

[IMAGE]

## **The World of Yoga**

By Brenda Duran

Everyone knows daily life can be hectic – errands to run, chores to finish, bills to pay and work to do. These daily stressors eventually take a toll on your body, causing pain and mental foggiess. For thousands of people these days, a physical, mental and spiritual overhaul is often desperately needed. The practice of yoga is one way for many people to achieve all of that and more.

Originated in ancient India, the practice of yoga helps many achieve spiritual insight and peace from their hectic lives by challenging the body to go beyond its current limitations through a series of poses. Over the years, yoga has evolved to include many different variations, providing a wide range of mental and physical benefits. For insight into some of the practices that have become popular and how they can benefit you, read on.

### **Bikram Yoga**

Bikram Yoga - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark The thought of sitting in a room cranked up to nearly 105 degrees with 40 percent humidity doesn't sound appealing, but for those who practice Bikram yoga, it is the norm. Bikram yoga is named after its founder, Bikram Choudhury, who came up with 26 postures to be per-formed twice in a 90-minute class. The 26 poses not only challenge you physically, but mentally as well, forcing you to focus on the moment and rev up your stamina in order to be able to hold each pose.

The concept behind the heat is that it allows your body to become more flexible while also detoxifying your internal organs of everyday toxins and stress. Each pose is also focused on achieving a physical goal – strengthening, toning and rebuilding every muscle inside and out.

Bikram yoga is intense; here are some other things to know before pursuing it:

It is important to drink lots of water (think 2-3 liters); your body will demand more hydration. It is also important to know you will have to push yourself in order to be successful in the class. The overall benefits gained through taking on Bikram yoga range from clearing your mind and detoxing your body to toning up

everything from your abs to your hamstrings.

Who does Bikram yoga? Classes often include everyone from beginners to advanced yoga enthusiasts. The goal is to try and the reward is often mastering a pose over time.

## **Hatha Yoga**

Hatha Yoga - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Hatha yoga is often the most recognized type of yoga and the most publicized by local yoga studios throughout the country. It is one of the six original branches of yoga and features a series of breathing exercises and a variety of poses.

Much less intense than Bikram yoga (see bottom of page), Hatha yoga tends to be slower paced, focused more on building up stretches and incorporating meditation and relaxation techniques. This is the ideal type of yoga for beginners who are interested in learning the basics. It is also ideal for anyone who is interested in de-stressing in a low-impact class.

Since meditation is a big part of Hatha yoga, be prepared to "zone out" and forget about your problems during the class. By the time you leave, you will have gained more flexibility and peace of mind.

## Power Yoga - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **Power Yoga**

For years, many people have favored intense aerobic exercise as their way of getting in exercise every day. How about combining active and athletic aerobic-like exercise with some yoga? That is precisely what power yoga does.

Power yoga is one of the newest trends in the yoga scene, offering traditional ashtanga-style yoga to aerobic exercise fans. Unlike Bikram and Hatha, this particular type of yoga does not stick to the same sequence of poses, so you can expect to perform a good variety of moves during your class.

Every class also features isometric movements to burn calories and rev up your metabolism. This is a good yoga style to try if you are looking for a new yoga experience and want to improve flexibility and strength all at once.

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