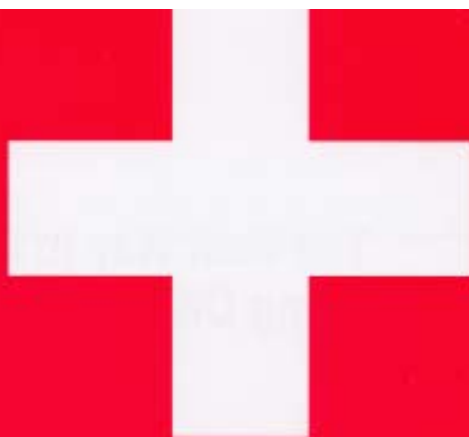




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lifestyle

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12 Yoga - for health, balance and well-being

Not too long ago just mentioning yoga and meditation as an important part of your lifestyle resulted in



Even in my very early childhood I preferred sitting in the Cobra position or the Lotus instead of lounging on the sofa. Sitting there with an upright spine just felt right. So it was that I - completely unconsciously - first came into contact with yoga.

During my school years, I trained in classical ballet every day. Intensive training was a very important part of my youth. But unfortunately my back couldn't stand the physical strain and soon I was experiencing strong pain and had to give up ballet.

Thus, the dream of a becoming a ballet dancer was closed to me. Numerous forms of therapy, advice from physicians and various medicines did nothing to help my body. Before I was due for an operation to correct the problem, I briefly read an Indian book on Yoga and tried the back exercises inside. I found them really helpful and

decided, from then on, to practice Yoga Asanas in the place of ballet positions, swapping my dancing shoes for a Yoga mat! After short time the pain clearly decreased and since then I practice Yoga daily.

Today, as Yoga teacher, I'm happy to pass on my knowledge to my pupils. Yoga is for everyone and every ability level - the intensity of the exercises can be decided by you. It's not about individualism, achieving, or goals, but rather harmony and physical well-being.

When you start, even though there are numerous well-illustrated Yoga books on the market, I believe you cannot supplement a well respected school. There you'll learn the basics of Yoga and the correct ways to breathe. Visit just for an hour and decide if you feel confident about the teaching, the ambience and the courses on offer.

If you want to know more visit a Yoga seminar once or twice a week. Then, when you know the Asanas, you can practice a sun greeting in the morning for about 20 minutes. Within a really short time, you'll start to see a positive change in your body and your balance within everyday life.

Most classes comprise of women aged between 30 and 50 years old although increasingly we are seeing more interest from men; perhaps an indication of today's pressure from success. The strain of this is not to be underestimated and giving time to your body and spirit will help gain a better sense of well-being.

It is really never too early or too late to begin Yoga which can help calm and aid so many conditions. In order to remain healthy and fit, or to become healthier, to reduce stress and to live a worry free life with love.



plus some healthy Asanas to begin with

scepticism and even mockery. Yet today it's considered a vital way to keep healthy and to increase quality of life.

FORWARD BEND/ PASCHIMOTTHANASANA

The forward bend energizes the organs in the belly, the kidney, the liver and the pancreas. It aids digestion and heightens the body's natural defences (it's an exercise which is great if you feel the onset of flu). This Asana is also recommended for diabetics.

In addition to creating flexible thighs, knee chords and calf muscles, the spinal column is stretched and becomes more mobile. On the mental level, the forward bend develops patience, "releasing" the ability for devotion.

The exercise

Lie relaxed on your back. Bend a knee; grab around it with your hands pull yourself up to a sitting position. Then with your hands behind your back, supporting it, stretch your legs thoroughly in front of you. Remain in this position and take some long breaths. Then, with your legs before you, put your hands on your thighs and drive them forwards along your shin-bones until you can grab your feet with your hands. Let your head hang relaxed. The stretch is noticeable in the calves, backs of the knee and thighs. The lower back is relaxed. Remain in this position for up to 5 minutes or longer.

TREE/YRIKSHASANA

The tree heightens physical and mental firmness, and exercises and strengthens the equilibrium. This Asana works to harmonize and stabilize. The tree promotes your equilibrium, your certainty and goal-orientedness and helps to give stability even in the midst of the storms of life.

The exercise:

Stand upright. Breathe completely calmly in and out. Then lift your right foot and with move it to your thigh with the sole facing inwards and let the thigh support it. Press the palms against each other and at the same time raise the elbows. Then, lift the arms over your head, keeping palms together. Calmly breathe in and out, then lower arms and legs. Repeat with the other leg.

DEPTH RELAXATION/SHAVASANA

The depth relaxation works to positively encourage healthy, deep sleep. Stress hormones are diminished, while good hormones (Endomorphine) are stimulated, as well as enlivening connections and signals in the brain. The relaxation helps to guard against high blood pressure, headache, stomach problems, digestion complaints as well as all stress-

related diseases. They stimulate the immune system and prevent colds and metabolic problems. 10 to 15 minutes of depth relaxation can be used during the day or at work to immediately return full energy to you.

The exercise

Lie on your back, with legs slightly apart and your arms away from the body, with palms pointing upward. If this position is not completely comfortable for your lower back, you can put cushions or a rolled mat or blanket under the knees. If it is not completely comfortable for your upper back or neck, put a cushion under the back of the head or a rolled towel in the hollow of the neck. If possible, it is best to lie straight on the ground. You can even practice depth relaxation in bed or even in a sitting position. Now tighten individual parts of the body, keep the strain for 5 seconds and then release them. Begin with the lower parts of the body and follow the instructions above. Now use autosuggestion and ask the parts of the body from the lowest to the highest to relax, such as - "I relax my feet" (repeat 3 times), "I relax my calves" (repeat 3 times), "I relax my thighs" (repeat 3 times) etc..





- 14 During the relaxation exercise visualization also helps. Imagine a beautiful area, somewhere in nature, where you feel completely safe and completely well. Paint yourself a picture of all the details; nature, sky, and try to feel the earth under your body. Feel at one with your environment. The more frequently you do this exercise, the more clearly obtain you the desired effect of inner peace in your life.



Aquila Camenzind (dipl.) is a yoga & power yoga instructor and wellness trainer with Indian roots, living in Zurich living. She runs a yoga school in Harrliberg and for 4 years has hosted a wellness guide on the internet at offering diverse services, courses and information on the topic of wellness, Ayurveda, Pilates, yoga retreats, specialized seminars about health, including health on the job, and special dietary consultations. Contact her at www.wellfitness.ch