, but that's not what it's really about. You can't prevent thoughts

but you can let them go. As well you can change your inner attention from thought to sensory experience - to the breath and the subtle sensations within the body - and feel them without thinking about them. This reduces the impact of thought and creates a quieter internal world. Once the players had some experience of applying this technique and more importantly, could feel it in themselves, we began to introduce some of the theory, the research and the background to its practice. We explained the neurological changes that came about through the practice; how mindfulness reduced the influence of the limbic system, - the older, more primitive part of the brain that initiated effects based on the activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System; a system that prioritized survival and activated the fight/flight reaction in situations of threat; and how Mindfulness builds the capacity of the Pre-Frontal Cortex - the part of the brain that controls impulse and emotional reaction - to respond in a more measured way to external stimuli.

After each session we emailed them links to Apps, or articles, or YouTube videos, either revising or preparing for the next session, and the players were pragmatic in approaching this material. They watched the videos and read the handouts. They asked questions that grew in sensitivity week to week. Maybe it just crept up on them. I know it crept up on me. But by week 4 they were all practising and they were feeling it. The guided practices in each session had given them a taste of what they were looking for, a clearer mental space, and had fostered enough confidence to practise alone.

Most players felt positive about the trial in their evaluations. But some saw specific benefits emerging. Mikayla Hinkley is a member of the Australian Under 21 team and was selected for the tour to Sri Lanka. Early in April she sent us an email: "I found being mindful over there quite difficult due to the continuous excitement of being overseas and also the heavy playing schedule. All up we played 6 games in which the first 4 I highly under-performed.

On the day of the 5th game my mind was completely unfocused

and thoughts were rushing through at a million miles per hour, I decided to meditate on the bus on the way to the ground, it was a 30 minute commute in which I found myself meditating for at least 20 of those minutes. That day I opened the batting in the t20 (keeping in mind this was the first time I had meditated before a game) things were amazingly different! Out in the middle it was a difficult day to bat as the wicket was sticky and our run rate was extremely low which was causing a lot of scoreboard pressure, however I felt so calm and collected. The pace of everything just seemed to slow down and I really felt as though I was in total control of my mind and focus.

The 6th and final game was very much the same as I went through the same routine of meditation on the way to the ground. Both days I opened and both days I was not out (I haven't been not out for a very long time!!) and I top scored in both games. I wished I had done it from game one!

Mikayla now practises daily. She says that her life is better, not just her cricket. She feels she has more time and space around her, even in daily life, and that things come at her at a slower pace and she is ready for anything. 'Mindfulness was hard at the beginning,' she says. 'But you begin to see there's no right or wrong. If there's thought, you just accept it and then go back to the next breath.'

Jason Sangha is a member of the Under 19 Australian team. In the recent international series against Sri Lanka he was captain for one of the games. Early in this game Sri Lanka were well on top, scoring quickly and hitting to all parts of the ground. Jason's thoughts were swirling as he looked for a solution. 'I walked slowly to my slips position in the break between overs,' he said. 'I felt my contact with the ground through my feet and took my attention to my breath. I let thought drop away and felt this calm me and clear my mind. I didn't think about the problem at hand and then the idea formed in this clearer mental space.'

Jason told the wicketkeeper he was bringing Param, a spin bowler, into the attack. The keeper complained that it was only the 7th over. It was too early. Jason remained composed, even in

the face of a strong, negative reaction from the fast bowler he replaced. Param took the wicket. The partnership and Sri Lanka's ascendancy was broken and this was the key moment that turned the game. Australia went on to win.

'In those moments when everything is rushing and random thought are coming from all directions, I find I can now identify this much earlier and clear my mind,' Jason says. 'As captain I felt that decision making from this space was easier. I can certainly see a place for mindfulness in cricket.'

Geoff Lawson is a former Test fast bowling great and currently coach, commentator and writer on cricket. For some time he's been following the development of these players and, as well, has a keen interest in the impact of new training strategies on performance. 'A lot of stuff gets put in front of these players in terms of performance improvement,' says Geoff. 'And they're smart, young and ambitious. They'll try things out, but it has to work or they'll let it go. In this mindfulness trial they found a practical application of something that had been considered abstract and unusable. But the big surprise was the immediate results. We thought we might see results slowly trickling in, but the impact in the under 19 International, when they had only just finished the trial, was entirely unexpected.'

We feel there is much more to be achieved in working with this group of players as they mature. Both in their game and their practice. It also defines goals that could be replicated with other groups of elite athletes. But, for Shaun and myself, what they were able to gain from the practice and achieve in their game so quickly, has become a clear starting point and a solid foundation for the future.

Greg Wythes has been teaching yoga in the northern suburbs of Wollongong for the last 20 years. Shaun Martyn has spent much of the same period working in corporate training."

For a link to the full article:

shaunmartynassociates.com/?page_id=33

A young child with dark hair is performing a yoga pose on a dark blue mat with a light blue wavy pattern. The child is in a low lunge position, with one leg bent and the other extended back, and one arm raised high. The child is smiling and looking towards the camera. The room has a wooden floor and a large window in the background. A wooden chair and a table are visible on the left, and a wooden cabinet is on the right.

THE VALUE OF CHILDREN'S YOGA

YOGA TECHNIQUES FOR CHILDREN

I first started practising yoga approximately 10 years ago at home in my lounge room using online websites. My children were 4, 7 and 16 years of age and I'd recently become a single mother. I'd always previously gone to gyms and practiced Pilates, but yoga was new to me.

In that period I started attending a yoga class once a fortnight. I loved the teacher I had and felt more able to cope with life each time I left the studio. There was no competition in the room, just encouragement from your teacher to focus on yourself and what was happening on your mat. I felt my body getting stronger each week along with my mind and continued my home practice and often with my children involved. It would become a happy, playful time in the house and the animal and nature poses, like 'tree pose' and 'lion pose' became the favourites.

I started to notice how shallow breathing was a very big part of my stress and anxiety and I learnt techniques to control it and bring more calm to my overactive mind at any time of the day that I needed it. I became more in-tune with my body and how it felt and could turn anxiety attacks around by using the techniques I was learning. I shared these with my children also. I learnt that it was never too late to take control of the emotional well-being, self-esteem, spiritual, physical and metaphysical health of yourself and your children through yoga and mindfulness.

I continued to work as an Early Childhood teacher in kindergarten programs and started to incorporate it into the kindy program. I found any child could engage in yoga at their level. One year I had three children on the autism spectrum in my room and I saw how they felt when yoga was implemented and their joy in achieving a pose. Their enthusiasm was a joy to see, as they came to the mat for yoga and immediately showed off their latest pose.

I could see how it was supporting the children's emotional and physical well-being and I wanted to learn more. I enrolled in a course of teaching yoga to children in 2011

and I went about putting together yoga lessons for children aged 2 years to teens. I began teaching yoga to children professionally after completing further training in kid's yoga teacher training. I now help others to learn how to bring yoga to children.

Benefits of children's yoga

Yoga encourages good posture for the skeletal system and flexibility, agility and strength for young growing bodies. Yoga helps children tune into their bodies both physically and mentally. Yoga increases oxygen to the brain which supports learning and concentration. Yoga ignites children's imaginations, creativity and self-expression.

The nervous system and the endocrine system are ignited and work together. Calming of the nervous system with breathing out and asanas takes place as the heart rate slows down and cortisol levels lower, activating calming hormones, such as serotonin.

In our fast-paced world, yoga assists children to calm their thoughts, centre themselves for learning and learn how to be 'still' for a moment. Even preschool age children are showing signs of stress and anxiety in Western countries.

Yoga teaches children how to care for their bodies, body awareness and self-regulation through mindfulness and relaxation.

The joy of movement, music, games and socialisation can all be experienced during a yoga session with children. There is no competition. Yoga teaches perseverance and confidence in their own abilities.

Simple yoga breathing for 2 to 5 year olds:

1. Ask children to sit in 'easy sitting pose' 'Sukasana' and cross their legs. To encourage them to sit up straight, ask them to imagine a piece of string coming out from the top of their heads and lifting their bodies up with a long neck and spine (you can get them to feel their spine on their own backs to connect with their bodies and understand how our spine supports our posture

and breathing). Encourage them to put their hands on their stomachs and feel how their tummies blow up as they breathe in and then go soft as they breathe out. They can then move their hands up to their chest and feel how their chest rises as they breathe in, like a balloon filling up with air and then flattens down like a balloon that you have let the air out of. Breathe deeply like this for three to five breaths together.

2. Lying down on the floor, play some soothing music and ask them to put their hands on their stomachs and with their feet outstretched. Ask them to breathe in and out deeply, in through their nose and out through their mouth or mouth breathing if that is easier at this stage. Ask them to imagine there is a paper boat on their tummies or place a bean bag on their stomachs and imagine it is a small boat on the sea. Feel it rise and fall with their breath as it moves over the waves of the sea. Continue to lie like this and talk them through their breathing in and out slowly in their own rhythm. You can add children's relaxation stories and visualisations to the process, either downloaded or make up your own. You could tell them to imagine they have a lemon in their hands and show them how to tighten their hands and squeeze the lemon, then let the lemon go and do the same with different body parts or just their hands and toes to start. It teaches them to feel the difference between a tense body and a relaxed one. They can feel the difference when their hands and feet go 'floppy' and melt into the mat 'like ice cream melting under the warm sun'.

Have fun and be flexible!

Tracey Maclay is a Yoga Australia Registered Teacher with further training in yoga for children and own business 'Yogamotorskills'. Her passion is to share yoga with the next generation and empower them with tools to connect their mind, body and soul. Tracey also runs workshops for educators and teachers to do the same.

PRANA – THE LIFE FORCE THAT MOVES US



Watching my young son go under anaesthesia recently was a confronting experience. Slowly his natural functions were shut down. His body was closer to a coma state than a sleep one. Tubes and machines assisted his breathing. Consciousness no longer linked him to his breath - his body had been forced into an artificial state. So it got me thinking about breath...and prana.

Prana is essentially life force. The breath is our expression of prana – the part we can access. The ancient yogis believed we were born with a certain amount of breaths in our life. Therefore extending the breath was of benefit to living a long, healthy life. (prana=life force ayama= to extend).

Have you stopped to think about your breath today?

If prana is weak or not functioning well it will show in breath capacity and rhythm. Far from being a mystical concept prana is a necessity for wellbeing.

There is a wonderful Indian story from the Upanishads highlighting how breath is linked to consciousness...

A dispute broke out between the senses, the mind and the breath as to who was more important. They went to a master who informed them that the most important part was the one without which the whole could not survive. They agreed to each leave the body for a short period of time to see what would happen.

Each of the senses left the body but life carried on without them...

The mind disappeared and even though things were dull, life still continued...

However when the breath started to leave, the mind and the senses felt themselves being pulled out of the body too. They all recognised who was the most important!*

We take our breath for granted yet

without it we wouldn't be alive!

It can be a great indicator of our health... short breath can indicate anxiety, illness in the body, or a lack of fitness. (Like most things in our life we only notice it when it becomes a problem!)

The opposite of this is a long, smooth and steady breath – a state indicating a calm mind, capable body and the goal of anyone who wants to sustain their energy! In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali this breath is described as dirgha and suksma (long and smooth) and is a prerequisite to starting a pranayama practice and moving deeper to meditation.

The ancient yogis believed we are all born with prana within us – but it's capacity or strength will change depending on what we do, think, and feel. Although prana may be 'unseen' it shows in the ability to complete simple functions – moving our body, having that thought, digesting our food etc.

Its flow in our system is via many energetic channels or nadis, one or more of which can become 'blocked' perhaps as a result of fatigue, poor health, inappropriate diet etc.

Which is why working with our breath is such a valuable tool...

Where the mind moves, so too does prana. When we link our mind to our breath we are affecting prana.

Conscious breath enables yoga to become a multidimensional practice.

Are you just moving the body through a series of asana or postures or bringing mindfulness to breath at the same time? If the breath can become dirgha and suksma we begin to affect our health at a much more subtle level.

The breath used this way is termed ujjayi – a subtle awareness as it moves softly through our nostrils and down the throat. This breath

demands you to be present – not just going through the motions. Tapping into this adds another layer to the quality of a yoga practice.

Beyond this there are other, more specific pranayama techniques used in yoga to affect the quality of our breath.

In fact, pranayama alone can assist in bringing wellness to the body – which is why even people who may be paralysed or with physical restriction can do yoga. As a colleague of mine likes to say 'If you can breathe you can do yoga!'

So far from being an esoteric concept that may have little relevance for us, prana is actually very logical and can be accessed so simply. We all have the capacity to 'exercise' our breath if we can just take our mind to it. Yet yoga is relatively new to the Western world and it sometimes seems we have grabbed the most obvious tool and run with it - the body. To move deeper into yoga, the body is the starting point - like the tip of the iceberg. The real depth to the practice sits deeper beneath the surface, where prana lies...

*Story from the Upanishads taken from 'What Are We Seeking?' by TKV Desikachar with Martyn Neal.

Jill Harris is a Senior Teacher with Yoga Australia and teacher trainer in the lineage of T. Krishnamacharya. She has been teaching for 14 years and is currently undertaking Yoga Therapy training with her mentor Barbara Brian. She conducts group and individual classes at Kyo Yoga in Ocean Grove, Victoria.

www.yogabijam.com.au

YOGA FOR BETTER POSTURE

Yoga can strengthen posture and the movements of breathing to contribute to a lifetime of health, longevity and pain-free living.

Whether one is teaching or practicing yoga, focusing on asana that simulates aligned 'posture' rather than aligned 'poses' is an important distinction to consider.

THE HUMAN BODY IS MADE OF CURVES

A lot of chronic pain and premature aging is the result of poor sitting and breathing habits juxtaposed with too much time in chairs and cars.

The human body is an organic structure and in the natural world, there are no 'straight lines'. The human body is made of curves and yet the bane of the modern lifestyle, the chair, forces our bodies into a linear unnatural right angle shape that inhibits our breathing apparatus and distorts the natural curves of our spinal column.

In order to remain injury free in our practice, it is important to do yoga poses that keep the 'curves' of the body while avoiding linear and right-angled poses.

SOME YOGA POSES CAN MAKE POSTURE WORSE

Many people mistakenly assume this tension in their back body is a result of shortness. Many will try to remedy the situation in their yoga practice by stretching the back body to make it 'longer' by doing a forward bend. But in anatomical reality, our back is too 'long' and our front body is too 'short'.

The stretch reflex will turn on in forward bends giving a false sense of security for about 20 minutes and the illusion that stretching the back

will make it less 'tight'. This is a huge blind spot in yoga and fitness classes.

In my experience, I have seen that a repetitive practice of forward bends can make back pain worse as well as destabilize the sacral joint. One must deeply bend the knees in forward bending to protect the hip joint and avoid laxity in the posterior ligaments needed for upright posture.

FINDING THE YOGIC MIDDLE PATH IN ASANA

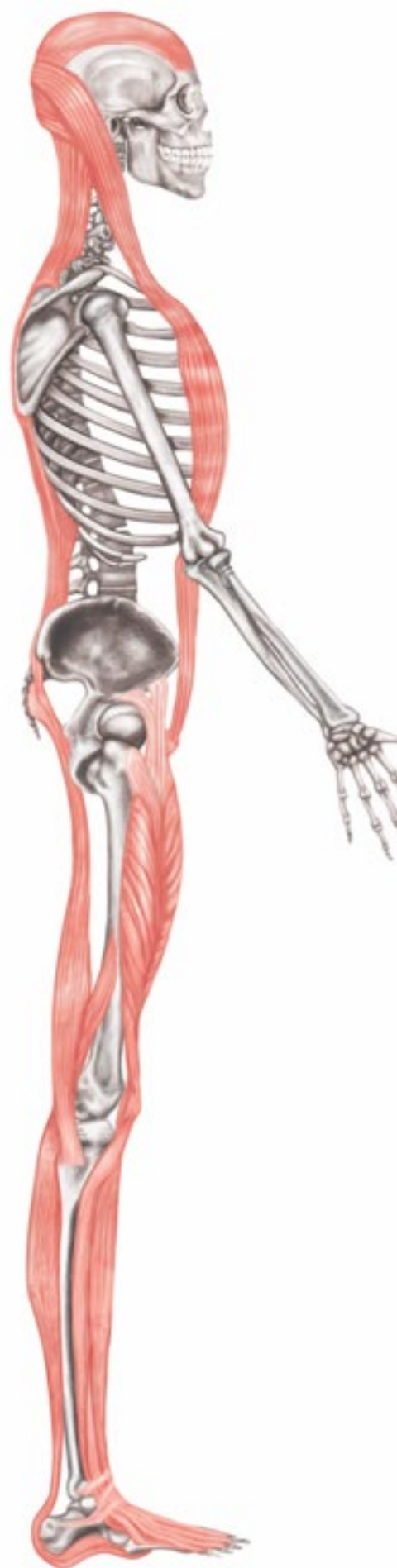
Many people age by going forward so my recommendation is to focus on yoga poses that simulate aligned and upright posture. I have never seen anyone age by going backwards into the wheel pose so I see no need to get good at going forward. Chair sitting, stress and forced compartmentalized exercises and poses can magnify the shortness in the flexor muscles/ fascia chains of the anterior body. Also making the spine loose in all directions can lead to instability and more pain.

People come to yoga to feel balanced and peaceful in the body and mind but many people still suffer from back pain.

Ancient yoga teachings encourage us to find the middle path, and in asana this can be the practice of creating aligned and centered posture.

AVOID COMPARTMENTALIZED STRETCHING OF THE BODY AND BALANCE TENSIONAL FORCES

Centered poses engage the breathing apparatus while contracting the back muscles which can stop the feeling of pain or 'tension' in the back body



or 'extensor chain'. This chain creates a line of pull that runs from the bottom of the feet all the way up the hamstrings, sacrum and back muscles, to the back of the neck and over the skull to the eyebrows. The extensor chain creates the curves in the back body needed for shock absorption during movement.

In most people, the flexors or muscles in the anterior part of the body are much shorter than the extensor chain in the back body. The flexor chain runs from the top of toes up the front of the legs, hip flexors, abdominals and chest muscles to the sternocleidomastoid muscles or SCM. The SCM runs in a diagonal line connecting the anterior flexors in the front body to the back of the skull behind the ears. The flexors and extensor chains meet in the skull and in the feet and to balance the tension in these forces allows one to feel young and be pain-free.

BALANCED TENSION - FLEXOR & EXTENSOR CHAIN

Your yoga practice can be adapted to balance the tension between the flexors and extensors while using breathing techniques that create expansion in the body engaging the core by using the deepest movements of breathing. Our whole body is connected and doing yoga poses that create aligned posture can help to upload better 'posture software programs' in our brain. By using focused breathing, one can tap into the autonomic system alerting the 'bio-intelligence' to 'remember' better posture.

HOW TO DO ACTIVE SITTING

When sitting in a chair, use blocks or a firm pillow to get your hips at least 4- 6 inches higher than the level of the knees. This will release tension in the abdomen allowing the diaphragm and rib cage to engage without restriction. Using the chair back acts as a brace leading to atrophy of the extensor muscles that keep us upright. Try to sit and engage your back muscles rather than using the support of the chair back.

AVOID USING THE PERIPHERY TO CONTROL THE INFRASTRUCTURE

When exercising, doing things like keeping your back flat, tailbone tucked, belly tight, knees straight, or pushing your belly out

on inhale will actually inhibit your ability to breathe and can lead to more slouching.

Many people engage daily in abdominal crunching moves that enlist the muscles of the trunk to be short and tight which can cause the organs to protrude and make a 'pot belly.'

Cyclists in particular are known for hunching over their handlebars and surfers and paddlers – prone as well as stand up – are often in very poor postural alignment when they exercise. The muscles that people engage to shorten the abdominals and round the upper back in these positions mimics slouching. Working the body hard in these positions engages the deep exhalation muscles and locks them in, so it is like they are literally stuck in the exhale.

BREATHE YOUR WAY TO A PAIN-FREE LIFE

Practice self-massage daily on the head, neck, feet, and arms to release unnecessary tension. Don't wait for someone else to give you a massage; you can and should massage yourself. Manage your stress levels with brief walks during the day and spend as little time as possible sitting in a chair. Stop stretching your back and hamstrings and instead practice focused breathing.

GET A BIGGER DRINKING STRAW FOR THIS EXERCISE

From standing, inhale through a straw slowly feeling the movement of the rib cage and the extension of the spine. Now hold your breath gently for about 6 seconds, then take the straw out of your mouth and slowly exhale making a slow SSSSS sound while focusing on staying tall in your body.

Repeat 7 or 8 times each time practicing the lengthening of your trunk muscles when you inhale and the retention of the 'lift' as you exhale.

This simple exercise can teach your brain, which controls your muscles contractions, how to automatically enlist your trunk muscles to stabilize your spine rather than flex your spine.

This is a quick way to realign your posture, get your curves back and improve your posture and health.



Michaëlle Edwards is the creator of YogaAlign and director of the Kauai Yoga School in Hawaii registered with Yoga Alliance. She is a writer for the Huffington Post, a massage therapist, author, and musician. Michaëlle teaches in Hawaii, the mainland USA and internationally conducting YogaAlign teacher trainings and Change Your Posture, Change Your Life Workshops.

www.yogalign.com

THE MIND

JOURNEY TO THE SELF



“We are mind of the mind creator of thoughts”. What is mind of the mind? Well first let’s look at the mind.

When we look at our mind what do we see? Maybe we see the ego, maybe we see our conditioning, but nothing more than that. So, let’s look a little deeper. Let’s look at the layers of our mind. Each layer of our mind holds a key to our journey of evolution.

Let’s start with our first layer, the conscious mind. This conscious mind or lower mind is where our ego sits.

It is how we view the world and our reaction to that. It is the conduit for all our other layers. For example, our instinctive reactions are played out via the ego or conscious mind, but they actually belong to the sub-subconscious mind or the mind of subliminal traits. The conscious mind is also the playground of the manas, the chatty mind. The part we listen to 24/7. We spend all of our time in this first layer of the mind on a constant treadmill of slavery to the ego, doing its bidding and being continually bound by the play of Maya (illusion of this

earthly world). We create new Karma at every turn by never looking at our reactions let alone where they came from. If we stopped before we reacted and asked ourselves; will this reaction be good for me, is it what I need or want, we would be on a path to moving beyond the lower mind to the deeper parts of ourselves. To our very essence. There is a wonderful analogy in Vedantic literature. The bowman has already sent an arrow and it has left his hands. He cannot recall it. He is about to shoot another arrow. The bundle of arrows in the quiver

on his back is the sanchita karma, the sum total of all his Karma from all lifetimes; the arrow he has shot is prarabdha karma the karma that is bearing fruit or has been put into action in this lifetime. The arrow which he is about to shoot from his bow is Kriyamana, or the karma that he is creating. Of these, he has perfect control over the Kriyamana karma (your choice or freewill), as he must surely work out his prarabdha karma; the past which has begun to take effect he has to experience. The message here is to stop and think about what you are about to create with your thoughts, words and deeds. It is said if we are going to shoot an arrow we must learn to be a very good shot and aim our arrows correctly.

Our mind is a complex minefield, with many stumbling blocks and hurdles to negotiate if we are to lessen the karmic implications.

First, we must look at our instinctive reactions or Samskaras. What are yours? Stop and think of some recent events and your reactions to them. Did you respond in the same way and have the same reaction? Do you constantly go around the treadmill acting and reacting the same way? I hope you weren't expecting a different outcome. It is the case for all of us, we get caught up in the physical world or this play of Maya and before we know it there are so many arrows being fired we can no longer see clearly. We will always have experiences, that is what we came to do. These experiences help us to grow and work out this prarabdha karma, but our reactions need to be refined or matured. How can we ever be discerning and use our Buddhi (discerning faculty) correctly if we never stop to think and keep reacting instinctively?

Once you have looked at your reactions and have an awareness of them it will be easier to change them. It will be easier to stop and take control and react differently.


We have been given the free will to act and react any way we want. We need to use this free will to stop, think and then act. It takes courage and steadfastness to stop before firing, but the more we practice the better we will become. Another way of lessening the impact of this ego and these samskaras is to participate in a yoga class that has a dedicated yoga Nidra component. Yoga Nidra is the easiest way to allow these samskaras to be overcome. Withdrawing the senses from the outside world (pratyahara) and reaching into the inner mind will allow the subconscious to teach the conscious a different way through the minefield. This will take practice as our ego will want to keep control and keep us attached to this physical world. Fear will play a big part of this. Our ego will throw fear into our conscious mind and stop us from letting go and surrendering to the process. Have you ever noticed the impact your ego has had on you in the past?

I have an amazing story of a woman who came to my Bali retreat. The participants were in a meditation workshop and meditating happily. Quite suddenly one woman got up and looked quite distressed. I took her for a walk eager to calm her and find out what the problem was. She told me that during the meditation she thought she was having a stroke and was convinced she was going to die in Bali away from her family. As 30 minutes or so had elapsed I assured her if she was having a stroke she would be unconscious by now and on her way to hospital. We walked and talked for about 45 minutes until she finally had the realisation that it was her egos drive and determination to keep her from meditating that was causing the negative reaction. Our ego will do extraordinary things, mainly negative to keep us from going within. I am pleased to say she is quite well and was a changed woman on the retreat after that

experience. She bought new clothes and had a new attitude to life. It was wonderful to witness the positive effects that maturing the ego and letting go of its merciless control can have. The next time you are in yoga Nidra really let go, assure your ego you are safe and enjoy the experience of transcending the conscious mind.

Remember, the mind will happily go on it's negative way if we don't, at some point, stop and say "I have had enough. I want something better. I don't want to keep acting this way". It is then that the real mind changes will come into action.

Once we allow ourselves access to the deeper recesses of the mind, we will overcome the ego, our conditioning and our samskaras. Then we will be free to really begin the journey to the self.



Donna Jordan is a Yoga Australia Registered Senior Teacher and runs a 12 month Diploma of Yoga Teaching. Her passion, apart from learning is to teach and empower people from all different backgrounds to find their own Body, Mind and Spirit connection.



SEED THOUGHTS

WITH DI LUCAS

OCTOBER

As we move into October we can ask our students to consider something they are able to do now which they could not do previously, because they are now experiencing the benefits of three terms of yoga, or at least regular weekly classes.

Is it physical? Is co-ordination better? Do they have increased strength? Have they come through the winter in better health? Have they suffered less with colds and flu? Is there a vitality flowing through each day?

Is the truth of the old Chinese saying "You are only as young as your spine" ringing through each day?

Now let's move to the feelings and ask some more pertinent questions.

Has the regular practice of yoga increased your confidence in your ability range? Are you able to engage with other people evenly and able to enjoy challenging interactions? Philosophically, do you have a broader overview of life? Is this allowing you to see "why things are as they are"? Are you enjoying states of being such as tranquility, harmony and determination?

Has the spiritual perspective allowed you to understand you are "part of all that there is"? Can you express, without arrogance, the realization "I am my best asset"?

Can you smile and be glad that you began, and sustained this journey

into the wholeness of yoga?

NOVEMBER

In the workplace this month of November can be "full on". Expectations that the year is almost complete can cause people to hassle, hurry and demand evidence of projects being completed. If you find yourself or your students are under such pressure, remember the

power of Pranayama!

As we all know and teach, breath is the first thing we do and have in this life. It sustains us throughout life every day. It is free, and finally it is the last thing we surrender.

So, let's go back to breathing. Let's breathe easily, consciously, rhythmically and regularly.

In the morning, when you wake up, sit up and stretch your arms sideways. Expand your chest and breathe. Do this several times. Then sit and experience the peace of the breath as you sit and watch its flow as if it is the very first time you have ever observed this natural life-giving process. Notice how the in breath seems to flow in on the "roof" of your nostrils. Then notice how the out breath seems to flow out on the floor of the nostrils. Be the "observer" and allow the breath to work its life sustaining magic.

How you start the day is how the day will flow. In a competitive environment it's healing to be "in the breath" As you share the workplace and all the challenges there may be, think of the oxygen re-charging your physical body. Remember also the prana. This is the finer life-force sustaining our energy or etheric body.

Use the conscious "breathing" to prepare you for some focused meditation. When there is much happening in the day ahead, joyful, conscious yogic preparation is what ensures we are the best we can be, contributing, sharing positively and achieving!

DECEMBER

Now in December we have the opportunity to review our year and celebrate the steady progress our yoga has nurtured.

As we reflect on 2017 with its global chaos, challenges and changes,

we can plan a week where we use our "lunch time" each day, to look locally and personally.

I suggest jotting down events or experiences which have coloured your year. Now distill each into a point of gratitude. Even the tough lessons have, from a yogic perspective, the expansion of insights and the deepening of understandings. We need to pause and ask what can be learned. How can this be handled differently? Are there useful follow ups for me now?

Now put these personal responses into phrases of gratitude. You may prefer to call it "thanksgiving". What is most important is the expansion of consciousness.

All our yoga with its physical beginnings, ultimately gives us the ability to handle the stresses of the world. This is why we express gratitude! We can enjoy the achievements of every day knowing we are expanding our consciousness. We are connecting with the vast field of Consciousness that brings everything into being.

Celebrate the year of yoga you have given yourself and your students.

Evaluate from your field of consciousness. The Wisdom teachings reminds us that Consciousness is all that there is. We are in it whether we succeed brilliantly or have a sense of there being more to learn. It is not about 'good' or 'bad', rather it is all of us sharing a huge learning curve.

It is our all embracing yoga framework that includes all and excludes none.

So....let 2017 with all its challenges and triumphs, be celebrated with gratitude and expressed with joy.

Di Lucas is Co-Director of Gita International Yoga and is a member of the Yoga Australia Council of Advisors (Y.A.A.A). Her Seed Thoughts reflect decades of practising and teaching yoga.

Q&A WITH SWAMI DAYANANDA/NANCY JACKSON

Q: *I run an after-work class in the city. A few people have to rush to get there on time but lately so many have been late it's affecting the class. Any tips??*

A: I like to tease the class. When someone is late I say "Everyone must pay" and tell them we're going to hold one of the more challenging postures for a long time. We all have a laugh but it gets the point across. I always start the class on time even if someone is still arriving and getting set up. That way I maintain the discipline not only of starting on time, but also finishing on time and allowing the right rhythm of postures, pranayama and relaxation within the session.

On the other hand, when someone genuinely has trouble getting to class on time, yoga also is flexible. I always welcome each student and try to make them feel comfortable. Individually you can talk to the person to let her know it's okay and the class will work with her with as little disturbance as possible while honouring the others.

As new students try out the class, I also am sure to announce to everyone that they are welcome to come 15 minutes before the class for relaxation and that we always start and stop on time.

Q: *Sometimes the students seem to have low energy and I find it hard to make them more present to the class.*

A: Tell jokes! Even if someone's in a bad mood and hates stupid jokes, it uplifts the energy.

Usually people get lighter emotionally throughout the class as they let go of their concerns and focus on the body. Depending on the posture, you can remind the students to open up and let

go. For example, the bridge is a wonderful posture to open the heart and navel chakras. It's a great asana for reminding them to be open to receiving, feel safe to open the heart and open to new possibilities. I also remind them to let go as we do different breathing exercises or when they are tight in a posture. When you tell them to relax the jaw, the shoulders, the hips, the ankles, they also let go of their worries, even for a moment.

Another loosener is to get them to tense on purpose. For example, I get them to do what I call the "teenage shrug", bringing the shoulders up towards the ears. When they let go they realise how much they hold in that area.

Usually people have become a bit happier by the final relaxation but here's the time to help them even more through guided meditations of letting go or bringing light and grace into their inner selves.

Q: *I need to raise my class price. Is there a good way to do it?*

A: First, perhaps, give them some lead time. You can print out an information sheet at sign-up to let them know the price will go up. Or you can mention it at an appropriate time. You can encourage them to purchase a discount card for a number of sessions, or make one up, perhaps 10 sessions at the old price.

Generally students recognise that prices need to go up from time to time and for the most part absorb the change. If there is an individual with a sincere financial challenge who has supported your class for a while, you can offer for that person to be a helper and attend the class for free or at a reduced rate.

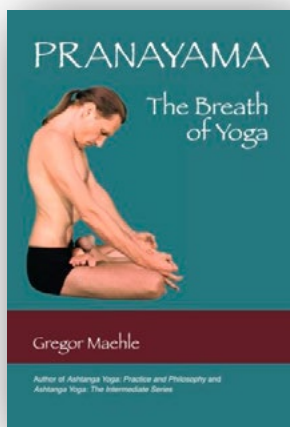
Q: *I used to put up a picture of my guru, a flower and a piece of fruit, and play a mantra as people came into class. I taught some of my favourite Sanskrit mantras and would have the class learn them as well. Then I heard some feedback where friends-of-friends who came to class said it was too "religious" and I backed off. The other day I spontaneously recited the "Purnamadah" mantra and everyone loved it and said they'd like to learn it. What to do?*

A: This is a standard yoga teacher's dilemma. When do you stick closely to what you were taught in your lineage? When do you make it more generic to suit the students you teach? Needless to say, people nowadays are highly influenced by what is said around them. Some are reticent about different cultures, some embrace them.

It's vitally important to be considerate of your students. Obviously you've done the right thing. It was right to honour your tradition in class and then it was right to make it more generic. Now it's right to add more elements of ancient yoga.

As yoga is always internal work, one of its most amazing aspects is intuition. Naturally lots of things in life backfire, but your intuitive pathway through each yoga class enhances each student's journey.

Swami Dayananda/Nancy Jackson has practiced meditation and yoga for more than 40 years. Widely published in health and self-development, she is senior feature writer for Australian Yoga Life magazine. She teaches in Adelaide and runs retreats at her Lokananda Yoga Meditation Retreat Centre in Country SA.



PRANAYAMA

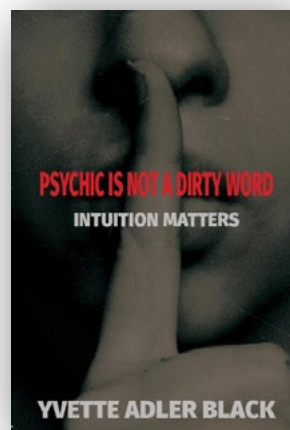
THE BREATH OF YOGA

BY GREGOR MAEHLE

There are many books written on this topic and all are equally thorough and educational. The main difference with this book is that it sticks to the traditional meaning and practice of yoga. It explains this limb of yoga as it is described in the ancient yogic texts. By taking the reader from the basic practices to the more advanced, it explains each practice in terms of the what, how and why including the physiological impacts of each practice and the contraindications. For each practice there is a description of how to practice and how to teach the practice. It emphasises the importance of learning through experience before teaching.

I believe this book is a valuable source for yoga teachers.

Words Shyamala Benakovic, Yoga Australia CEO



PSYCHIC IS NOT A DIRTY WORD

INTUITION MATTERS

BY YVETTE ADLER BLACK

As yoga teachers we understand and resonate with the importance of trusting our inner guidance or intuition and the practice of *sraddha* – an internal, informed conviction.

However people who have a finely developed ability, or simply a gift to be able to intuit on many levels both in relation to themselves and others have not always enjoyed the most welcoming attitude from much of society, especially when they call themselves (or are called by others) a “psychic”.

In her partly autobiographical book, *Psychic is Not a Dirty Word – Intuition Matters*, author Yvette Adler Black shares many moments of her life with honesty, charm and humour, as she recounts the unfolding of her own psychic abilities from an early age, leading to a lifelong vocation assisting others in understanding and being more comfortable with what life is telling them.

Yvette helps us recognise that intuition not only matters, but is a vital part of being a whole, integrated, authentic human being – which of course resonates clearly with the goals of yoga.

I’m reminded of a saying that I first heard from Deepak Chopra. ‘For those who don’t believe - no proof is possible, while for those who do believe - no proof is necessary.’

This book is easy to read and thoroughly engaging. As a person who has sat with Yvette many times over the past 15 years, I can say that reading it is like sitting around the fire with her, having a cup of tea and a chat. It is a writing of simple authenticity – even down to the occasional mixed or adapted metaphor.

The word “psychic” can be a charged one for some people, but after reading Yvette’s book, folks are likely to come to the conclusion that “psychic” is indeed not a dirty word and intuition does surely matter.

Words Leigh Blashki, Yoga Australia Council Advisor



CHI FLOW YOGA & SOUTHSIDE OSTEOPATHIC PRESENT: WORKING WITH INJURIES

A COURSE FOR PRACTITIONER & TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

WITH DR. COREY DYER (OSTEOPATH) & ROMAN KOUZMENKO (SENIOR YOGA TEACHER)

This course is specifically designed to increase your knowledge of musculoskeletal injuries that commonly occur in the body and as a teacher/instructor will help you to work safely and therapeutically with them. Whether for your own practice, or for teaching students you will benefit from this course.

Set out over 3 daily workshops, each day will focus regionally on an area of the body. In the first half of the day Corey Dyer, practicing Osteopath will review the functional anatomy and biomechanics along with an understanding of commonly occurring injuries and how they affect movement. He will cover the principles and strategies of how to work safely in class and which forces may aggravate each condition. The second half of the day will be a practical workshop with Senior Yoga teacher Roman Kouzmenko applying these strategies in a practical manner on how to work with these injuries using movement, posture and breathing exercises.

When:

Saturday November 18th: Working with Spinal Injuries: Lower Back, Middle Back and Neck

Sunday November 19th: Working with Knee, Hip and Ankle Injuries

Saturday December 2nd: Working with Shoulder, Elbow and Wrist Injuries

Sessions are from 11am to 6pm each day

For Bookings and Information:

Call Roman on 0419 369 364

or email info@chiflowyoga.com.au

Cost:

\$165 for the day

\$450 for the full course

Where:

Chi Flow Yoga Studio

Level 1, 726 High Street, Armadale

Corey Dyer is a practicing Osteopath with 18 years clinical experience. He has a strong interest in movement practices for therapy and rehabilitation as well as nutrition for health. He is a teacher/educator in Osteopathic education and has taught Anatomy to more than 150 yoga teacher trainees

Roman Kouzmenko is a registered senior yoga teacher and a member of Yoga Australia. He has more than 16 years teaching experience in both Yoga and Meditation. Roman's experience has seen him teaching across Australia, Asia, and Europe. His style of teaching is joyful and informative with the main focus on the health benefits of Yoga, Qi Gong and Meditation.

