

Yoga Can Heal Your Life

Yoga is a profound integrative practice to heal your body, mind, and spirit. Here are just a few of the healing benefits:

- **Stress relief.** As scientific studies have found, yoga lowers heart rates, reduces blood pressure, and decreases the production of stress hormones such as cortisol. High levels of cortisol are linked to depression, osteoporosis, and abdominal weight gain.
- **Greater immune function.** Yoga's postures improve the flow of the lymphatic system, responsible for fighting infection and releasing toxins from the body.
- **Flexibility and balance.** Yoga helps release tight muscles and increase range of motion. Even those who claim to be "genetically inflexible" are surprised to find how much more limber they can become through a regular yoga practice. Yoga also deepens your awareness of your body, allowing you to improve your balance and posture.
- **Strength.** Yoga is a powerful strength-building exercise for every part of the body, including the muscles of your core, back, legs, chest, and arms. This helps prevent problems such as back pain and arthritis. As you strengthen your body, you also build your inner strength, discipline, and self-confidence.
- **Improved mood.** Yoga balances the central nervous system and endocrine system and stimulates the release of endorphins – natural mood-elevating neurochemicals. As you practice, your mind relaxes and you're able to stop dwelling on stressful thoughts and situations.

Even if yoga only enhanced physical fitness, the time spent in practice would be fully worthwhile. However, yoga offers much more than just a way to exercise the body: It gives us a way to enter the timeless, spaceless world of spirit . . . to connect with our Divine inner being. As stated in The Yoga Sutras, "Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence. When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature, which is unbounded consciousness."

In this unbounded state, we experience freedom from suffering. No longer identifying ourselves with our ego, we let go of our attachment to temporary conditions — whether a relationship, a job, our body, or a material possession. We remember our essential spiritual nature and life becomes joyful, meaningful, and carefree.

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