

Transform Your Life with Yoga!

by Tony & Mary Riposo

Yoga has become very trendy these days, with its infomercial style promises of a toned, fit body. Its popularity appeals to our competitive nature and fits with our fast-paced existence. After all, most people come to Yoga for the fitness aspect. But did you know that Yoga is not only about the physical postures? Yoga is a complete system of healing consisting of asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breathing practices), meditation, and relaxation. These four components, when consistently practiced together, have the power to transform our lives, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. In fact, personal transformation has always been the aim of Yoga.

In the beginning stages of your Yoga practice, you can't help but experience the physical results. As you move into the asanas, and stretch your body, you not only become more flexible and have more energy; you're also called to develop a deeper relationship with your physical form and all its imperfections. As you continue to practice, you begin listening to your body in a new way, and taking better care of yourself. Through the practice of Yoga, you have the opportunity to transform your relationship with your body; all of a sudden the excess weight drops off, your blood pressure normalizes, and your aches and pains disappear.

The practice of Yoga not only transforms our relationship with our bodies, it also helps us re-gain a sense of inner balance. Let's face it; the world can be a very stressful place and many of us suffer from stress-related symptoms such as anxiety and depression, which can result in dis-ease if allowed to continue over time. When you practice the asanas along with the simple breathing, meditation and relaxation techniques of Yoga, your stress levels decrease and you become more resilient. The world doesn't necessarily change, but your reaction to it does; and all of a sudden you realize you're more capable of dealing with what life throws at you. Not only that, you find yourself experiencing more periods of peace and contentment.

Yoga is often referred to as a spiritual discipline and as such it has the potential to enrich our lives in a way that can only be described as transformative. The word Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word "yuj," which means "yoke;" thus, Yoga means "yoking together" or "union." With consistent practice of the system of Yoga, your awareness expands and you experience a connection with something greater than yourself. As a result, your heart naturally opens with compassion for all of life. In effect, you come back to your true self. Just like the caterpillar that is transformed

into a beautiful butterfly, we have the ability to be completely transformed through the practices of Yoga. Yoga offers you the ability to live in the present moment; no longer bound by memories of the past or fears of the future. The promise of Yoga has less to do with a firm, sculpted body and more to do with a life of purpose and meaning; that's the transformative power of Yoga!