



Suburban LIFE

Wednesday for Saturday paper

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IN POSITION

Oak Brook woman flourishes as yoga teacher

By Marty Egel

Many people, unfortunately, cannot go to work each day knowing they will enjoy their job.

Joan Budilovsky of Oak Brook is an exception, however, because she goes to work each day and calls her job "the greatest love of her life."

Budilovsky, who teaches yoga classes as a part of the Physical Education Department at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, said she never thought she would be teaching yoga, or even thinking about it on a daily basis.

"I never thought of making money teaching, let alone teaching yoga classes," Budilovsky said. "It is interesting how things have turned out for me."

Budilovsky was first introduced to yoga when she was in college in 1976. She took an introductory class, but even then, she never imagined she would be teaching yoga 20 years later at the college level.

In 1979, Budilovsky moved to California, where she discovered a group of people that studied yoga called the Self-Realization Fellowship in Pacific Palisades.

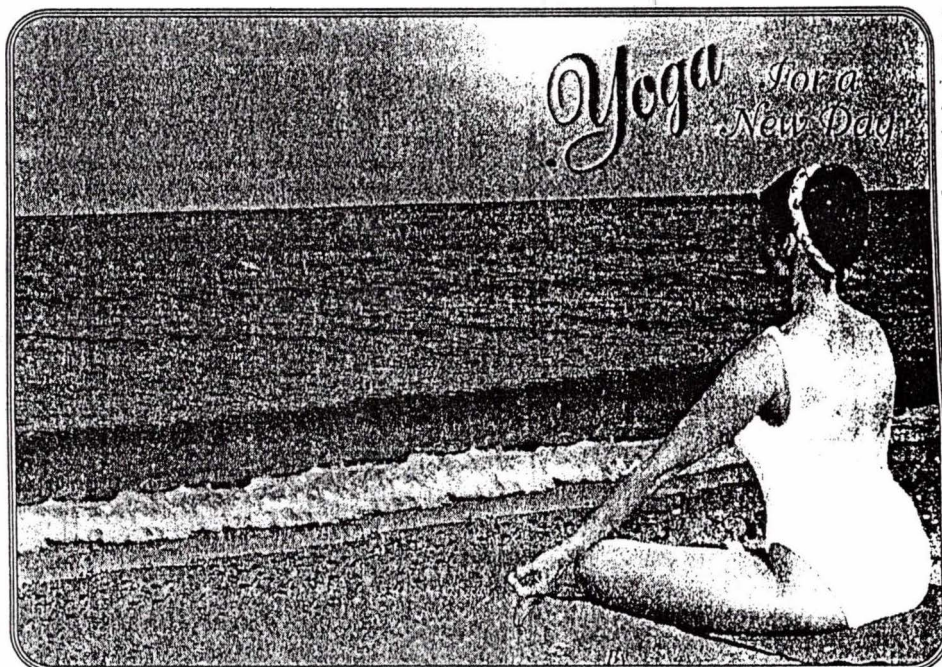
"I thought the group was special, and I was drawn to the teachings, but even then I didn't realize it was yoga or what it really meant to me," she said.

Budilovsky said it wasn't until she read yoga founder Paramahansa Yogananda's book, "Autobiography of a Yoga," that she made a real connection with yoga.

"I also participated in several retreats in northern California at a yoga farm, and I began to realize how outstanding the experience was."

While back in Chicago in 1993, Budilovsky was involved in a yoga class, when her instructor told her there was upcoming hatha yoga teacher certification classes.

After Budilovsky took the 14-month course, her new



Oak Brook's Joan Budilovsky has put her love of yoga to work as a teacher and author.

"yoga career" took off. In September of 1994, she went to the College of DuPage

'I just want people to gain a greater understanding of yoga because I think it has a lot to offer people once they understand it.'

Joan Budilovsky
Yoga teacher

to inquire if the school had ever offered yoga classes, and to propose a sequence of classes she could teach.

"I approached the College of DuPage and asked them if they were interested in yoga classes for the P.E. Department," she said. "They were very receptive, and I guess my life has

just taken off from there." Today, Budilovsky teaches two yoga classes at the College of DuPage, and also teaches classes at other locations including Eisenhower Junior High in Darien, and the Wellness House in Hinsdale.

Recently, Budilovsky has completed a book entitled "Fat-Free Yoga," for which she is looking for a publisher.

"The book deals with the many different yoga experiences one can have, and it also explains some of the different yoga positions," Budilovsky said. "I think the one thing people have to realize is that yoga has nothing to do with religion. That is probably the biggest misconception about yoga."

In addition to teaching yoga, Budilovsky also practices Swedish massage and conducts massage workshops whenever possible.

She has recorded two tapes entitled "The Art of Massage"

and "Beginners' Yoga." "Massage is another thing I really enjoy," she said. "I worked for a while at Pheasant Run Resort (a St. Charles resort) as the massage therapist, and I gained great experience from that."

Budilovsky said she will continue to practice massage whenever possible, but her future plans involve advancement in her yoga career.

"Someday I want to have a yoga television show," she said. "I would like to do this within the Chicagoland area, that is my ultimate goal."

Budilovsky said she also would like to continue to make yoga tapes and write books about yoga in the future.

"I just want people to gain a greater understanding of yoga because I think it has a lot to offer people once they understand it," she said. "I have had so many great experiences with yoga that I want to share them with my students and

The Press-Advertiser Edition
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FOCUS

Friday, July 11, 1997

WEDDINGS, ENGAGEMENT AND ANNIVERSARIES / 4

Yoga teaches relationship between mind and body

By Pam Boert

For Press Publications

The conversation ended on the idea of change — how change is necessary in life.

"I was struggling to find a change. I felt a need for a change to be happy. I didn't know what I wanted, so I pursued what interested me."

Joan Budilovsky had found a career in the entertainment world. She graduated in 1979 from Northern Illinois University with what she referred to as a vague social science degree. She sang with big band orchestras in night clubs and traveled from Chicago to New York to Los Angeles. She did stand-in work in Hollywood films, such as for Madeline Griffin in "Working Girl." She acted in small continuing roles on many of the major soap operas, including being a nurse on "Another World."

Most people would say her career was successful as well as interesting.

When she moved back to Oak Brook to be closer to her parents, John and Leon, she wanted something different, so she tried her hand as manager at Steppenwolf for several months in the early 1990s.

But change still seemed to

be waiting for her.

She enrolled in a two-year massage therapy class — which happened to be offered on Mondays, the only night off from the theater. And after several months, she left the theater.

"I wanted to go into the healing arts," she said. "I thought it was something that was needed inside of me and [was needed] to help people."

Budilovsky found the healing arts were not that different from the performing arts.

"I think all the arts are healing. The performing arts are healing. I just went to a different medium. Healing is a personal journey. The healing arts tend to be a more one-on-one, as opposed to a bigger group in performing arts."

She attended the Willowbrook Wellness and Massage Training Institute and earned a certification to teach Hatha Yoga in 1994 from the Temple of Kriya Yoga. Kriya means spiritual action.

Finding a new career

Since then, Budilovsky's new career has blossomed.

Beginning with one adult education class at College of DuPage, she has expanded her COB offerings to three Hatha 1 classes, one Hatha 2 and perhaps a Hatha 3 class, all offered for credit in the physical education depart-

ment. In addition, she teaches at the Spectrum Center in Oak Brook, the Wellness House in Hinsdale, the Lake Shore Yoga Center in Evanston, as well as for a few private clients.

"It all just kind of evolved. I say with my whole heart that I didn't see myself teaching when I began studying," she explained.

To say her career blossomed may be too weak; it has burst in the most positive manner for this 40-year-old, trim woman.

Her yoga World Wide Web site attracted the attention of an executive publisher at MacMillan in New York. She was teamed with Florida writer Eve Adamson, and this fall "The Complete Kier's Guide to Yoga" is scheduled to be in book stores in the United States and around the world.

"The title did not please her, since yoga advocates a non-violent and nonjudgmental view of life. She asked to change the title, but since has come to accept it."

"I would reach people who would never pick up a book [by a swimmer]. I see yoga as joyful and this book is definitely joyful," she said.

The book will be the fourth book she has penned. It will also use works from photographer Saïed Laboufi, who



Courtesy of College of DuPage Publishing

Joan Budilovsky assumes a classic yoga pose. Budilovsky, a yoga teacher from Oak Brook, is the author of four books about yoga. The most recent, "The Complete Kier's Guide to Yoga," will appear in book stores this fall.

shot pictures for her three other books, which are all self-published. They are "Yoga For a New Day," "Fat Free Yoga" and "The Little Yogi Energy Book." These are

available at the Fruitful Yield stores in Elmhurst, Lombard and Naperville, Borders Bookstore in Oak Brook, and at College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. In addition, she has

done videos that are only available for checkout through College of DuPage's resource center. Two audio tapes are also available at the stores: "Beginner Yoga With Joan" and "Breathwork."

She especially likes the audio tapes because they help remove self from judgments from sight and sound.

"Yoga is a personal study and we get lost in the visual. We try to imitate the person up there. We forget ourselves," she said. "With audio you can turn things off ... and not be judging."

That notion reaches into the core of yoga, based in Eastern thought.

"It is the study of how the mind works with the body and how the mind is so important in who we are physically and vice versa," she explained.

"The core principal is non-violence and how it seeps in our lives. Low self-esteem is based in violence. [Through yoga] we can detach ourselves from that."

Many of her students come to the first yoga class not knowing the relationship between mind and body — yet many do come knowing it would help with the stress in their lives.

Healthier bodies

A self-confessed Type A

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■ YOGA

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personality, horticulturist Susanne Lankin of Wheaton began yoga about three years ago and has studied under Budilovsky about one year.

"Yoga is not a religion," Lankin said. "It's about being a healthier person."

She began classes at the urging of her daughter. Lankin has shallow breathing and was experiencing stiffness.

"It's changed my way of

thinking," she said.

By performing breathing exercises, such as inhaling through one nostril and exhaling out the other, Lankin relaxes herself and becomes more peaceful.

Similarly, Warrenville's Jim Morrow, 20, who is a special-education student in College of DuPage's transition program, said the classes have helped him to relax, too.

"We've learned to breathe basically out of our nose and

breathe from our stomachs. It helps," he said.

His mother, Jill, explained the class "has shown him a different way of thinking."

"Jimmy really enjoys his class. He really has found his niche," she said.

Following yoga principles, Budilovsky said she doesn't know if she has seen changes in her students.

"I see an unveiling. I see the layers being removed, such as judgment — self-judgment, the judgment of others."

But her students realize the physical change within themselves.

For example, Lankin has found her arms has become very strong.

"Yoga develops strength and flexibility," said Budilovsky.

"Hatha means balance — finding the balance in strength and flexibility. ... It calls upon strength and softness; it's the

balancing of the two. It's a complete workout for the body."

Despite what others may think, yoga can be aerobic. In fact, her Yoga 3 class will be a heavy aerobic workout, said Budilovsky.

However, like any exercise program, she recommended those interested in starting a yoga program see their doctors first.

In reflection of her growth over the past three years, Budilovsky readily admits that she is a student.

"I'm always learning," she said.

"I want to keep writing. I want to keep growing. I want to be a better teacher. I want to be a better student. If I ever find that I'm not growing, I will go on to other things."

Joan Budilovsky embraces change and knows change is the cornerstone of life.

Budilovsky's website is: <http://www.yoyoga.com>.

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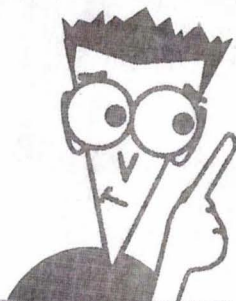
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Battle of the self-help behemoths

The idiots VS The dummies

By Paul Galloway
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

The idea has created a new genre of how-to and self-improvement manuals, yet its initial success was a surprise to the book world. After all, using a title that insulted potential readers seemed to invite failure. It wasn't surprising, however, that a competitor was soon employing a similar approach and enjoying a similar success.

Both series — the "Idiot's Guides" and "Dummies" line — originally concentrated on computer instruction but eventually began applying their formula to a seemingly limitless array of subjects.

For example, some of the more recent releases in the groundbreaking "Dummies" line are "Crossword Puz-

zles for Dummies," "Alternative Medicine for Dummies" and "Cool Careers for Dummies."

And among the new titles from its rival are "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Making Money Through Intuition," "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Lost Civilizations" and "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Successful Dressing."

Today, eight years after the appearance of the first "Dummies" manual and five years after "The Complete Idiot's Guide" series followed suit, no one pays attention to the derogatory trademark words or their meanings, says Lloyd Short, an executive vice president of Macmillan U.S.A., which publishes the latter line.

SEE GUIDES, Page 4

Idiotic facts



Susan Durante, a spokeswoman for the Idiot's Guides, says this line has between 70 and 80 computer titles and some 200 lifestyle titles. "And we'll do another 100 lifestyle books this year," she says.

The top sellers in the Idiot's series include "Learning Spanish," "Philosophy" and "Dating," an intriguing trifecta. Other hot Idiot's topics are "Yoga," "Healthy Stretching," "Choosing and Training a Dog" and "Astrology." An early launch in the new News category is "An Idiot's Guide to Impeachment of the President." On the way are guides to "Social Security" and "Medicare."

A backlist only an idiot would love

Getting rich	Teaching your bird to talk
Magic tricks	Understanding football like a pro
Understanding men and women	Astronomy
Extraterrestrial intelligence	Interpreting your dreams
Seduction	Dinosaurs
Amazing sex	Shakespeare
The perfect wedding	Fly fishing
Being faithful	The Old West
Impeachment of the president	Angels
Surviving divorce	Massage
Tai Chi and QiGong	Improving your IQ
Pool and billiards	The Civil War
Gambling like a pro	Elvis
The Bible	Being a psychic
Beer	Dating
Cigars	Getting a good night's sleep
Breaking bad habits	Freshwater aquariums
Living with a cat	Selfesteem
Managing people	Palmistry
Irish history and culture	The Beatles



Dumb facts

Spokeswoman Mimi Sells says Dummies now has more than 400 computer-technology titles and around 120 non-computer, or lifestyle, titles (neither company could provide exact numbers; perhaps they could use a Guide to Tallying). The computer manuals dominate the best-selling list for the Dummies series. The first off the press, "DOS for Dummies," now has 4.2 million copies in print, second only to the 4.3 million of "Windows 95 for Dummies." The first non-computer title—"Personal Finance for Dummies"—heads the lifestyle category with 874,000 in print.

A backlist only a dummy would love

Auto repair	Blues
Red wine	Java beans
White wine	Classical music
Back pain	Opera
Italian	Plumbing
Gourmet cooking	Figure skating
Dieting	Cocktail parties
Beauty secrets	Jazz
Chess	Roses
Parenting	Sex
Mutual funds	Pregnancy
Home buying	Football
Golf	Lawn care
Negotiating	Piano
Grilling	Weight training
Houseplants	Art
Photography	Hockey
Politics	Antiquing
Bartending	Meditation
Public speaking	Bridge

Guides

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"They're subliminal," he says. "People see the words only as familiar brand names."

Indeed, book buyers from the start seemed to understand that addressing the books to dummies and idiots was a lighthearted, postmodern way of saying that the information inside the cover would be presented so clearly and comprehensively that everybody would be able to grasp it.

The immediate acceptance may also have been related to the desperation that many felt about operating personal computers, the original topic for each venture.

"Publishing houses realized there were a lot of very smart, very educated, very talented, very busy people who didn't know anything about this phenomenon that was taking over the world and, in fact, were mystified about it," Short says.

In other words, when it came to computers, people *knew* they were dummies and idiots.

But it was John Kilcullen, the founder of IDG Books Worldwide, who in 1991 had the smarts and the nerve to try to take advantage

of this computer anxiety by bringing out "DOS for Dummies," which explained the widely used computer operating system.

An instant best seller, the book not only overturned conventional thinking with its title but also established itself as the prototype for an improved way of teaching computer programs.

The secret was to translate arcane terms into everyday language, transform complicated procedures into directions that anyone could understand and present the entire package in short, graphically inviting chapters that featured generous helpings of lists, sidebars and, of all things, humor. And all for under \$20.

In 1994, the same year that the first "Idiot's Guide" made its debut, Kilcullen's series opened the untapped non-technological territory with "Personal Finance for Dummies," whose quick success had the effect of a gold strike.

The following might be called "A Complete Idiot's Guide for Dummies to Those Books for Nincompoops."

Onward and upward. Each year, the number of titles has increased for both series, as have the number of books in print and revenues, with the Dummies series substantially ahead in the last two categories. The Dummies manuals lead in books-in-print, 50 million to 20 million, and in 1998 revenues, \$120 million to \$30 million.

Bon jour, dummies. The Dummies series has been translated into 31 languages, the Idiot's Guides into 15.

And the titles? "We try to find something that works within each culture," says Dummies spokesperson Sells. "For instance, the word we use for 'Dummies' in Russian translates as 'Teacups.'" Thus: "The Internet for Teacups."

**Imagine:
The French
are taking lessons
from us Americans
about dating
and sex.
Sacre bleu!**

In France, "Dummies" becomes "Zeroes." Says Sells: "Our 'Sex for Dummies' in French is 'Le Sexe Pour Les Nuls.'"

The romantic French actually have a need for a manual on sex?

"It's done surprisingly well," Sells says.

Many countries, she continues, prefer to stay with the word "Dummies." Again, it's now widely recognized as a desirable American brand name.

And the Idiot's Guides? Spokeswoman Durante says consultants in other countries, who suggest titles they think will sell well, tend to avoid the Idiot label.

"The French substitute 'Le Plein d'Idées,' which means, I think, 'A Lot of Ideas,'" Durante says. "The Italians use a phrase that translates as 'The Easy Way' to such-and-such."

And while the Dummies people found a robust market in France for their book on sex, Durante says Macmillan is finding a similar demand for "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Dating."

Imagine: The French are taking lessons from us Americans about dating and sex. Sacre bleu!

Another surprise is the strong showing in Italy of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Cooking." Say what? "It's hard to believe there are any Italians who don't know their way around a kitchen," Durante says. "But it's selling

The dumb and the slothful. Believing you can't have too much of a good thing, Macmillan's Idiot's Guide division has introduced two spinoffs—the "Lazy Way" and "The Official Guide" manuals.

Among the first books in the former series are "Train Your Dog the Lazy Way" and "Cook Your Meals the Lazy Way."

"If you can laugh at yourself at being dumb about certain things, we thought it would be the same for being lazy," explains Macmillan's Short. "This series is really for people who are strapped for time. It sells at a lower price than our 'Idiot's Guides,' and it's about doing things. Right now, we have five or six titles, and they all seem to be selling well."

"The Unofficial Guide" series, Short says, addresses "serious topics and major life events" in "an extremely thorough way." The first two are "The Unofficial Guide to Buying a New Home" and "The Unofficial Guide to Divorce." This line so far has a dozen titles.

Mindful Readings

Timothy Yandel
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Ever since last season's premier of the hit sitcom "Dharma and Greg" (a story about a Yoga instructor and her love-sick spouse) interest in Yoga has taken off — mind, body and all.

The real life Dharma, COD's own Joan Budilovsky, has taken advantage of the current spark of Yoga with her book "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga," released in December of '98 and now with her new book "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Meditation."

Budilovsky co-wrote the books with the help of Eve Adamson, a resident of Florida who is the author of many books.

Budilovsky's and Adamson's books feature step-by-step instructions, helpful diagrams and photos, and explanations of terms and philosophies behind the art of Yoga and Meditation.

In regards to Yoga, Budilovsky says, "In Yoda, Idiots just don't exist. Banish the thought that Yoga is too esoteric to understand, too mystical, or on the fringe."

At COD, more and more students are becoming aware that Yoga is not just something that some friend of a friend does, it's actually something that they themselves can accomplish and, most importantly, gain from.

In Budilovsky's newest addition to the "Idiot's Guide" series, Meditation is explained as a stress resister and a wielder of a better outlook on life in

One could hardly complain about a program that gives those results. Just maybe an indepth look at your mental state would be better than investing an insane amount of money in a Weight Watchers or Jenny Craig program.

Not only would the mental state be better, but the pocket book state as well.

The easy to follow diagrams in Budilovsky's books make it very different from the normal Do it Yourself books. With a little work and dedication, you can become mind over matter in no time at all.

Yet if you are one of those people who feels best having being taught by a physical instruction rather than a pure mental instruction, Budilovsky's talent not only lies as an author, but also as a professor at COD teaching the very same concepts as taught in the book.

Budilovsky has won many awards over her short career as an author, one being the prestigious American Society of Composers, Authors & Publisher's (ASCAP) award, won for 1986 through 1996 of outstanding Writing and Performance.

Budilovsky is also the author of many other books including "FAT-FREE YOGA Containing all natural ingredients," "Beginner's Yoga Class," "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage," and "The Art of Massage... made simple."

All of the above books are available at the COD library for an eternal expanding of your mind.

College credited Hatha Yoga courses are being taught here by Budilovsky in the Physical Education Department. For more information contact Admissions at 942-2046.

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SUN PUBLICATIONS

9 W. JACKSON AVE.

P.O. Box 269

NAPERVILLE, IL 60566-0269

Departments and Fax Numbers

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Looking in the mirror

If Jerry Seinfeld is to the '90s what the Brady Bunch was to the '70s, what does that say about us?

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Photos by Scott Panella / Staff photographer

Calming influence

Ancient art of yoga helps people chill out in a hectic modern world



Joan Budilovsky teaches yoga class at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. The class focuses on breathing exercises and focusing on the body.

By Lisa Leland

STAFF WRITER

Joan Budilovsky had to laugh when she tuned into Oprah Winfrey the other week to hear the talk show queen touting yoga as “the exercise for the Millennium.”

“I thought, ‘Oh, my, that’s funny,’” she recalls. “Yoga’s been around for thousands of years.”

If anyone has proof of yoga’s current posture, it’s Budilovsky, author of “The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Yoga,” part of the national best-selling “idiot’s guide” series. Her 1997 book just had its second printing.

“When Macmillan (book publishers) first called me, I thought it was a joke,” she says. “I thought it was friend of mine from New York pulling my leg. I had never approached a publicist or anything.”

Budilovsky is the resident yoga guru at

College of DuPage, where she teaches college-credited courses in Hatha Yoga to students ages 16 to 87. Oddly enough, the nationally renowned yoga expert took her first class in yoga at COD two decades ago.

“Yoga was big in the ’60s, and now it’s big again, so it definitely goes through cycles,” she says. “Now that celebrities like Madonna are using it as their workout, a lot of people are saying, ‘Oh, yoga – something new!’ But it’s not a fad that comes and goes like Pet Rocks.”

To be precise, yoga is one of the most ancient art forms, originating in India 5,000 years ago. Considered a form of exercise for the mind as well as the body, yoga techniques have received increasing attention in the United States for their ability to relax the muscles and release tension.

“People come to my classes for various rea-

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Yoga

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sons, but I would say the majority come for stress reduction," says Budilovsky, a graduate of the Teacher's Training Program at the Temple of Kriya Yoga in Chicago. "Yoga is a coping mechanism in a fast-paced culture. It's very much about learning ways to discipline the mind. Yoga is defined as cessation of movement in the consciousness, and what that means mainly is quieting the constant fluctuations of the mind."

Sarah Glowiak, a 20-year-old student at COD who has studied under Budilovsky, is one who testifies to yoga's ability to keep her calm before exams: "It's made me a lot more mellow so I'm able to step back from a situation and look at it without reacting. When I'm stressed out over school, like when I have a paper due, I do yoga more often, and it really relaxes me."

Health benefits attributed to yoga exercises include improved circulation of blood and oxygen, weight loss, more energy and better concentration. It can relieve back pain, allergies, headaches, high or low blood pressure, insomnia and depression.

Budilovsky actually garnered the attention of the New York publishers after they happened upon her Web site and saw that she had already written three books on yoga — "Fat Free Yoga," "Yoga for a New Day" and "The Little Yogi Energy Book."

pete, someone has to win and someone has to lose, but in yoga everyone is a winner. Yoga is grounded in this philosophy of nonviolence."

Budilovsky is a former professional musician who headlined as a jazz vocalist at numerous nightclubs in New York and Chicago in the 1980s. Also a concert harp player and organist, yoga aided her with breathing and concentration. Increased awareness of one's breathing, for example, allows a person to be more alert and relaxed in stressful situations. The stretching exercises increase blood and oxygen circulation, which makes a person more focused and able to fully concentrate.

Contrary to what some people believe, Budilovsky says, yoga does

not have to be done in hourlong sessions and can even be done during 10 to 15 minute breaks in a busy schedule.

"I try to do 20 minutes in the morning and then some at night," says Lori Erickson, who has studied under Budilovsky through her instructional video tapes produced at COD. "Instead of jogging or having to mess with getting into a pool and then getting all dried and dressed afterwards, I find yoga to be perfect because I can take it with me, do a little bit even at work. ... Yoga is such a contrast to the rest of my day. It's the moon to the sun, yin and yang. I help people all day, troubleshooting software problems, so yoga gives me time to look inward and think about only me."

Wheaton Park District

■ Yoga I, 7 to 7:55 p.m., Mondays, Park District Community Center, 1777 S. Blanchard St. The first session is June 8 to July 13; second session is July 20 to Aug. 24. Fee is \$30 for park district residents, \$45 for nonresidents. Register at the community center. For information, call (630) 690-4880.

■ Yoga II, 8 to 8:55 p.m., Mondays, Park District Community Center, 1777 S. Blanchard St. Session I is June 8 to July 13; session II is July 20 to Aug. 24. Fee is \$30 for park district residents, \$45 for nonresidents. Register at the community center. For information, call (630) 690-4880.

B.R. Ryall YMCA in Glen Ellyn

■ Yoga, 9:30 to 10 a.m., Fridays at the YMCA, 49 Deicke Drive. First session is June 15 to July 19; second session is July 20 to Aug. 3. Class is free for members, not available to nonmembers. Register at the YMCA. For information, call (630) 858-0100.



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She describes her latest book as a "down-to-earth" introduction to yoga, presenting the reader with exercises and postures as well as the history and philosophy behind yoga.

Yoga, a Sanskrit word for "union," means a sense of oneness with a person's inner being. Using an integrated approach of mind and body is said to lead to ultimate physical health along with mental tranquility.

Hatha Yoga, which Budilovsky teaches, combines three aspects of yoga - Asanas, Pranayama and meditation.

Asanas are body positions that help tone and condition the muscles. The idea is for the body to remain steady for a length of time, stretching without straining. Since Prana refers to vital air or energy, and Yama is the control and direction of that energy, Pranayama is the name for a breathing exercise that focuses on control and direction. Meditation is the closed-eye process of focusing completely on awareness of body, mind and spirit.

"A lot of people think Hatha Yoga is very relaxing, but it can also be quite a workout," Budilovsky assures. "It's really all you need for your body since it's aerobic and you lift your own body weight, doing headstands and other poses. It's a combination of strength-building and flexibility-training, yet it's done in a noncompetitive way even with one's self. In essence, if we com-

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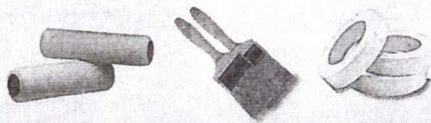
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Healthy trip needs passengers

Hi. My name is Joan Budilovsky. I am a lecturer, author, and teacher of yoga, meditation, and message therapy.

The Suburban LIFE has asked me to start an advice column on alternative health therapies. I'm thrilled to begin a working dialogue between us on subjects so fascinating and enriching.

Not only can alternative therapies be helpful in preventing serious health problems, but methods are available and being studied, which can also help illnesses already in progress. In fact, within the past few years, the National Institute of Health has instituted a department and research program just for alternative therapies.

Did you know that massage can reduce stress, improve circulation, relieve lung congestion, improve brain function, improve posture, digestion, elimination — the list goes on and on. Did you know that yoga has many, if not all, of the same health benefits? And although not as physical as massage or yoga, meditation has definitely been linked to improving concentration, focus and control over the body's mechanisms. Massage, yoga, meditation — three times the charm to a healthier lifestyle.

I'm sure you're asking yourself, "Who is Joan and how can she help me?" Good first question; here is the answer.

I am currently teaching yoga, massage and meditation courses at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. I am on the faculty of both the Physical Education and Continuing Education departments. I have been serving on faculty there for the past six years. I am also the co-author (with Eve

Adamson) of the nationally best-selling series — "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga," "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage," and our newest book to hit the bookstores this week, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Meditation."

All three books are available at any major bookstore. I have also written an assortment of other yoga and massage books, and have recorded a wide variety of audio and video tapes. I have published the popular, award-winning "Yoyoga" Website on the Internet since 1996



(<http://www.yoyoga.com>). The website contains basic information on yoga, vegetarian recipes, a bookstore, and a question and answer column called "Yo Joan." Every two weeks I answer questions sent in from around the world.

My alternative health journey began in 1976 when I took my first yoga class at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. I went on to complete degrees from Northern Illinois University (Social Sciences) and Columbia College (Broadcast Communications). In the 1980s, I traveled between Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles, working as a musician and actress. I appeared as a jazz vocalist in numerous major nightclubs and hotels (in Chicago — Milt Trenier's, Hilton, Palmer House, etc., along with

many of the fabulous clubs that existed back then on Rush Street like "Manhattan" and "the Snuggery").

I also worked as an actress in numerous daytime serials (Another World, Days of our Lives), major motion pictures (New York Stories, Working Girl) and lots of off-off-Broadway original stage productions. My acting parts were not large — in fact, usually if you blinked you'd miss me — but they were steady and along with my singing, enabled me a full-time career in the arts. During all this time, I continued my studies in yoga, massage and meditation. I found that these disciplines helped me significantly in my general health and peace of mind within this hectic career. Over the last 10 years, with my increasing teaching and writings on health related subjects, my life's work has shifted from the performing arts to the healing arts.

Are you looking for a new approach to an old problem or an old approach (yoga traditions are more than 5,000 years old) to a new problem? In the following weeks, I look forward to answering your questions on yoga, meditation and massage, and responding to questions or concerns you may have about other alternative health therapies too.

Please remember that I am not a physician, and I do not give medical advice. Rather, I am here to help open up some new doors of understanding and further discussions on subjects that are intriguing and thought pro-

voking. Do send your letters to:

"Yo Joan," at The Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, Ill. 60523-8814 or through the Internet at Joan' Yoyoga Website
<http://www.yoyoga.com> or email: joan@yoyoga.com.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Massage can improve self-awareness

By Joan Budilovsky

Hi. My name is Joan Budilovsky. I am a lecturer, author, and teacher of yoga, mediation, and message therapy.

Prime Times has asked me to start an advice column on alternative health therapies, and I am very excited to start a working dialogue between us on this fascinating field of health.

Massage is one area of alternative health care that has certainly gained popularity over the past few years.

For good reason too. Massage can aid digestion and circulation, improve posture, and can enhance the immune system. It can remind us that we actually do have toes or a left elbow.

Along with its many health benefits, it affords us a heightened sense of self-

awareness. Did you know that yoga has many of the same benefits as massage?

And meditation has also long been associated with numerous health benefits, including improved concentration and relaxation.

I'm sure you're asking yourself, "Who is Joan and how can she help me?" Good first question; here is the answer.

I am currently on faculty at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn where I teach courses in yoga, massage, and meditation in the Physical Education and Continuing Education departments. I have served on faculty there for the past six years.

I have authored numerous books and tapes on these subjects, including the recently released, best-selling series (co-authored with

Eve Adamson) "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga," "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage," and "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Meditation."

All three books are nationally published and available at any Borders, Barnes and Noble, or through any major bookstore.

Since 1996, I have published the popular and award-winning "Yoyoga" Website through the Internet (<http://www.yoyoga.com>).

In this website appears the "Yo Joan" column. Over the years I have received hundreds of letters from people all over the world with questions about yoga.

A good portion of these letters have come from seniors. Seniors who are looking for ways of re-gaining flexibility and strength.

I have instructed many seniors over the years. The study of yoga is over 5,000 years old — a bit older than either of us.

My alternative health journey began in 1976 when I took my first yoga class at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn.

I went on to obtain degrees from Northern Illinois University (Social Sciences) and Columbia College (Broadcast Communications).

In the 1980's, I worked steadily as a musician and actress. I traveled between Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. I received numerous awards for my writing and live performances. Little did I know then, that my writings would take me into the healing arts.

While I was working as a performer, I continued a disciplined practice of yoga, massage, and meditation.

I found that these three disciplines helped me tremendously with my general health and well-being. I relocated back to the Chicago area in 1993.

Over the last 10 years,

with my increasing teaching and writings on health related subjects, my life's work has shifted from the performing arts to the healing arts.

In the following weeks, I look forward to answering your questions on yoga, massage, meditation, and to opening doors of understanding to other alternative

**yo
joan**

health therapies as well. I am not a physician.

I do not give medical advice.

I am simply here to offer a greater understanding and appreciation for a life with infinite possibilities at any age. Let's explore a healthier life together.

"Yo Joan," at Prime Times, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60 523-8814 or through the Internet at Joan's Yoyoga Website: <http://www.yoyoga.com> or email: joan@yoyoga.com.

A HEALTHY OUTLOOK

Yoga 'icing on the cake'

Dear Joan:

I attended your 10 a.m., Monday and Wednesday, Hatha Yoga One class at College of DuPage and I'd like you to know how pleased I am to be a part of it. It's kind of like 'the icing on the cake' for me as I'm a second degree, Usui method, Reiki practitioner and the similarities in the principles of both Yoga and Reiki are wonderfully harmonious.

Your class is fortifying my belief in the truth of positive energy. I firmly believe in the karmic value of positive thinking and actions. The exercises you teach strengthen those qualities for me.

I'd like to share with you the Reiki Principles. They too are words to live by and are made stronger by what I'm learning in your class.

They are as follows:

- Just for today I will give thanks for my many blessings.
- Just for today I will not worry.
- Just for today I will not be angry.
- Just for today I will do my work honestly.
- Just for today I will be kind to my neighbor and every living thing.

Thanks for your dedication to teaching Yoga.

**Yours in Universal Energy,
Carol Wolverton**

Dear Carol,

Thank you, Carol, for sharing these great thoughts to live by. Reiki is a form of massage that works with the yoga energy system called "chakras." For those looking for a massage that works to unlock energy on various levels — this may be worth looking into.

Peace,
Joan



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

A pain in the neck The Suburban LIFE, Saturday, February 13, 1999 Page 15

Dear Joan,

I have recently had some surgery (an open thoracotomy and lobectomy) which seems to have aggregated an old injury to my neck. A chiropractor recently told me I have had arthritis as a result of a trauma to the C-5 disc in my neck that happened 15 to 20 years ago. I have had pain from time to time in the past but always thought it was from stress. The pain has never been as bad as it is now.

Can you suggest any yoga poses or stretches that I can do that would benefit my aching neck. Once the inflammation goes down, I would especially like to give a special effort to a daily maintenance program to keep my neck and spine more flexible. Also, is it a good idea to exercise the neck while there is some inflammation.

**Ann
Woodridge**

Dear Ann,

Do not exercise the neck if it is swollen or inflamed. Continue your exercise program under your doctor's supervision. Ask your doctor for guidance. Educate him on the yoga postures and ask his opinion if they are related to your condition. Above all, I would recommend rest and patience. In the meantime, a steady practice of breathing exercises would be helpful. The way we breathe has long been associated with various illnesses and stresses.

For starters, try the following simple exercise. Extend the exhale to your inhale. For example breathe in (through the nose) for four counts and breathe out for eight counts. Gradually work to extend the length of time inhaling and exhaling. This can help to de-stress the body. Do breathing exercises any time, but particularly when you are alone, relaxed and unpressured.

A regular Swedish massage can also be of great benefit to joint problems associated with arthritis. It works with the manual manipulation of the soft tissues of the body. Always tell your massage therapist your comfort level in the amount of pressure given in the massage. After your massage, it is very important that you drink lots of water to help the waste products (that massage can help dislodge) release from your body.

Peace
, Joan

Joan is a local resident author of numerous books on yoga, massage, and meditation. Send letters to Joan at: Yo Joan c/o The Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523-8814, or e-mail at Joan's "Yoyoga" website: www.yoyoga.com.

A HEALTHY OUTLOOK

The Suburban LIFE, Saturday, February 27, 1999

'Breath breaks' are helpful

*Yo Joan,
Recently I had to go to the hospital for a bad asthma attack. What really helped me through the experience was concentrating on my breathing (just like in yoga class). I was wondering if there were any breathing techniques that would be most effective to calm my breathing down?*

Thank you.

Elise
Lombard

Elise dear,
When the breath is erratic, as in an asthma attack, panic can start to set in, which exacerbates the problem. Continue working on breathing exercises so that you can use them as tools to calm you when needed. Start by simply watching your breath. How does it flow in? How does it flow out? Is the exhale even with the inhale. Breathe in through the nose. Breathe out through the mouth. Can you slow it down?

When you are calm, and your breath is steady, lie on your back and place your hands on your tummy. As you inhale, let the tummy rise. As you exhale, let it fall. Notice the movement in your chest lessening as the lower part of your lungs are used more fully. Continue working on this exploration of deep breathing. This increases the strength of your diaphragm

(located under your lungs) so that you can call on a greater capacity of your lungs. Strengthening the diaphragm increases the ability of your lungs to expand more fully. Every day, spend at least a few minutes on breathing exercises. Give these breathing exercises your full focus and attention. Discipline your practice and take regular focused "breath breaks" throughout the day. Breath is the key to the life force. We can't leave home without it. So let's continue to open doors of deeper understanding to this, our magnificent breath of life.



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

*Yo, Joan,
If there was one thing that people could start to do each day to begin the day well, what exercise or pose would it be?*

Joan Swier
Indian Head Park

Joan dear,
Look in the mirror, into your own eyes, and say something kind to yourself.

Peace,
Joan

Joan Budilovsky is the local author of numerous books on yoga, massage, and meditation. If you have a question contact Joan at The Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook 60523-8814 or her Web site at www.yoyoga.com.

Yoga can ease sciatica woes

Yo Joan,

How can yoga and massage affect my sciatica? Can I get permanent relief by diligent practice of yoga? I've already experienced a great improvement.

Lorrie G.
Wheaton

Dear Lorrie,

Sciatica is an uncomfortable and often painful condition that usually stems from impingement of the Sciatic Nerves. The Great Sciatic Nerve is the largest nervous chord of the body. It is approximately a quarter-inch wide and extends from the sacrum, all along the back of the leg, and through the heel. This Great Sciatic Nerve also consists of Lesser Sciatic Nerves stemming off from it. When the Sciatic nerves are impinged, the pain can be felt along the back of the leg and throughout the entire leg and foot. Those suffering from this condition often turn to yoga and mobility exercises to help ease their severe discomfort.

Yoga and massage can be of significant help to those with sci-

atic impingement. Yoga standing postures are of particular benefit. For example, try standing with the legs spread about four feet apart with the toes just slightly angled in. Bend forward at the hips maintaining a flat back. Holding this pose for a period of time helps to release some of the pressure by stretch-



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

ing out the sciatic nerves and the major muscles along the back of the legs. A regular practice of this pose along with other yoga standing poses may offer significant relief to many suffering from sciatica.

As yoga works with stretching and strengthening the major muscle groups, a targeted massage can work to stretch and relax the minor muscles involved too. The Piriformis is a

small muscle located in the center of the buttocks that also can effect the smooth functioning of the Sciatic Nerves. When the Piriformis constricts, it impinges upon the Sciatic Nerves. A trained massage therapist can locate and massage this Piriformis muscle to help it stretch and relax. Many people hold lots of tensions in their buttock muscles (gluteals), and are not even aware of their overly strained muscles. Their first sign may be lower back pain or sciatica. Lower back pain is a condition that a majority of people over 40 experience. So, if you are one of the majority of this population, a regular practice of yoga postures along with regular massage therapy may indeed greatly benefit you.

Yo Joan,

How do you know when you are really in meditation?

Sue
Glen Ellyn

Dear Sue,

When the profound peace you are feeling within helps you to clearly see the beautiful world without.

Peace,
Joan

There are ways to deal with the pain of arthritis

By Joan Budilovsky

I have a grandmother who is in her 80's and has very bad arthritis. It's her neck that gives her the most trouble. Is there any kind of massage, or even better, any kind of stretching she can do to relieve the pain?

Brandi M. Allen
Bartlett

Dear Brandi,

How lucky your grandmother is to have you as her granddaughter! When suffering from arthritis (or any chronic condition) it is important to have people in our life who understand how painful and often debilitating the condition can be.

Most people respond to arthritis by decreasing their activity level, but inactivity further weakens muscles and can actually increase arthritic problems. Regular exercise and massage can keep muscle tone intact and prevent stiffness by increasing nourishing body fluids to the areas of discomfort.

When arthritis strikes one area, the whole body tends to stiffen to protect or attempt to

subdue the part that hurts. This is why a gentle full-body massage can help, even if one area of the body suffers the most. Gentle yoga movements can also increase flexibility to areas of arthritic discomfort. These movements can be done sitting in a chair, or standing holding a chair.

For example, have your grandmother lean her right

**yo
Joan**

ear towards her right shoulder. Ask her to feel the stretch on the left side of her neck and to keep her focus there. Have her take long deep breaths as she is holding the pose. As she exhales, encourage her to sense her neck relaxing as it stretches.

Yoga exercises are designed to work all the major muscle groups. Relaxation is also an important part of the study - working the muscles through various movements and then consciously relaxing

the muscles. The slow breathing exercises used in yoga further serve to flood the body with increased oxygen. These relaxation and breathing exercises, along with the flexibility gained, may greatly help your grandmother through her arthritic discomfort.

There are many massage therapists who are now specializing in geriatric massage. The massage does not have to be very deep to get the great benefit of increased circulation and oxygen to the tissues. It is important to know what specific physical limitations exist, so that the massage therapist can tailor a massage to one's specific needs. I highly encourage you to consider giving your dear grandmother a gift certificate of a professional massage, from a trained and certified massage therapist, for her 81st birthday.

Joan Budilovsky is a local author of numerous nationally released books on yoga, massage, and meditation. If you have a question for Joan, write to "Yo Joan!" at the Prime Times or on the internet at: www.yoyoga.com

['Cow' limbers neck cramps

Yo Joan,

I get these horrible shoulder and neck cramps. Sometimes it travels to my lower back too. What techniques can I do to get rid of them?

Jessica in Downers Grove

Dear Jessica,

After you have checked with your physician and ruled out any serious condition, I will offer you a few suggestions to help open up the shoulder area. Overly tight shoulder muscles can directly effect the comfort of the neck. The tightness can spread all the way down the spine and into the lower back as well. Regular yoga practice can help to loosen and limber the effected muscles.

Let's start with a pose called "cow." The cow is a revered and sacred animal within the Indian culture. In fact, cows are often permitted the freedom to walk the streets in India among the people. They are not killed for meat. How different than our hamburger culture. The cow is worshipped for its giving nature — cream, butter, and dung, which is used for fuel for fire. The cow pose stimulates nerves at the base of your spine, keeps the lower vertebrae from calcifying, opens the shoulders and chest, and activates the base chakras (energy centers) to help increase your vital energy. Sounds like a lot for such a simple posture. Let's give it a try.



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

Sit on the floor or in a chair with your spine straight. Place your right hand palm down on top of your head. Bring your left hand behind your lower back with your palm facing away from your back. Now bring your hands toward each other in back. The hands do not have to touch. As the shoulders open, eventually the hands may connect. Keep your spine straight. Close your eyes. Hold the pose by counting a comfortable number of slow breaths. Try four long breaths to start. Each week increase the number of breaths in the pose. Do the other side by placing the left hand on top of your head and the right hand behind your lower back.

If you are sitting on the floor, cross your legs so that your knees come close on top of each other. The heels pull in toward your body. Don't over strain to "accomplish" anything. The study of yoga is a study of opening. It is not goal orientated and it is not to be rushed.

Are your shoes tight? Near the outside of the upper feet by the little toes is a reflex point for the shoulders. Try massaging your feet and giving extra attention to this outside area of the feet. Try also massaging directly under the little toes. Ask a friend to massage your feet in these areas, so your shoulders can relax even more. Breathe deep and watch the tensions begin to melt away. Pause in reflection after your yoga practice or massage, and experience the peaceful connection between different parts of the body. With steady practice, the moments of peace become longer and more encompassing.

Peace, Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local area teacher and notional author of numerous books on yoga, massage, and meditation. To write to Joan, address letters to "Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523-8814" or through her Yoyoga website at www.yoyoga.com.

Yoga may help a hurting back

Yo Joan,

If you have back problems, can you perform yoga without hurting yourself?

Kimberly A. Cygan
Villa Park

Dear Kimberly,

Yoga can be very beneficial for those suffering from back problems. For example, cobra pose is a pose that helps to strengthen the spine. It is done lying face down on the floor with your hands flat on the floor and in line with your shoulders. First imagine tucking the tail bone under to lengthen the spine. Slowly, lift the head off the floor, then the shoulders, then the chest. The hips stay flat on the floor. The elbows stay bent. If the arms are not bent, you may over strain the lower back. The eyes look up toward the ceiling.

The shoulders are down and away from the ears. An experienced yoga teacher can see if you might be over stretching



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

your spine. Yoga poses advance so that as your back becomes stronger, the poses become more difficult. However, this is a process that should not be rushed into. To continue to advance in your studies, study under the guidance of an experienced teacher and review your yoga program with your physi-

cian.

Yo Joan,

I know young male students who I think would benefit from massage — they complain of neck and back discomfort, leg cramps, etc. Do young athletes/students benefit from massage?

Kathy Steiner
Naperville

Dear Kathy,

Yes, absolutely. There is a type of massage called "sports massage" which is tailored specifically for athletes. It involves lots of compression type strokes. I call it "Muscle CPR." This type of massage can be done on someone who is fully clothed. Many sporting events

now have massage therapists on hand to help clients work out muscles tensions between sporting events. An effective sports massage helps to release unwanted tension from the athlete's body, but also helps the athlete keep the "edge" needed to effectively compete in sporting events. Go team.

Peace,
Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local area teacher and popular national author of numerous books and tapes on yoga, massage, and meditation. Write to Joan at "Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, 60523-8814 or through e-mail at joan's Yoyoga website at: www.yoyoga.com.

SUBURBAN LIFE

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JRDAY, APRIL 24, 1999

Strengthen spine with yoga poses

Dear Joan,

I've had recurring back problems for a few years and followed physicians' directions but still have stiffness and weakness. Some friends have suggested I take a class in yoga to help strengthen my back. Can you offer some insight to what yoga would do to help relieve my back troubles? What yoga asanas help reduce or relieve back pain?

Chris in Lombard

Dear Chris,

Since back problems can be so varied, and I do not know what your specific back problem is, I will answer in general terms regarding the back. Yoga postures create a more flexible and stronger spine. If you want a more youthful body, the back is where it's at. Yoga exercise is very effective as a preventive measure for back trouble. It is important that you approach the study non-competitively. This means to be gentle, kind, and patient with your body. Listen carefully. If you already have back troubles, as you stated you do, Chris, then yoga can help you by making you aware of how to move the body in ways that strengthen the energy of the spine and not deplete it.

Let me give you an example of a spine-strengthening exercise that can be done seated in a chair. It is called cobra pose.



Joan Budilovsky

Sit in a chair with your back straight and your feet flat on the floor. Bring your fingers up to your shoulders and face the palms away from your body. Visualize lengthening the spine as you lift your chin up and pull your shoulders down. Slightly arch your chest out. Shoulders come further back and down. Look up and keep your gaze steady. Hold here, and breathe deeply for four long breaths. Then come back to your regular seated position. Rest; then try it again. Do this simple exercise at least three times a day.

I would also highly recommend massage and acupuncture of back troubles. Both forms of treatment can help the healing circulatory effects of the body. Through increased and improved circulation, the body can more effectively bring the needed nutrients to the necessary areas. A series of treatments would probably be recommended to help your condition. Acupuncture, a popular form of healthcare in China in which tiny needles are placed at specific energy points on the body, has been gaining recent popularity here in the United States. Numerous scientific studies on acupuncture and massage are currently being funded by the Office of Alternative Medicine. These modes of healing healthcare have been effectively used for thousands of years in traditional Chinese medicine. They are still effectively used in the major hospitals of China today, as well as in many other corners of the world. I hope these suggestions help, Chris. Wherever you're at, I'm in your corner.

Peace,
Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local teacher and national author of numerous books on yoga, massage and meditation. Reader questions are encouraged. Write to her at Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523-8814 or on the Internet at www.yoyoga.com.

For a more youthful you, look to help that back

I've had recurring back problems for a few years and followed physicians directions but still have stiffness and weakness. Some friends have suggested I take a class in yoga to help strengthen my back. Can you offer some insight to what yoga would do to help relieve my back troubles? What yoga asanas help reduce or relieve back pain?

Chris, Lombard

Dear Chris,

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Let me give you an example of a spine strengthening exercise that can be done seated in a chair. It is called cobra pose.

Sit in a chair with your back straight and your feet flat on the floor. Bring your fingers up to your shoulders and face the palms away from your body. Visualize lengthening the spine as you

lift your chin up and pull your shoulders down. Slightly arch your chest out. Shoulders come further back and down. Look up and keep your gaze steady. Hold here, and breathe deeply for four long breaths. Then come back to your regular seated position. Rest, then

**yo
Joan**

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body. Through increased and improved circulation, the body can more effectively bring the needed nutrients to the necessary areas. A series of treatments would probably be recommended to help your condition. Acupuncture, a popular form of health care in China in which tiny needles are placed at specific energy points on the body, has been gaining recent popularity here in the United States. Numerous scientific studies on acupuncture and mas-

sage are currently being funded by the Office of Alternative Medicine. These modes of healing health care have been effectively used for thousands of years in traditional Chinese medicine. They are still effectively used in the major hospitals of China today, as well as in many other corners of the world. I hope these suggestions help, Chris. Wherever you're at, I'm in your corner.

Peace,

Joan

Yoga harmonizes body and spirit

What does yoga mean?

Kristi
Glen Ellyn

Yoga is a Sanskrit term that means "yoking" or "coming together." A yoga practice brings the body and mind into harmony. The study consists of a system of techniques and practices that originated more than 4,000 years ago in India. The study was originally handed down orally from teacher to student. A few thousand years later, an Indian sage named Patanjali wrote a text called the "Yoga Sutra." This was the first time that the study was written in text.

A typical yoga class consists of movement exercises to strengthen and tone the body. Breathing exercises are also an important part of the study. As the body becomes stronger and more flexible, it becomes easier to sit for longer periods of time in meditation. Some, and this teacher is one of them, consider meditation to be the natural outcome of a steady yoga practice. Meditation involves quieting the constant chatter of the mind. A more peaceful body plus a more peaceful mind equals a more peaceful world.



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

Can you do yoga if you are not very flexible? Can men take yoga too?

Calvin Newman
Addison

Yoga helps the body become stronger and more flexible. A healthy body is balanced. For example, an overly flexible body is not aware of its limitations and can easily injure itself (hyper-extension). Just as an overly strong body can easily 'break' if it does not have the necessary flexibility (hypertonic). Yoga involves a gradual slow process in building strength and flexibility. So, whether your body is like a fortress of steel or a limp rag, the study of yoga builds a balance that helps your body become more graceful and more competent.

Men and yoga — absolutely. Yoga classes usually consist of a majority of women. And so, I am going to divulge the best kept secret in town — a great way for a wonderful man to meet a wonderful woman, is to take a wonderful yoga class.

Peace,
Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local teacher and national author of numerous books on yoga, massage, and meditation. Write to her at Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523-8814 or on the Internet at www.yoyoga.com.

Tame stress with massage

Dear Joan

What types of massage are useful in stressful situations? Are there particular points to focus on for stress?

Jamie of Downers Grove

Dear Jamie,

Depending on our jobs, physical conditioning, environment, heritage, etc., we carry stress in different ways. Ultimately stress manifests in physical forms. Some (many) of us carry stress in the neck and shoulders, others (many) of us carry it in our spine, still others (many) of us carry it in our emotional outbursts. The list goes on and on.

Where do you focus your stress? Where do you feel anxiety build when you are in an uncomfortable situation? Does it build in your stomach, your neck, your head, your chest? Although it may feel like stress builds all over the body, there is usually one area that dominates.

There is a type of massage called "relaxation" massage that can be quite helpful in helping you to determine where your areas of stress are concentrated. Relaxation massage consists of slow gentle kneading and gliding strokes on the body. When you receive this type of massage, you may not even be aware that your shoulders ache until the massage therapist starts slowly and consistently kneading that area. A professional relaxation massage is usually approximately one hour in length. An effective relaxation massage will not only heighten your awareness, but also slowly and steadily help your body to release the stress. A regular session of relaxation massage (weekly, if possible) will help your body to release stress before it builds into a serious condition.

Our bodies are naturally conditioned to respond to stressful situations in a "fight or flight" type of way. As our lives become more sedentary, we are often not physically able to respond in "fight or flight."

For instance, when you are caught in your car in a traffic jam, you cannot go out and belt the obnoxious guy in the car next to you (well, I suppose you could but when he belts you back it will probably be even more stressful) and you can't run away from him either. You are stuck there in that insufferable traffic jam. Stress builds with no way to release it other than to clench the steering wheel till your knuckles turn blue. After you get to your destination, you may mentally forget about the stress, but your physical body is still holding onto it.

A regular relaxation massage is one very healthy and enjoyable way to relieve the continual stress that builds up in the body. Relaxation massage has the potential of being physically, emotionally, and spiritually uplifting.

Peace, Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local resident, teacher, and expert author of the nationally best-selling series "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Massage," "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga," and "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Meditation." Send your questions to "Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523-8814, or on the Internet at <http://www.yoyoga.com>.



A HEALTHY OUTLOOK

Self-awareness aids individual suffering

Dear Joan,

Do you think there will be a time without suffering?

Julie
Woodridge

Dear Julie,

Suffering is a part of our human existence. If you are not suffering, you will only need to glance a short distance to find someone else who is.

We must each work to deepen our self-awareness if we want to put an end to suffering in our individual lives.

Self-awareness requires deep introspection and study. It is often much easier to get caught up in the outer whirlwind of emotions than to sit quietly and turn deeply inward.

Through quiet contemplation, we can begin to see that our emotions do not define our existence. The old saying, "Count to 10 before you react" is a great way to teach us that we have emotional

choices in ways of responding. Times of quietness are important to our self-study and our self-awareness.

By counting to 10, we begin to develop a sense of detachment. This detachment does not mean a detachment from caring. It does



not mean that in detaching from our emotions we become expressionless zombies.

Emotions are a healthy part of our existence. They need to be expressed. However, our ever changing emotions do not define our constant inherent nature.

Meditation is another way of

quieting the mind and detaching from the fluctuating outer emotions. Meditation is a study of awareness that brings us closer to the deeper and larger reality of the beauty and peace that resides within all of us.

This peacefulness is constant and is not ruled by our changing emotion or even physical nature. Let me give you an example of a meditative exercise, sit quietly for a few minutes and watch your breath. As a thought travels into your mind, acknowledge it and let it swiftly leave through your exhale. Don't push it out. Just simply say, "bye-bye thought" through your exhale.

Try and keep your focus on the simple movement of the breath. Watch the air flow in through the nostrils. Watch the slow exhale release from your body. Full awareness to this simple process, for even a few minutes, can be quite profound.

Dear Joan,

If geneticists crack the secret of cellular regeneration via telomeres thereby extending cellular life indefinitely — what does this do to the theory of karma/rebirth?

Just Curious
J.F
Naperville

Dear J.P.,

I am humbled by your excellent question, of which I have no answer. I simply continue to wonder which came first — the cell or the cell's karma?

Yours in peace
Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local area teacher and national author of numerous books on meditation, yoga and massage. To write to Joan, address your letters to "Yo Joan" at The Suburban LIFE Newspaper, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook 60523-8814 through Joan's web site address <http://www.yoyoga.com>

Is there someone today who deserves your thanks?

Dear Readers:

If you are a caregiver, or know of someone who is, I have recently come across a wonderful local newsletter you should know about called "Caregiving." It is published and edited by Denise M. Brown of Park Ridge. This newsletter contains information on caregiving services, support groups, educational services, advise on uncovering the joy in difficult times, and more. For more information contact: Tad Publishing, P.O. Box 224, Park Ridge, IL 60068 or call 847-823-0639

Peace,
Joan

Thank you for saving my life

Thank you for saving my life. You know who you are. The time when I was drowning in silent sorrow over the death of someone I loved deeply, your compassionate eyes caught my drowning sadness and my heart soared in oneness with your kind spirit.

And then there was the time I was feeling untouchable, you softly touched my shoulder and said "thank you." I know not what for.

I cannot forget yet another time for it was not all that long ago, I yelled out in heart wrenching anger and you did

not take my misguided attacks and hurl them back at my dying soul but rather actually listened to the depth of my pain.

You reminded me of my hidden peaceful reality. The mask of my anger slowly unveiled, an ever deeper love. By seeing past my anger, this most crucial time, you saved my life.

I know there must be many people who go through life never realizing how truly important they are; never realizing that they actually saved a person's life. I don't want this to happen to you. I want you to KNOW how important you are. I want you to KNOW the depth of my gratitude. I want you to KNOW you saved my life. I want to sincerely thank you for saving my life, my joy.



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

Thank you.

Letters to "Yo Joan" can be sent to The Suburban LIFE at 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523-1188 or via the Internet at <http://www.yojo-ga.com>

A HEALTHY OUTLOOK

Weight loss effort is multi-faceted

Dear Joan,

Your Website is informative and pleasant to read! Thanks for putting it out there.

Here is my question: I do yoga because I like it — it is enjoyable. Well, now I am trying to lose an extra 40 to 50 pounds by eating less and walking more. I was wondering if yoga could enhance or provide support to this kind of weight loss program? Are there any specific books I could refer to? Asanas to do? Meditations?

Dianna Lord
Glendale Heights

Dear Dianna:

Weight loss can be difficult to achieve, especially when we want it very badly. I myself once had a weight problem in the early 1980s.

I ate compulsively and was in a "Yo-Yo" type pattern of bingeing and dieting. I resented what I saw as the constant bombardment of society and the media to look a certain way. The harder I tried to lose weight, the more erratic my eating behavior became. During

this time, I read a fascinating book called "Fat is a Feminist Issue." It revolutionized my thinking in how I regarded my body. I started to wear looser clothes and to rejoice in the freedom of movement. I started to look at my eating behavior in new ways, too. I slowly started detaching and began to watch my own bingeing behavior with love. Actions that at one time inspired self-hatred began to inspire within in me true compassion.



During this time, I also increased my yoga studies. I studied the postures/asanas with yoga teachers who did not pressure me to achieve an end result. I started to open up to subtle changes in my body. I looked forward to my yoga classes with joy and wonderment. Soon I was doing yoga asanas at home when nobody else was around. I relished this quiet time of inner reflection.

I find myself today at a comfortable weight. The bingeing patterns of many years ago have long since gone. The patterns did not change overnight. It was a process of continual adjustments in behavior and thinking. The yogic path of Ahimsa

(and continues to). I would suggest books for you, Diana, that focus on this ahimsa aspect of yoga study. A favorite book of mine is, "Yoga Postures for Higher Awareness," by J. Donald Walters. This book encourages experiencing the feelings inherent beneath the physical yoga postures.

I hope my sharing a part of my story will help you in a part of your story, Dianna. Om — all is one.

Dear Joan,

I just finished reading your book, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga." It is excellent. I think I am going to read it again because I would like some of these ideas to be with me throughout the day. I often read about personal growth and ones own mind and body, but I never take it all the way. I quit smoking two months ago, and that has led me into interests of exercise and paying closer attention to my diet. With quitting smoking comes the weight and tons of energy! It also has made me more aware of my surroundings and how much more organized and healthy I feel when they are clean. Where I feel I fall short is in meditation and self-discipline and exercise. I sometimes get that feeling of pure happiness for no reason. But it's something I would like to have more and stop some of the chatter in my head.

Do you have any suggestions on how I can create more self-discipline to do the things I know are healthy for me?

Dear Kevin,

Self-discipline is tough. I know of many people who are extremely disciplined in their various pursuits, but I do not know of any who find self-discipline easy. Perhaps it is easy getting started, but the continual practice of self-discipline is difficult. Some theories would say to make your discipline a "habit." This would be similar to smoking, but instead of starting your day with a drag, you start it with a yoga triangle pose. A triangle pose is healthy, however, habit formation is not. Awareness is what you are trying to develop to help in your self-discipline. Habits lack awareness — even healthy habits. The times you mention you are feeling "pure happiness," these are the times to meditate. Meditation is what will increase your awareness, which will, in turn, increase your self-discipline.

To meditate, sit with your spine straight. Close your eyes. Let the mind chatter release with your breath. Focus on your breath — the simple movement of the breath. Stay focused here for as long as you can. Here's a simple poem for you to remember: "Feeling down, move around. Feeling great, Meditate!"

Yours in peace, Joan

Joan Budilovsky is the author of numerous books and tapes on yoga, massage and meditation. She can be contacted through her website at www.yoyoga.com or by sending a letter addressed to Yo Joan at Suburban LIFE.

Power yoga not for everyone

Dear Joan,

I have never taken a yoga class and know very little about it. I am interested in learning it. Where can I find classes (I live in Downers Grove) or find a tape? I think the easiest thing for me to start is with a videotape. Could you please suggest one and where I could find one?

Can I get any cardiovascular improvement from yoga? I am off from my usual routine due to a back injury and thought this may be a low-impact way to stay in shape.

Thanks!

Amy
Downers Grove

Dear Amy,

Perhaps you have heard of the term, "Power Yoga?" It is a new term for an old style of yoga practice. This style of yoga involves a steady flow of increasingly difficult postures. It is an exceptional cardiovascular workout. Since this particular practice can be quite challenging, and you state you have back problems, I would not recommend it specifically for you, Amy.

However, I would recommend it for people who do not have back problems and are looking for an exceptional cardiovascular workout. Numerous classes are springing up in this recently popularized style of yoga.

There are numerous tapes on the market now. I like the "Yoga Journal" videotape series available in any major bookstore. I happen to prefer audiotapes over videotapes though, because audiotapes take you away from the competitive edge that the video images often foster. I have released a series of audiotapes that are available through my books. You can also find a fine assortment of yoga tapes from numerous other authors in the "books on tape" section of a major bookstore. The very best way to study yoga though, is in direct contact with a teacher.

Regarding your concerns for your back rehabilitation, I would recommend a gentle approach to yoga practice. A beginner's class in hatha (balance) yoga would be most appropriate for your concerns. There are SO MANY classes popping up now in your area. I teach Hatha Yoga and Meditation classes Monday and Wednesday mornings at the College of DuPage through the Physical Education

Department. There are also other styles of yoga being taught at the college by various teachers, including Power Yoga. The new quarter begins in mid-September and registration is going on right now. Call (630) 858-2800 to register.

There is a new yoga studio in Downers Grove called "Yoga Among Friends," which offers yoga classes every day of the week at various times and with numerous teachers. The number is (630) 585-4640.

The Park District and YMCA also offer classes, so call your local



Park District or YMCA to find out more details on this.

Many martial arts studios are now offering yoga classes as part of the curriculum.

Most health clubs offer classes in yoga.

Local hospitals are offering classes in yoga and/or stress reduction too.

Some therapy centers offer stress reduction for certain specific populations. For instance, the Wellness House in Hinsdale offers free gentle yoga classes to cancer survivors. The number is (630) 323-5150.

The places to study are expanding every day as yoga becomes more popular as a healthy exercise in reducing stress and its accompanying luggage (and I do mean a big lug) of physical/emotional ailments. As our lives become busier and more complicated, it is so essential to find healthy ways of working with stress. Good luck in your search for the right class, Amy. It is most certainly within near reach!

Dear Joan:

I have made a few futile attempts at Tai Chi and Yoga. I experience a lot of bronchial problems although I have not been diagnosed with asthma. Here and

there I have heard that Yoga "relieves asthma." How so?

Sincerely, Jay

Dear Jay,

Yoga can give you "techniques" to work effectively with asthma. Certain yoga breathing postures can be very effective in helping to reduce the panic that often accompanies an asthma (or asthma like) attack. For example, counting your breath and trying to extend the exhale to inhale can naturally work to calm the body. I realize this is very difficult to do though, when the breath is out of control. You mention futile attempts in your letter, Jay. The health-building results of yoga practice are found through the discipline of its practice. The more often you practice, the more natural the techniques become. As these techniques become a natural part of your life, the easier it becomes to turn to these helpful breathing techniques in times of need. Self-discipline is the key.

How does one acquire self-discipline? One way is to study with teachers who exemplify this in their teachings. Self-discipline does not necessarily mean the simple act of standing on one's head for an hour. It means the very difficult act of inner/outer peace that develops over continued study and practice.

Breath control and self-discipline are VERY important aspects of the yoga study. In yoga, the life-force is referred to as "prana." The way to physically work with the life-force is through the breath. Hatha (means balance) Yoga (means union). This balanced, disciplined practice of uniting the body and mind strengthens and deepens the breath, as it tones and strengthens the rest of the body and mind — all and all, paving the way for a healthier life.

Yours in peace, Joan

Joan Budilovsky is an area resident and the national author of numerous best-selling books on yoga, massage and meditation. Readers can send her questions via the Internet at yoyoga.com or send them by mail to Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE Newspapers, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, 60523-8814.

Reader seeks advice on starting yoga, again

Dear Joan,

I am 75 and used to do Yoga years ago, but have lapsed. Know it does wonders, but right now, don't know how to get motivated to restart, and a program to follow. I have a 79-year-old husband who is on oxygen 24 hours a day (Emphysema), so am tied down to a certain extent. Would appreciate your input.

Jane

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your letter. How wonderful that you are looking into yoga again! Perhaps your husband will find some of the visualizations and gentle movements helpful in his healing as well. A well

known and loved Chicago yoga teacher, Becky Love, is in her 80's and a shining example of the many healthy benefits a regular practice of yoga can offer. If possible, it is important to try and find an instructor you can personally study with. Of course, there are also many books and tapes on the market which will encourage your at home studies and increase your motivation. You are at a beautiful age now, Jane, to be able to bring your wisdom and experience into your yoga studies.

The study of yoga involves holding the body in what are termed yoga postures. These postures help make the body stronger and more flexi-

ble. The postures were created over hundreds of years of study. Nature was a big influence in creating these postures. Animals were observed in the natural movements they performed to heal or optimize the health of

yo
Joan

their bodies. Humans observed and learned from the healthy ways of the animal kingdom. For example, by positioning the body in the way an eagle positions its body, one develops a keener sensitivity to the life of an eagle, while also develop-

ing the bones and nervous tissue of the limbs, firms the muscles of legs and creates balance and poise. In studying the postures, a deeper sensitivity develops to all of nature and to our shared beautiful life force.

There is no rush to "achieve." The postures are studied non competitively and appropriate to each person's particular needs. I encourage you, Jane, to take a class, or find a personal trainer who can come to your home and teach you some simple postures and breathing techniques. Many professional personal trainers are now adding yoga movements to their training repertoire. A local health club

may be able to offer you advise on how to find a qualified personal trainer. Your local senior center may have classes in yoga too. Although it has been many years since you have studied yoga, it is never too late to start again. It has been over twenty years that I have been studying, and I still consider myself a beginner.

Yours in peace,
Joan

Joan Budilovsky is the author of many books on yoga, massage, and meditation. To write to Joan, address your letters to Yo Joan, Prime Times Address....or via Joan's website at <http://www.yoyoga.com>

Yoga takes a holistic view to better health

Dear Joan,

I am interested in the yoga practice and have a question for you. I was diagnosed with depression approximately three years ago and take medication that does not totally wipe it out, but keeps everything at an even keel. I still feel tired a lot, and at times do not have the energy to get out of bed even. Do you know if yoga has benefited anybody with depression? Thank you for your time.

Wendy



Joan Budilovsky

YO
JOAN

Dear Wendy,

You are not alone. Yoga has benefited people suffering from depression. It is a holistic approach to health. It works with the body through postures, breath and diet. It works also with the thought processes through the study of the principles of non-violence.

For now, let's start with the breath. Have you noticed how you breathe? Have you ever spent a half-hour or more simply focused on your breathing? Yoga consists of numerous pranayama/breathing techniques to help us improve our "prana," or energy. I would highly recommend spending at least 10 minutes a day on one simple technique, Wendy.

May I suggest alternate nostril breathing for starters? To do this: place your thumb over your right nostril and exhale through your left nostril. Inhale through the left, close the left nostril with your index finger and exhale through the right nostril.

Inhale right, close right, exhale left. Continue this process of alternate nostril breathing as long as you possibly can. This begins to balance the energy within. Try this out for a few weeks, and then write back to me and let me know how you are doing.

Yours in peace, Joan

Dear Joan,

How can one release karma?

Stan

Dear Stan,

Certainly there are many techniques to release karma.

Karma consists of the forces that pull and tug at one's life. The word karma translated means "action."

How can one change the actions that make up one's personality? Even when one knows that one's actions are not beneficial, the pull of the actions (karma) can be very strong and change very difficult. For example, perhaps you are attracted to a certain type of person. Look around at your friends. Do they share some common characteristics? Look around at your enemies. Do they share common characteristics? What makes one person your foe and another your friend? Your specific answers and mine (if we can even get specific) will most likely be quite different. The reason — karma.

It is easier to flow with karma than to release it — getting up, going to work, eating, sleeping, getting mad at particular events, laughing over other events and never realizing how programmed one is. Ignorance is bliss. But not if one is aware of the ignorance. Then one is at a different level of understanding.

According to yogic training, it is impossible to release karma without extensive self-study. In order to release karma, one first has to be aware of its existence. Awareness is the key. Releasing karma requires tremendous efforts in discipline, concentration, self-study. It is not easy. Transitions are not easy whether transitions are from one city to another, one job to another or one life to another. Life is movement, action, karma.

Mantra, the repetition of sound; Hatha yoga asanas, the study of physical movement; Scriptures, the study of historical sacred texts; Meditation, the study and stilling of movements of consciousness. These are some techniques to soften and release karma.

Yours in peace, Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a area resident and national author of numerous best-selling books on yoga, massage and meditation. Letters can be sent to her World Wide Web site address at www.yoyoga.com or to The Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook, Ill. 60523-88144

Massage helps with diabetes

Q. Hi, Joan

I saw your column in today's paper. I have a son with Type I diabetes. He's 9, diagnosed at 4. I've read that massage therapy can help lower blood sugars. Do you have any information on this? Can you tell me where I can learn more about this?

Thanks,
Marina

PS. I'm also interested in yoga for myself (to relieve stress) so I really appreciate your column.

A. Dear Marina,

A recent Touch Research Institute study found that diabetic children who received massages from their parents, lowered their glucose levels to normal ranges after one month.

A massage for a child can be (and should be) very light to be most effective. Since massage stimulates circulation, it aids in the fluid functioning of internal organs.

Do not massage any inflamed or swollen areas unless under the guidance of a professional.

If you have doubts on your abilities to perform a simple massage, there are numerous one-day classes for the general public available at the College of DuPage (where I teach), or through your local Park District. A class like this will give you some extra pointers and some extra confidence in giving your child an effective massage.

Some classes may even permit your nine year old son to enroll with you, so that he will learn how to give his dear mom a massage too. Doesn't that sound great?

Q. Hi Joan!

I'm praying you can help me. I do some yoga, although I admit I haven't done it in awhile. I'm 16, and well, basically, I'm very skinny but have very large breasts. They make me very self conscious.

A friend of mine mentioned something about a yoga exercise that may firm the breasts. Is this true? Even if it only works a little, it would be great! Please send me any details that you may have, and thank you...

Sally

A. Dear Sally,

Yoga is an internal study that can eventually manifest externally in our physical appearance.

For example, there is a yoga pose called, plough pose. In this pose, the body lies flat on the ground and the legs and hips are raised, with the legs eventually resting back over the head toward the ground - sounds complicated, but really it's not.

It stimulates the stomach, spleen, gall bladder, heart and kidneys. In the process of compressing these organs, they are stimulated and massaged as the pose is released or extended. Stimulating the stomach tones the area of the stomach. This will result in a healthier stomach. A healthier stomach results in better digestion. Better digestion results in a brighter complexion. A brighter complexion stimulates circulation for better muscle tone....and so it goes.

It is a study from the inside out. The longer the pose is held, the more pressure is placed on various organs. When the pose is released, the organ receives an internal massage.

The force of the blood returning is stronger from the compressive release of the pose. The blood returns to more effectively cleanse the area in the process.

So, regarding your question, and with deepest respect, the size and development of your breasts are not goals in the study of yoga. Since the breasts lie in the area of the heart and the lungs, the focus would be in developing the heart and the lungs.

Find yoga poses that help you open your heart and breath. Bring the focus internal. In a world that is focused externally, I know how difficult this is to do.

It is essential, though, in the study of yoga.

Yours in peace,

Joan

*Joan Budilovsky is a local area resident and national author of numerous books on yoga, massage, and meditation. Write to her via her website at www.yoyoga.com or through *The Suburban LIFE*.*

A HEALTHY OUT

Yoga practice can ease pain from arthritis

Q.Hi Joan,

My name is Selena McBride from the Arthritis Society British Columbia and Yukon Division. I'm a kinesiology co-op student working on a literature review on the benefits of yoga and tai chi programs on arthritis. The information from this review will be used to offer increased exercise options for people with arthritis. I am wondering if you have any information on this subject or know any relevant sites, books or contacts for more information on this subject. Thank-you very much and I look forward to hearing from you!

Selena McBride
Arthritis Society
British Columbia
and Yukon Division

A. Dear Selena,

Arthritis, a debilitating joint condition, can stem from numerous conditions. Rheumatoid arthritis usually stems from an auto immune conflict and stress related conditions. A steady practice of hatha yoga postures and breathing exercises help to balance the immune system. Because yoga has such a cleansing effect on the body, the effectiveness of anti-inflammatory drugs increases and the

dosage of these drugs can then be reduced. Do check out the book, "Yoga for Common Ailments," by Dr. Nagendra for even more discourse on arthritis and other ailments.

Fibromyalgia, another form of arthritis where the surrounding tissues and muscles surrounding the joints become painful and tender, can also be improved by a regular practice of yoga. It is important to recognize with fibromyalgia, and with any form of arthritis, that the conditions that brought the arthritis have been, most likely, built up over a period of years. Yoga is not a quick fix. It is a steady progressive treatment for the body. It is a steady progressive cleansing of the body. It also involves a study of how the mind works in relationship to the body.

For example, one of the principles studied in yoga is non-violence. Where are your thoughts? How often do your thoughts drift to self-condemnation or negative judgments of others? The mind can muck up the joints just as the body can. The mind and body are intimately connected.

The physical movements by themselves are not enough for purification and a true healing. The mind must also be examined and brought actively into the healing process.

Age related arthritic condi-

tions usually involve a chronic unhealthy conditioning of the joints. For example, if you walk with high heels for fifty years and your gastrocnemius muscles of the calf shorten, while your quadriceps lengthen to take up the slack, the knee joint suffers as a result of the imbalance. It's going to take a heck of a lot of time to balance out the effect of 50 years of misuse. It's possible but it's difficult.

Osteoarthritis effects load bearing joints like the knees and hips. What I consider to be one of the most beautiful aspects of the hatha yoga postures are that one's body acts as a weight in the exercises. For example, single leg lifts helps to bring mobilization back to the hips. The weight of your own leg lifting is the right weight balance for your body. We tend to think we need more and more weight to improve our health. Hatha Yoga is the study of balance. How can one find balance through the study of one's own body and mind? It is the process of finding these balances that improve one's health.

Hatha Yoga is a slow process to make the joints more fluid and flexible.

It improves circulation and muscles tone. Diet is also an important aspect to the effectiveness of the study. If you are polluting your body with unhealthy foods, the effectiveness of the postures will also be effected. Healthy foods and healthy eating habits are encouraged. Pranayama, or breath work, also plays an important part of the hatha yoga study. The breath is associated with the life force. If the breath is improved and deepened, so is the quality of your life. Pranayama also works to 'cleanse' the body through the various breathing exercises. It is best not to move joints when they are inflamed -pranayama practiced by itself can improve circulation and increase energy. The healing effects of pranayama can help to reduce inflammation. When joints are no longer inflamed, begin slow, sensitive asana (physical movement) practice along with pranayama.

I realize this appears a rather long answer to your question, Selena, but it is really a very brief answer. Yoga is more than an exercise program. It is an ancient study that involves an entire lifestyle approach. There are many facets to it. All can be helpful to arthritis, and to any chronic condition.

Yours in peace, Joan Budilovsky

Joan Budilovsky is a local resident and national author of numerous books on yoga, massage and meditation. Send questions to Yo Joan, Suburban LIFE addressor via Joan's Yoyoga! web site at www.yoyoga.com or Budilovsky at Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook 60523-8814.



Joan Budilovsky

Yo
JOAN

Non-violence beliefs link vegetarians, yoga

Q:Dear Joan,

I've struggled with weight my whole life and am now trying hard to overcome. I've been reading about vegetarianism and am considering giving it a try because it seems like a naturally low-fat way of life. But I'm curious, is there a correlation between yoga and vegetarianism? Is vegetarianism an intricate part of yoga or simply a personal choice?

Rose
Glen Ellyn, Ill.

A:Dear Rose,

Vegetarianism is a personal choice.

Yoga is a personal study. It is non-competitive. For this reason, do not feel pressure to eat a certain way or to stretch into a certain pose if your body is saying, "No." Vegetarianism is connected to yoga through the basic yoga observance of non-violence. As one becomes more aware of the ways and means animals are used as food for our consumption, it becomes very clear that they are subjected to a tremendous amount of violence and torture. As one becomes more and more established in non-violence, one becomes more aware of all sentient creatures and of personal steps that can be taken to make this world a kinder one. One of these steps is vegetarianism. In turn, this type of diet is also kinder to one's own body. It enables the body to work in a clearer and more efficient way. Sufficient and exemplary proteins, carbohydrates and all the necessary ingredients for a strong and healthy

body can be found in a vegetarian diet.

Many people think they will become weak because they will not get enough protein in a vegetarian diet. If knowledge is gained as to which foods are high in protein (tofu, seitan and broccoli, for example), it becomes easier to see that protein really is not a problem. Through meat diets, the body is usually flooded with too much protein (and toxins from the meat). Digestion becomes slow

and what is not.

Regarding weight loss, many people turn to vegetarianism for this reason. However, sugar often becomes a main part of the diet. A meal consisting of a milk shake and french fries does not make one a healthy vegetarian. So, my suggestion to you, Rose, would be to continue trying to eat whatever you consider to be healthy for you. And if this means eating meat, then so be it, as you continue to increase awareness for the life that was given to nourish you, and, very importantly, to continue the study of yoga and the yoga postures. As you continue, you will begin to see changes in your body, some subtle and some profound. Through continuing your yoga practice and practicing loving patience (a form of non-violence to oneself), you will soon find yourself at exactly the right weight and eating exactly the way that is right for you.

Yours in peace, Joan Budilovsky

Joan Budilovsky is a local resident and national author of numerous books on yoga, massage and meditation. Send questions to "Yo Joan" via her [Yoyoga!](http://Yoyoga.com) web site at www.yoyoga.com or at The Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive, Oak Brook 60523-8814.



and difficult. Our bodies become sluggish. Vegetarian diets may be smaller in meal size with more frequent meals. Perhaps this is a reason why many people claim they feel light after eating a vegetarian meal: they will probably be hungry again sooner than if they had eaten a meat meal. So, a new awareness is developed in listening to one's body and when it is hungry. As sensitivity continues to increase, it becomes clearer and clearer what is necessary for the ultimate functioning of the body

Yoga is the process of quieting

Q. Dear Joan,
All high yogi master, I'm afraid
f yoga...aren't there ghosts
involved?

Mr. Sardonicus

A. Dear Mr. Sardonicus,
There most certainly are
ghosts. Ghosts of our own making.
They flutter back and forth across
the mind. Yoga is the process of
quieting these ghosts, this con-
stant mind chatter. These ghosts
are not to be feared. Then again,
for Sardonicus, your ghosts may
be quite different than mine.

Q. Dear Joan,
My daughter is three years off



treatment for a rare bone cancer.
She is 17 years old, and was in 8th
grade when she was diagnosed.
Because we traveled to another
state for treatments, and had to
keep up with her schoolwork, it
was hard to get her started with a
psychologist while under going
treatment.

When treatments ended, we
hired a couple therapists to help
her deal with anxiety that she still
has from her illness, (scars, both
physical and emotional) but noth-
ing has really helped.

A friend suggested yoga classes
for her, to help her deal with stress.
She also has a friend (16 years old)
who is undergoing treatments
right now for a rare muscle disor-
der, who is very stressed out, too.
Neither girl knows how to work
through their stress very well,
which lends to the theory of stress
being involved in bringing on ill-
nesses!

Because I am not knowledge-
able about yoga at all, I am not
sure what type of yoga class they
could take together. The friend
suggested Iyengar yoga, but I read
the letter you responded to in Yo
Joan, where you suggested Ash-
tanga yoga for someone interested
in keeping fit, which they both
are—being that they are teenage
girls. And so the factors here are:
teenage girls, illness, and keeping
fit. What type would you recom-
mend, and where would I find that
class in our area?

Thank you so much!
Caring Mom
Riverside

A. Dear Caring Mom,
My heart felt regards to you and
your daughter for all your trials
this year.

I would recommend contacting
the Wellness House in Hinsdale,
Illinois. Their phone number is
630-323-5150. They offer numer-
ous support groups for cancer sur-
vivors and for their families...at no
charge. Free gentle yoga classes
are offered there too.

I would recommend gentle
yoga for your daughter. Even
though she may be very athletic,
this will give her the necessary
ingredients to de-stress while also
providing opportunities to become
stronger and more flexible.

We sometimes may think we
need intense workouts to de-
stress. This is not true. Intensity
can simply cause the body to
become exhausted. There is a sig-
nificant difference between
exhaustion and relaxation.
Exhaustion actually puts more
stress on the body. It wears the
body down. Whereas, relaxation
energizes and restores the body's
health building properties.

There is also a wonderful yoga
studio in your area called Garden
of Yoga. Kathleen Wright, the
instructor, has a strong Iyengar
background. This is a type of yoga
training that highly focuses on
alignment and the use of props,
such as blocks and bolsters. The
use of these props helps the body
to open further in yoga postures.

For example, if your hand can
not touch the floor when bending
forward, blocks or bolsters are
used to rest your hands on. This
allows your body to relax into the
pose, as compared to forcing your-
self further into a pose your body
is not ready for. Garden of Yoga's
number is 708-802-1329.

You may want to also pick up a
copy of the Yoga Chicago newspa-
per (available at Borders in Oak
Brook, and numerous other loca-
tions, or check out their website at
www.yogachicago.com) for even
more local listings of yoga teach-
ers and classes. Keep in touch, car-
ing mom. Your daughter is being
surrounded by such good energy, I
have total faith in her healing
process...

Q. Dear Joan,
One of the big problems is life is
how does one stuff a tofu-turkey?
A friend

A. Dear friend,
I do not consider myself much
of a cook, so I will instead refer
you to the fabulous Vegetarian
Timesnational magazine available
in any major bookstore.
In it you will find an assortment

of vegetarian recipes. There are
many vegetarian alternatives (tofu
being one of them) to turkey,
goose, or any meat.

To further encourage your veg-
etarian interests, there is a local
social organization called The
Chicago Vegetarian Society. This
organization sponsors social
events to encourage friendships
and to offer educational support in
being a vegetarian - a choice that is
difficult in our society.

Would it not be an incredible
holiday season of thanks if we
expanded our thanks to our dis-
tant relatives in the animal king-
dom? We still have a long way to
go with human rights in our world,
so hard to believe, perhaps, that
we could be politically, emotional-
ly, compassionately aware enough
to realize that animals suffer in the
ways that we do.

Difficult to believe, perhaps,
that we could actually realize in

our physical actions, what we may
already know in our deepest self.
This realization being that the
actions we take (whether direct or
indirect) that cause pain and suf-
fering in the sentient animal king-
dom, is ultimately, and immediat-
ly, our very own pain.

Again, for recipe meal sugges-
tions, I would recommend Vege-
tarian Timesalong with a sincere
blessing for the life that was given
to sustain another. Thank you for
your question, my dear friend.
Truly, my dear friend.

Yours in Peace,
Joan

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and national author of numerous best
selling books on yoga, massage, and
meditation. Address letters to Yo Joan at
Suburban Life, or via Joan's Internet
address at www.yoyoga.com.

A HEALTHY OUTLOOK

Yoga can support all faiths

Q: Dear Joan,

Sometime perhaps we can talk about how Eastern mysticism and thought can live in harmony with Christianity. I suppose that I am thinking of the admonitions of my Southern Christian upbringing that didn't allow for multiple paths to God. Please don't be offended by my questions about yoga thought. I have some of the same questions about Native American spirituality as well.

I need to reconcile the approach with my own understanding of my Christian faith's tenets. Regardless of the direction I go, it will be a fun journey and I will be wiser for it.

Namaste, love and shanti (am I redundant?),

Kim

Joan Budilovsky



YO
JOAN

A: Dear Kim,

Your questions and concerns about your Christian beliefs are valid and shared by many.

Yoga is based in India and sometimes confused with Hinduism. Yoga is not a religion, although the distinctions are sometimes confusing. Yoga, in its true essence, can support and encourage whatever religious faith you have.

Svadhya is a sanskrit term in yoga that means self-study. This means quiet introspection within the yoga poses, and within the study of sacred texts. This involves studying the nectar of sacred literature and exploring the deep meanings inherent within these writings.

The reading of sacred literature is highly encouraged because it lifts the thought processes.

As you are a Christian, applying and discovering the yogic principles of non-violence, contentment and truthfulness to your studies of the Bible can serve to deepen your understanding and appreciation of this rich text.

Studying sacred texts from the Hindu perspective, such as the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads, can also serve to deepen your appreciation of the spiritual essence and truth that is inherent in all great sacred literature.

Studying different texts of different religious faiths, in the yogic sense, is not meant to persuade one to change religions, but rather to deepen one's respect for divinity in all of its many forms. "Ask and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." - Luke 11:9

Concentration is another important aspect of yoga. For you, this may involve continuing your deep exploration of the Bible without exploring other religious texts. All great sacred texts have so many rich dimensions within them, that surely a lifetime can be spent in bringing the foundation of one's particular religious faith into one's life.

To truly breathe in and out the principles of sacredness — to live in full realization of self respect, respect toward others, love, peace and harmony. Yoga means uniting body and mind. And, in this process, comes the full realization of the intimate bond of life we share with each other.

Namaste and shanti are sanskrit words. Namaste means recognizing and respecting the divinity within all. Shanti means peace. So, you are not redundant when you say, "Namaste, love and shanti." You are all encompassing.

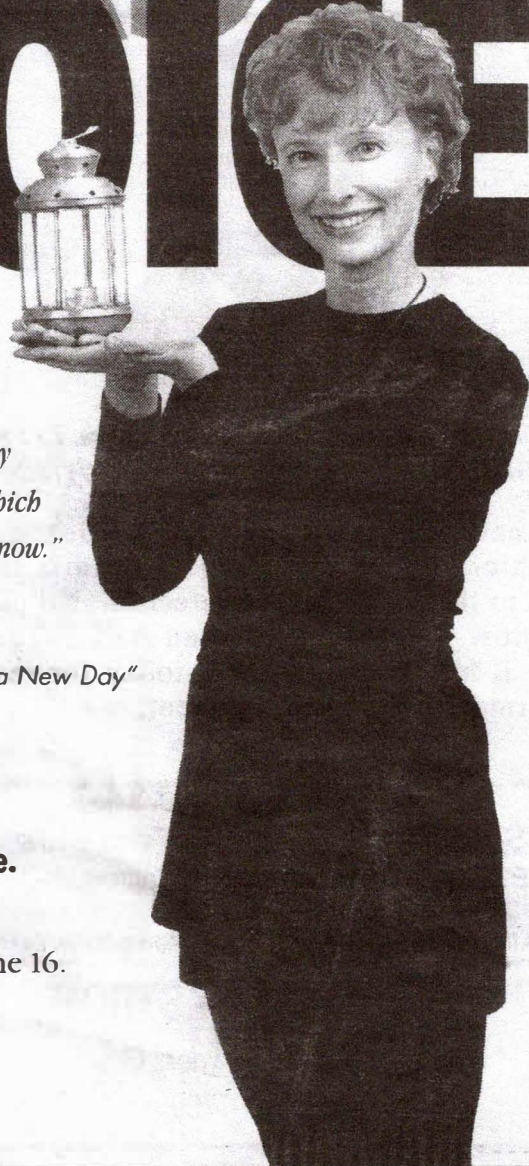
Namaste, love, shanti and Merry Christmas,

Joan

Joan Budilovsky is a local resident and national author of numerous best selling books on yoga, massage, and meditation. Address letters to "Yo Joan" at Suburban LIFE, 709 Enterprise Drive in Oak Brook, 60523-8814, or via Joan's Internet address at www.yoyoga.com.

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Author, "Fat Free Yoga" and "Yoga for a New Day"
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