



Yoga: In the Now

by KJ Hamilton

If you are like me, you have probably seen or heard about yoga, but you really just aren't sure what it's all about. Maybe you've thought about trying it, but were a little uneasy about what you might be getting yourself into. Education of any kind is never a waste, so I thought I would learn a bit about the age-old practice.

The word yoga means "union" in Sanskrit, which was the language of ancient India where yoga was created. The main idea behind yoga is to be in the present. This is accomplished by designing movement of the body that focuses on breath, which keeps you "in the now." Yoga is also a practice that involves all of your anatomy; it works every single muscle in every routine, thus giving the whole physique a complete workout. This is contrary to other forms of exercise, such as weight training, that focus on one part of the body and one muscle group.

Yoga is not easy to do; even the most seasoned professionals can sometimes lose their balance. But the result is well worth it. Yoga increases your overall flexibility and helps to relax the joints, ligaments and tendons. It tones every muscle you have and helps to detoxify your body. Because Yoga is so methodical and thorough, it also works all of the internal glands and organs of the body through movement and breath.

Are you sold yet? Believe it or not, the pros of this practice do not end there. Yoga also helps to create harmony between the mind, body and spirit through meditation. Meditation allows you to detach yourself from everything that goes on around you and focus on yourself and your body.

This creates a harmonious balance as well as a positive outlook. And, it's very hard for the body to be negative when so much positive energy runs through it.

Believe it or not, yoga has even been known to make people smile during a routine. That was something I'd never heard of before. But the reason is simple: positive energy. It really is impossible to frown when that positive flow rushes through you. It's quite amazing.

So, now we know what yoga is, as well as some of its benefits. Now what?

Boston is a fairly large city, with possibilities on practically every corner. If you've made the decision to start yoga, it is always best to learn with a certified instructor. Don't just dive into the deep end of the pool. Much like all forms of exercise, yoga is a focused discipline that shouldn't be taken lightly. And when it comes to the studios in Boston, some of these havens have teachers who give private lessons. If you're unsettled with the idea of learning yoga with a group of people by your side, try some one-on-one time with a qualified instructor. Still, you should always look around for a studio that makes you feel comfortable. Here are just a few examples of the overwhelming opportunities available to you:

North End Yoga

256 Hanover Street, Boston
617-227-9642

www.northendyoga.com

If you live in or close to the North End (or

even if you don't—you should never need a reason to head over to this amazing section of Boston), check out North End Yoga. Owned and operated by Alessandra Miele and Alicia Orr, this spacious studio encompasses everything a yoga student could fathom; a Zen-like area in which to practice, experienced, friendly teachers and a giant statue of Ganesha—the Hindu elephant deity—placed in the corner. You'll feel connected to the gods and your inner self as he watches your poses from afar.

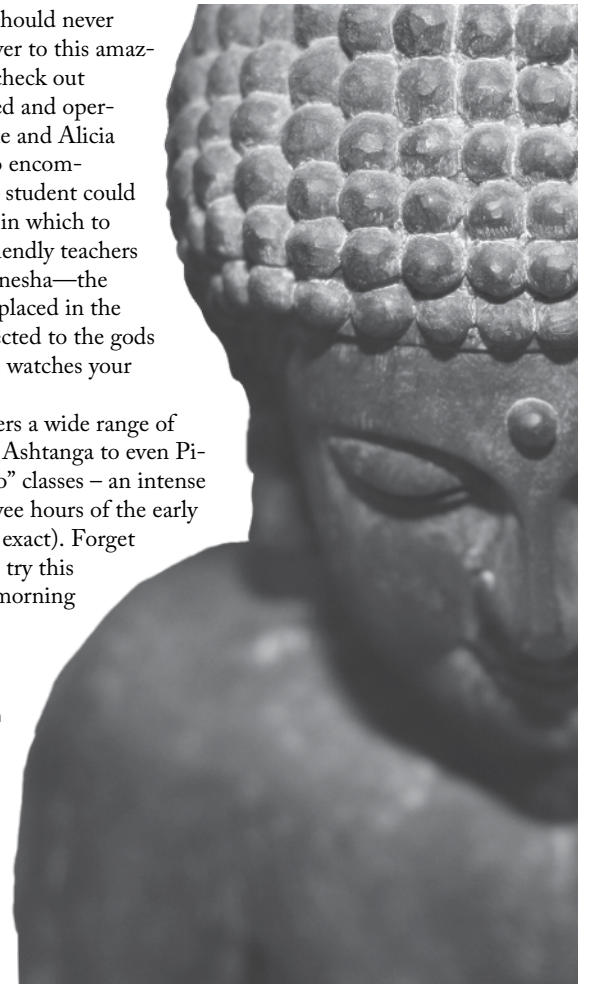
North End Yoga offers a wide range of classes, from Vinyasa to Ashtanga to even Pilates and "Yoga Espresso" classes – an intense hour of practice in the wee hours of the early morning (6:30am, to be exact). Forget that shot of caffeine and try this healthy alternative to a morning pick-me-up.

Dahn Yoga

551 Boylston Street, Boston
(& several other locations)
617-262-9642

www.dahnyoga.com

Those of you in the Back Bay have several options available to you. Dahn Yoga is right in Copley Square, and has several



Tranquility

other locations around Boston. Some of its classes also include DahnMuDo, which is a non-combative form of martial arts designed to promote healing in the body and to create power and strength. You can also take Tai-Chi and Vibration classes, both of which are effective ways to release stress and stale energy from your body.

Savin Hill Yoga

11 Pearl Street, Boston
617-429-9597
www.savinhill yoga.com

I was pleasantly surprised to discover this studio, located right in heart of the quaint area of Dorchester known as Savin Hill. The location provides a wonderful space to learn yoga, but they also offer classes in the workplace, in school, after school and in private groups. If you have a lot of friends, it could be beneficial to gather them all together for a private group session.

South Boston Yoga

141 Dorchester Ave. #101r, Boston
617-292-0040
www.southbostonyoga.net

South Boston Yoga, strategically-placed near the Broadway stop on the Red Line, has a variety of variety of classes designed to help everyone from beginners to advanced; they even feature a class for parents to come in and stretch, play and relax with their babies. Their classes specialize in breath work, sound mediation as well as traditional meditation.

Black Lotus Yoga Project

91 Sidney Street, Cambridge
617-899-4775
www.blacklotusyogaproject.org

Founded in 2004, The Black Lotus Yoga Project was created to help bring yoga to people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Since then it has expanded to a vibrant studio, offering a wide range of classes and even massage and acupuncture sessions. There are also several workshops featured

there – in other words, it's a one-stop shop for all things yoga.

Healthworks Fitness

441 Stuart Street, Boston (and several other locations)
617-859-7700
www.healthworksfitness.com

You can find a wide range of exercise programs at any Healthworks location in and around Boston, but many forget that this includes different types of yoga. These centers are exclusively for women, and are designed to make them feel comfortable and welcome. Classes ranging from Hatha to Vinyasa to Power Yoga are taught by a variety of incredibly experienced instructors.

Karma Yoga

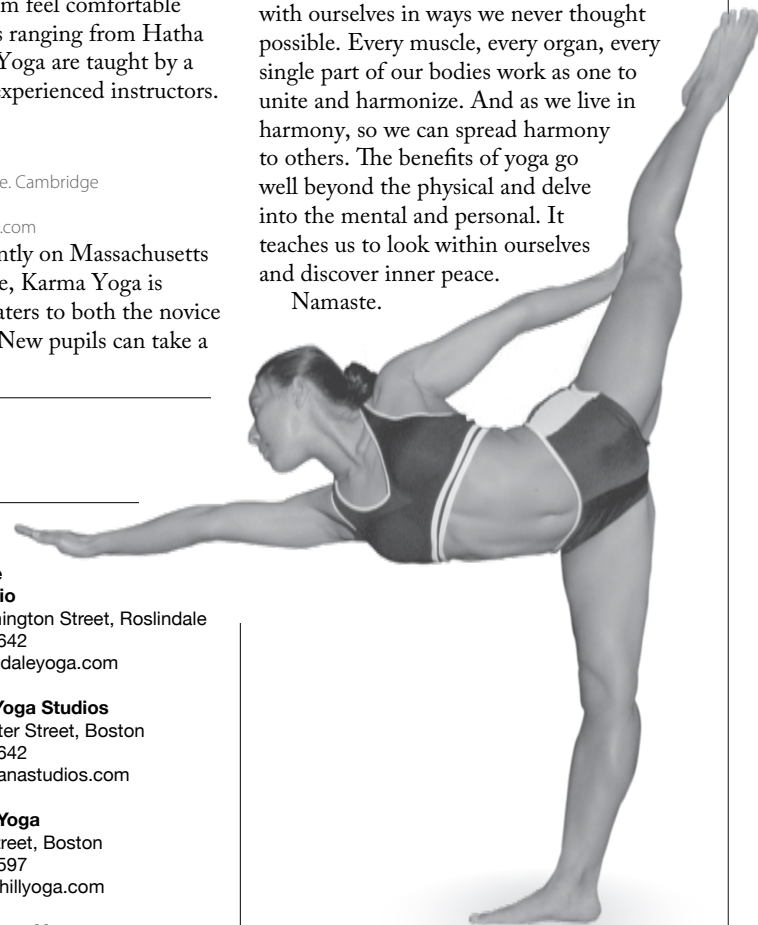
1120 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge
617-547-YOGA
www.karmayogastudio.com

Located conveniently on Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, Karma Yoga is another studio that caters to both the novice and skilled students. New pupils can take a

variety of "gentle" classes—an option that even those with injuries might find enticing. Students with more experience might want to venture into one of the many styles offered at this location.

At the end of every yoga session, we bring our hands together close to our hearts in a praying position; our heads are slightly bowed. The gesture itself is a sign of reverence, and respect of one soul to another soul; a sign that we are all one when connected through the heart. Yoga allows us to connect with ourselves in ways we never thought possible. Every muscle, every organ, every single part of our bodies work as one to unite and harmonize. And as we live in harmony, so we can spread harmony to others. The benefits of yoga go well beyond the physical and delve into the mental and personal. It teaches us to look within ourselves and discover inner peace.

Namaste.



Boston Yoga Studios

AltThera Health

30 Chauncy Street, Boston
617-542-8500
www.altthera.com

Back Bay Yoga

1112 Boylston Street 3rd Floor, Boston
617-375-0785
www.backbayyoga.com

Baptiste Power Yoga Institute

25 Harvard Street, Brookline
2000 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge
617-661-YOGA
www.baronbaptiste.com

Bikram Yoga Boston

108 Lincoln Street, Boston
617-556-9926
www.bikramyogaboston.com

Black Lotus Yoga Project

91 Sidney Street, Cambridge
617-899-4775
www.blacklotusyogaproject.org

Blissful Monkey Yoga Studio

663 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain
617-522-4411
www.blissfulmonkey.com

Boston Body Pilates

448 Common Street, 2nd Floor, Belmont
617-484-7711
8 Newberry Street 6th Floor, Boston
617-262-3333
www.bostonbody.com

Boston Pilates

709 Centre Street Ste 201, Jamaica Plain
617-524-0118
www.bpilatesstudio.com

Charlestown Yoga

191 Main Street, Charlestown
617-241-0824
www.charlestownyoga.com

Dahn Yoga

10B Green Street, Jamaica Plain
617-983-9642
551 Boylston Street, Boston
617-262-9642

122 Cambridge Street, Boston
617-742-9642

235 Harvard Street, Brookline
617-264-4851

1110 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge
617-576-9642

32 Union Street, Newton
617-964-8333

325 Broadway, Arlington
781-648-9642
www.dahnyoga.com

Exhale Spa

28 Arlington Street, Boston
617-532-7000
www.exhalespa.com

Gold's Gym

323 Dorchester Ave., Boston
617-268-5500
www.goldsgym.com

Hatha Yoga Classes

21 Stratford Street, West Roxbury
617-323-4289
www.yogaclasses.net

Healthworks Fitness Centers for Women

441 Stuart Street, Boston
617-859-7700

36 White Street, Cambridge
617-497-4454

100 Boylston Street Rt 9E, Brookline
617-383-6100
www.healthworksfitness.com

Inner Strength Yoga

309 Main Street, Watertown
617-924-0111
www.innerstrengthyoga.com

Karma Yoga Studio

1120 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge
617-547-YOGA
www.karmayogastudio.com

Mindful Dog Yoga

69 Robeson Street #5, Jamaica Plain
617-524-0627
www.mindfuldogyoga.com

North End Yoga

256 Hanover Street 3rd Floor, Boston
617-227-YOGA
www.northendyoga.com

O2 Yoga Studios

288 Highland Ave., Somerville
617-625-0267

121 E Berkeley Street 2nd Floor, Boston
617-532-0691
www.o2yoga.com

Prana Power Yoga

585 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge
617-441-9642
www.pranapoweryoga.com

Roslindale Yoga Studio

4155 Washington Street, Roslindale
617-363-9642
www.roslindaleyoga.com

Sadhana Yoga Studios

15 Worcester Street, Boston
617-536-9642
www.sadhanastudios.com

Savin Hill Yoga

11 Pearl Street, Boston
617-429-9597
www.savinhill yoga.com

South Boston Yoga

141 Dorchester Ave. #101r, Boston
617-292-0040
www.southbostonyoga.net

The Yoga Studio

29 Harvard Street 2nd Floor, Brookline Village
617-566-1489
www.yogastudio.org

Yoga In The Square

249 Elm Street, Somerville
617-629-2299
www.yogasquare.com

“Much like all forms of exercise, yoga is a focused discipline that shouldn't be taken lightly!”



Alicia Orr and Alessandra Miele from North End Yoga

Photo by Ryoji Suzuki