



Yoga: Moving through Trauma

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Discussing Trauma - What is Trauma?

Any injury, whether physically or emotionally inflicted, that impacts a person's ability to function normally.

Trauma can only be experienced by the person or persons experiencing the "traumatic" event. Therefore, the impact or degree to which the event affects a person, i.e., as positive or negative can only be interpreted by that person(s).

Trauma can be felt or experienced overtly or covertly and may manifest symptoms in much the same way. For example, an impact trauma to the body may have a short term effect. A trauma that violates the person's values, beliefs, or morals may be experienced and expressed for a longer time, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD).

Trauma can impact either/or both the body and the psyche leaving a person with a myriad of difficult symptoms to explain and learn to live with; fear, shyness, depression, defensiveness, becoming a bully; And, since the impact and experience can only be defined by the person who has experienced the event as traumatic, professionals are faced with having to interpret the person's experience and recall.

Defining Trauma – slide 2

Diagnosis can be difficult. Some “Studies have shown that people are born with different constitutions. Some people can experience an event and sail through it while others, are brought to their knees by it.” Clarissa Estes’ Ph.D., Carl Jung.

Spiritual trauma is even more difficult to diagnose as the impact can effect the person’s will to live and ability to survive. Balancing the triad is an important part of the process of healing.

What makes us different? What we believe, what we see, feel, and how we experience our interpretations of the world we live in is often what makes us different.

Man or woman, people having been witness to or returning from war, the family receiving news their loved one is not returning, a child rape, a girl’s first gynecological exam are examples of possible traumatic events and as each are different so are the ways each person experiences these events and finds to manage their lives.

No two people are exactly alike, therefore neither should be the tools and therapies used in an attempt to help.

Trauma can have many faces and it is our job, without judgment, to help these traumatized people get in touch with their mind, body, and spirit and begin the process of healing.



**The
Good News is,**

***“You can
teach an
old dog new
tricks”***



The Brain Fitness Program is based on the concept of neuroplasticity the ability of the brain to change and adapt and even rewire itself! The brain remains highly malleable or “plastic” throughout life and by presenting the brain with the proper stimuli, scientists can drive beneficial physical and functional change. *The Brain Fitness Program* will help you understand how the brain works and how you can keep your brain fit.

See excerpts from PBS Home Video, [The Brain Fitness Program](#).

The Brain Fitness Program – DVD

- PBS Home Video – Introduction
- Chapters 1-4; 8-11;
- Chapter 13 – Summary
 - # 1 – The brain has to be in the mood – it has to want to pay attention
 - # 2 – Change strengthens connections between neurons engaged at the same time
 - # 3 – Neurons that fire together wire together
 - # 4 – Initial changes are just temporary
 - # 5 – Brain plasticity is a two way street – positive or negative
 - # 6 – memory is critical for learning
 - # 7 – Motivation is the key factor

Tips for optimal plasticity:

- Cardiovascular system in good shape
- Training be incremental
- Training be taxing enough to be interesting

Notes:



The Body Remembers, Babette Rothschild talks about the psychophysiology of trauma; “Consciousness of current sensory stimuli is our primary link to the here and now; it is also a direct link to our emotions. As a therapeutic tool, simple body awareness makes it possible to gauge, slow down, and halt traumatic hyper arousal, and to separate past from present. Moreover, body awareness is a first step toward interpreting somatic memory. (Chapter six, *The Body as Resource*, page 100 – 101.)

The practice of concentrating on body-oriented sensations and body processes is not new. “...The usefulness of cultivation awareness of the state of the body has ancient roots in the Eastern practices of meditation and yoga.”



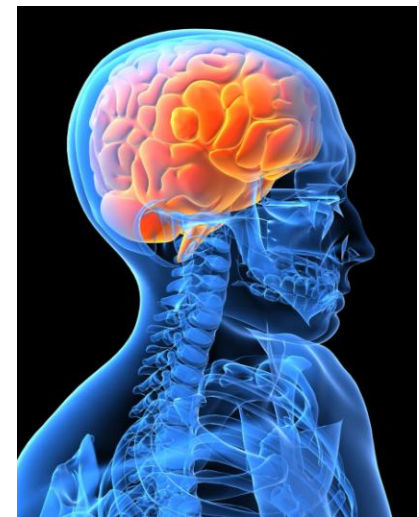
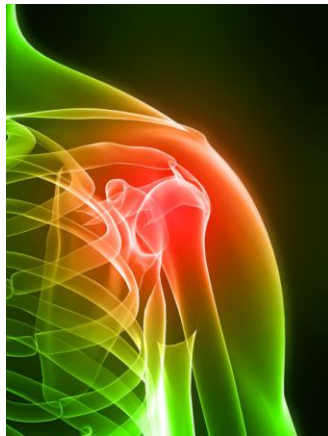
Yoga for Depression, Amy Weintraub cites that studies have shown stress affects the levels of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine. Could it be that the stressors inherent in our modern cultures are the source of an international serotonin deficiency, causing depression in epidemic proportions?

Through the practice of Yoga, we awaken to the knowledge that there is only one consciousness and we begin not with the question “What is wrong with me?” but with the question “*What is right with me?*” page 8-9

When a behavior, belief, or suggestion is repeated frequently enough it will automatically consciously or unconsciously be stored as memory. Like Pavlov's bell ringing and the salivating dog the response to a particular behavior becomes part of the body's stimulus response. Perhaps you don't know why you begin salivating when the bell rings but here you are. Another example is riding a bicycle, most of us don't have to think about riding a bicycle we simply get on the bike, the behavior is enough to stimulate the body's memory.

The body remembers the good and the bad.

The body remembers injury and tries to protect it's self; usually the fear response becomes pronounced.



A person may not remember the precipitating event that caused the reaction but today they can choose how they respond to the triggering event. Training your body and learning new ways of managing response becomes a vital part of your body's health and may affect the quality of your life.

Why Yoga?

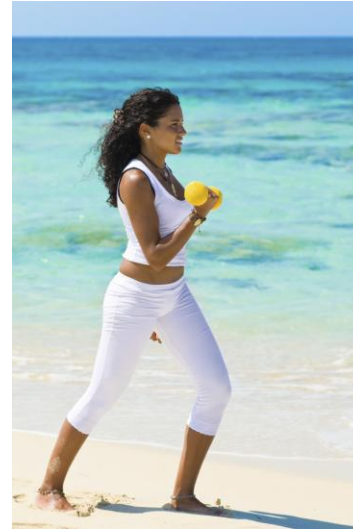
Yoga Works and it is the perfect blend of all these components:



Bones are one thing we all have in common; choice is another!

Remember any exercise is better than no exercise; if you can't run, walk; if you can't walk, crawl; if you can't crawl; breath... Mental and physical exercise is necessary to keep the body strong, healthy, focused and alert.

- Movement
- Focus
- Strength building
- Flexibility
- Balance
- Breathing
- Feeling
- Listening to one's body
- Letting go of competition
- Letting go of judgment
- Letting go of expectation



Defining Yoga and YogaFit

“Yoga is one of India’s six great ancient philosophies. The science of yoga is unique because it encompasses all the types of problems associated with the the human condition. Yoga is believed to have originated 5000 - 6000 years ago in India. Yoga is not a religion. Instead, it is a physical and psychological discipline.

Hatha Yoga means “yoga for health”, and is the physical aspect of the practice. Hatha yoga is all physical yoga. It renews, invigorates, and heals the body.

The word yoga comes from a Sanskrit word “yuj” ,meaning “yoke” or “union”. The word hatha when broken down means ha=sun and tha=moon. Just like other alternative practices, yoga seeks to balance. Sun energy is thought of as “yang” and associated with more masculine energy = fiery, energizing, active. Moon energy is thought of as “yin” and associated with more feminine energy = stabilizing, grounding, calming, and relaxing. Yoga is the practice that unites these two energies and balances our bodies and minds.

Under the Hatha Yoga umbrellas there are a diversity of styles: Ashtanga, Kundalini, Iyenga, Bikram, Yin yoga, Vinyasa yoga. YogaFit is a user friendly style designed and developed in the western world for use in health clubs and fitness environments, but perfectly adapts to the studio environment. YogaFit is helping to demystified yoga, it was designed for every body, “Real Yoga for Real People”.

The essence of YogaFit hatha yoga is" Breathing, Feeling, and Listening to the Body. Letting go of competition with, or judgment toward, ourselves or others, letting go of any expectations that may keep us from fully experiencing the joy of the movement.”

Created in 1994 by yoga instructor and fitness professional Beth Shaw, YogaFit combines the ancient Hatha Yoga practice with modern fitness movements and safety guidelines.

YogaFit Teacher Training Manual Level 3; Lifestyle: Mind Body Fitness.

Your Practice

Congratulations for the courage to be here. Before we begin YogaFit requires us to review some basic safety principles. First tell the instructor if you are pregnant or injured. Yoga is not suppose to hurt. If you feel pain relax the pose into something more comfortable.

YogaFits – Important Principles of Alignment

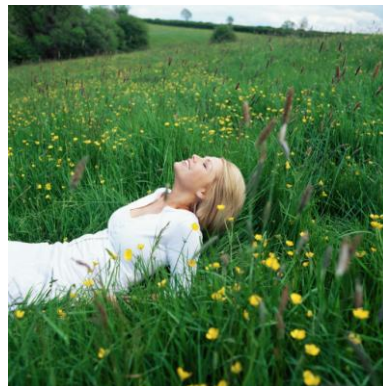
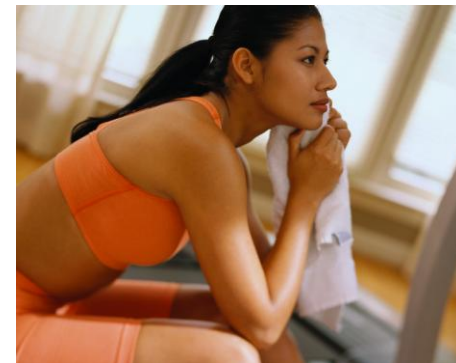
1. Hip Hinge – during forward bending we hinge from the hips, activating the abdominal muscles, and keep the knees soft (or bent) to maintain length and strength in the spine. We want to avoid flexing from the lumbar spine. The hip joint is a ball and socket designed for forward flexion. The muscles surrounding the hip joint act as a pulley to allow safe and effective movement of occur. When returning neutral from foreword flexion bend use the knees and muscles of the legs to push you back to neutral.
2. Neutral spine – Yoga focuses on active back extension, using core stabilizers, with neutral spine and pelvis.
3. Scapular Retraction and Depression – We want to keep the shoulders relaxed down away from the ears to avoid tension in the neck and shoulders and to strengthen through the upper back.
4. Lever length – To avoid unnecessary stress to the low back, we use shortt lever length when coming into and out of forward bending in standing poses.
5. Head in line with spine – In most poses, it is safest for the neck to keep the head in line with the spine. You can look up, center or down, as long as the head remains a natural extension of the spine.
6. Knee Alignment – Knees stay in line with toes. In most relevant poses, the knees stay supported over the ankle (do not go over the toes in Warrior poses or lunge.)
7. Starfish hand and Foundational Feet – Distribute the weight evenly into the hand and/or feet when setting the foundation of a pose. This will prevent joint injuries and muscular imbalances.
8. Joint Stacking – knees over ankles, hips over knees, spine alignment, head on top of the shoulders... This will also prevent joint injuries and muscular imbalances.
9. Dynamic Tension – using core strength creating stability and mobility

Today's Yoga Practice

- Start with focused breath
- Focused attention, *kirtan kriya* (screen 12)
- Apply principals of alignment to some of the more traditional Yoga Poses; Mountain, Sunflower, Prayer, Triangle, Warrior I, II, Tree pose, etc.

YogaFit Format:

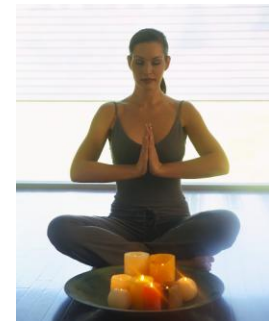
- Mountain I - The warm up - warming the body; breathing in and out through the nose
- Mountain II - The Yoga workout
- Mountain III – Balancing and floor work
- Relaxation



kirtan kriya mantra

“Scientists at the University of Pennsylvania are studying the Kundalini Yoga exercise to determine whether and how it creates actual changes in the brain. While waiting for definitive research results you can do your own study at home and see if this exercise doesn’t quiet and focus your mind.

- **1.** Come to a comfortable sitting position with a straight spine on the floor or in a chair. Rest the back of the hands on the knees.
- **2.** Inhale deeply and begin to say aloud the mantra, **Sa ta na ma.**
- The mantra means ‘Truth is my identity.’
- **3.** On the syllable **sa**, touch the index finger of each hand to the thumb; on **ta**, touch the middle finger to the thumb; on **na**, touch the ring finger to the thumb; on **ma**, touch the pinkie to the thumb. Continue these finger movement throughout the exercise (use enough pressure so that the fingers blanch slightly).
- **4.** Chant / say out loud the mantra for 2 minutes, imagining that the sounds come in through the crown and exit through the third eye in an L shape. Continue the chant in a loud whisper for another 2 minutes. Next, say the chant silently and internally for 4 minutes. Then say it in a whisper for 2 more minutes. Finish by chanting aloud for 2 minutes. The entire meditation takes 12 minutes.
- **5. To finish, take a deep breath and reach your arms over head. Exhale, and draw your hands to your chest in prayer position. Affirm: Satanam.”**



Relaxation

- Relaxation is a vital component to any yoga workout
- Learning to relax the body and the mind helps release physiological and psychological tension
- Day dreaming, active imagination, guided imagery access the right hemisphere of the brain which helps develop and/or recreate your imagination, creative ideas, plans, goals.



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