

Yoga for Men

An Article

By Jonathan Bowra

Yoga has a long rich history in India (as long as 5000 years) where a vast majority of the practitioners are men. But there is a general misconception among men in the West about yoga.

When yoga is mentioned a typical man's response is "I'm too tight to do yoga" or they say, "I should do yoga, but I don't". There seems to be this awkward not knowing how to get involved, what's yoga about, nervous about being a beginner, that keeps most men from ever trying yoga. Or they do go to a yoga class and indeed there are a lot of flexible young women and they feel out of place. Not only do they feel out of place but when learning yoga you will be clumsy and feel awkward not something most guys want to feel in a room full of beautiful women.

Maybe you are an older man and you don't feel comfortable in a room full of scantily clad women.

Whatever your reasons for not doing yoga you are missing out on a phenomenally powerful and dynamic physical activity that will improve your health and has real calming benefits for your mind.

It does not matter how young, old, tight, flexible, strong weak, fat, thin, in shape, out of shape, injured or if you're in a wheel chair, you can do yoga and the yoga will bring many positive benefits into your life.

Yoga is a fantastic full-body workout that stretches and tones your muscles and helps to bring alignment and balance into your body. Yoga has incredible benefits to those who spend their days working at a desk and can literally “turn your world upside down” and get your sluggish energy moving.

For golfers or tennis players or anyone who does a one-sided sport, yoga brings strength and balance to your whole body. Whatever sport you do, yoga can give you an edge.

Or maybe you just want to be more relaxed? There are many breathing exercises that you learn in yoga that you can do anytime anywhere that will help you calm down when you are overloaded.

But yoga has more to offering than superior health benefits for your body. Yoga can literally help you change your life. You achieve a deeper understanding of yourself, a deeper self-knowledge by doing yoga. As your practice yoga you “free stuck energy” in your body and you begin to feel better. You have more energy; you're stronger and more relaxed. You begin to make different choices about what you put in your body because you can

feel their effects, whether they are positive or negative. You begin to hear your body when it says, “enough, I’m full” or “WOW, I feel terrible what did I eat”. Or maybe you feel great after a healthy meal and this helps motivate you to eat better. And sometime, what you feel has nothing to do with what you put into your body but has to do with what you are doing in your life and you need to shine the light of awareness inside to see what changes you need to make in your life.

All the benefits of yoga may sound great to you and are relevant to anyone man or woman, so why Men’s Yoga? Can’t we do yoga together? Yes, you can, but it is also very obvious that having men and women together brings in another very powerful element that can be a distraction to doing certain deeper spiritual work. It is a time-honored tradition that men and women do some of their spiritual work separately. Each group can be more relaxed and less guarded.

When men do yoga in a men’s yoga class they are more relaxed and more focused. There is a completely different energy in the room that is so profound that every man in the room can feel it and it is often giddily commented on.

Also when you look around you see men doing yoga, their bodies are similar to your body, there challenges are similar to your challenges it feels more inclusive, you feel more included and

accepted.

It is very reaffirming to see a room full of men, young, old, in good physical shape, not in such good shape, but all taking an active role in improving their health and the quality of their lives.

The work that men do together, learning together, helps build honor and respect for each other and for them self.

Honor and respect are very much needed in the world on all levels and it starts with each man and each woman honoring and respecting themselves.

