

Is Yoga For Me?

By Britt Bensen Steele

Having taught yoga for nearly 2 decades, I often field questions from folks who have not taken a yoga class before. These questions are generally something like this: Why should I do yoga? What will I get out of it? Or, sometimes instead of questions, I hear: I tried yoga once, and it was too hard. Or, I am not flexible enough to do yoga. I also occasionally hear: I am a Christian, so I shouldn't do yoga. Or, my favorite: Yoga is weird.

These questions and comments are both common and understandable. Now that Yoga is being offered in town, it might be worth attending to some of these questions and comments, as well as offering up some additional information that might be helpful in determining if yoga is a good fit for you.

First, the word "yoga" itself means to be in balance. The entire practice of Yoga is designed to balance the part of your brain and body that works hard, pushes, accomplishes, and gets things done with the side of the brain and body that assures adequate and deep, restful sleep, proper digestion, relaxation, and ease. All of the practices

that are done in a typical yoga class are designed to bring the body and brain into balance, as life has a way of throwing us off balance with day to day stress and challenges. Yoga is "spiritual" in so far as it allows your unique needs to be met, for you to strengthen your body to do good work, or to do God's work, if you see it that way. It is non-secular, non-religious, and IF one were to argue that yoga is religious, that religion would be Kindness. Yoga is all about being kind to yourself, so that you can share kindness with your family, your community and your world.

If you have tried yoga before and had a bad experience, the best advice I have is to try it again. As one of my teachers in Thailand told me "there are as many types of yoga as there are ways to chop a cucumber". This could also be said about styles of yoga, and personalities and approaches of yoga teachers. If one didn't work for you, that's great information. Just keep looking. A teacher who allows you to honor your body's experiences, challenges, and needs in the course of a class, while guiding you gently to challenge yourself and expand your strength, flexibility and balance is a teacher worth pursuing.

If done properly, you feel more open, happier, and stronger when you leave a class. Your day is brighter, and life's challenges are easier to manage.

Then, there are the pragmatics: Yoga strengthens the muscles, deepens one's capacity for oxygen consumption (which makes us feel energized and clear), keeps low back pain at bay, enhances posture, and increases one's overall ability to conduct general ADLs (Activities of Daily Living such as climbing a ladder, gardening, and getting things out of the back of the bottom shelf of the cabinet). It is also linked to making better food choices and maintaining a healthier body weight.

From a clinical perspective, there is solid research that suggests yoga is an exceptional treatment for managing high blood pressure, lowering heart rate and anxiety-related conditions, improving digestive health, and strengthening one's immunity. Yoga has been used effectively for heart disease treatment and reversal, as an adjunct cancer treatment, arthritis, auto-immune related conditions, depression, stress management, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and weight management.

For me, yoga is an anchor. Not

only do I feel the physical benefits of strength, flexibility, and balance, but I also feel the biochemistry in my brain changing, shifting my perspective on life, calming my mind and opening my heart. As my mind quiets, I realize that I am not all of the things I need to get done, or the endless chatter in my head when I have too much to do, but instead, I am a living, breathing vehicle through which goodness can come with every choice I make, dollar I spend, and service I render. For me, yoga sets a precedence to do the best I can in each day with my heart and mind wide open.

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ball, even attending some high level camps this summer. Seniors Ryan Law-



rence, Sean Solberg are hard runners and good athletes; juniors Mikol Pihl, Jonathan Anderson and senior Dillon Dethlefs and Craig Weller round out the runningback corp. Seniors Brett Benes and Kanan Olsen will anchor the offensive line with newer players senior Gabriel Ramirez, sophomores Jared Whitton and Jerimiah Hammons and junior Dawson Shay all working hard and improving. At tightend T-john Wolf will play; Jake Stevens will bring some real speed to the position and foreign exchange student Fin Hoeck brings some size. At wide receiver

Jake Titus, exchange student Leon Wiegand, Cole Harkson, and Shylo Dooley will see the most playing time.

On defense Jarmin mentioned that T-john Wolf, Craig Weller, and Shylo Dooley will all contribute playing time.

"This is a team that works hard and is pulling together," says Jarmin.

The Loggers opened their season at home on Friday September 9 with a 22-7 loss against Warrenton.

The Loggers next play away against Gervais on September 16 and Santiam on September 23, before returning home again on September 30 against Culver and face Portland Christian on October 7.

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