

## The Power of Yoga

**Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self. – The *Bhagavad Gita***

Yoga is for everybody.

It's not about reaching your toes or getting into a picture-perfect pose. It's about controlling your thoughts and letting go of the outside world. It is a continuous meditation.

Some of its physical benefits include increased strength, energy, circulation and cardiac function. It can heal chronic neck and back pain, aid in digestion, increase bone density, lower blood pressure, lower anxiety etc.

Every expansion can lengthen muscles, increase oxygen or open your heart. Every twist and fold can relieve stiffness, stimulate glands and organs, or detox. Every balance can strengthen your core, legs or arms. And every inversion has a purpose like relieving stress and pain, reducing insomnia, increasing circulation, or creating calm and bliss.

It is being also talked about the father of modern yoga, named *Patanjali*. *Patanjali* described an 8-Limbed Yoga Path that is the root of many styles. These eight "limbs" are key to achieving yoga's true goal, enlightenment. Within them are ethical, moral, and spiritual virtues, meditation, breathing work (*pranayama*), and of course the physical postures (*asanas*). *Asanas* are the third of these eight limbs.

Along the way, benefits like improved balance, increased strength, relief from arthritis and of course weight loss will be felt and seen. But these benefits pale in comparison to the mental benefits.

Again, many people go to yoga classes before they start a regular meditation practice. Sometimes it's the other way around. Each is a gateway to the other. But

when the physical practice comes first, those tiny moments of meditation inside classes lead to more outside of class.

You may start tuning into your breath off the mat or making a point to stop and gaze at the beautiful, dusky sky more often. You may cease hurrying through day-to-day duties, or slow down while eating to savor each bite. You may find yourself being less reactive, making better decisions and becoming more patient. It's beautiful because the positive impacts are endless. And yes, it really can change your life.

When you practice yoga once a week, you change your mind. When you practice twice a week, you change your body. When you practice every day, it will change your life.

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