

Living Yoga Newsletter

Sept 2004

Yoga For Pregnancy

Gail is now running a specialised class for mums-to-be on a Wednesday evening. So if you know anyone who would be interested (no prior Yoga experience necessary), please pass our details on. Gail is keen to expand this area of her work so your assistance in informing others would be appreciated.

Vedic Chanting Course

A Vedavalli registered foundation course in vedic chanting will start in late September on Monday evenings, running about every 3-4 weeks. This is for people who would really like to learn the principles of vedic chanting and develop a personal repertoire. As part of the course, students have 5 individual chanting lessons and must be prepared to practice at home. This really is a great way to learn to chant.

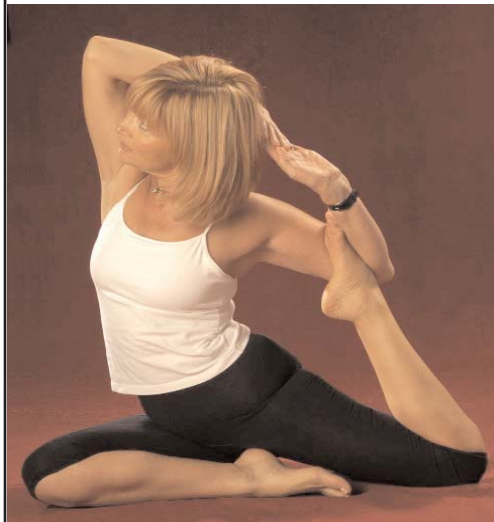
BWY Foundation Course

This is not a teaching qualification, but is open to all interested students who want to know a bit more. However if you want to train to be a teacher on a BWY course, then it is an important pre-requisite. The foundation course will run on Monday evenings at approximately 2 weekly intervals. We hope to start towards Christmas, so let us know if you are interested.

Effortless Being - a Winter Retreat

Holland House is a lovely retreat centre at Cropthorne near Pershore. This retreat is from Friday evening on the 5th Nov until Sunday afternoon on the 7th. We will explore "being at ease" in postures and meditation, and in life generally. So come on down and get effortless for a weekend before the onslaught of Christmas!

Dave & Gail welcome you back to another year of Yoga!



We hope you had a good summer and feel refreshed and ready for new challenges. Here at Living Yoga we have been busy planning new classes to expand and deepen your experience of Yoga.

In particular we would like to draw your attention to a retreat in November at Holland House. This will be the second retreat we have run at Holland House and we are hoping to make this a regular event as it was hugely enjoyable for all involved (including us!).

AYS Introductory Workshops

An AYS (formerly Viniyoga Britain) introductory workshop series will be running in Malvern on two Fridays, 12th Nov & 3rd Dec. This two day course covers the foundations of the theory and practice of Yoga. We would recommend this to all students who would like to know a bit more, or who might be considering doing the foundation course. It is a nice easy, and enjoyable way, to take the first steps in understanding some of the method behind the practice. There is also some practice time, so its an opportunity to put into practice what you are learning.

Monday Masterclasses

Come and experience a longer practice with a bit of workshop type work on asana. This is a good way to supplement your weekly class and take your practice a bit further. There are two masterclasses scheduled this term, 4th Oct and 15th

To vinyoga or not to vinyoga?... and what about AYS and BWY?

We need to clear this up. It has been requested that we no longer use the word vinyoga to describe the style of yoga that we teach since vinyoga is simply an ordinary sanskrit word meaning application (and not vini-yoga, a type of Yoga). Thus it is more correct to say that we teach Yoga and our approach is the vinyoga of yoga - the application of yoga techniques respecting individual circumstances. Consequently the national training organisation Viniyoga Britain has changed its name to the Association for Yoga Studies (AYS). AYs offers training programmes, accredited by the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY), that culminate in a teacher training programme that trains teachers to teach yoga both in groups and specifically on a one-to-one basis. At Living Yoga we deliver some of the AYs training programmes i.e. the introductory workshops and AYs foundation course (we may sometimes lapse into referring to these as vinyoga stage 1 and stage 2 courses).

The British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) is the national governing body for Yoga in the UK. It is an eclectic organisation and embraces a variety of approaches to Yoga (and indeed there are a lot!). The BWY offers both foundation courses and teacher training courses, and is widely recognised as the national standard so it is worth doing it or an accredited course (such as the AYs training) if you want a recognised teaching qualification. The BWY sets out a syllabus that is aimed at training teachers to teach yoga to groups. BWY courses are delivered by registered tutors (called DCTs) to meet the syllabus, although the emphasis and course content will vary widely according to the interests and background of the DCT. If you want to do a BWY course it is essential that you check out your DCT and check that you are happy with their approach and personality.

If you are unsure whether to follow the AYs or BWY route then there are a number of issues to consider. If you are committed to the AYs approach exclusively and want to work with individuals the AYs training is specific, consistent and intense (at teacher training level). The BWY training that we offer is obviously inspired by the same principles but is less intense (under half the hours) and does not have the same focus on individual teaching. It is an alternative, but is not equivalent in coverage or emphasis.

āsana focus: ardhā matsyendrāsana half spinal twist



The half spinal twist is a very powerful seated posture. One of the oldest texts that describes actual postures says of the seated twist that it cures all diseases (they liked to exaggerate a bit!). They also claim that it helps to stimulate the digestive fire, stabilise the mind and awaken us energetically. It is certainly true that the posture has a strong tonic effect on the abdomen from the compression against the thigh and in our experience working with twists makes us hungry! The two important aspects of the posture, like most classical twists in Yoga, are the strong compression around the navel and the rotation in the spine, facilitated by lengthening the spine upwards and opening the chest. It is a posture! There is a full spinal twist also, we will let you guess what this might be... but a

atha yogānuśāsanam

Now, the teaching on Yoga follows.

This is the first verse in the Yoga Sutra, our most important reference text on the theory and practice of Yoga. The Yoga Sutra was written in Sanskrit approximately 2000 years ago and is really a manual on meditation and the nature of the human mind. It also describes principles of practice. For example it describes the practice of asana, or posture, in terms of the qualities of sthira (strength, attention, form) and sukha (softness, ease, joy), concepts you are most likely familiar with from your classes.

The word atha means literally “Now!”, but in sanskrit this word also denotes an auspicious beginning and start of something important. Atha also suggests a commitment on the part of the practitioner to put the teachings of Yoga into practice, here and now. It represents an intention to practice and see the process through.

Anusasanam means a teaching, not just words, but something that has been passed down from one to another and put into practice. It suggests the importance of the tradition: by practicing Yoga you are linking into a practice that has been followed by countless others and in some mysterious way this can help to make the practice more potent. Anusasanam also suggests the importance of the teaching process and the human contact that this involves. You can't really learn Yoga from a book.

The word sutra (as in Yoga Sutra) means thread, and each short verse is known as a sutra. They form a thread through the teachings of Yoga, but in their actual words contain just the essence. This needs to be discussed and elaborated to understand their full meaning and significance.

The study of the sutras is a rich and endless exploration into the hidden depths of their meaning and how they are relevant to both the practice of Yoga and modern life. We run a regular Yoga Sutra study group that meets about once a month. It is Dave's favourite class!