



by Sue Fuller

“ - Mahatma Gandhi
The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

The Benefits of Yoga



Practicing yoga regularly balances both body and mind to help you achieve optimum levels of health and vitality. Three key elements form the basis of a sound yoga practice: physical postures, correct breathing techniques and meditation/relaxation techniques.

Yoga postures (asanas) improve your physical strength and flexibility. Folding, twisting and stretching your body has a gentle warming effect and provides benefits similar to a deep massage to release physical tension. They stimulate your internal organs, enhance all bodily functions and help to remove toxins by improving circulation.

Yoga also improves your physical posture which contributes to overall health and well-being. Holding the body correctly helps to remove any muscular imbalances, prevents injuries, improves balance and eliminates minor aches and pains caused by incorrect weight distribution. The way you stand and sit also has a direct influence on the digestive system – if you slouch forward you restrict your abdomen and squash the organs required for digestion. By standing and sitting correctly you create more space for these organs to function efficiently.



The breathing exercises and techniques included in yoga practice are known as pranayamas - a Sanskrit word which means control of vital life force. Many of us only use a third of our lung capacity when breathing normally. Pranayamas encourage you to breathe using the whole of your lungs which greatly increases the oxygen levels within your body. Performing pranayamas regularly also helps the lungs maintain their elasticity which gradually decreases as we age.

The meditation and relaxation techniques included in a complete yoga practice help to relax and calm both body and mind, enhancing your ability to stay calm and think clearly during stressful situations. They also help to create mental strength and emotional balance.

Each of these elements provides many benefits, and work together to synchronise body and mind. Yoga practitioners become more aware of how they are feeling mentally and physically and are able to maintain an equilibrium.



This deep sense of balance and connection then filters into your external world through positive deeds, actions and words which have the power to greatly influence all aspects of your life.

Just taking the first few steps on a yoga pathway helps you enjoy many benefits and may lead to other lifestyle changes that feel natural and right: perhaps your diet will improve, any cravings you have may diminish so you no longer find yourself wanting a caffeine or sugar fix. As these natural changes continue you realise that yoga has so much to offer. It really can help to provide health, harmony, balance and happiness for the journey ahead – what ever that may be...

Sue Fuller is a leading yoga teacher and well-being expert. Her website www.wellbeingworldonline.com features downloadable yoga, pilates, meditation, relaxation and sound healing classes from a worldwide collection of inspirational teachers and experts.