

Yoga Club National



Yoga Club

Yoga Club was created to offer every BODY cost effective quality Yoga led by instructors from various studios! Additionally, as yoga is about healthy living, relaxation, and meditation (in addition to great exercise) local Yoga Club's hold many classes in the most natural setting...the great outdoors! The cost is \$5 per regular class for members. Why are the fees so low? Local Yoga Clubs simply collect enough to pay the instructors! Please join your area Yoga Club for great yoga practices at www.yogaclub.us !



The Mind Body Connection!

Explore the Connection In Yoga, Natural and Modern Medicine

What is the Mind-Body Connection?

In short, it's the way our minds, primarily our thoughts, can influence the functioning of the body - for better or worse. If your mouth physically waters for your favorite food or if you've ever felt butterflies in your stomach as you prepared for a speech, you've felt your thoughts affect the functioning of your body. This is the mind-body connection which we experience daily.

One of the main reasons for the study of mind-body medicine is that this connection often leads to negative physical and mental effects. For example, when you're anxious or stressed you may not be able to sleep well or concentrate on tasks, or may

experience a spike in blood pressure or a weakened immune system. Externally, you may see symptoms including acne or a rash breakout such as hives or shingles. When one harbors anger, bleeding ulcers or a heart attack may result.

It's clear that the mind influences the physical state of our body's health. The medical world is increasingly recognizing this connection as a part of what's often referred to as whole-body wellness care. In this form of medicine, the doctor not only treats the disease, but also the person, looking deeply into their physical state, lifestyle habits, and the effects of the mind-body connection on that patient. Wellness care is more preventative in nature.

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Yoga for Dancers

Teach Your Body to Move with Conscious Control to its Fullest Potential

Dance and yoga are a complimentary combination. Most obviously, both disciplines use the body as a vehicle of expression. When executed correctly these are beautiful things to witness. But beneath the surface, both enhance strength and flexibility, sharpen focus and coordination skills, and tap into the mind-body connection.

Many dancers are drawn to yoga's physical benefits, finding it a perfect supplement to their conditioning

regimen. Yoga comes easily to many dancers - their hips open, hamstrings long and lean, body awareness attuned. It's not uncommon to find yourself next to a dancer in yoga class, coveting their perfectly arched Wheel, wondering what genes they were born with (or vertebrae without) to get to that point. But not all dancers take to yoga as effortlessly as one may think.

There is no dancer who can "do everything" without some obstacles along the way.

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Yoga for Dancers, continued

In fact, yoga presents challenges to the dancer's body that many people may not incur. It's therefore highly beneficial to them. For example, dancers generally have flexible legs and backs, sometimes too flexible. Many dancers can fall into a full split with no effort (or sensation). That's great for high battements (kicks) and soaring grand jetes (leaps). But, when you have to lift that leg to nose height, can you hold it there? Can the ultra-flexible dancer control their range of motion instead of just letting limbs flail in the wind?

While very open backs and 180 degree turnouts create nice lines on stage, they can also lead to injury. That's where yoga jumps in (pun intended). Yoga teaches the body how to move to its fullest potential with conscious control. By toning, not tightening, the tissue surrounding the joints, yoga trains dancers to master their range of motion, without sacrificing flexibility.

Dancers can often be weak in their upper bodies relative to their lower bodies as they focus most of their attention on the lower half often neglecting the upper portions. Their arms, back, and core are by comparison to the legs, often underdeveloped.

The beautiful thing about yoga is that it builds strength without adding bulk (the dancer's nemesis). By using one's own body weight & resistance, yoga teaches the body to support and hold itself up, virtually defying gravity. Yoga arm balances, chaturangas, and jump-throughs are excellent ways to build strength and confidence in the arms, back, and core, without "bulking up." Yoga enhances the dancers' body, making it not just a high-kicking/ jumping machine, but a complete package of balance, strength, & flexibility.

Yoga is good for everybody. Yoga has something to offer every physique and level of experience whether you're a ballerina, body builder, or couch potato. The trick is to find what that particular body is lacking, and supplement that need with the appropriate form of yoga. This might mean sitting in meditation, preparing for a performance, or taking a Hot Power Vinyasa class, sweating out toxins. Whatever your body type and background, yoga has something for you. Like music to dance, it is the perfect accompaniment for your physical and spiritual journey, wherever it takes you.

By Audrey Ipapo, RYT Charlotte, NC



Mind Body Connection, continued

Can Our Physical State Also Influence Our State of Mind?

Just as important to the topic of mind-body medicine is our ability to physically utilize our bodies to positively influence our state of mind. Most people have discovered that exercising can lift their mood. A massage or a hot bath can relieve stress. These actions are taken in order to affect the state of mind, which in turn results in lower stress and the associated physical health benefits.

Properly utilizing this connection can be life-changing, yet quite simple. If you're meeting someone for the first time, and are in a bad mood, how can you make a good first impression? Your body is physically displaying your poor mood (wrinkled forehead, stressed eyes, tight lips), not to mention the negative internally effects. To positively alter your mental state, try physically forcing a smile or laugh. University of Washington psychologist, Marsha Linehan, who treats suicidal patients, found that helping patients alter their facial expressions - such as relaxing the face when angry or smiling when sad - can help them control their emotions. The physical action of changing one's expression or choosing to laugh actually improves one's state of mind. One may also find simple breathing techniques improve the mental state. "The face isn't a pressure-relief valve. It is more like a thermostat" detailing the state of mind.

Yoga and the Mind-Body Connection

When angry, in pain, or fearful, people are told to take a deep breath. This suggestion recognizes the mind-body connection at play in the asana (or posture) portion of a yoga practice. Yogis have discovered that certain poses like backbends and side stretches stimulate the mind, while forward bends and inversions tend to quiet and calm the mind, leading to a more introspective state. Students of yoga are taught to "look inward" leaving behind the world around them while on the mat and working to take this mindset with them as they leave. They're led to calm their minds and devoid it of thoughts. Without the interference of anxious or angry thoughts, the stress response system relaxes and the body's better able to heal itself.

At Harvard Medical School's Mind-Body Medical Institute, Dr. Herbert Benson teaches a technique called the Relaxation Response described as a "state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional responses to stress. The opposite of the fight or flight response." Studies have shown that when you quiet the mind using these techniques a variety of beneficial physiological responses are triggered such as reduced heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones. These positive changes have helped individuals suffering from migraines, high blood pressure, anxiety attacks, and infertility.

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Mind Body Connection, continued

Dr. Benson's Relaxation Response is a system of quiet meditation taken from yoga. The system includes sitting with your eyes closed in a comfortable position, deeply relaxing all muscles, and concentrating on breathing with long inhaled and exhaled through the nose, while ignoring any thoughts that come to mind (www.relaxationresponse.org). Sound familiar to any yogis? This "system" is inherent in all yoga classes whether meditative or physical. Within even physical yoga practices students are lead to quiet their minds and maintain this state during the more intense portions of the practice. A wide variety of yogic tools cultivate withdraw from the senses and work to quiet the mind. Examples include quiet meditation, pranayama (controlled breathing exercises), and the physical practice of asanas (postures). Each offers the many health benefits associated with a more relaxed state of mind.

We live in a world that we cannot control that often tosses obstacles our way. While we cannot control the world around us, we can each control our response to it. If you're stressed, someone else is not "stressing you out" but you are choosing to respond to that situation with a stress response instead of a clam response. It's our choice as to how we respond, and given that there are negative health effects associated with the wrong choice, I suggest that we learn each day to better utilize the benefits of the mind-body connection. Each day consciously use your body to calm your mind, and your mind to help heal your body. Choose to live a happy, healthy, and fruitful life!

By Melanie Snyder, Founder Yoga Club

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Thanks to Our Members

I'd like to thank all of our members, participants, and facebook fans for a wonderful first year! It's absolutely amazing how together we've grown Yoga Club from a small group meeting weekly in Charlotte to thousands meeting in cities across the county. With your help we look forward to bringing you even more in 2010! If you have any suggestions for improvements or additional offerings please let us know! We'll work to ensure that your experience with Yoga Club is the best it can be!



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Inspirational Quote

"We're extremely wasteful in health care in America because we don't respect what the patient can bring to the table, the healing properties of the body itself." ~Dr. Donald Berwick

"Chronic stress can lead to a variety of health and emotional problems. Yoga is an effective method to reduce stress and anxiety. But the benefits of yoga surpass stress relief. Other health benefits of yoga may include: Increased Flexibility; Management of Chronic Health Conditions; Weight Loss; Balance; Coping with Cancer; Alzheimer's Caregiver Stress and Fatigue." ~Mayo Clinic

Disclaimer: By joining any local Yoga Club ("YC") you hereby agree to assume all risks and liability related to or resulting from any & all group functions. You agree that neither you nor any third party will hold Yoga Club, any local clubs, any of the club's leaders, representatives, instructors, or sponsors liable for any injury, loss, or damage to your own person or any members of your family, friends, acquaintances, pets, or property, arising directly from or as a consequence of any group activity.