

YOGA, RELAXATION AND STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is an age-old mix of spiritual awareness and physical movement that was developed in India around 5000 years ago. Yoga is the union of the breath and body, and our body, mind, and spirit. Yoga is the practice of transitioning from one pose to another. Poses range from very easy and basic to very difficult and challenging. Some poses are meant to be held like statues (static) and others are meant to be active (dynamic).



GOALS:

- Students will be introduced to stress reduction principles through the techniques of Abdominal Breathing (AB) and Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR).
- Students will utilize strategies from Yoga, AB and PMR in learning how to focus on one thing at a time, rather than being distracted by too many things at once. In other words, letting their mind relax and "take it easy" while focusing.
- Students will better understand the importance of posture and body alignment in performing Yoga exercises.
- Students will understand the importance of flow and cohesiveness while performing Yoga poses and exercises.
- Students will better understand the "core" of the body. Areas of the body where your strength comes from to support your muscles.
- Students will better understand and appreciate what it means to be "flexible" and hopefully see improvements in flexibility at the end of the unit.
- Students will learn a totally new way to exercise that is individually focused and not team focused.
- Students will understand that Yoga is an excellent activity to use as cross-training for other sports/activities you might be doing.
- Students will practice holding the body in challenging positions to emphasize muscular strength and endurance.
- Students will have fun and challenge yourself with a new fitness activity.

WHAT WILL WE ACCOMPLISH IN THIS UNIT?

- Introduce students to the technique of deep abdominal breathing.
- Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation as a relaxation technique.
- Connect the importance of breathing to Yoga poses and exercises.
- Learn the entire sequence of "Salute to Sun" and then have students supplement the sequence with other learned poses.
- Learn and practice various Standing, Arm Balance, Backbend, Seated and Finishing Yoga Poses.
- Understand the importance of transitions from one pose (or exercise) to the other.
- Students will design their own routine and perform for the class.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF YOGA?

You may know that you want to practice yoga, but be baffled about all the different types you've heard of or seen listed on the schedule at the gym. Although all these types of yoga are based on the same poses, there are some major differences between them. Find the style of yoga that will best suit your body and personality here.

- **IYENGAR YOGA**

An introduction to the history and methods of Iyengar Yoga. Iyengar yoga was developed by the living yoga master B.K.S. Iyengar. Iyengar emphasizes alignment and encourages the use of yoga props.

- **BIKRAM YOGA - HOT YOGA**

Vinyasa yoga classes taught in heated rooms are very popular, especially the method taught by living yoga master Bikram Choudhury.

- **JIVAMUKTI YOGA**

David Life and Sharon Gannon are the founders of Jivamukti Yoga, which they have been teaching out of their New York City yoga center since 1989. This style, which blends vigorous vinyasa practice with

spiritual teachings, chanting, and an emphasis on how to bring yoga's philosophy into daily life, is at the forefront of yoga's current popularity

- **ASHTANGA YOGA**

Information about Ashtanga Yoga. Ashtanga, which means eight limbs in Sanskrit, is a fast-paced, intense style of yoga practice. A set series of poses is performed, always in the same order. Ashtanga yoga is very physically demanding, because of the constant movement from one pose to the next, but students progress at their own pace.

- **POWER YOGA**

Power Yoga is a general term used in the west to describe a vigorous, fitness-based approach to Vinyasa-style yoga.

BENEFITS OF YOGA

- Help improve Body Composition by burning calories
- Strong, sculpted and lean muscles
- Stress reduction
- Focused mental clarity
- Increase blood flow, helping to detoxify the body
- Increase flexibility, muscular strength and endurance
- Promotes good posture and body alignment
- Provides excellent form of cross-training for your favorite sports or activities

WHAT DOES "NAMASTE" MEAN?

In the yoga world, "Namaste" is a way of greeting each other as well as thanking yourself for a good workout. We will use it in class to start and end a routine. "Nama" means bow, "as" means I, and "te" means you. Therefore, Namaste literally means "bow me you" or "I bow to you."

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