



THE YOGA JOURNEY

BY IMMERSING HERSELF IN YOGA, DOMINIQUE (NICO) KLIMEK BEGAN
A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY



“I don’t like this,” I thought, as my fingers sunk into the mat and I pushed my hips into the air in an attempt to find the ‘downward facing dog’ pose. My gaze wandered around the room, scanning the other yogis and their form that I tried to mimic. This went on for the entirety of the class. We moved and stretched and twisted and breathed, and all I was trying to do was keep up and not confuse my left and right. As we made our way into the final pose, Savasana, and I lay there with my eyes closed, I finally felt peace. The room that was hot with energy had suddenly become calm. I could feel the air stilling and everyone’s molecules of

energy that had been racing around the room now felt like they were floating above us all. I decided I would go to another yoga class. Not because I liked it, but because I knew that I needed it.

At 5am and I’m woken by the most irritating alarm clock in the world. The city is still dark and asleep, but I am putting on my sneakers and heading out the door. When you’re training for a marathon you don’t need much motivation to wake up and run – if you want to make it to mile 26, you have to train. I get twelve miles down before my nine-hour workday. I shower, chug a smoothie, make my

lunch and head to the office. By 7pm my body is sore and my mind is numb. I don’t want to go to yoga, but somehow my legs take me there and I find myself sitting on my mat with my eyes closed and my hands on my knees, as we settle in and calm our minds for class. I’m a bit more familiar with the poses since I’ve been going to yoga a couple times a week, and it’s getting easier to follow the sequences. Do I dare say that

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the asanas are even somewhat enjoyable? This evening feels better than usual. I found a gentle yoga class and my body needs this as much as my mind does. By the time I rise from Savasana I feel utterly peaceful. I sleep well that night.

And so my yoga journey continued. I needed yoga to relax my mind and stretch my muscles. Long runs, intense spin classes and

heavy gym sessions would be complemented by evening asanas and breath work. Once I had completed my marathon I started putting more time and effort into my yoga practice. I no longer went because I knew it was good for me, I went because I wanted to go.

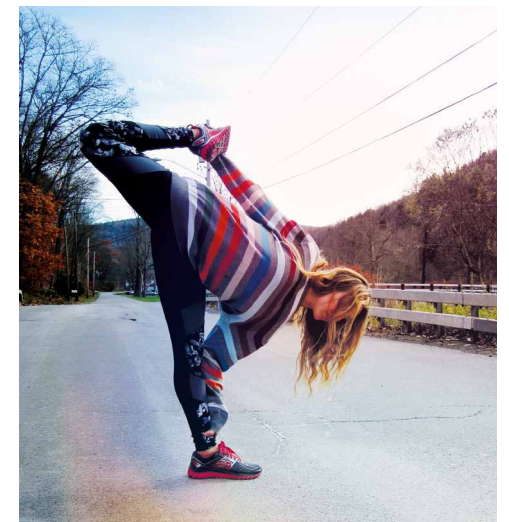
Yoga is possibly most challenging for people with high levels of energy – those of us that love running, spinning, boxing and fast-paced exercise. This is the most challenging part (and also the most rewarding). When allowing the mind to settle and be still, your senses awaken – the feeling of your breath entering and exiting your body, the thump of your heartbeat, the weight of gravity holding you down – all of

these things that occur every second of our lives, you suddenly become connected with. Yoga always reminds me, especially on ‘off days’, that I am here and I am alive and that is something to be grateful for.

It’s because I enjoy practising asana in group settings, and because I enjoy teaching and public speaking, that I decided to get my Yoga Teacher Certification. My weekends became filled with yoga lectures, asana practice, meditation and anatomy lessons. When immersing myself so deeply into yoga I discovered so much about me in my practice and in my life. And throughout this self-discovery I had the privilege of continuing my yoga journey with the most incredible group of people. Yoga seems to attract the most beautiful souls from all walks of life. The common factor is always an understanding of the benefits of yoga.

Now that I have graduated I aim to teach classes that draw in people who are new to yoga. There is always a hesitance to try something new or uncomfortable and I think the way to introduce yoga to more individuals is by making it available in different forms. Asana does not need to take place in a yoga studio – it can take place in a gym, a park, a store, a bar – anywhere that you can fit some mats in a safe setting. Yoga does not need to be limited to any specific location and I hope to share it with as many people as I can.

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- NICO

5 REASONS TO BRING YOGA INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE



HERE NICO SUGGESTS WHY YOU SHOULD INCORPORATE YOGA INTO YOUR LIFE.

1. MENTAL BENEFITS

Starting a yoga practice means that you'll be setting aside time for yourself to clear your mind and push outside thoughts away for about an hour each day. This reset and recharge will have tremendous benefits for your outlook on life and personal growth.

2. PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Yoga will keep you mobile. As well as stretching your muscles yoga also builds up strength, not only in your muscles, but your bones as well.

3. ENERGY

When you start a yoga practice I highly encourage you to incorporate group classes as opposed to only practicing solo in your home. By going to a studio or gym you pick up on the energy around you and meet others who may share similar goals.

4. LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Often when people begin a yoga practice, they start to make life adjustments as well. Your personal yoga journey will allow for a lot of self discovery, which will lead to changes in your daily life - whether they are big or small. This can be anything from becoming more conscious of your breath when in a stressful situation, or to changing up your diet to better serve your body.

5. ACCOMPLISHMENT

When you begin your yoga journey the asanas will confuse you, the poses will get mixed up and you'll be looking around the room to figure out what is going on - and that's okay! This is all part of the progression and the wonderful thing about yoga is that you will constantly be learning and striving to master new poses and learn new ones. The sense of accomplishment and pride that you will feel along the way will boost your self-esteem and confidence and keep you hooked to learn more.

