

Y.O.G.A. Community Connection



WELCOME TO Y.O.G.A.

Happy Spring!

Spring always seems to ignite a feeling of newness and growth, warmth and light. I am excited to rollout and share my new brand for Y.O.G.A. this spring with you.

I was very fortunate to have spent some time travelling and experiencing new cultures, beliefs and ideas this past winter. This time offered me the opportunity to reflect and re-evaluate my yoga practice, offerings and priorities. I concluded that I needed a different presence that was more of a reflection of how and why I want to teach yoga.

A yoga practice is a journey and everyone is on their own journey with their own intentions and goals. There is no right or wrong and there is no end or finishing line. Yoga offers a life long journey that changes as we change with age, health and life situation. It truly can be "Your Own Great Adventure". It is my goal to offer practices, teachings and learning opportunities that will help you fulfill your goals. Thank you for taking the time to read this short connection. I hope that you enjoy it.

THE PURPLE LOTUS

I chose the lotus after seeing my first real lotus flower in Cambodia, and being inspired by some of the most positive, resourceful and resilient people that I have ever met. The lotus is their national flower. The lotus rises up out of the mud everyday and blooms into a beautiful flower. It symbolizes purity, overcoming adversity, positivity and rebirth. I chose the purple lotus because it represents finding balance in our lives, and self-enlightenment. I committed to the lotus in my logo and on my inner arm with my new tattoo.



FEATRUED POSE - LEGS UP THE WALL - VIPARITA KARANI

As we head outside with the nicer weather, adding more vibrant activity to our lives - running, hiking, cycling, and gardening, we also may realize some tight muscles, sore backs and maybe some stressful and discouraging thoughts. Legs up the Wall can be a very helpful pose to add to your practice to help alleviate all of these symptoms. Practicing this pose regularly can offer such benefits as an opportunity for deep relaxation, stress relief, knee pain reduction, alleviate tired legs, relieving leg and foot cramps, helps with backaches, softly opens the backs of your legs. Let's take a closer look at how to move into and out of this pose:

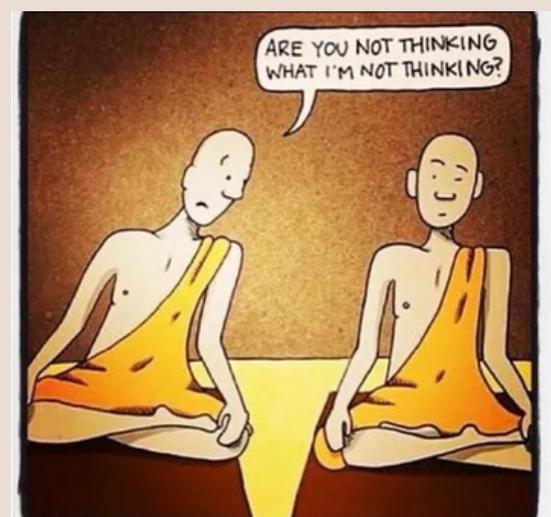
- sit with your right side against the wall with knees bent and feet close to hips,
- swing your legs up against the wall as you turn to lie flat on your back,
- place your hips as close to the wall as you are comfortable, it is OK to move your hips away from the wall so that the legs can be relaxed and straight,
- let your arms rest in a comfortable position
- stay there as long as you can up to 5 minutes or more,
- to release the pose, gently push yourself away from the wall,
- relax on your back for a few minutes, before bringing your knees to your chest and rolling to your side, rest on your side for a few minutes before moving to an upright position.



For added comfort and feeling of relaxation, you can place a folded blanket under your head and neck and place an eye pillow over your eyes. This pose may not seem like a fancy or "photo" moment yoga pose but it is very effective and easy to fit into a schedule.

I was recently reminded of the amazing capacity that we as humans have for compassion and kindness when I observed a man in his vehicle, stop and ask another man pushing a shopping cart full of empty bottles if he had a jacket. It had just started to rain. The man with the cart replied "no" and the man in the vehicle got out of his car, took off his jacket and gave it to the man, got back in his car and drove away. I was in awe by this action and I thought about this over and over again for days. I felt privileged to have observed this act of kindness. I am reminded that although a calm and relaxed mind can be wonderful benefit from a regular meditation practice, it is this calm mind and relaxed mindset that facilitates compassion and kindness within us that we then direct towards others. The benefit of our meditation extends beyond our own personal gain. I remind you that a mantra repeated during your meditation can help bring to truth any feeling or emotion - Dhanya Vad - (dahn-yah vahd) I feel gratitude.

Meditation Moment



Y.O.G.A. First Solo Retreat

I am very excited, and a little scared to offer my first solo retreat. Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica is a beautiful location to retreat to. It is set between the beach, the hills and the jungle. There are so many great activities and adventures to supplement your retreat experience. I am looking forward to integrating yoga, meditation and fitness into this small group retreat. I know that everyone comes to retreats for different reasons, with different intentions and I hope that in this small group setting I will have more of an opportunity to help you meet those goals. The retreat is almost full. I have 2 rooms available, potentially 4 - 5 participants. The retreat brochure is on my website (jradford.ca) for your information. I hope that you will decide to join us in this lovely location for an exciting week. If you have any questions or would like to register, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.



Thank you again for taking the time to read this (hopefully you made it to the end). If you have any questions or comments on any of this information or on the contents of my website, please don't hesitate to contact me at joanradford@shaw.ca.

Y.O.G.A. website: jradford.ca



Community Note: I met a very talented young woman this month as she did my tattoo(it is always good to make friends with your tattoo artist(Flying Shield Tattoo)). Carolyn Agopsowicz also hand makes body care products that are palm oil free, paraben-free, sulfate-free and aluminum free. Her products are lovely and I wanted to share her information with you. Please take a look at "Woolly Bath" at woollybath.ca.