

Research File ZenYoga.pdf

Zen Yoga : The Holistic Pathway to Wellbeing



Yoga is an art form, a way of life that explores the harmony between mind, body and soul. It's about much more than burning calories and toning muscles. Yoga combines strengthening and stretching poses with coordinated breathing and meditative focus. At Zen Yoga has its own philosophy and spiritual meaning that guides our guests to a new level of consciousness.

Zen Resort's Yoga classes comprise of gentle exercises done in the Dandasana sitting position and in a sequence in order to relax the entire body. Surya Namaskar is also performed, which is a series of twelve graceful movements done sequentially such that energy stretches through the spinal cord stimulating blood circulation. Thereafter, certain Yoga Asanas are performed. These are posture exercises that can involve bending, twisting, sitting, standing, inverting or being in a supine position. Depending on an individual's level of fitness and physical flexibility, specific asanas will be recommended and practiced under supervision.

During each asana, the Yoga master guides the eye toward the hand or foot in the pose and hold the gaze; this is not to achieve the perfect pose but rather it is a psychological tool which helps in control and decision making. For example, the asana becomes a psychological image of the actual pose and thought behind it: 'If I take this step what comes next?' Thus, at Zen Yoga practice, within the paradigm of the consciousness of Yoga that empowers achieving one's goals. It is this core consciousness of Yoga that is so often forgotten in the context of Yoga being considered as physical asanas and challenging poses.

Our classes are designed to strengthen physical and mental resolve, instil discipline and unshackle you from your inhibitions. But they are also deeply restorative. Each Zenchi session takes place in the tranquility of the Zen Nirvanum Sanctuary and includes exercises in breathing, relaxation and consciousness. At sunrise, guests go through a sequence of graceful movements and overlook a landscape dotted with lush forest, rice fields and vineyards, stretching all the way to the ocean.

Zen's Yoga master's practice timeless techniques that will give you greater control over the many elements that determine your wellbeing, from building resilience against negative emotions and anxiety, to contending with the physical and psychological barriers that keep us all from realizing our full potential.

If you are unfamiliar with Yoga, our masters can provide all the guidance you need to confidently practice Yoga in a group setting. They can suggest Asanas depending on your level of fitness and flexibility. Individual classes can also be tailored in to target specific health conditions.

Daily Yoga gives our guests the opportunity to explore the divinity of mind, body and soul. Though it may seem like a purely physical action, there is much more to Yoga than meets the eye. We see it as a process through which the body is strengthened, the mind fortified and the soul enriched. And the science bears that out. Numerous studies have detailed Yoga's physical and psychological benefits. Yoga practices and corresponding breathing techniques are proven to treat many of the chronic and acute illnesses common in our modern lifestyles.

Yoga's transformative power is best illustrated with the concept of balance. To reach your full potential, the mind must be liberated from inhibitions and constraints. The soul must be enlightened through ethical and compassionate living. Physical barriers must also be overcome. And so Yoga at Zen seeks to provide balance in every sense of the word. Balance in dealing with your emotions, in channeling sensitivities and desires. Physical balance and improved flexibility. The awareness needed to live a sustainable life in balance with all that you encounter.

Yoga is made up of three fundamentals: the 'external', which relates to physical health and fitness; the 'internal', which refers to psychological health and strengthening of the intellect; and the 'innermost': spirituality and benevolence. All three aspects are entwined in our Zenchi classes and essential to healthy living, happiness, liberation and enlightenment. Our morning session, Zenchi, is made up of Yoga, Pranayama and Meditation. We warm up with light exercises done in the sitting position, Dandasana, followed by Surya Namaskar, a series of twelve graceful movements performed in sequence that push energy through the spinal cord to stimulate blood circulation.

Pranayama - the art of breath control - and guided meditation follow, as part of a series of breathing, relaxation and consciousness exercises to support physical, emotional and spiritual health. That is followed by Mudras, eleven intricate finger exercises that use the five fingers to represent the five elements that make up our world. These exercises aim to balance those five elements within the body, enhancing physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing.

Yoga at Zen ends with our masters guiding you through flowing Asanas. These posture exercises improve flexibility, stability and control through a series of fluid movements. Our Yoga masters can recommend specific Asanas to suit your level of fitness. Individual Yoga classes can also be tailored to meet your specific goals, rehabilitation targets and personal needs, including specific health conditions such as digestion and stomach problems, sugar level and diabetes, weight problems and obesity, backache and spinal problems, circulation and blood pressure and anxiety and stress.

All of our guests receive a Zenchi booklet to help put the lessons they have learned into practice once they leave. Many stay in touch and report that their ongoing Yoga is not just energizing in a physical sense, but also deeply connected to living life with less stress.



Yoga practices help us to deal with emotions, sensitivities, desires, achievements and failures in our lives. They help us better manage our feelings, reactions and responses to the difficult situations we are often confronted with. Yoga also helps us to develop a greater awareness of the physical and psychological barriers that keep us from realizing our full potential.

The regular practice of Yoga has invaluable benefits: a youthful figure, gracious posture, improved blood circulation, not to mention the confidence to realize our aspirations and live a life in harmony and sustainability with all that we encounter.

Yoga comprises of three fundamentals: the “external” view-point, which primarily relates to physical health and fitness; the “internal” view-point, which refers to psychological health and strengthening of the intellect; and finally, the “innermost” perspective, which refers to spirituality and benevolence. All three aspects are essential to healthy living, happiness, liberation and enlightenment.

Yoga Knowledge and Research

The word "Yoga" comes from the Sanskrit word "yuj" which means "to unite or integrate". Yoga is a 5000 year-old system of Hindu philosophy of harmony and balancing the body, mind and soul, thereby enhancing physical, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing. Yoga is a way of life that aims towards 'a healthy mind in a healthy body'.

We are physical, mental and spiritual beings; Yoga helps promote a balanced development of all three aspects. The physical benefits of Yoga include increased flexibility, increased strength, improved balance, increased stamina and improved body alignment and the mental benefits of Yoga: include stress reduction, body awareness, better sleep and Improved self-confidence and spirituality.



Yoga comprises of three fundamentals, the external relating to physical health and fitness, the internal to the psychological health and intellect, and the innermost to spirituality and benevolence. All three aspects are essential to healthy living, happiness, liberation and enlightenment. Yoga is an art and takes into purview the mind, the body and the soul in reaching divinity. The body must be purified and strengthened through physical exercises and discipline. The mind must be cleansed and liberated of all inhibitions and constraints and the soul enlightened.



There are six Hindu vedic philosophies, and among them two relate to yoga – Sankhya yoga and Patanjali yoga. Sankhya yoga focuses on the mystery and different elements of life and the universe. It relates the relationships and relevance of previous life, birth and after death to current life conditions and aspirations. The individual human spirit (Paramatma) can secure eternal liberation (Moksa) through Karma yoga (selfless work), Bhakti yoga (spiritual devotion), Jnana yoga (ways of wisdom) and Raja yoga (self-control).



Yoga practices help deal with emotions, sensitivities, desires, achievements and failures in our lives. Through Yoga we learn to develop a greater awareness of our physical and psychological barriers that can keep us from realizing our full potential. Yoga enables us to better manage our feelings, reactions and responses to situations we are confronted with. The regular practice of yoga results in many benefits, including a youthful complexion and figure, gracious posture, clear complexion, improved blood circulation and, perhaps most importantly, the confidence to realize our aspirations and dreams.



During the last decade, Swami Maharaj Ramdev in India has simplified and popularized a range of yoga exercises together with pranayama techniques and meditation that are easy to do and highly beneficial in not only achieving and sustaining good health but also curing many ailments and diseases. The teachings of Swami Ramdev have influenced many people, and in fact tens of millions of people join his daily television exposition of yoga, pranayama and meditation across India.

Our Yoga masters from Kerala have attended workshops by Swami Ramdev and these practices and technique are at the core of our morning Zen Resort yoga classes comprising,

- Light exercises done in sitting position Dandasana and in sequence to relax and strengthen the toes, feet, ankles and legs, knees and hips, waist and stomach, back, chest and heart, fingers and hand, shoulder and neck, elbow and the eyes.
- Surya Namaskar, a series of twelve graceful movements done sequentially such that energy stretches through the spinal cord stimulating blood circulation. A regular practice of this exercise improves the digestive system and heart functioning, flushes impurities from the skin and is beneficial to the endocrine system thus aiding metabolism of the body.
- Pranayama and Meditation: A series of eleven breathing, relaxation and consciousness exercises that is critical to physical, emotional and spiritual health.
- Mudras are a series of eleven finger exercises done in sitting or standing position. Our five fingers denote the five elements that compromise everything in the world, thumb the fire, index finger the air, middle finger the space, ring finger the earth and the little finger the water. The exercises bring about a balance of the five elements in our body thereby improving the functioning of all the internal organs and body physical as well as enhancing psychological and spiritual wellbeing.
- Asanas are posture exercises that involve bending, twisting, sitting, standing, inverting and supine position; they are highly beneficial in terms of physical, psychological and physiological wellbeing. Depending on an individual's level of fitness and physical flexibility, specific asanas will be recommended and practiced.

Yoga has been around for more than 5,000 years. Yoga does more than burn calories and tone muscles. It's a total body-mind-soul physical and mindfulness exercise that combines strengthening and stretching poses with deep and coordinated breathing and meditative focus. Once you get into Yoga, you will realize that it is a way of life, with its own philosophy and spirituality that opens the door to a new level of consciousness.

The stretching Yoga asanas opens the body to feel more freedom, flexibility and relaxation, creating a self-awareness of the power of the mind to heal the body as well as give direction to the mind and spirituality to the soul. This triangular balance is the pyramid of life that holds the power to unlock a wealth of opportunities which are drawn to you by raising your personal energy pattern beyond the material world towards self-actualization. This transformative experience empowers an immersive and fulfilling re-connectivity with the self and the environment leading to heightened engagement and consciousness.

Yoga, literally meaning "union", can be understood on different levels: philosophically, as that of the limited self with the absolute self, religiously, as that of the individual soul with the infinite spirit, psychologically, as the integration of the personality—a state wherein a person no longer lives at cross-purposes with oneself and emotionally, as the stilling of the waves of likes and dislikes. All these permits one to remain in all circumstances and aspects complete in oneself. The ultimate goal of Yoga is to help the individual to transcend the self and attain enlightenment. As the Bhagavad-Gita says, "A person is said to have achieved Yoga, the union with the self, when the perfectly disciplined mind gets freedom from all desires and becomes absorbed in the self alone".

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At Zen individual Yoga exercise classes can also be designed and tailored in case of specific health conditions such as digestion and stomach problems, sugar level and diabetes, weight problems and obesity, backache and spinal problems, circulation and blood pressure and anxiety and stress.

During each asana, the Yoga master guides the eye toward the hand or foot in the pose and hold the gaze; this is not to achieve the perfect pose but rather it is a psychological tool which helps in control and decision making. For example, the asana becomes a psychological image of the actual pose and thought behind it: 'If I

take this step what comes next?' Thus, at Zen Yoga practice, within the paradigm of the consciousness of Yoga that empowers achieving one's goals. It is this core consciousness of Yoga that is so often forgotten in the context of Yoga being considered as physical asanas and challenging poses.

Yoga practices and the coordinated breathing techniques have shown in scientific studies to treat many chronic and acute illnesses of the modern lifestyles. Yoga heals simultaneously heals body and mind while bringing back a connection of self-awareness which allows the body to operate on a higher, brighter level of energy. This in turn reconnects our personal aura to nature's frequencies and that of the universal grid, allowing many a miracle through the power of positive energy. By practicing Yoga at sunrise, positive experiences can become drawn to the magnetic energy connection whilst letting go of stagnant energies blocking flow.

From its origins as a belief system, Yoga has become a way to disengage from working life and stress and engage with a way to relax and even reverse some of the modern ills that Ayurveda and modern research believes come from an accumulation of toxins from emotional discourse and stress, disconnection from the self and surroundings to the ingestion of drugs, fast foods and too much electromagnetic fields disrupting our energy patterns. Although the worldwide spread of Yoga into mainstream society has spawned a diversity of forms including hatha, kundalini and ashtanga Yoga, at Zen we emphasize asanas reconnecting with consciousness to relax, recharge and engage in a transformation to wholeness of life and healthy living, especially for so many people caught up in the stresses and strains for modern lifestyles.

Yoga and Modern Lifestyles

Just think what could happen if we harnessed the tools of modern living such as bio hacking and amalgamated them with ancient practices proven to improve our health and increase neurons. Yoga has the capacity to enhance cognitive development and with a better functioning brain we can make clearer decisions.

With regular Yoga practice nervousness and anxiety can be treated through reducing cortisol levels, which is a risk factor for obesity and high stress levels. Brain imaging studies show Yoga as a promising treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder as well as depression with positive effects beyond the placebo. In fact Yoga studies have shown it to be comparable to the efficacy of an antidepressant and this supports the enhancing brain benefits of Yoga as potentially relevant to dealing with the escalating worldwide burden of the ailments and diseases of modern lifestyles

For centuries Yoga has been an ancient Indian therapy to quieten angst of the heart, as well as a spiritual approach to cure addictions and chemical dependencies; moreover it has been shown to prevent substance abuse in adolescents, which gives good reason to introduce children to Yoga at a young age.

Yoga has also been proven to have a reversing effect on the illnesses of the modern age such as obesity and diabetes type 2 where clinical research shows reduction in glycemic index after participating in Yoga for a few weeks. With growing medical evidence to evaluate Yoga as one of the best forms of exercise for back pain and hormonal imbalance, in addition to helping manage most modern immune system disorders such as chronic fatigue syndrome and inflammatory responses; by stimulating metaphysical changes in the yogi, the environment will affect change too, through the brighter energy grid of positive ions.

Yoga Research and Modern Lifestyles

- The Indian philosophy of yoga is that it holds the power to unlock a wealth of opportunities which are drawn to you by raising your personal energy pattern beyond the material world towards self- actualization. Thus yoga can be a transformative experience where change can be sought in an immersive and fulfilling re-connectivity with the self and the environment leading to enhanced engagement and heightened awareness, Pine and Gilmore 1988
- Yoga has become a way to disengage from working life and stress and engage with a way to relax and even reverse some of the modern ills that Ayurveda and modern research believes comes from an accumulation of toxins from emotional discourse and stress, Knight and Ensor 2017
- Harnessing the tools of modern living such as bio hacking and amalgamated them with ancient practices have been proven to improve our health and increase neurons. Yoga has the capacity to enhance cognitive development and with a better functioning brain we can make clearer decisions, Thomas et al. 2016.
- Regular Yoga is regularly practice regulates the nervous system and reduces anxiety through reducing cortisol, which is a risk factor for obesity and raised in stress levels, Nezu et al. 2016.
- For centuries yoga has been an ancient Indian therapy to quieten angst of the heart, as well as a spiritual approach to cure addictions and chemical dependencies, Matus 2013
- Yoga has been shown to prevent substance abuse in adolescents, which gives good reason to introduce children to yoga at a young age, Bethany et al. 2017.
- Yoga has also been proven to have a reversing effect on the illnesses of the modern age such as obesity and diabetes type 2 where clinical research shows reduction in glycemic index, Lauche et al. 2016 and Thind et al 2017.
- With growing medical evidence to evaluate yoga as one of the best forms of exercise for back pain and hormonal imbalance, in addition to helping manage most modern immune system disorders such as chronic fatigue syndrome and inflammatory responses; by stimulating metaphysical changes in the yogi, the environment will affect change too, through the brighter energy grid of positive ions.

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