

ALWAYS ANOTHER CHANCE TO GET IT RIGHT

Resolve to forgive yourself in 2006

If you promise yourself to lose weight, don't let one misstep turn into a tumble

BY CAROLYN KLIMAS
Special to the Observer

The challenge in keeping resolutions is not only in keeping them but also in the paralyzing guilt that comes with breaking them. How often do dieters stray from their planned meal and then embrace the logic that says, "Oh, I ruined my diet."



Klimas

As if one bowl of ice cream has brought down a nation. The disappointment from this lapse can and often does snowball into a continuation of old habits.

My suggestion is to combine one's resolution with forgiveness. In yoga, we approach the poses with *abhyasa* and *vairagya*,



COURTESY OF CAROLYN KLIMAS

Carolyn Klimas is the owner of Peaceful Poses Yoga studio. She suggests incorporating yoga's flexibility into your resolutions.

which means "best efforts, surrender the results." Why not keep your resolutions, but also incorporate some kindness in the plan?

First, take pride in your effort.

By trying to make changes in your life, you are honoring yourself. That in itself is pretty groovy.

Second, have realistic expectations. Choose goals that you have

a possibility of fulfilling. Most of us won't drop pounds that quickly unless we're assigned to a tribe on "Survivor." Apply softness and knowledge of yourself when you make your resolutions.

Lastly, forgive. Chastising yourself will only perpetuate whatever low self-esteem that inspired the resolution in the first place. If you slip up on your diet, forgive yourself and try again at the next meal or snack. If you skipped your spin class, check the schedule to see if there's another tomorrow. Or take a walk instead.

In yoga, we say each inhale provides a new opportunity, a new moment. This year, why not offer yourself a new kindness with your resolutions?

carolyn@peacefulposes.com



Myths About Yoga

by Carolyn Klimas

Yoga is hard to miss these days. Gyms, commercials – one can even procure a mat at Wal-Mart. While infusion into the mainstream makes yoga accessible to a broader audience, it can also be confusing. What is yoga, really, and by what means should you try it? As a teacher and a studio owner, I've heard every excuse – er, stereotype – about yoga. It is discouraging that misconceptions about yoga may be an obstacle to a newbie venturing into a class – and potentially finding an outlet to relieve stress and nurture the body. The word guru translates as dispeller of darkness. A guru doesn't necessarily have to be a person in a lofty position. It could be a friend, a car wreck, a pet or an article. Let's work on dispelling some myths about yoga.

Myth: Yoga is just a trend.

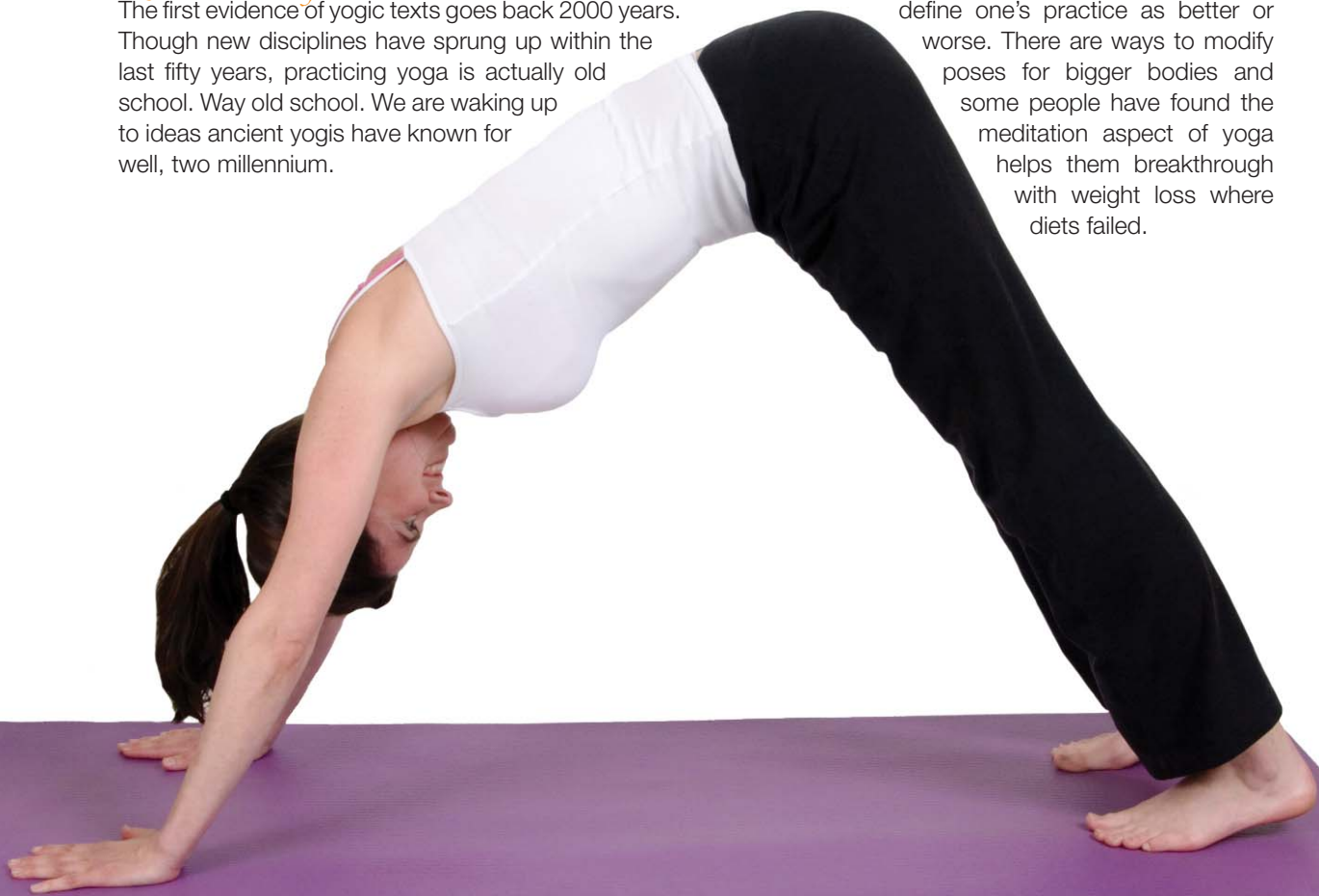
The first evidence of yogic texts goes back 2000 years. Though new disciplines have sprung up within the last fifty years, practicing yoga is actually old school. Way old school. We are waking up to ideas ancient yogis have known for well, two millennium.

Myth: Yoga is for wimps.

First of all, take a breath and work on dropping that competitive vibe. Ain't nothing wrong with being a beginner. Continuing to learn keeps us young. As a yogi builds strength in his or her physical practice, one learns – you gotta be pretty tough for yoga. It combines strength, flexibility, balance, and focus. You can't devise a grocery list or do your taxes while breathing in challenging poses such as wheel or handstand.

Myth: You have to be skinny to do yoga.

Magazines, studios and websites often feature one kind of body to advertise yoga. Sinewy, toned and sometimes irritatingly flexible. In the real world, yoga practitioners come in all shapes and sizes. A typical yoga body is strong, period. Extra weight doesn't define one's practice as better or worse. There are ways to modify poses for bigger bodies and some people have found the meditation aspect of yoga helps them breakthrough with weight loss where diets failed.





Myth: You have to Om.

Eh. Depends on the teacher. Even if your instructor is chant-happy, you can exercise the freedom to sit and listen.

Myth: One must practice yoga at very hot temperatures.

Yes, some yoga takes place in a warmer climate. Some folks find their body loosens up with heat; others find it distracting and suffocating. Just as there are many different bodies and approaches, there are different styles and teachers. If sweating isn't your thing, try a balmier class.

Myth: Yoga improves performance in the boudoir.

Okay, this one is actually not a myth.


Myth: Yoga clashes with my faith.

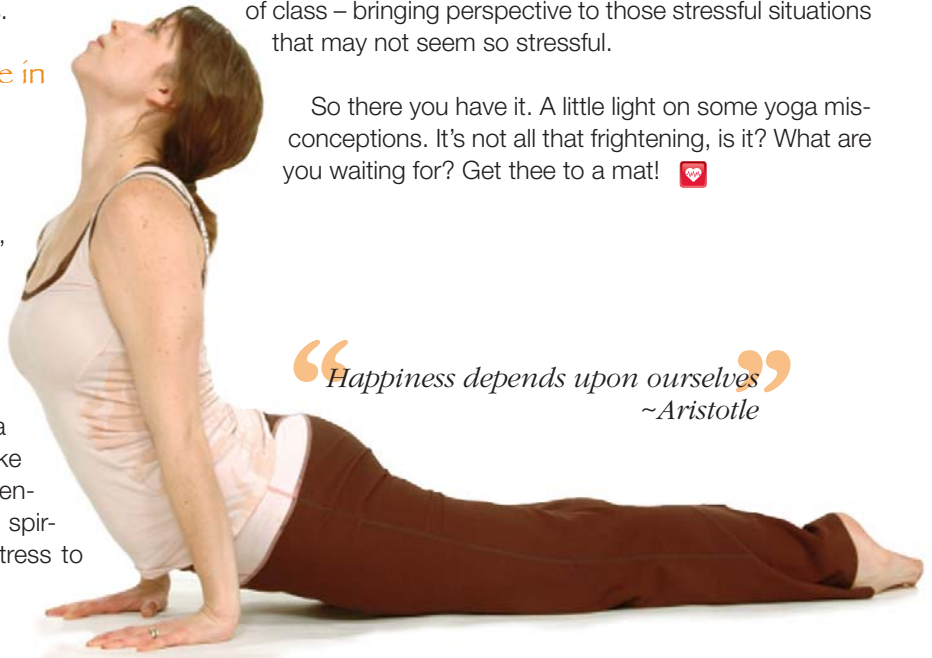
The names of yoga poses are Sanskrit, an ancient scholarly language from India. Sometimes teachers pepper colorful stories of Hindu legends to explain poses and philosophy. The language and Eastern ideas can be confusing; new yogis may fear a conflict with their religious faith. Yoga doesn't clash with other faiths. You can take what you want from it. Yogic philosophy encourages openness and union of body and spirit. If anything, yoga can be a powerful buttress to one's faith.

Myth: Yoga is very serious.

Another Sanskrit word I love – lila – means the divine play of the universe. We practice yoga to lighten up. While slowing down and drawing oneself inwards can bring up darker issues, we practice yoga to return to a state similar to that of a child – openness, non-judgment and curiosity.

So, go ahead, giggle! You're lying on your back with your bum and toes in the air. It's kinda funny, so go ahead. Maybe yoga class will even inspire you to laugh at yourself outside of class – bringing perspective to those stressful situations that may not seem so stressful.


So there you have it. A little light on some yoga misconceptions. It's not all that frightening, is it? What are you waiting for? Get thee to a mat! 




“Happiness depends upon ourselves”
~Aristotle



Six branches of yoga

Emotion, action and intelligence must be in balance to integrate body, mind and spirit; this is done through poses, breathing and meditation; the main yoga branches:





<p>Karma</p> <p>•Yoga of Service</p> <p>Present situation is based on past actions; by doing selfless service now, you are choosing a future free from negativity, selfishness</p>	<p>Tantra</p> <p>•Yoga of Rituals</p> <p>Uses rituals to experience what is sacred; values qualities such as purity, humility, devotion, dedication to one's guru, cosmic love, truthfulness</p>	<p>Hatha</p> <p>•Yoga of Postures</p> <p>Most popular in the West</p> <p>Uses physical poses (asana), breathing techniques (pranayama) and meditation</p>	<p>Bhakti</p> <p>•Yoga of Devotion</p> <p>Most used in India</p> <p>Teaches a person to have devotion to the "One" or to Hindu god Brahma by developing a person's love and acceptance for all things</p>	<p>Raja</p> <p>•Yoga of Self-Control</p> <p>Raja means "royal"</p> <p>King of yoga: Practitioners are members of religious and spiritual orders; based on rules found in classical yoga sutras</p>	<p>Jnana</p> <p>•Yoga of the Mind</p> <p>Focus on intelligence</p> <p>Values wisdom, intellect and aims to unify the two to surpass limitations; open to other philosophies and religions</p>
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