

CarolinaAramburoAndFriends' TOPIC OF THE WEEK

Hello Health, Fun and Well-Being Partners!

In this 231st Newsletter, I want to give us a chance to consider the world of **YOGA**, and the effects it has on people's physical, mental, emotional and even our spiritual well being.

In order to put the rest of the **newsletter in context**: This conversation makes more sense if you've watched my [1st Health Proposal](#) and my [2nd Health Proposal](#). So if you haven't, please pause, go back and watch them. This week we have also included articles on Yoga (on our Health Fan-page) that you can read in full [HERE](#).

We are going to go **beyond the obvious** as we EXPLORE the topic of YOGA. If you think you know everything there is to know about YOGA then consider that in this newsletter we may be able to expand your **knowledge** about Yoga beyond what you think. If you already do or have done a class in Yoga and think you already 'got the basics' about Yoga, please give your self the **chance** to learn beyond. Even and specially if you are a Yoga Teacher...

Even if you have never considered Yoga or you may feel you are already at peak health or that Yoga is simply another trendy exercise program that you are not interested in; please read this **entire** newsletter.

You can discover about the amazing benefits that Yoga can provide for you and also to be able to **support** friends or family. Yoga can be a possible addition to alternative ways that they may **prevent**, treat and HELP heal any and all illnesses.

In any case I invite you to, **introduce REAL** Yoga into your and/or their wellness practices to achieve and maintain **optimal** physical well-being, emotional, mental and spiritual balance and vibrant energy.

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What I am going to present in this article are the facts, as **traditionally** recorded, about the possible benefits of Yoga - **conventional** and not conventional, but I also want to invite you to discover the REAL lost secret of the ANCIENT Traditional Original Yoga, that most people will **never** ever KNOW about or even KNOW that is mostly UNAVAILABLE unless you are VERY VERY ADVANCED in a few Monasteries.

This Ancient Traditional ORIGINAL form of Yoga that I am speaking about is not **accessible** in modern cities almost at all. 85% of people who do Yoga do not know that they are not practicing the **Original Ancient Yoga** as it was **designed**. And as a result, are not getting all of the Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Wellness benefits Ancient Traditional ORIGINAL Yoga could provide. The design of THE Ancient Yoga is to be part of a **holistic** DEEPLY SPIRITUAL Lifestyle including raw vegan living and a redesign of life such that people start living in a **conscious** mindfully AWARE and balanced way that causes an ever-expanding state of wellness. One half of the aches and pains you may experience **everyday** can be **healed** through THE Yoga that I am referring to, along with one half of the structural problems you may have .. and at half of the recovery speed of other modalities.

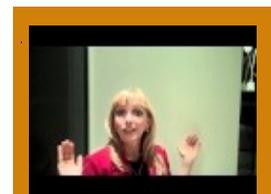
Yoga is an **ancient** physical and spiritual discipline and branch of philosophy that originated in India reportedly



CAROLINA ARAMBURO

more than 5,000 years ago. The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit word yuj, which means to yoke, join, or unite. The Iyengar School of yoga defines yuj as the "joining or integrating of all **aspects** of the individual - body with mind and mind with soul - to achieve a happy, balanced and useful life." The ultimate aim of yoga, they claim, is to reach kaivalya (emancipation or ultimate **freedom**).

There is no **written** record of who invented yoga because; yogis (yoga practitioners) practice it long before any written account of it came into existence. Yogis over the millennia passed down the **discipline** to their students, and many different schools of yoga developed as it spread. The earliest written record of yoga, and one of the oldest texts in existence, is generally **believed** to be written by Patanjali, an Indian yogic sage who lived somewhere between 2,000 and (Cont. on next page)



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2,500 years ago. Patanjali is credited with writing the **Yoga Sutras** (sutra means "thread" in Sanskrit), which are the principles, philosophy, and practices of yoga that are still followed today. Although many schools of yoga have evolved over the centuries, they all follow the fundamental **principles** described by Patanjali more than 2,000 years ago. Buddhism and other Eastern spiritual traditions use many of the yoga techniques or **derivations** of those techniques.

While today, and particularly in the West, many regard it as just another form of **exercise** - and some even see it as a "fad" - it's truly a comprehensive practice that integrates mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual elements.

With regards to the latter, yoga can be viewed as a form of **meditation** that demands your full attention as you move from one asana (yoga position) to another. As you learn new ways of **moving** and responding to your body and mind, other areas of your life tend to shift and change as well.

In a sense, you not only become more physically **flexible**, but your mind and **approach** to life may gain some needed flexibility as well. Your body and your health will indeed change as you start implementing the correct **lifestyle** changes, and yoga has received increased attention lately.

"Yoga is a healing system of theory and practice. The **purpose** of yoga is to create strength, awareness and harmony in both the mind and body," explains Natalie Nevins, DO, a board-certified **osteopathic** family physician and certified Kundalini Yoga instructor in Hollywood, California. "As an osteopathic physician, I focus a lot of my efforts on preventive medicine and practices, and in the body's **ability** to heal itself. Yoga is a great tool for staying healthy because it is based on similar principles."

As reported by Fox News, Huffington Post, and *Scientific American*, several recent **studies** highlight a variety of health benefits from regular yoga practice. This includes but is not limited to:

- Improved immune function
- Reduced risk for migraines
- Improved sexual performance and satisfaction in both sexes
- Better sleep
- Reduced food cravings

Current research suggests that a carefully **adapted** set of yoga poses may reduce low-back pain and improve function. Other studies also suggest that practicing yoga (as well as other forms of regular exercise) might improve quality of life, reduce stress, lower heart rate and blood **pressure**, help relieve anxiety, depression, and insomnia and improve overall physical fitness, strength, and flexibility.

Yoga uses asanas (postures or poses), focused **concentration** on specific body parts, and pranayama (breathing techniques) to integrate the body with mind and mind with soul.

Yoga asanas help condition your body. There are thousands of yoga poses, and in **Sanskrit**, these poses are called kriyas (actions), mudras (seals), and bandhas (locks). A kriya focuses on the effort necessary to move energy up and down the spine; yoga **mudra** is a gesture or movement to hold energy or concentrate awareness; and a bandha uses the technique of holding muscular contractions to focus awareness.

Yoga focuses on the mind by teaching you to **concentrate** on specific parts of the body. For instance, you may be asked by the instructor to focus deeply on your spine, or let your mind go and have your body sink into the floor. This **awareness** keeps the mind-body connection sharp and doesn't allow a lot of space for external chatter (like worrying about what you're going to have for dinner or the **presentation** at the office that you're preparing for). Instead, the focus is internal, between your head and your body.

Yoga uses **controlled** breathing as a way to merge the mind, body, and spirit. The breathing techniques are called pranayamas; prana means energy or life force, and yama means social ethics. It is believed that the controlled breathing of pranayamas will control the energy flow in your body. It is my experience that controlled **breathing** helps me focus on muscles that are working, and during (Cont. on next page)



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To ENHANCE, elevate and EVOLVE your wellness I have two very important **recommendations** for you:

- 1) Listen to your body in a specific way*.
- 2) Find an extraordinary **Holistic Health/ Wellness Coach**.

*In my second health proposal, I proposed that you can improve your health by **listening** to your body and becoming aware of what it needs. I don't mean listening to your body's cravings, mostly just out of habit.

There is a **specific** way that this needs to be done and to learn 'HOW' please watch my video by clicking [HERE](#).

My 2nd recommendation is that you find an **extraordinary** Holistic Health/ Wellness Coach. In our Radical Results WELLNESS COACHING DIVISION we are ready to create **Top Wellness**, with and for YOU, by designing completely **customized** nutritional, exercise plans that work for your unique body!

If you would like to **find out more** about coaching with our Health, Fitness & Quantum Healing Division click here:

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svasana (Corpse Pose or Final Relaxation), it slows down my heart rate, calms my mind, and leads to a deep, inner calm and sense of **relaxation**.

While there are more than one hundred different types, or schools, of yoga, most sessions are typically comprised of **breathing exercises**, meditation, and assuming postures (*asana*) that stretch and flex various muscle groups. Yoga has evolved over the **centuries** as different yogis developed their own philosophies and approaches and taught them to eager students, who then passed them on to their own students and disciples. Fundamentally, all yoga types strive for the same **outcome**, a unification of mind and body and spirit, although they may differ in their philosophy and even in the asanas.

Here is a list (certainly not all-inclusive) of some of the **various** types of yoga: Purna, Ashtanga, Jnana, Bhakti, Bikram, Karma, Raja, Hatha, Kundalini, Mantra, Tantra, Iyengar, Astanga, Vini, Ananda, Anusara, Integral, Kali Ray Tri, Kripalu, Kundalini, and Sivananda. Some of the most popular in the U.S., and the ones you are most likely to find in yoga and **fitness** centers, are Hatha, Iyengar, Astanga (or Ashtanga), Bikram, and Kundalini. Below is a short description of some types of yoga:

Hatha yoga is the most widely practiced type in the U.S. and is excellent for beginners. It is gentle with slow and smooth movements, and the focus is on holding the poses and integrating your **breathing** into the movement. It's a great introduction to yoga as it incorporates many different asanas, as well as pranayamas and chanting. Hatha yoga will prepare you for other yoga types that might be taught at your yoga center. Hatha is a great way to **stretch**, work your muscles, get in touch with your body, relax, and decrease stress.

Hatha yoga, in current times, is mainly practiced for health and vitality. It's a **marvelous** means of exercising, stretching, and freeing the body so it can be a healthy, long-lived, and vital

instrument of the mind and soul. In addition, hatha yogis can become extremely clear-minded and can concentrate well. However, a few yogis do practice hatha yoga as their main method for spiritual **realization**. The yogis' clear minds and pure, healthy bodies enable them to meditate easily.

In Sanskrit *ha* means sun and *tha* means moon. Hatha yoga is the practice of **harmonizing** the body's inner currents (principally the currents of Feeling, Thinking, Willing, and Acting) until they are in perfect balance.

Normally the hatha yogi with the calm mind focuses **awareness** at the ajna center half an inch above where the eyebrows join and directs awareness to move through that center into a super-conscious state. The individual life, the finite life, meets and fuses temporarily, at first, with the infinite life.

Hatha yoga **meditation** is not well-known today and the purity of life required in order to do hatha yoga meditation well requires more time and application than most people are willing to give. However, those few dedicated men and women who are true hatha yogis live in abundant well being and universal harmony.

Iyengar yoga is a form of yoga that uses poses similar to Hatha, but it focuses more on body alignment and balance and holding poses longer. Iyengar yoga was developed and popularized by B.K.S. Iyengar (pronounced "eye-yen-gar"). Iyengar is a very **meticulous** style of yoga, with utmost attention paid to finding the proper alignment in a pose. In order to help each student find the proper alignment, an Iyengar studio will stock a wide array of yoga props — blocks, blankets, straps, chairs, **bolsters**, and a rope wall are all common. There isn't a lot of jumping around in Iyengar classes, so you won't get your heart rate up, but you'll be amazed to discover how **physically** and mentally challenging it is to stay put. Iyengar teachers must undergo a comprehensive train-

ing — if you have an injury or chronic condition, Iyengar is probably your best choice to insure you get the knowledgeable instruction you need.

Kundalini yoga emphasizes rapid movement through the poses and emphasizes breathing, chanting, and meditation. It has a more spiritual feel than Hatha and **focuses** on energy balance in your body. You might find Kundalini physically and mentally challenging if you're a beginner and unfamiliar with yoga poses, chanting, and meditation, and so Hatha or any **beginner** class is probably a better way to go.

Kundalini yoga is sometimes considered a distinct yoga although it generally involves a **combination** of: raja, hatha, tantra, laya and mantra yogas.

Its principal goal is the stimulation of the **spiritual** life force at the base of the spine (called Kundalini) so that it will rise easily from the lower centers of your being into the spiritual centers in your head where higher consciousness is perceived, experienced and, ultimately, lived in.

Bikram yoga is derived from traditional Hatha yoga, but is practiced in a room (sometimes unventilated) heated to about 105 degrees Fahrenheit. The objective is to loosen muscles and to sweat to cleanse the body and remove symptoms of disease and **chronic** pain. Approximately 30 years ago, Bikram Choudhury developed this school of yoga where classes are held in artificially heated rooms. In a Bikram class, you will sweat like you've never **sweated** before as you work your way through a series of 26 poses (like ashtanga, a Bikram class always follows the same sequence, although a Bikram sequence is different from an ashtanga sequence). Bikram is somewhat controversial, as Choudhury has trademarked his sequence and has **prosecuted** studios, which call themselves Bikram (Cont. on next page)

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but don't teach the poses exactly the way he says they should. It is also wildly popular, making it one of the easiest types of classes to find. There is a potential risk of **dehydration**, hyperthermia (overheating), blood pressure changes, and cardiac problems with exertion in such an inhospitable environment. This is particularly so for individuals who may have an existing heart problem or high blood pressure but don't know it.

Ashtanga yoga, or power yoga, is an ancient system of yoga taught by Sri K. PattabhiJois at the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute in Mysore, India. In the U.S., it is taught as an aggressive workout where you move quickly from one pose to another to build strength and **endurance**. In Ashtanga yoga you perform the exact same poses in the exact same order. There is little emphasis on meditation with Ashtanga, and at the end of the session you will feel more like you have completed a **traditional** weight-training or callisthenic workout than you would with any other type of yoga.

Anusara yoga is a relative newcomer to the yoga world as an American yogi developed it, John Friend, in 1997. Based on the belief that we are all filled with an **intrinsic** goodness, anusara seeks to use the physical practice of yoga to help students open their hearts, experience **grace**, and let their inner goodness shine through. Classes, which are specifically sequenced by the teacher to explore one of Friend's Universal Principles of Alignment, are rigorous for the body *and* the mind.

Restorative - Restorative yoga is a delicious way to way to relax and soothe frayed **nerves**. Restorative classes use bolsters, blankets, and blocks to prop students in passive poses so that the body can experience the benefits of a pose without having to exert any effort. A good restorative class is more rejuvenating than a nap. **Studios** and gyms often offer them on Friday nights,

when just about everyone could use a little profound rest.

Vinyasa - Vinyasa (pronounced "vin-yah-sah") is the Sanskrit word for "flow", and vinyasa classes are known for their **fluid**, movement-intensive practices. Vinyasa teachers choreograph their classes to smoothly transition from pose to pose, and often play music to keep things **lively**. The intensity of the practice is similar to Ashtanga, but no two vinyasa classes are the same. If you hate routine and love to test your physical limits, **vinyasa** may be just your ticket.

Bhakti yoga - Bhakti yoga, also known as devotional yoga, is the most natural path for those who are dominantly seeking emotional fulfillment and well being. The "bhakta" usually practices meditation by **visualizing**, thinking and feeling that Source is sitting or standing before him. The bhakta pours out his heart's love, adoration, and **shares** his deepest thoughts and **concerns** with Source until a continual flow of awareness moves between devotee and his or her Source. This continuous flow of love and life force brings about a super conscious state of awareness, which is **generally** called a mood, or bhava.

Karma Yoga - Karma means to do. Karma refers to the universal principle of cause and effect. For every effect there's a cause, and the devotee realizes that he, in his **present** life situation, is experiencing the effects of a number of causes, which he has entertained and **enacted**. He recognizes that for a finer, more fulfilling life he has to change his thoughts and feelings and so express himself through his **actions** that new causes supplant old habits and attitudes. Through establishing new causes, he is confident of more beneficial and successful effects occurring to him and his loved ones in life.

Jnana Yoga - Jnana means wisdom or discernment. Jnana yoga is the path of wisdom and jnana meditation is many-faceted. The main purpose of jnana meditation is to withdraw the mind and **emotions** from perceiving

life and oneself in a deluded way so that one may behold and live in attunement with Reality, or Spirit.

One principal way that the "jnani," the yogi of **discernment**, meditates is to patiently release or put aside all thoughts and feelings until the luminous glow of the soul dawns in the mind and heart and is allowed to do a work of **transformation** and enlightenment within the rapt meditator. One way this is accomplished is through the technique called neti-neti, which means "not this, not this." Whenever a thought or feeling which is not the goal of the **meditation** — that is, which is not the soul, the inner self — occurs to the mind, the meditator simply says, "Not this, not this," and dismisses the thought, image, concept, sound, or sense distraction.

Raja Yoga - Raja means royal or kingly. Raja yoga meditation is generally based on **directing** one's life force to bring the mind and emotions so into balance that the attention may be easily focused on the object of meditation, or the Lord directly.

Generally, life force is directed to move up and down the spine until it is **balanced** and the mind and emotions are serenely content. Then awareness is generally directed to move forward into a point in the center of the lower forehead. This meditation point, which is about half an inch above where the eyebrows meet, is called ajna, or the third eye.

When the energy is balanced throughout the **brain** and body and easily moving forward in the area of the third eye, your mind becomes very calm. While your mind is not passive, it is free of meaningless thoughts, worries, and the bric-a-brac of the **subconscious** mind. This state usually gives you a very pleasant sense of well being and your mind seems filled with a velvety darkness.

Mantra Yoga - Mantras (or mantrams) (Cont. on next page)

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are words, phrases, or syllables, which are chanted thoughtfully and with growing attention. Mantra yoga meditation involves chanting a word or **phrase** until the mind and emotions are transcended and the super-conscious is clearly revealed and experienced.

Since the mind **wanders** so much, the music of a mantra easily rescues the mind and brings it back to the object of one's meditation. Both the rhythm of it and the meaning of it combine to guide the mind **safely** back to the point of meditation — the higher consciousness or the specific spiritual focus. There are thousands of mantras, which are mainly from the ancient Sanskrit language.

Lava Yoga - While you need a teacher to help you learn any form of meditation well, you particularly need the aid of a teacher to learn laya yoga meditation. There are five main energy centers in your spine and two in your head. The laya yoga meditator knows **exactly** how to locate these centers through the kind training of a teacher. When these centers are found, they function very much like doorways to different realms of higher consciousness.

Through laya yoga meditation, for example, you sense the heart center, which is **located** inside the spine, directly back of the heart. From this point you can expand your awareness and enter into a **realm** of great, sky blue light (sometimes other colors as well) and discover how easily and readily you can love. Through laya yoga meditation in the heart center you overcome **selfishness** and self-centeredness. You become able to deal with your fears and worries because of the tremendous strength and insight you gain from the "heart expansion."

Tantra Yoga - The word tantraliterally means "expansion." A tantra yogi concentrates on expanding all levels of his or her **consciousness** to unveil and realize the Supreme Reality. Tantra focuses on the dynamic aspect of divinity called Shakti, or "the Cosmic

Mother."

The tantric devotee **strives** to attune with the spiritual dynamic energy in order to transform personal limitations and release subconscious blockages.

True tantra yoga is a pure path, but some self-proclaimed **adherents** have abused it. Tantra yoga is not concerned with sexuality, but with the creative force and transmuting this energy into higher channels. Sometimes self-styled teachers have misconstrued the **symbolism** of tantra yoga into sex practices for men and women.

Rather, the goal of tantra yoga is to awaken and **harmonize** the male and female aspects within each person in order to spiritually awaken and realize the whole universe as an expression of the Cosmic Mother, the divine life force, or Spirit.

Kriva Yoga - Classically, kriya yoga is a blend of raja, jnana, and bhakti practices. The word kriya means "to do, to make an effort," or "to transform."

One of the main ways that kriya is practiced is a daily **program** of self-discipline of mind and body, introspection, and devotion to Source. Another way that kriya yoga is practiced in the World today is in directing life force to **move up and down the spine**, transforming the meditator's state of being until spiritual realization occurs. This technique is usually conveyed privately through initiation from a Guru or longtime practitioner of this **method**.

Both forms of kriya are deeply related and very **ancient** — well over five thousand years old and probably much older. Several million people practice both forms of kriya yoga throughout the World today.

Training, Licensing and Certification

There are many training programs for yoga teachers throughout the country. These programs range from a few

days to more than 2 years. Standards for **teacher** training and certification differ depending on the style of yoga.

There are organizations that register yoga teachers and training programs that have **complied** with a certain curriculum and educational standards. For example, one nonprofit group (the Yoga Alliance) requires at least 200 hours of training, with a specified number of hours in areas including **techniques**, teaching methodology, anatomy, physiology, and philosophy. Most yoga therapist training programs involve 500 hours or more. The International Association of Yoga Therapists is developing **standards** for yoga therapy training.

If You Are Considering Practicing Yoga

- Do not use yoga to replace your current medical care or to postpone seeing a **health** care provider about pain or any other medical condition.
- If you have a medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before **starting** yoga.
- Ask a trusted source (such as your healthcare provider or a health coach) to recommend a yoga **practitioner**. Find out about the training and experience of any practitioner you are considering.
- Everyone's body is different, and yoga postures should be modified based on individual abilities. Carefully selecting an instructor who is experienced with and attentive to your needs is an important step toward helping you **practice** yoga safely. Ask about the physical demands of the type of yoga in which you are interested and inform your yoga instructor about any medical issues you have.
- Carefully think about the type of yoga you are **interested** in. For example, hot yoga (such as Bikram yoga) may involve standing (Cont. on next page)

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and moving in humid environments with **temperatures** as high as 105° F. Because such settings may be physically stressful, people who practice hot yoga should take certain precautions. These include drinking water before, during, and after a hot yoga practice and wearing suitable clothing. People with conditions that may be affected by excessive heat, such as heart disease, lung disease, and a prior history of **heatstroke** may want to avoid this form of yoga. Women who are pregnant may want to check with their health care providers before starting hot yoga.

Tell all your healthcare providers about any complementary health approaches you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to **manage** your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

101 Benefits of Yoga (by yogadrienne)

Physical

- Increases body awareness.
- Stretches and lengthens the muscles.
- Stretches the soft tissues of the body. (Tendons, ligaments, and the fascia sheath that surrounds the muscles.)
- Releases **lactic acid** build up. (Lactic acid can cause muscle soreness, stiffness, pain, and fatigue.)
- Increases range of motion in the joints.
- Increases muscle tone. (From the larger ones to some of the smaller, less-used muscles.)
- Increases **endurance**. (This depends on the style, as some are more conducive to improving endurance, such as vinyasa, ashtanga, and other power styles.)
- Helps develop motor skills for kids.
- Improves **balance**.
- Improves coordination.
- Improves posture. (Increases in strength, especially core strength, flexibility, and bodily awareness can lead to improvements in posture. Moreover, each pose give specific **attention** and focus to proper alignment.)
- Improves respiration. (Increased lung capacity due to yoga's emphasis on deeper and fuller breathing.)
- Improves circulation of blood.
- Improves stress-management (or less stress). (Yoga's emphasis on deepening and lengthening the breath helps to initiate the body's relaxation response.)
- Lowers levels of adrenaline, cortisol, and catecholamines (all responses to stress.)
- Increases energy and vitality.
- Lowers **blood pressure**.
- Lowers pulse rate.
- Lowers cholesterol.
- Eases the symptoms of asthma.
- Facilitates weight loss. (Primarily through better lifestyle choices.)
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Improves oxygen delivery to cells.
- Helps to prevent loss of bone density (osteoporosis).
- Reduces or even eliminates pain, both acute and chronic. (Including those associated with arthritis and fibromyalgia.)
- Improves **sleep** and decreases symptoms and occurrence of insomnia.
- Improve conditions of irregular heart rhythm.
- Helps to maintain a balanced **metabolism**.
- Protects against future injury.
- Aids the recovery of stroke victims.
- Massages the internal organs.
- Improves lymphatic functioning.
- Helps prevent hardening of the arteries.
- Aids and improves digestion and elimination processes.
- Helps to detoxify the body.
- Increases the **Galvanic skin response**.
- Improves depth perception.
- Improves endocrine functioning (normalization).
- Reduces sodium levels.
- Increases level of red blood cells.
- Increases core stability.
- Improves agility.
- Improves reaction time.
- Decreases inflammatory markers.
- Decrease in **cellular** aging.
- Reduces blood glucose levels. (Especially helpful for diabetics.)
- Aids in sensory integration (especially helpful for both kids and adults with **Autism**).
- Improves lipid profile.
- Improves symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. (Improved grip and reduction of pain.)
- Decreases occurrence of tension headaches and migraines.
- Relieves some symptoms and discomfort associated with menstruation and **menopause**.
- Promotes nasal breathing. (Filters, warms, and humidifies the air).
- Aids in common pregnancy discomforts such as bloating and backaches.
- Often helps make labor shorter and easier.
- Helps manage the symptoms of multiple sclerosis.
- Improves spinal curvature. (Can even help straighten curvature associated with scoliosis.)
- Elevates brain gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) levels. (Lows levels are associated with Alzheimer's disease.)
- Improves sexual functioning.
- Calms the nervous system.
- Nourishes intervertebral discs.

Mental and/or Emotional

- Increases experience of relaxation.
- Provides a deeper appreciation for the present moment, or (Cont. on next page)

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- mindfulness.**
3. Allows for greater mind control, or control over the thoughts.
 4. Increases mental clarity.
 5. Improves concentration and focus. (Cont. on next page)
 6. Improves self-discipline.
 7. Expands imagination and creativity (especially in children).
 8. Elevates mood and feelings of contentment.
 9. Increases **self-awareness.**
 10. Increases self-confidence.
 11. Increases optimism.
 12. Provides much-needed "me-time." (Especially important for parents)
 13. Increases mental strength, or willpower.
 14. Improves **symptoms** of certain neuropsychiatric disorders. (Including schizophrenia and ADHD.)
 15. Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.
 16. Improves learning efficiency.
 17. Improvements in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD).
 18. Reduces **symptoms** of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
 19. Fosters a healthier body-image.
 20. Improves emotional control. (Especially over feelings such as anger or hostility.)
 21. Improves **self-control.** (Contributes to better choices and habits.)
 22. Increases experience of positive emotions. (Joy, peace.)
 23. Decreases experience of negative emotions. (Fear, frustration, worries.)
 24. Improves the mind-body connection. (Comes from synchronizing breathing with movement. Retrains the mind to find a place a peace and calm.)
 25. Improves **relationships** with others.
 26. May decrease feelings of loneliness (especially in elderly practitioners).
 27. Increases sense of emotional healing and well-being.
 28. Increases ability to handle disappointment and **adversity.**
 29. Increases open-mindedness.
 30. Improves intuitive abilities.
 31. Increases sense of community. (When practiced in a group setting.)
 6. Leads to a **greater** sense of connectedness to others and the world.
 7. Develops a sense of connection to something greater than ourselves. (Nature, the universe, one's God or gods, or some other expression of the divine.)
 8. Fosters a greater sense of appreciation of each experience for what it is.
 9. Fosters a deeper sense of gratitude in general.
 10. Leads to a sense of **fulfillment.**
 11. As many yogis/yoginis say: you know your yoga practice is working when your life gets better, *not* when your yoga gets better.

Spiritual

1. Encourages self-knowledge.
2. Stimulates the energy centers of the body.
3. Increases ability to manifest positive **experiences** in daily life.
4. Discovery or connection with one's sense of purpose or meaning in life.
5. Creates a sense of being more in-tune with one's inner consciousness.

We will be going into details about many of these benefits of Yoga in the rest of this newsletter. A combination of Yoga and a Balanced Raw Living Foods Diet and Mindful lifestyle practices can have a huge effect on maintaining OPTIMAL Health and **Wellness**. If yoga appeals to you, you will need to find a good teacher/ yoga master who can help you practice correctly and thrive. No chapter or book on yoga can replace personal coaching.

New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our physical SYSTEMS!!

In this article we will present the various **physical** health benefits of yoga and studies that have been done in relationship to those benefits.

Chronic Backpain- Back pain is a common condition that can negatively affect one's quality of life. When doctors at the HMO Group Health Cooperative in Seattle pitted 12 weekly sessions of yoga against therapeutic **exercises** and a handbook on self-care, they discovered the yoga group not only showed greater improvement but experienced benefits lasting 14 weeks

longer.

People with routine back strain should practice yoga gently and should not attempt poses that require extreme **twisting** or vigorous spinal extension, as these exercises can put a lot of strain on the spinal disks and nerve roots, potentially causing a ruptured disk. Anyone who has severe or worsening back pain, traumatic back injury or loss of lower-body sensation or function during or after a yoga session should be evaluated by a physician.

Carpal tunnel syndrome - Carpal

tunnel syndrome is a common wrist compression neuropathy that causes pain, paresthesia (a burning or tingling sensation) and disability. In a randomized, single blind **controlled** trial, at the end of the study period, the yoga participants showed improvement in grip strength, pain levels and elicited symptoms compared with the wrist splint group.

Other researchers reviewed 21 separate trials that evaluated the (Cont. on next page)

New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!!

clinical outcome of nonsurgical treatments for carpal tunnel syndrome. After 8 weeks of yoga, participants had significantly **reduced** pain compared with other participants who wore wrist splints (O'Connor, Marshall & Massy-Westropp 2003). The researchers concluded that yoga provided a "significant short-term benefit" for people with carpal tunnel syndrome (O'Connor, Marshall & Massy-Westropp 2003).

People who suffer from carpal tunnel syndrome should modify poses as needed to **avoid** wrist strain. Poses that cause numbness, tingling or exacerbation of symptoms should also be avoided. Using different hand positions to minimize wrist pressure can modify some poses. For example, resting the upper-body weight on the forearms instead of the **hands** can modify downward-facing dog.

Osteoarthritis - As Baby Boomers age, more and more of them will likely suffer from the debilitating effects of osteoarthritis (OA). Since OA is a common problem in the United States, many people would benefit from an exercise **program** that could mitigate the symptoms of this condition. In one pilot study, 11 deconditioned subjects who had been clinically diagnosed with OA in the knee experienced some relief from symptoms once they **started** a yoga program. After 8 weeks in a modified Iyengar yoga class that met just once per week, all of the subjects showed a reduction in knee pain stiffness (Kolasinski et al. 2005). Some clients with OA may need to **modify** certain yoga poses and may benefit from the assistance of props, such as blocks, blankets or a yoga strap. Any person who experiences arthritis pain accompanied by joint swelling needs prompt medical evaluation.

Diabetes - One of the major problems from long-term diabetes is nerve damage due to constant high sugar levels in the body. This nerve **damage** leads to the slowing of nerve impulses, decreased sensation, numbness of the feet, and poor bowel func-

tion. Scientists at Guru TeghBahadur Hospital, in Delhi, India, studied a group of 20 type 2 **diabetic** subjects between the ages of 30-60 years. Their aim was to see whether Yoga asanas had any effect on nerve conduction. The Yoga asanas included Suryanamkar Tadasan, Konasan, Padmasan Pranayam, Shavasana, Pavanmukthasan, Sarpasan and Shavasana.

At the end of the 40 days, those who did the yoga had improved the **nerve** impulse in their hands. The hand nerve conduction velocity increased from 52.8 meters per second to 53.8 m/sec. The control group nerve function deteriorated over the period of study, **indicating** that diabetes is a slowly progressive disease involving the nerves. The authors conclude that Yoga asanas have a beneficial effect on blood sugar control and improve nerve function in type 2 diabetics who have mild nerve damage.

Researchers at the University College of Medical Sciences, in Shahdara, New Delhi evaluated 24 patients aged 30 to 60 year old who had non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, also called Type II diabetes. Diabetics who **require** insulin are called Type I, while Type II diabetics are treated with diet, exercise, and oral medicines that lower blood sugar. The researchers evaluated the baseline **fasting** blood sugar levels of the patients, and they also performed pulmonary function studies. These pulmonary function studies measure lung capacity and the quantity of air that can be exhaled within the first second of a rapid exhale.

After 40 days of yoga asanas regimen, the results **indicate** that there was significant decrease in fasting blood sugar levels from about 190 initially to 140. Fasting blood sugar in people without diabetes is usually below 120. The lung studies showed an **average** improvement of about 10 percent in lung capacity. These findings suggest that better blood sugar control and pulmonary func-

tions can be obtained in type I diabetics when they stick to a daily schedule of yoga asanas and pranayama. The exact **mechanism** as to how these postures and controlled breathing interact with physio-neuro-endocrine mechanisms affecting blood sugar and pulmonary functions remains to be worked out.

A recent study published in the Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies revealed that adults at risk for Type 2 diabetes reduced their blood glucose levels with just eight weeks of **practice**. Conducted at the University of Texas in the Cardiovascular Aging Research Laboratory, this study had participants practice Bikram yoga three times weekly and found that their blood glucose responses during a glucose tolerance test were lowered as a result.

Menopause - Findings from the Women's Health Initiative led researchers in 2002 to take an unprecedented stand in halting the study when it became clear that the CVD risks to women taking long-term hormone replacement therapy outweighed the **benefits**. As a result, many postmenopausal women have chosen not to take hormone replacement therapy and instead are now seeking non-hormonal methods to control common menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes and **impaired** sleep pat (Cont. on next page)

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New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!! (Cont.)

terns. A gentle yoga practice may be part of an overall lifestyle approach that can help **decrease** the discomfort of some symptoms.

A preliminary study at the University of California, San Francisco, found that menopausal women who took two months of a **weekly** restorative yoga class, which uses props to support the postures, reported a 30 percent decrease in hot flashes. A four-month study at the University of Illinois **found** that many women who took a 90-minute Iyengar class twice a week boosted both their energy and mood; plus they reported lowered physical and sexual discomfort, and reduced stress and anxiety.

Stress Relief - To combat stress, many people turn to meditation or other mental stress reduction tools. But stress also creates physical response in the body and, as such, can be managed with exercise -- in particular, with yoga.

"Stress sends the entire physical system into overdrive," says Garrett Sarley, president and CEO of the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Lenox, Mass. "The **muscles** tense, the heart beats faster, breathing patterns change, and if the cause of stress isn't discontinued, the body secretes more hormones that increase **blood sugar** levels, raising blood pressure. Yoga is one of the few stress-relief tools that has a positive effect on all the body systems involved."

Recognizing the detrimental effects of stress, especially in the area of heart disease, the preventive and rehabilitative **cardiac** center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles began offering yoga to their patients more than 10 years ago. "Over the years, yoga has become one of our **primary** therapies for stress management," says C. Noel BaireyMerz, M.D., director of the preventive and rehabilitative cardiac center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

35 male volunteers whose ages ranged from 20 to 46 years were studied in two **sessions** of yoga-based guided relaxation and supine rest. A significant decrease in oxygen consumption and increase in breath volume were recorded after guided relaxation (paired t test). There were comparable reductions in heart rate and skin **conductance** during both types of relaxation. During guided relaxation/yoga the power of the low frequency (LF) component of the heart-rate variability **spectrum** reduced, whereas the power of the high frequency (HF) component increased, suggesting reduced sympathetic activity. Also, subjects with a **baseline** ratio of LF/HF > 0.5 showed a significant decrease in the ratio after guided relaxation, while subjects with a ratio < or = 0.5 at baseline showed no such change. The results suggest that sympathetic activity **decreased** after guided relaxation based on yoga, depending on the baseline levels.

Asthma and Breathing - Asthma is a lung condition involving chronic inflammation of the airways (bronchi), which can narrow and go into spasms. During asthma attacks, the smooth muscle cells in the bronchi constrict, the **airways** become inflamed and swollen, and breathing becomes difficult. Symptomatic control of episodes of wheezing and shortness of breath is generally achieved with fast-acting bronchodilators. Asthma can be exacerbated by stress and **negative** thoughts and feelings. Studies have shown that the practice of yoga and the resulting state of thoughtless awareness automatically helps relieve stress and reduce negative thoughts and feelings, which, in turn, improves coping skills and **ultimately** reduces symptoms of asthma.

The role of yoga **breathing** exercises, as an adjunct treatment for bronchial asthma, is well recognized. In a study of 120 patients of asthma were randomized into two groups. In the group that utilized yoga the subjects showed a statistically significant

increasing trend in percent predicted peak expiratory flow rate (PEFR), forced expiratory volume in the first second (FEV1), forced vital **capacity** (FVC), forced mid expiratory flow in 0.25-0.75 seconds (FEF25-75) and FEV1/FVC% ratio at 4 weeks and 8 weeks as compared to Group B. Thus, yoga breathing exercises used adjunctively with standard pharmacological **treatment** significantly improves pulmonary functions in patients with bronchial asthma.

One study showed that practicing yoga for 16 weeks reduced asthma attacks and improved lung function. yoga also **decreased** the negative effects of stress, while the control group that did not practice yoga showed no improvements. A more recent study in Australia showed that yoga reduced severity of asthma symptoms.

Obesity - Obesity rates in the United States have reached epidemic proportions: 58 Million Overweight; 40 Million Obese; Eight out of 10 adults over age 25 Overweight; 78% of American's not meeting basic activity level recommendations; 25% completely **Sedentary**; 76% increase in Type II diabetes in adults 30-40 years old since 1990; In 2001 25% of all white children and 33% of African American and Hispanic children were overweight.

Research published in 2012 discovered that yoga has a beneficial impact on **leptin**, a hormone that plays a key role in regulating energy intake and energy expenditure. According to the authors, expert yoga practitioners had 36 percent higher leptin levels compared to novices, leading them to theorize that regular yoga practice may **benefit** your health by altering leptin and adiponectin production.

Both insulin and leptin resistance are associated with obesity, and impair (Cont. on next page)

New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!! (Cont.)

ment of their ability to transfer the information to receptors is the true foundational **core** of most all, chronic degenerative diseases. Diet and exercise are your top **allies** when it comes to improving insulin/leptin sensitivity, and yoga, it seems, can do that just as well as other forms of exercise.

More recently, a study investigating the mysterious ability of Tibetan yogis to generate high **amounts** of body heat through the yogic practice of Tumo, found that these expert yogis were able to activate brown fat to keep them warm. This allows them to meditate near-naked in sub-zero temperatures without shivering or succumbing to **hypothermia**.

Brown fat is a heat-generating type of fat that *burns* energy instead of storing it. Not only does this have implications for **surviving** extremely low temperatures while meditating in the Himalayas, but it also plays a role in weight loss, which is a more common conundrum for people in the West. Human **newborns** have a supply of brown fat that helps them keep warm, but by adulthood you've lost most of your stores of it. (Cont. on next page) Brown fat has been located in the neck area, around blood vessels (helping to **warm** your blood), and "marbled" in with white fat in visceral fat tissue.

Researchers at Hampton University in Virginia report that a program combining yoga and breathing exercises helped teens shed unwanted pounds. The study included 60 **overweight** high school girls and boys. After 12 weeks, the average body mass index (BMI) in the yoga / pranayama group went from 22.8 to 21.5 (a 5.7 percent decrease), while the average BMI in the control group increased from 22.3 to 22.4. The **decrease** in the pranayama group could be attributed to two factors: the pranayama and yoga exercises themselves, and a possible **decrease** in daily caloric intake by the participants in the pranayama group because of decreased stomach size caused by the yoga.

Vigorous Power, Vinyasa, or Ashtanga yoga classes done for 90 minutes at least 3-5 times a week will produce **weight loss**. Yoga also keeps people more in tune with their bodies making them aware of aware of bad habits, such as eating because of stress, boredom or depression.

Heart Disease, Blood Pressure and Cholesterol - While almost any exercise is good for the heart, experts speculate yoga's meditative component may give it an extra boost by helping to stabilize the endothelium, the lining of the blood vessels that, when **irritated**, contributes to cardiovascular disease. Since the lining is reactive to stress, and meditation can lower stress hormones, yoga may be causing a cascade of events that could reduce your risk of a heart **attack** or stroke.

Several trials have found that yoga can lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and **resting** heart rates, and help slow the progression of atherosclerosis—all risk factors for heart disease, says Erin Olivo, PhD, director of Columbia University's Integrative Medicine Program.

Yoga also has potential for benefit for patients with **coronary** artery disease. Scientists evaluated the possible role of lifestyle modification incorporating yoga, on retardation of coronary atherosclerotic disease. At one year, the yoga groups showed significant reduction in number of anginal **episodes** per week, improved exercise capacity and decrease in body weight. Serum total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels also showed greater reductions as compared with control group. Revascularisation procedures (coronary angioplasty or bypass surgery) were less frequently required in the yoga group. Coronary angiography repeated at one year showed that significantly more lesions **regressed** (20% versus 2%) and fewer lesions progressed (5% versus 37%) in the yoga group. The compliance to the total program was

excellent and no side effects were observed. The conclusion was that a yoga **lifestyle** intervention retards progression and increases regression of coronary atherosclerosis in patients with severe coronary artery disease. It also improves symptomatic status, functional class and risk factor **profile**.

Researchers at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Medical Division, in Mumbai, India, evaluated the overall benefits of yoga on risk factors for heart **disease**. The effect of yoga on the body, psychological well being, and cardiovascular risk factors was studied in a group of middle aged patients. Twenty patients (16 males, 4 females) in the age group of 35 to 55 years with mild to moderate high blood pressure **underwent** yogic practices daily for one hour for three months. High blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and kidney damage. There was a decrease in blood pressure along with a decrease in blood sugar, **cholesterol** and triglycerides. The patients also reported an improvement in overall well being and quality of life. There was also a decrease in the levels of catecholamines, suggesting a decrease in sympathetic activity. A decrease in sympathetic activity indicates that the patients were calmer and experienced less tension and stress, and that their blood pressure would be lower. The authors of the study conclude that yoga can play an **important** role in decreasing the risk factors for cardiovascular disease in those with mild to moderate hypertension.

Heart rate variability, a sign of a healthy heart, has been shown to be higher in yoga practitioners than in non-practitioners, according to research in the International Journal of Medical Engineering and Informatics. The **autonomic** nervous system regulates the heart rate (Cont. on next page)

New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!! (Cont.)

through two routes — the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The **former** causes the heart rate to rise, while, the parasympathetic slows it. When working well together, the two ensure that the heart rate is steady but ready to respond to changes caused by eating, the fight or flight **response**, or arousal.

Another study showed it helps improve atrial fibrillation (irregular heart-beat)—a condition in which the upper chambers of your **heart quiver** chaotically. At the end of the study, the number of times the yoga participants reported heart quivering (confirmed by heart monitor), dropped by half. Their average heart rate also fell from an average of 67 beats per minute during the first **three months**, to 61-62 beats per minute post-yoga. The participants also reported feeling less anxiety and depression—beneficial mental/emotional side effects that I'll get into below.

Another study, published in the April issue of the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, investigated the effects of Hatha Yoga on blood pressure among seventh-graders, some of whom were **pre-hypertensive** (had clinical signs of early-stage high blood pressure). At the end of the three months, those who took yoga classes had lower resting blood pressure compared to those who participated in art or music classes.

Yoga increases activity in the parasympathetic nervous system and reducing activity in the sympathetic nervous system, which restores balance and **homeostasis** and reduces autonomic nervous system activity, ultimately reducing blood pressure, pulse rate and respiratory rate.

A 2012 study of **stress** and hypertension compared yoga to conventional medical **treatment**. Meditators in yoga significantly improved systolic and diastolic blood pressure and increased blood pressure control, compared to participants who received

conventional medical treatment and showed no **improvement**. Another study in India found similar results for a group of 35- to 50-year olds with hypertension who practiced yoga for 12 weeks.

Epilepsy - Scientific studies have shown that meditation/yoga can help manage epilepsy in several ways, including influencing brain chemical activity implicated in causing seizures, repairing damaged brain structures, and changing brain activity **patterns**. Research to date suggests that yoga can be an effective long-term epilepsy management strategy for many. In 2006, a clinical trial of people with chronic epilepsy showed that yoga can help reduce the **frequency** of epileptic seizures. In another study involving yoga and other groups, the group practicing yoga reported a greater than 60% decrease in epileptic seizures. In a study of **refractory** epilepsy (chronic, drug resistant epilepsy), the group practicing yoga demonstrated significant reduction in the duration and frequency of seizures over a 6-month period.

Cancer and Cancer Related Treatments - A study from The University of Texas found that yoga helped women undergoing **radiation** therapy reduce fatigue, improve mental outlook, and regulate the stress hormone cortisol.

Another study published in January 2014 from Ohio State University found that yoga helped women who had just completed cancer treatment reduce **inflammation**, increase energy, and improve mood. The researchers believe the health benefits of yoga are applicable to the broad population.

Another study from Ohio State University also found that practicing yoga for as little as three months can reduce fatigue and lower inflammation in breast cancer **survivors**. The more the women in the study practiced yoga, the better their results. The January 2014 study was ti-

tled "Yoga's Impact on Inflammation, Mood, and Fatigue in Breast Cancer Survivors: A **Randomized Controlled Trial**."

The research team focused on breast cancer survivors because the rigors of treatment can be so taxing on **patients**. "Though many studies have suggested that yoga has numerous benefits, this is the largest known randomized controlled trial that includes biological measures," said Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, professor of psychiatry and psychology at The Ohio State University and lead **author** of the study.

The participants of the Ohio study had completed all breast cancer treatments before the start of the study. Only yoga **novices** were recruited for the randomized controlled clinical trial. At the six-month point of the study—three months after the formal yoga practice had ended—results showed that on average, fatigue was 57 percent lower in women who had practiced yoga compared to the non-yoga group, and their **inflammation** was reduced by up to 20 percent. "This showed that modest yoga practice over a period of several months could have substantial benefits for breast cancer survivors," said Janice Kiecolt-Glaser. "We also think the results could easily generalize to other groups of people who have issues with **fatigue** and inflammation."

"One of the problems they face is a real reduction in cardiorespiratory fitness. The treatment is so debilitating and they are so tired, and the less you do **physically**, the less you're able to do. It's a downward spiral," Kiecolt-Glaser said. "That's one reason we think there are higher levels of inflammation in cancer survivors, meaning that an intervention that reduces inflammation (Cont. on next page)

New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!! (Cont.)

could potentially be very beneficial."

"We were really surprised by the data because some more recent studies on exercise have **suggested** that exercise interventions may not necessarily lower inflammation unless people are substantially overweight or have metabolic problems," Kiecolt-Glaser said. "In this group, the women didn't lose weight, but we saw really marked reductions in inflammation. So this was a particularly striking finding biologically."

A secondary **analysis** showed that more frequent yoga practice produced larger changes in fatigue, vitality and depressive symptoms as well as between an average 4 to 6 percent reduction in two of the three pro-inflammatory **cytokines**. The yoga group also reported significantly improved sleep compared to the control group.

Janice Kiecolt-Glaser said, "Yoga has many parts to it—meditation, breathing, **stretching** and strengthening. We think the breathing and meditation components were really important in terms of some of the changes we were seeing." Kiecolt-Glaser concluded, "We think improved sleep could be part of the **mechanism** of what we were seeing. When women were sleeping better, that could have lowered inflammation. Reducing fatigue **enables** women to engage in other activities over time. So yoga may have offered a variety of benefits in addition to the yoga exercises themselves."

Research is becoming clear on this: Women who do yoga during and after treatment **experience** less physical discomfort and stress. Duke University scientists reported results of a pilot study in which women with metastatic breast cancer attended eight weekly yoga sessions. The doctors found that the women had far less pain and felt more **energetic** and relaxed.

Researchers in Ankara, Turkey evaluated twenty patients between the

ages of 30 and 50 years who were under routine medical treatment for breast cancer. Eight sessions of a yoga program were included in the program such as **warming** and breathing exercises, asanas, relaxation in supine position, and meditation. After completion of the study, testing showed that patients' quality of life scores were better than scores obtained before the program. After the yoga **sessions**, there was a significant decrease in anxiety. The researchers concluded that yoga is helpful to achieve relaxation and reduction of stress, helps cancer patients perform daily and routine activities in an easier manner, and increases the **quality** of life in cancer patients.

Lorenzo Cohen, Ph.D., professor and director of the Integrative Medicine Program first reported findings of the MD Anderson Cancer Center study, from University of Texas in 2011. His research is part of an ongoing effort to scientifically validate mind-body **interventions** in cancer patients and was conducted in collaboration with India's largest yoga research institution, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana in Bangalore, India.

According to Cohen, research shows that developing a yoga practice also helps patients after **completing** cancer treatment. Cohen said, "The transition from active therapy back to everyday life can be very stressful as patients no longer receive the same level of **medical** care and attention. Teaching patients a mind-body technique like yoga as a coping skill can make the transition less difficult." Cohen also found that patients who did yoga were more likely to find 'life meaning' from their cancer experience than the other groups.

According to Cohen women who practiced yoga had the **steepest** decline in their cortisol levels across the day, indicating that yoga had the ability to help regulate this stress hormone. This is particularly important because higher stress hormone

levels throughout the day—known as a blunted circadian cortisol rhythm—have been linked to worse breast cancer outcomes. Although these findings **focused** on patients with cancer, it is likely that the cortisol regulating benefits of yoga are universal.

A gentle form of yoga helps those with lymphoma sleep better. Lymphoma is a **cancer** that arises in the cells of the immune system. The investigators found that among 39 patients being treated for lymphoma, those who participated in only seven weekly sessions of yoga said they got to **sleep** sooner, slept for longer, and needed fewer drugs to fall asleep. Some studies have suggested that up to three quarters of cancer patients struggle with sleep. This may have important health **consequences** since sleep disturbances have been linked with problems with the immune system, and an increased **risk** of illness or death. Individuals with cancer should be cautioned that while undergoing or recovering from treatment one should adopt a gentle routine, and avoid excessively **strenuous** routines. This is particularly true for cancer patients who have metastases to the bones, which would make the skeletal system more **prone** to fractures. There is good reason to expect that a gentle form of yoga would be beneficial to not only patients with lymphoma, (Cont. on next page)

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but also those suffering from other types of cancer.

Several recent studies have been conducted with cancer patients and survivors. Nine studies conducted with cancer patients and survivors yielded modest improvements in sleep quality, mood, stress, cancer-related **distress**, cancer-related symptoms, and overall quality of life. Studies conducted in other patient populations and healthy individuals have shown beneficial effects on psychological symptoms, as well as other aspects of physical function. Results from the emerging literature on yoga and cancer provide **preliminary** support for yoga interventions for cancer patients.

Boost Immunity - A recent Norwegian study found that yoga practice results in changes in gene expression that boost immunity at a **cellular** level. And it doesn't take long: The researchers believe the changes occurred while participants were still on the mat, and they were significantly greater than a control group who went on a **nature** hike while listening to soothing music. Yoga also helps to boost immunity by simply increasing overall health, says Mitchel Bleier, a yoga teacher of 18 years and owner of Yogapata (Cont. on next page) in Connecticut. "As you breathe better, move better and circulate better, all the other organs function better."

Ease Migraines - Research shows that migraine sufferers have fewer and less painful migraines after three months of yoga practice. The cause of **migraines** isn't fully understood, but Bleier says it could be a combination of mental stressors and physical misalignment that create migraines and other issues. Hunching over a computer or cell phone with your shoulders up and head forward causes **overlifting** of your trapezius and tightening of the neck. This pulls the head forward and creates muscle imbalances that can **contribute** to headaches and migraines.

Boost Sexual Performance - Studies

have found that 12 weeks of yoga can improve **sexual** desire, arousal, performance, confidence, orgasm and satisfaction for both men and women. How? Physically, yoga increases blood flow into the genital area, which is important for arousal and erections, says Bleier, and strengthens the "moolabandha," or pelvic floor muscles. Mentally, the breathing and mind **control** involved with the practice can also improve performance.

Sleep Better - Researchers from Harvard found that eight weeks of daily yoga significantly improved sleep quality for people with insomnia. And another **study** found that twice-weekly yoga sessions helped cancer survivors sleep better and feel less fatigued. This can be attributed to yoga's ability to help people deal with stress, says Bleier. "Sleep issues are like **anxiety**. Your head can't stop spinning, you don't know how to relax," he says. "Breathing and mental exercises allow the mind to slow down, so you're going to start to see yourself sleep better."

Fight Food Cravings - Researchers from the University of Washington found that regular yoga practice is associated with mindful eating, an awareness of **physical** and emotional sensations associated with eating. By causing breath awareness, regular yoga practice strengthens the mind-body connection, Bleier says. The awareness can help you tune in to emotions involved with certain **cravings**, and yoga breathing exercises can help you slow down and make better choices when cravings strike.

John Denninger, a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, is leading a five-year study on how the ancient practices affect **genes** and brain activity in the chronically stressed. His latest work follows a study he and others published earlier this year showing how so-called mind-body techniques can switch on and off some genes **linked** to stress and immune function.

While hundreds of studies have been conducted on the mental health **benefits** of yoga and meditation, they have tended to rely on blunt tools like participant questionnaires, as well as heart rate and blood pressure monitoring. Only recently have neuro-imaging and genomics **technology** used in Denninger's latest studies allowed scientists to measure physiological changes in greater detail.

"There is a true biological effect," said Denninger, director of research at the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, one of Harvard Medical School's teaching hospitals. "The kinds of things that happen when you **meditate** do have effects throughout the body, not just in the brain."

A Harvard study published in the medical journal PLoS One showed that one session of relaxation-response practice was enough to enhance the expression of genes involved in energy metabolism and insulin secretion and reduce expression of **genes** linked to inflammatory response and stress. There was an effect even among novices who had never practiced before.

Aging - In a study published last year, scientists at the University of California at Los Angeles and Nobel Prize winner Elizabeth Blackburn found that 12 minutes of daily yoga meditation for eight weeks increased **telomerase** activity by 43 percent, suggesting an improvement in stress-induced aging. Blackburn of the University of California, San Francisco, shared the Nobel medicine prize in 2009 with Carol Greider and Jack Szostak for research on the telomerase "immortality **enzyme**," which slows the cellular aging process.

(Cont. on next page)

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Improves Flexibility and Strength - Improved flexibility is one of the first and most obvious benefits of yoga. With practice you will notice a gradual loosening, and eventually, seemingly impossible poses will become possible. You'll also **probably** notice that aches and pains start to disappear. That's no coincidence. Tight hips can strain the knee joint due to improper alignment of the thigh and **shin-bones**. Tight hamstrings can lead to a flattening of the lumbar spine, which can cause back pain. And inflexibility in muscles and connective tissue, such as fascia and ligaments, can cause poor posture.

The principle of **specificity** in exercise science holds that a healthy body will adapt to the specific physical stressors placed upon it. With yoga's heavy emphasis on correct biomechanics and **muscle** stretching and strengthening, it is not surprising that some of the strongest evidence of the benefits of yoga has come from studies that measured strength and flexibility indices.

Researchers who examined the fitness-related benefits of hatha yoga studied 10 previously untrained subjects who had no **knowledge** of yoga. After 8 weeks, the subjects showed significant improvements in upper- and lower-body muscular strength, endurance and flexibility; there was no statistically significant change in body composition or **pulmonary** function (Tran et al. 2001).

Another study compared subjects who performed an **average** of about 21 hours of hatha yoga classes with a sedentary control group (Boehde et al. 2005). At the end of the 8-week study period, the yoga group **showed** significant improvements in flexibility, balance and muscular endurance compared with the controls (Boehde et al. 2005).

Strong muscles protect us from conditions like arthritis and back pain, and help prevent falls in **elderly** people. And when you build strength through yoga, you balance it with flexibility. If

you just went to the gym and lifted weights, you might build strength at the expense of flexibility.

Perfects your posture - When your head is balanced directly over an erect spine, it takes much less work for your neck and back muscles to support it. Move it several inches forward, however, and you start to strain those **muscles**. Hold up that forward-leaning weight for eight or 12 hours a day and it's no wonder you're tired. And fatigue might not be your only problem. Poor posture can cause back, neck, and other muscle and joint **problems**. As you slump, your body may compensate by flattening the normal inward curves in your neck and lower back. This can cause pain and degenerative arthritis of the spine. Yoga, when done correctly will correct and enhance posture.

Prevents cartilage and joint breakdown - Each time you practice yoga, you take your joints through their full range of motion. This can help prevent degenerative arthritis or mitigate disability by "squeezing and soaking" areas of cartilage that normally aren't used. Joint **cartilage** is like a sponge; it receives fresh nutrients only when its fluid is squeezed out and a new supply can be soaked up. Without proper sustenance, neglected areas of cartilage can eventually wear out, exposing the underlying bone.

Protects your spine - Spinal disks—the shock absorbers between the vertebrae that can herniate and compress nerves—crave movement. That's the only way they get their nutrients. If you've got a well-balanced yoga **asana** practice with plenty of backbends, forward bends, and twists, you'll help keep your disks supple.

Betters your bone health - It's well documented that weight-bearing exercise strengthens bones and helps ward off osteoporosis. Many postures in yoga require that you lift your own weight. And some, like

Downward- and Upward-Facing Dog, help strengthen the arm bones, which are particularly vulnerable to **osteoporotic** fractures. In an unpublished study conducted at California State University, Los Angeles, yoga practice increased bone density in the vertebrae. Yoga's ability to lower levels of the stress hormone **cortisol** may help keep calcium in the bones.

Increases your blood flow - Yoga gets your blood flowing. More specifically, the relaxation exercises you learn in yoga can help your circulation, especially in your hands and feet. Yoga also gets more oxygen to your cells, which function better as a result. **Twisting** poses are thought to wring out venous blood from internal organs and allow oxygenated blood to flow in once the twist is released. Inverted poses, such as Headstand, Handstand, and Shoulder stand, encourage venous **blood** from the legs and pelvis to flow back to the heart, where it can be pumped to the lungs to be freshly oxygenated. This can help if you have swelling in your legs from heart or kidney problems. Yoga also boosts levels of **hemoglobin** and red blood cells, which carry oxygen to the tissues. And it thins the blood by making platelets less sticky and by cutting the level of clot-promoting proteins in the blood. This can lead to a decrease in heart attacks and strokes (Cont. on next page)

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New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!! (Cont.)

since blood clots are often the cause of these killers.

Regulates your adrenal glands - Yoga lowers cortisol levels. If that doesn't sound like much, consider this; Normally, the adrenal glands secrete cortisol in response to an acute crisis, which temporarily boosts immune function. If your **cortisol** levels stay high even after the crisis, they can **compromise** the immune system. Temporary boosts of cortisol help with long-term memory, but chronically high levels undermine memory and may lead to **permanent** changes in the brain. Additionally, excessive cortisol has been linked with major **depression**, osteoporosis (it extracts calcium and other minerals from bones and interferes with the laying down of new bone), high blood pressure, and insulin resistance. In rats, high cortisol levels lead to what researchers call "food-seeking behavior" (the kind that drives you to eat when you're **upset**, angry, or stressed). The body takes those extra calories and distributes them as fat in the abdomen, contributing to weight gain and the risk of diabetes and heart attack.

Relaxes your system - Yoga encourages you to relax, slow your breath, and focus on the present, shifting the balance from the sympathetic **nervous** system (or the fight-or-flight response) to the parasympathetic nervous system. The latter is calming and restorative; it lowers breathing and heart rates, decreases blood pressure, and **increases** blood flow to the intestines and reproductive organs—comprising what Herbert Benson, M.D., calls the relaxation response.

Improves your balance- Regularly practicing yoga increases proprioception (the ability to feel what your body is doing and where it is in space) and improves balance. People with bad posture or **dysfunctional** movement patterns usually have poor proprioception, which has been linked to knee problems and back pain. Better balance could mean fewer falls. For

the elderly, this translates into more independence and delayed admission to a nursing home or never entering one at all. For the rest of us, postures like Tree Pose can make us feel less wobbly on and off the mat.

Maintains your nervous system - Some advanced yogis can control their bodies in extraordinary ways, many of which are mediated by the nervous system. **Scientists** have monitored yogis who could induce unusual heart rhythms, generate specific **brain-wave** patterns, and, using a meditation technique, raise the temperature of their hands by 15 degrees Fahrenheit. If they can use yoga to do that, perhaps you could learn to improve blood flow to your pelvis if you're trying to get pregnant or induce relaxation when you're having trouble falling asleep.

Releases tension in your limbs - Do you ever notice yourself holding the telephone or a steering wheel with a death grip or scrunching your face when **staring** at a computer screen? These unconscious habits can lead to chronic tension, muscle fatigue, and soreness in the wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, and face, which can increase stress and worsen your mood. As you **practice** yoga, you begin to notice where you hold tension: It might be in your tongue, your eyes, or the muscles of your face and neck. If you simply tune in, you may be able to release some tension in the tongue and eyes. With **bigger** muscles like the quadriceps, trapezius, and buttocks, it may take years of practice to learn how to relax them.

Helps you sleep deeper - Stimulation is good, but too much of it taxes the nervous system. Yoga can provide relief from the hustle and bustle of modern life. Restorative asana, yoga nidra (a form of guided relaxation), Savasana, pranayama, and meditation encourage pratyahara, a turning inward of the senses, which provides downtime for the nervous system. Another by-product of a

regular yoga practice, studies suggest, is better sleep—which means you'll be less tired and stressed and less likely to have accidents.

Boosts your immune system functionality - Asana and pranayama probably improve immune function, but, so far, meditation has the strongest scientific support in this area. It appears to have a beneficial effect on the functioning of the **immune** system, boosting it when needed (for example, raising antibody levels in response to a vaccine) and lowering it when needed (for instance, mitigating an inappropriately aggressive immune function in an autoimmune disease like psoriasis).

Gives your lungs room to breathe - Yogis tend to take fewer breaths of greater volume, which is both calming and more efficient. A 1998 study published in The Lancet taught a yogic technique known as "complete breathing" to people with lung **problems** due to congestive heart failure. After one month, their average respiratory rate decreased from 13.4 breaths per minute to 7.6. Meanwhile, their exercise capacity increased **significantly**, as did the oxygen saturation of their blood. In addition, yoga has been shown to improve various measures of lung function, including the maximum volume of the breath and the efficiency of the exhalation.

Yoga also **promotes** breathing through the nose, which filters the air, warms it (cold, dry air is more likely to trigger an asthma attack in people who are sensitive), and humidifies it, removing pollen and dirt and other things you'd rather not take into your **lungs**.

Prevents IBS and other digestive problems - Ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, constipation—all of these can be exacerbated by (Cont. on next page)

New studies are PROVING that Yoga has a positive HEALING effect on all of our ORGANS!! (Cont.)

stress. So if you stress less, you'll suffer less. Yoga, like any physical exercise, can ease constipation—and theoretically lower the risk of colon cancer—because moving the body facilitates more rapid **transport** of food and waste products through the bowels. And, although it has not been studied scientifically, yogis suspect that twisting poses may be beneficial in getting **waste** to move through the system. An RCT observed a small sample of patients who had been clinically diagnosed with IBS (Taneja et al. 2004). For 2 months, one group was given drug treatment while the other group practiced yoga twice a day. Both groups demonstrated a decrease in bowel symptoms and anxiety.

Uses sounds to soothe your sinuses - The basics of yoga—asana, pranayama, and meditation—all work to improve your health, but there's to it than that. Consider chanting. It tends to prolong exhalation, which shifts the **balance** toward the parasympathetic nervous system. When done in a group, chanting can be a particularly powerful physical and emotional experience. A recent study from Sweden's Karolinska Institute suggests that **humming** sounds—like those made while chanting Om—open the sinuses and facilitate drainage.

Guides your body's healing in your mind's eye - If you contemplate an image in your mind's eye, as you do in yoga nidra and other practices, you can effect change in your body. Several studies have found that guided imagery **reduced** postoperative pain, decreased the frequency of headaches, and improved the quality of life for people with cancer and HIV.

Keeps allergies and viruses at bay - Kriyas, or cleansing practices, are another element of yoga. They include everything from rapid breathing exercises to elaborate internal cleansings of the intestines. Jalaneti, which entails a gentle **lavage** of the nasal passages with salt water, removes pollen and viruses from the nose,

keeps mucus from building up, and helps drains the sinuses.

Supports your connective tissue - As you read all the ways yoga improves your health, you probably noticed a lot of overlap. That's because they're intensely interwoven. Change your **posture** and you change the way you breathe. Change your breathing and you change your nervous system. This is one of the great lessons of yoga: Everything is **connected**—your hipbone to your anklebone, you to your community, your community to the world. This interconnection is vital to understanding yoga. This holistic system simultaneously taps into many mechanisms that have additive and even **multiplicative** effects. This synergy may be the most important way of all that yoga heals.

Yoga and Nutrition - Move more, eat less—that's the adage of many a dieter. Yoga can help on both fronts. A regular practice gets you moving and burns calories, and the spiritual and emotional dimensions of your practice may encourage you to address any **eating** and weight problems on a deeper level. Yoga may also inspire you to become a more conscious eater.

Sharon Gannon co-founder of the Jivamukti Yoga Method, with over 25 years of teaching and **activism**, she is credited for making yoga "cool and hip." Here's what she had to say about yoga, life and being vegan.

Choosing food that promotes health and **happiness** for the planet and ourselves will lead to a better quality of life for the planet and ourselves. If our food choices cause suffering and disease to others and contribute to the **destruction** of the environment and ultimately to our own demise, then perhaps it is time to question what we are eating. Through my practice, I have discovered some profound ways that the **yamas** (yogic ethical code) relate to our treatment of other animals:

1. **Ahimsa** (non-harming). The confinement, exploitation, slaughter and eating of animals is harmful to them -- even if one does not do the harming himself or herself.
 2. **Satya** (truthfulness). The animal user industries employ deception in advertising. They show us pictures of happy cows grazing with their families and smiling chickens pecking in a country barnyard, yet these beings are never happy on farms.
 3. **Asteya** (non-stealing). The animal user industries are founded upon stealing -- stealing milk from mother cows, stealing wool from sheep, stealing skin from many species of **animal** to use for coats, car seats and more, and of course stealing lives from all animals used for food, clothing, cosmetics, drugs, "scientific" research, etc.
 4. **Brahmacharya** (not misusing sexuality). All animal foods and products are derived through sexual abuse: most female animals raised for food and/or as milk cows are tethered in a small stall and raped by human farm hands for artificial **insemination**, only to have their babies taken away from them shortly after birth. Forcible and repeated masturbation of males is also common practice in the farming industries.
- Aparigraha** (greedlessness). Patanjali recommends living a life of moderation rather than excessive consumption -- taking only what one needs, rather than what one wants, and **leaving** no other beings impoverished. While the human population of the Earth is approximately 7 billion, the United Nations estimates that [67 billion] land animals are killed each year for food, not including the countless sea **creatures** that we kill to eat. Further, the animal user industries create more carbon emissions than all transportation combined worldwide. By any measure, using animals the way we do cannot be considered moderate.

SIMPLE SPIRITUALITY AND SUSTAINIBILITY

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I have created a Facebook Fan Page with these intentions:

- To express **three passions** of mine that I have ironically been suppressing since 1999:
 - My passion for **spirituality**.
 - My passion for our **earth/environment/plants/animals** and the future of them/us all.
 - My passion for **uniting all religions, spiritual expressions** without excluding any of them and without relating to one as better than the other.....
- To **create a space** where my friends and I can **enrich each other's spiritual growth** and we can all together

empower our community (and our world) in their/our spiritual growth.

- To have us all support each other and the world in learning to **live sustainable lives and learning to "heal" the world in a "green way"**.
- To answer my lifelong "calling". A calling to: team up with leaders in our community/world and together **lead the way towards a Self-Realized Civilization**, creating/waking up to a NEW GLOBAL VISION and maybe even questioning all our belief systems.
- To make it all **simple and synergistic**.



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Yoga is a GIFT that BALANCES and HEALS us EMOTIONALLY, MENTALLY and SPIRITUALLY!!!

The average person lives in a mental hurricane, with a mind so turbulent that the usual **concentration** span is only six seconds! Most people live in a storm of ideas: constructive thoughts war against biases, superstitions, fantasies, unremitting memories, dreads, doubts, and **occasional** frustrating blankness. People become so accustomed to the hurricane they think it's normal! And, the emotions are storming within almost everyone, too. Anger, jealousy, grief, fear, and guilt create anxieties, which often **drown** peace, joy, and love.

We strongly suggest that you go out and do in depth **research** about the Ancient forms of Yoga if you even have a passing interest in Yoga and it's most effective **implementations**. YOU owe it to yourself to explore these Ancient Traditional forms of Yoga.

Yogis discover and affirm life's great possibilities by freeing the body of tension and the **ravages** of stress, and progressively releasing mental and emotional turbulence. The resulting well being is often considered **miraculous**; some Yogis are able to control their heart rate, some are able to levitate, some are able to leave their physical body un-breathing for long periods and return to their bodies in **perfect** health. Some yogis are even

able to provoke miracles in their healing and touch the limits of what we consider possible!

Yoga quells the **fluctuations** of the mind, according to Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. In other words, it slows down the mental loops of frustration, regret, anger, fear, and desire that can cause stress. And since stress is implicated in so many **health** problems—from migraines and insomnia to lupus, MS, eczema, high blood pressure, and heart attacks—if you learn to quiet your mind, you'll be likely to live longer and healthier.

Yoga has also been shown to help with a variety of **common** psychiatric disorders. A meta-analysis of more than 100 studies looking at the effect of yoga on mental health found the practice to have a **positive** effect on:

- Mild depression
- Sleep problems
- Schizophrenia (among patients using medication)
- ADHD (among patients using medication)

Some of the studies suggest yoga can have a similar effect to antidepressants and psychotherapy, by influencing **neurotransmitters** and boosting serotonin. More recent research has

also found that yoga reduces anxiety and aggression among prison inmates. After doing yoga once a week for 10 weeks, participants reported feeling less stressed, and also scored better on tests of executive control, **indicating** a higher degree of thoughtfulness and attention to their surroundings. As noted by *Scientific American*:

"Several studies have shown that yoga helps to improve symptoms of anxiety and depression in prisoners, and now a study at the University of Oxford has found that it also increases focus and, crucially, decreases **impulsivity**—a known factor in much prison violence...Attention and impulsivity are very important for this population, which has problems dealing with aggressive impulses,' says Oxford psychologist Miguel Farias, one of the study's authors. With less anxiety and **aggression**, he notes, prisoners should be better able to reintegrate into society when they are released."

A report by the Institute of Science in Society (ISIS) discusses how meditative practices such as yoga, qigong, and many others can alter (Cont. on next page)

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your genetic expression, through its beneficial effects on your mind. Indeed, **thousands** of genes have been identified that appear to be directly influenced by your subjective mental state.

This shouldn't come as a major surprise to those well versed in natural health. You cannot **separate** your health from your emotional well being. As just one example, one recent study came to the conclusion that happiness, optimism, life satisfaction, and other positive **psychological** attributes are associated with a lower risk of heart disease. As reported by ISIS:

"Yogic **meditative** practices were shown to have positive effects on the heart rate, blood pressure, and low density lipoprotein cholesterol, and decrease the levels of salivary cortisol, the stress hormone. These findings are **consistent** with a down regulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and the sympathetic nervous system, both of which are known to be over-activated by the stressful western lifestyle. Now, a series of new studies on gene expression profiles in immune cells **circulating** in the blood are showing that yogic/meditative practices have profound effects at the molecular level."

Examples of genetic effects obtained through yogic and other meditative practices include the down-regulation of genes **associated** with the pathway responsible for the breaking down of proteins, and cellular stress response genes. Expression of certain heat shock proteins is increased, and immune function is amped up through a variety of genetic changes. One study investigating **genetic** changes triggered by the relaxation response (RR) determined that meditative or mindfulness practices affect no less than 2,209 different genes. As noted by ISIS:

"The type of genes differentially expressed suggested to the authors that gene expression **changes** in the M [RR practitioners with several years practice] and N2 [healthy controls who took eight weeks of guided relaxation training] groups might indicate a greater capacity to **respond** to oxida-

tive stress and associated detrimental effects. And it matters little which RR technique is practiced."

Every experience in the mind is accompanied by shifts in the body's chemistry. When you say, "I feel anxious" (or angry, **depressed**, disappointed, etc.), you're acknowledging that your body is generating disturbing sensations. Feelings are so named because we feel them in our body. These **sensations** result from changes in hormone levels and in the pattern of nerve firings within your nervous system. These physiological shifts can persist long after the emotionally upsetting experience that first triggered them. Over time, you mind-body system **reflects** your emotional history.

Through yoga, you can release the emotional **toxicity** stored in the body. Just as changing thought patterns can influence the body, changing the position of the body can influence the mind and facilitate emotional release. As you stretch your **muscles** and expand your range of motion, you shift the bodily patterns that trap emotional pain. Yoga poses, breathing practices, and meditation release the constriction and free the flow of the vital life force energy known as *prana*. Although you can feel the healing effects of yoga after just one session, a **regular** practice is required if you want to experience the full benefits yoga offers. Perform yoga poses on a regular basis, and your mind and emotions will transform.

Many studies have shown that, in altering our state of consciousness, meditation **produces** positive neurophysiological effects. In fact, in studies of Yogathe state of thoughtless awareness has been shown to have measurable effects on the brain's electrical activity.

- A 2005 EEG study demonstrated that Yoga increases positive emotions, **reduces** negative emotions, improves emotional resilience and coping skills. Regular training of attention, paired with positive emotional experiences during the meditation, increases psychological sta-

bility.

- Several studies suggest that regular Yoga practitioners develop the ability to **literally** turn off neural circuitry that drives negative, intrusive, disturbing or irrelevant "noise."
- An fMRI study found that meditators show increases in emotions such as empathy and compassion when meditating and that the extent of these emotions was directly proportional to their level of experience with **meditation**.

There are many mental, emotional and spiritual benefits of yoga:

Yoga improves your psychological/mental well being.

According to the British Psychological Society, yoga involves concentration on the breath and body, which makes it a great way to soothe a person's mind and relieve worries. By helping **discharge** tension and stress, yoga poses and breathing exercises keep a person free from such negative elements. As a result, a person who does yoga is better able to **achieve** the peak of psychological health. In a German study conducted in 2005, a group of women with "mental stress" were evaluated after participating in an 8-week yoga program. Saliva tests revealed a reduction in **cortisol**, a hormone that is associated with high blood pressure, diabetes, diminished immune system, inflammation when present in high levels and mental distress.

Yoga helps with anxiety and depression.

Various studies including ones at Harvard University, a New Hampshire psychiatric hospital, Boston University, the University of Utah and the University of Massachusetts Medical School have shown Yoga to regulate or **modulate** a person's stress response system, lower blood (Cont. on next page)

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pressure and heart rate as well as improve respiration and lower levels of tension, anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, and fatigue dropped significantly. In one study depression scores **improved** by 50%, anxiety scores by 30%, and overall well-being scores by 65%. MRI studies on participants with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) revealed positive changes in the regions of the **brain** associated with concentration, regulation and expression of emotion, and production of mood-enhancing and anxiety-reducing neurochemicals, among others. In another study ninety percent of the participants reported significant reductions in **anxiety** in just 8 weeks of practice. More importantly, a follow-up conducted three years later showed that the improvements were sustained.

Low brain **levels** of the neurotransmitter GABA are often found in people with depression; SSRIs, electroconvulsive therapy, and yoga, it seems, can boost GABA. Preliminary research out of the Boston University School of Medicine and Harvard's McLean Hospital found that healthy subjects who **practiced** yoga for one hour had a 27 percent increase in levels of GABA compared with a control group that simply sat and read for an hour.

In addition the following have been proven in studies:

- Many neuroimaging studies have found that meditation has the ability to regulate **emotional** states. One UK study found that the practice of Yoga for a few weeks had a significant impact on patients with Major Depression, compared to groups which received other forms of treatment.
- Another study demonstrated that Yoga practitioners exhibited significantly higher **emotional** resilience in managing feelings of depression, anxiety and neuroticism.
- Chronic depression can actually alter brain physical structures over time. A number of meditation studies have shown that meditation and yoga can physically improve brain structures over time and thus aid in

the treatment of depression.

- Yoga has been found to influence neurotransmitters and neurohormones, such as serotonin, norepinephrine, epinephrine, dopamine, GABA and melatonin, which play a role in regulating mood and positive emotions.

A type of controlled breathing with roots in traditional yoga shows promise in providing relief for depression. The program, called SudarshanKriya yoga (SKY), involves several types of cyclical breathing patterns, ranging from slow and **calming** to rapid and stimulating. One study compared 30 minutes of SKY breathing, done six days a week, to bilateral electroconvulsive therapy and the tricyclic antidepressant imipramine in 45 people hospitalized for depression. After four weeks of **treatment**, 93% of those receiving electroconvulsive therapy, 73% of those taking imipramine, and 67% of those using the breathing technique had achieved remission.

Another study examined the effects of SKY on **depressive** symptoms in 60 alcohol-dependent men. After a week of a standard detoxification program at a mental health center in Bangalore, India, participants were randomly assigned to two weeks of SKY or a standard alcoholism treatment control. After the full three weeks, scores on a standard depression inventory **dropped** 75% in the SKY group, as compared with 60% in the standard treatment group. Two stress hormones, cortisol and corticotropin, also dropped levels, in the SKY group, but not in the control group. The authors suggest that SKY might be a beneficial.

Yoga boosts memory and improves concentration.

There may come certain instances in your life when you find it difficult to concentrate on your day-to-day tasks. Thankfully, you now have an idea on how to address this issue. Yoga has been proven effective at improving your memory and concentration, according to *Women's Fitness*. For **instance**, Dharana, otherwise known as the practice of concentration, is the perfect way to clear your mind and

calm your senses. As you remove the static noise in your head and focus your mind, you'll find that you're able to remember things, concentrate, and perform much better.

Yoga prevents the onset of mental health conditions, which are prevalent during adolescence.

Adolescence is a stage in one's life when a variety of mental health problems are more likely to develop. With the many cases of psychological disorders diagnosed in **teenagers**, it has become imperative to find ways to prevent the onset of such mental health conditions.

Yoga, among others, has been seen as a helpful method that can be used to protect **adolescents** from mental illnesses. This is according to a study published in the *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*. The said study had some of the subjects enrolled in PE classes centered on Kripalu Yoga. This type of yoga involves physical **postures**, breathing, relaxation, and meditation. In comparison to the control group, the yogis displayed better moods, lower levels of anxiety and tension, better anger control, improved resilience, and enhanced **mindfulness**. These are just some of the many factors that are important in the prevention of psychological conditions in teenagers.

Yoga reduces the effects of traumatic experiences.

Women who have been abused, as well as enlisted military personnel who have gone into battle with enemy combatants, usually develop a condition known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Patients who suffer from this mental illness frequently experience nightmares and flashbacks, to name a few of the symptoms. While some mental treatments can address the underlying factors of **PTSD**, there are some patients who prove to be 'immune' to these approaches. Particularly in cases where contemporary mental and pharmacological treatments have (Cont. on next page)

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failed, Hatha Yoga has been shown to be effective in reducing PTSD symptoms, according to the American Psychological Association. Since evidence suggests that yoga can tone down maladaptive nervous system arousal, researchers have explored whether or not yoga can be a helpful practice for patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In an Australian Study of Vietnam veterans **diagnosed** with severe PTSD; Participants were evaluated at the beginning of the study using the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS), which ranks symptom severity on an 80-point scale. Six weeks after the study began, the yoga and **breathing** group had dropped their CAPS scores from averages of 57 (moderate to severe symptoms). These improvements persisted at a six-month follow-up. The control group, consisting of veterans on a waiting list, showed no improvement.

Researchers at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., are offering a yogic method of deep relaxation to **veterans** returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Dr. Kristie Gore, a psychologist at Walter Reed, says the military hopes that yoga-based treatments will be more acceptable to the soldiers and less **stigmatizing** than traditional psychotherapy. The center now uses yoga and yogic relaxation in post-deployment PTSD awareness courses, and plans to conduct a controlled trial of their effectiveness in the future.

Cognitive improvements

Through meditation, we focus our attention inward and are able to remain focused on the present, rather than obsessing about the past or worrying about the **future**.

- EEG studies of Yoga have found that thoughtless awareness produces greater connectivity and synchronicity between brain regions, which produces better balanced, better **integrated** brain functioning. We become better at balanced, holistic thinking, which

enhances our ability to act rationally, rather than simply reacting emotionally. For experienced yoga meditators, these changes in brain activity were found to last beyond the meditation session itself.

- Some studies have suggested that meditation may actually alter the fundamental **electrical** balance between the brain's cerebral hemispheres, which can alter the way we process emotions on an ongoing basis.
- Other studies have found that Yoga helps the **brain** reduce distractions and "noise" and maintain a higher level of attention focus.
- Many studies have found that people who have meditated for several years are physiologically (both neurologically and physically) younger compared to standard measures of their chronological age.

Attention Deficit Disorder/ Hyperactivity

More and more children in the United States are being diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD). The **hallmarks** of these disorders include an inability to stay attentive and increased impulsivity, often accompanied by hyperactivity, which can have a profound effect on a child's education and family interactions.

Because quality meditation naturally sharpens attention and focus and reduces impulsiveness and hyperactivity, it's a promising **therapy** for people of all ages who have AD/HD. Yoga, in particular, is non-commercial, thus accessible to everyone as a no-cost alternative to medication and other conventional AD/HD behavioral treatments.

- Studies have found that children who practiced a Yoga meditation program for several weeks as a supplemental therapy showed improved attention and reduced hyperactivity and **impulsiveness**.
- In another program where children participated in a Yoga program along with meditating at home for

several weeks showed improved sleep patterns, attention and concentration, and notably fewer conflicts in their lives.

- An EEG study measuring the brain activity of Yoga meditators showed a **significant** reduction in "disturbance" or noise within the meditators' brains that coincided with the time at which the meditators reported entering the state of thoughtless **awareness**. The remarkable correlation of this activity in specific areas of the brain that are associated with specific chakras may demonstrate how thoughtless awareness is established in the brain.

Addictions and Substance abuse

Recent scientific evidence may help explain why this happens. The state of thoughtless awareness, which is central to the Yoga practice, improves **emotional** regulation and enhances cognitive and emotional resilience. One study of 500 college students with drug abuse problems found that 97 percent stopped using drugs after a month of practicing Yoga.

Yoga improves our ability to introspect and separate thought from emotion, which increases our objective **awareness** of all the factors causing us to abuse substances. Yoga can help treat addiction and substance abuse by rewiring old, automatic pleasure-reward-motivation **circuits** in the brain that drive unhealthy cravings and motivational drives, making it easier to discard bad habits and replace them with new, healthy ones. We're better able to recognize our triggers and extinguish the associated desire to abuse drugs or alcohol.

Forgiveness (located at the Agnya chakra) is a key goal and benefit of practicing Yoga. One clinical study found a strong **correlation** between substance abuse recovery and the ability to forgive others, forgive oneself and to feel forgiven by God. Of (Cont. on next page)

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these three kinds of forgiveness, the ability to forgive oneself was found to be most essential for alcohol addiction **recovery** and, over the longer term, relapse prevention.

Helps you focus - An important component of yoga is focusing on the present. Studies have found that regular yoga practice improves coordination, **reaction** time, memory, and even IQ scores. People who practice Transcendental Meditation demonstrate the ability to solve problems and acquire and recall information better—probably because they're less **distracted** by their thoughts, which can play over and over like an endless tape loop.

Makes you happier - Feeling sad? Sit in Lotus. Better yet, rise up into a backbend or soar royally into King Dancer Pose. While it's not as simple as that, one study found that a consistent yoga **practice** improved depression and led to a significant increase in serotonin levels and a decrease in the levels of monoamine oxidase (an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters) and cortisol. At the University of Wisconsin, Richard Davidson, Ph.D., found that the left prefrontal **cortex** showed heightened activity in meditators, a finding that has been correlated with greater levels of happiness and better immune function. More dramatic left-sided activation was found in dedicated, long-term practitioners.

Helps you serve others - Karma yoga (service to others) is integral to yogic philosophy. And while you may not be inclined to serve others, your health might **improve** if you do. A study at the University of Michigan found that older people who volunteered a little less than an hour per week were three times as likely to be alive seven years later. Serving others can give **meaning** to your life, and your problems may not seem so daunting when you see what other people are dealing with.

In addition to the above, yoga offers a practical, systematic method for enhancing many other critical aspects of mental and emotional wellness, such

as:

- **Self-esteem** -Yoga improves self-esteem by improving several key emotional processes: ego regulation, emotional **regulation** and emotional maturity, self-awareness, self-confidence, self-image, self-respect, sense of self-worth, and reducing **negative** self-talk and faulty thinking.
- **Defenses** -Yoga reduces our defensiveness by reducing egoism, increasing self-awareness, helping us cope with reality and maintain our sense of **self-worth**, improving our reactions to emotional conflicts, and helping us accept and manage “unwanted” impulses, thoughts, feelings and behaviors that we've been defending against.
- **Mindfulness** -Yoga enhances our ability to self-regulate our attention to focus on the present moment with curiosity, openness and acceptance.
- **Emotional intelligence** -Yoga improves emotional intelligence by increasing emotions such as empathy and compassion and promoting qualities such as mindfulness and self-awareness. Meditation enhances the ability to perceive, identify, understand and manage emotions, and use our emotions constructively to guide our thinking.
- **Self-actualization** -Yoga helps us develop our abilities and achieve our greatest potential by: becoming less egotistical and more inner-directed, self-motivated, self-reliant and emotionally mature; developing deeper **interpersonal** relationships; adopting a more holistic, positive worldview; becoming more purposeful, creative, productive and open to new experiences with a focus on higher aspirations.
- **Self-realization/self-transcendence** -Yoga can help us discover the authentic self through psychological and spiritual self-striving and ultimately transcend the self to live in the world in an enlightened way, **exploring** the higher reaches of human consciousness and spiritual fulfillment.

According to Kino MacGregor an international yoga teacher, author of

three books, producer of six Ashtanga Yoga DVDs, writer, vlogger, world traveler, co-founder of Miami Life Center and founder of Miami Yoga Magazine, “If you come to the practice of yoga looking only for pleasure, yoga will **eventually** disappoint you. Sooner or later, you'll get bored with the practice or you will experience pain or discomfort in a posture you previously found fun. The basic **lesson** of this centuries-old science of self-exploration is that if you heed the call of pleasure and pain, you will always be a slave to the sensory experience.

If you instead learn to train the mind to be present, focused and equanimous regardless of the inevitable vicissitudes of life, then you will gain your freedom and ultimately experience your limitless, powerful higher self.

Sincere spiritual **investigation** is a journey to your center. Along the road, all of your attachments and aversions will be challenged. Everything you know yourself to be will be questioned. It's not for everyone.

There are traditionally three qualifications that constitute a firm ground for the practice:

1. **You have to commit to the practice for a long time, perhaps for your entire life, before you can expect to see measurable results.** This framework removes the ego's attachment to getting anywhere fast in the practice.
2. **Second, you should practice with continuity and regularity both on and off the mat.** As much as you are willing to put in the effort the practice will give back to you. But if you waver in your commitment to practice and to allow the practice to transform your whole life then you will waver in your journey. Only you can unroll your mat and practice. And only you can commit your whole life's journey to the spiritual side of the practice. (Cont. on next page)

Yoga is a GIFT that BALANCES and HEALS us EMOTIONALLY, MENTALLY and SPIRITUALLY!!! (Cont.)

3. **Your intention and sincerity matter.** If you come to the yoga practice with the assumption that it's just about getting a thin yoga body and a solid handstand, then it will only take you to the most **superficial** level of the practice. If you do your practice merely for health benefits, you will certainly feel better and have more energy, but even this is not the true depth available within the context of yoga.

In order to **really** get the deepest benefit from the practice, you have to set your intention on the spiritual journey of yoga. If you know that your reason for doing the practice is to be a more peaceful, happy, and joyful person, then all the necessary lessons that lead to that **result** will become evident through the vehicle of the practice.

Yoga is about keeping your peace of mind **regardless** of whether you experience ease and flow or stuckness and difficulty. Changing external situations is a losing battle, but gaining control of your own nervous system is something that you can truly master."

The yogi or yogini strives to open the gift of life and **discover** his or her fullest possibilities. A yogi/yogini endeavors to discover the higher consciousness and how the body, mind, and emotional nature can be truly fulfilled through **unifying** their purposes - rather than living in constant interior civil war.

Yoga is **not a religion**. People of many different faiths - Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews - as well as agnostics and atheists, practice yoga because of its numerous benefits and life-enrichment. Many **millions** practice yoga for its asanas, its physical exercises, which are regularly acclaimed to be extraordinarily health giving by many **doctors** around the world. And, too, many millions practice some form of yoga meditation in order to contact their higher consciousness, or commune deeply with their Source. Many who practice yoga meditation are deeply religious, while

many others who practice these meditations are agnostics seeking verifiable **experience** and personal transformation.

A yoga devotee strives to live in an ongoing and progressively more joyous state of **harmony**. Body, mind, and emotions are brought into attunement with one another and with one's soul, or spiritual self. The devotee finds this ongoing **state** of harmony not only to be a wonderful way to live but an essential factor in becoming enlightened — living in higher consciousness.

According to Subhamov Das, a Hinduism expert, "First and foremost, yoga is a systematic process of spiritual unfolding. The path of yoga teaches us how to **integrate** and heal our personal existence, as well as harmonize our individual consciousness with Source/God/the Universe/Oneness. Devotional meditation upon this oneness is at the very heart of any good yoga **practice**. For this reason, yoga has often been called "meditation in motion".

The Eight Limbs of Yoga

While the physical component of yoga is certainly of importance, it is only one of the eight traditional limbs of yoga practice, all of which have meditation on Source as their purpose. These are the eight limbs of the complete yoga **system** as they are found in the famous yoga textbook known as the Yoga Sutras, written by the sage Patanjali in circa 200 B.C. These eight limbs together constitute the complete system known as classical Ashtanga Yoga.

Briefly, they are as follows:

1. **Yama:** These are five positive ethical guidelines (restraints, or abstinences) that include non-violence, fidelity to the Absolute, non-stealing, truthfulness and non-attachment.
2. **Niyama:** These are five positive behaviors, including cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, self-study and devotion to Source.
3. **Asana:** These are the actual physical exercises that people usually associate with yoga. These powerful

poses are designed to give our bodies **strength**, flexibility and energy. They also contribute to the deep sense of relaxation that is necessary in order to lovingly meditate on the Absolute.

4. **Pranayama:** These are the energizing breathing exercises that produce vitality, overall health and inner calm.

5. **Pratyahara:** This is detachment from the ever-present fluctuations of life. Through this practice, we can transcend all the trials and sufferings that life often seems to throw our way and begin to see such challenges in a positive and healing light.

6. **Dharana:** This is the practice of powerful and focused concentration.

7. **Dhyana:** This is devotional meditation on Source, designed to still the agitations of the mind and open the heart to Source's healing love.

8. **Samadhi:** This is blissful absorption of one's individual consciousness in the essence of Source. In this state, the yogi experiences the direct presence of Source in his or her life at all times. The result of samadhi is peace, bliss and happiness without end.

We can **maintain** optimal health through a Balanced Raw Vegan Living Foods diet, and practices that include managing our stress, meditation and prayer, yoga, journaling, and time alone to nurture and love your self. These **practices** will give YOU the BIGGEST chance to CREATE not only OPTIMAL wellness, but also add **Holistic balance** to your life such that your WHOLE SELF can thrive as it was DESIGNED to do!!

I invite you to take on these **practices with me, and I invite you** to give yourself the gift of thriving and absolute wellness the way that our body, as the temple of our minds, souls, and hearts was designed to have, if we **gift ourselves** the right ingredients and the right conditions for this robust wellness that most of us don't let ourselves experience.