

# Yoga: Stretch your body - stretch your life

The more you stretch the younger you get! I know it sounds ridiculous but for all intents and purposes, it's true.

Approximately 85 percent of injuries that occur when we get older are due to inflexibility. We bend over to pick something up and pinch our back, we kneel down to tie a shoe and pop a knee, reach up to grab something on the shelf and tweak our neck and shoulder—it's all just nasty business! What do you do you may ask? **STRETCH!**

The ancient yogis tell us that if you have a strong and flexible spine, you will have a healthy life. Ridiculous? Actually not! In reality, the need for flexibility transcends the spine into other parts of the body creating a more symbiotic relationship between health and wellness and longevity. If you want to live a long and healthy life **KEEP STRETCHING!**

Yoga's benefits are many and go beyond just the stretching component. Each 60-90 minute class is built on a tradition and philosophy health in mind, body and spirit. This ancient practice focuses on moving the body through a series of postures that build strength, tone muscles, increase flexibility and detoxify the body.

## HOLISTIC FITNESS

Many individuals often have questions about the heat and its impact on the yoga practice itself. The body adjusts to the heat as a regular practice develops and the nurturing effects only enhance the other major systems of the body such as stimulating the metabolism in order to burn fat.

The detoxification that happens as a result of the added heat allows the joints to become supple, the heart and lungs to grow in cardiovascular strength and the mind to become focused, open and calm. The heat teaches the practitioner to focus only on the present moment and the present posture thus allowing little time for other distractions.

The hot yoga discipline is more than just a physical workout but rather a moving meditation that allows for self-reflection and concentration during each 60-90 minute session. Through each posture lies a challenge. These challenges range from the physical quest to balance on one foot to the mental challenge of focusing while working in a hot and humid room. Although each is distinct they are an important and necessary part of the whole practice. Hot yoga is not just about bending one's body into funny postures while sweating like crazy but rather an avenue to make the mind-body-spirit connection in a deep and meaningful way.

In addition to the positive mind-body-spirit connection, hot yoga is also a phenomenal way to recover from injury and disease. The therapeutic effects hot yoga has on such things as restoring range of motion back to injured muscles and joints, increasing mobility in tendons and ligaments and stabilizing long-term disorders like depression are many. As a ten-year hot yoga practitioner that has sustained multiple sports-related injuries I can attest to the benefits without reservation.

Finally, hot yoga is an excellent alternative to traditional gym fitness programs as it works all muscles, joints and ligaments of the body without hard repetitive

motions that can cause most injuries in the first place. In addition, it stimulates all major systems of the body enabling a holistic balance to be achieved in one's entire being. After just a few classes the benefits of this ancient yoga practice will reveal themselves and you too will experience that "high pro yoga glow." Namaste!

*Dr. Kelli Harrington is the Zen Proprietor of KAMP KELLI (www.kampkelli.com), a Holistic Fitness Company for Women, and Partner and Yogini of Zen Spot Hot Yoga (www.zenspothv.com), both located in Millbrook. Write to her at kelli@kampkelli.com or info@zenspothv.com.*



Dr. Kelli Harrington

## ZEN SPOT

HOT YOGA

**The benefits of practicing Hot Yoga at Zen Spot:**

- strengthen and tone muscles
- increase flexibility and stimulate the metabolism
- expand lung capacity and circulation
- cleanse and detoxify the entire body from inside out
- enhance the mind-body-spirit connection
- learn this tradition from certified instructors

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