

Beat the Heat with Yoga

By Buffy Owens

The summer's heat can add excess stress to the body and mind. So, when the temperature soars, it is important to relax. So, instead of complaining about the weather get out and do some yoga.

I know that yoga scares some people. Often they imagine a funny-little cult of New Age hippies sipping green tea or fear that they themselves are not "flexible enough" to do yoga. However, the truth is that yoga is an excellent means of maintaining a healthy body and a sharp mind. Specifically, yoga has been shown to improve sleep, increase strength and flexibility, decrease blood pressure and improve breathing.

If you are new to yoga, feel free to take a little yoga tour. There are many different styles and every teacher has a unique style of teaching. Finding the style and teacher that is right for you will increase the likelihood of sticking with a new program and enhance your overall experience.

Here are a few things to consider as you begin your yoga journey:

1. **Be consistent.** Any new endeavor requires a period of commitment. Sticking with a new movement regimen for at least six weeks has a profound impact on the nervous system. Sticking with a program even longer will bring a noticeable difference in the rest of your body. That said, to receive the most benefits, you will need to practice at least twice per week.
2. **It is not a competition.** At first, you may feel awkward or self-conscious and be tempted to compare yourself to others. Remember that yoga, like life, is a personal journey. Each day brings us a new experience of ourselves and our bodies. Savor these moments and enjoy the movement.
3. **Practice with a friend.** Better yet, get to know the other people in your class. Some of my best memories are of having tea with friends after a yoga class. Plus, it is easier to keep motivated if you have someone to play with.
4. **Find your personal practice.** Each time you attend a class see if you can actively remember one or two poses and a bit of the breathing. You can journal about them after class writing down what you did and how it felt in your body. Then practice those poses and the breath-work the next day. This will help to stimulate your somatic learning and you will get to experience a little bit of joyful yoga each day.

As always, please check with your doctor before beginning any new diet or movement regimen.

...find yourself in motion