

Why do yoga?

Because, in short, it does this stuff!

(And if the below wasn't reason enough, then continue reading further down to find out how and why I lost 6stone in weight with yoga alone).

- Promotes a feeling of well being – by toning both mind and body.
- Increases an awareness and strength in the body
- Works on internal organs (liver, kidneys become cleansed), cells, glands (such as thyroid which regulates weight), and the endocrine system, regulates the metabolism and in turn appetite and weight control.
- Improves posture and delays the “ageing” process!
- Improves digestion and elimination process
- Improves circulation, skin tone, hair growth.
- Can be done by “everyone” – all ages shapes and sizes. For the inflexible it will make them such, great for kids as its fun and something to learn, get them into exercise at an early age.
- It can be restorative for mild injuries, muscle pulls and aches and pains.
- Creates strong muscle foundations for other sports or exercise but is perfect at toning in itself with many styles to choose from.
- Creates strong bones and joints. Keeps the spine young and strong. A flexible strong spine is the key to youth and posture as well it being a second brain that feeds and functions the organs around it.
- Promotes a positive happier attitude and rewards the practising individual with the “Feel-Good Factor”
- For every problem, there is a yoga move to help, it sometimes helps to think of yoga as a toolbox, if you have a problem or pain, pluck out a move to help. There are forward bends that help lift mood, back bends that keep you young, supple and open out stiffness as well as helping with Asthma. There are twists for stomach, wind and digestion problems. Moves for headaches and migraine. The list is endless.
- Calms and disciplines the mind and can alleviate and control depression or mood swings
- Yoga can also help with addictions, be it food, alcohol, tobacco....

How can Yoga help me loose weight, isn't it just stretching?

NO!!!

This is one the most frequently asked questions when I tell people I was overweight (from a combination of years of Under-active Thyroid, Anti-Depressants, sleeping pills as well as at the wrong times with no exercise).

How can you loose weight with just yoga - it's just gentle stretching?

Well, I would have agreed with that statement before, until trying it for 10 minutes everyday and loosing 4lbs in the first week and then continuing to do it, increasing the time, until two years later, I was 6stone lighter, Thyroid levels pretty much normalised and no longer taking medication for depression or Thyroid, of which I was told, I would be on it for life.

Here's how:

There are a number of factors involved. Firstly, some of the asanas (postures) stimulate sluggish glands to increase their hormonal secretions. The thyroid gland, especially, has a big effect on our weight because it affects body metabolism. There are several asanas, such as the shoulder stand and the fish posture, which

are specific for the thyroid gland. Fat metabolism is also increased, so fat is converted to muscle and energy. This means that, as well as losing fat, you will have better muscle tone and a higher vitality level.

Secondly, yoga deep breathing increases the oxygen intake to the body cells, including the fat cells. This causes increased oxidation or burning up of fat cells.). Yogic exercises induce more continuous and deeper breathing which gradually burns, sometimes forcefully, many of the calories already ingested.

Thirdly, yogic practices that reduce anxiety tend to reduce anxious eating. When under nervous strain we tend to gulp our food without attaining much genuine satisfaction. We end up in eating more. If, on the other hand, we approach our meals with greater calmness of mood, whether produced by habits which have calmed our life or by yoga (like a pause for prayer before a meal), we tend to be less likely to overeat in a frantic effort to quiet our midday anxieties.

Lastly, yogic aids may be employed between meals whenever one becomes tempted to search for a snack. One may deliberately turn to yoga, rather than to the icebox or snack bar, when he feels the need for a lift or relief from restless nervousness. Practicing yoga may make you aware of your weight problem that may also act as a deterrent from overeating. If you are not overweight, your weight will remain about the same. If you are underweight, you will gain weight.

The weight you gain will be healthy firm tissue, not fat. That is, yoga will tend to produce the ideal weight for you. This is due to yoga's effect of 'normalizing' glandular activity.

An article that appeared in the San Francisco Examiner of October 13, 1959 shows that the weight reduction potential of yoga was recognized in the USA more than quarter of a century ago.

For those whose eating habits, whether at meals or between meals, are believed to be due to feelings of weakness rather than anxieties, most yogic postures and breathing exercises are designed to increase one's strength. Hence, they may relieve feelings of weakness more effectively than additional eating. The exercises themselves, although consuming some energy, also store up energy which, when combined with oxidizing breathing, provide energy that is ready for use rather than for storage.

Are there any men in your class? Yoga isn't for men!

Men feel intimidated taking part in a yoga class. They think that yoga is just for women. They also think that yoga comes down to simply stretching the muscles and that it's slow.

For all of these reasons, men tend to avoid doing yoga and unfortunately miss out on a fantastic science that was initially created by men for men back in ancient India to aid health in mankind and peace in society.

Why should men do yoga?

The same reasons as women should, but more specifically to answer this question, men tend to concentrate more on building muscle in their workouts and sport, but in turn doing this leads to a lot of muscular tension and the prime thing that yoga teaches us is that tension in the body, is the biggest blocker of physical and mental energy.

These bulkier muscles are often built upon weak foundations and weak core muscles, which can lead to injuries as mobility and flexibility and sometimes agility is reduced and can, if not worked consistently, quickly turn to flabby weak muscles. Good foundation and core muscles is the start to, not only to good health, but long lasting strength and muscles that not only look good aesthetically but also are healthy, strong, tension free AND flexible.

I've worked with rugby players, golfers, runners, cyclists, bodybuilders and martial arts men that have added yoga to their program with great success and have found that this has improved every area of their current exercise or sports regime.

I highly recommend that men try at least one of my yoga classes. Only then will you understand how it feels to release tightness and work all the muscles in the body at the same time through static contractions and releasing stretches rather than repetitive movements on one set of muscle group at a time.

Another benefit of yoga (for men and women) to compliment an active lifestyle is that the person that does yoga, gets twice as much out of their other activities than the person that doesn't do yoga as the yogis body is more efficient.