

# Infinite Light Yoga ~ What's It All About?

Yoga is a practice of time tested, proven techniques that encourage the development of your conscious awareness, or that union between your mind, body and spirit. Through its practices and varying styles you can get whatever it is that you're looking for. If you're involved in a regular practice you continually benefit by being in relationship with yourself. As this relationship unfolds within you, you continue to change. You are no longer static. Life is a perpetual experience; like time that does not stand still, you move forward and evolve. By becoming active in the relationship you have with your life, you can consciously make changes to make the experience of life more joyful. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (authoritative text on the teachings on Yoga and the process of its path) says that through the eight-fold path one can reach a state of "effortless being", free from physical, mental and spiritual afflictions. Of course the process isn't without effort, none the less you will find that there can be less effort or struggle in life when you are an active participant in the process of living instead of just living and waiting to see what happens.

Infinite Light Yoga (ILY) is based on the teaching methodologies of Kripalu Yoga, which originated from the personal practice of Swami Kripalvanandji (Swami Kripalu). Although lineage based, Infinite Light Yoga has evolved to meet the needs of our modern times.

Our Classical approach to the practice of yoga can be broken down into four categories, the physical postures, meditation, breathing and relaxation techniques. These aspects of yoga can be practiced separately, but when practiced together they become a powerful vehicle for self-discovery.

Exercising your physical body using the Hatha Yoga **Postures** helps to keep the body young, strong and flexible. In each guided class the postures are led using a unique teaching methodology, combining the use of press points to assure proper physical alignment and offering progressions or levels of difficulty. This way each student can stay comfortable, yet still be challenged as they explore their abilities and limitations in each posture safely and correctly. As you practice the physical postures you benefit from muscular and glandular regulation and detoxification. The postures also help to stimulate and regulate the hormonal and immune systems. They improve digestion, circulation, respiration, and balance energy systems. You get stronger, your body becomes more flexible and physically you feel better. By keeping your body in good working order you will enjoy life more fully, live longer and have greater mobility, especially in your later years.

Through the practice of **Meditation** you benefit by learning to be conscious of thoughts as they're happening and recognizing how they affect you. Eventually this leads to being able to turn away from the undesirable thoughts so that they minimally affect you, if you let them effect you at all. You can think of meditation as a form of mental hygiene, a practice that helps you clear your mind so that the unwanted, anxious and stress related thoughts can be dealt with so you can be "in the moment" more, instead of reliving the past or longing for the future. The meditation techniques help to reduce anxiety and mental fatigue leading to more manageable thinking, clarity and peace of mind. Practicing meditation, you will begin to understand your true

nature and discover the wisdom and tranquility that lie within. Through meditation you relax into the experience of life. You become the experience and the one experiencing at the same time.

The **Breathing** (Pranayama) techniques fall into two categories, calming breaths and kriya (cleansing) breaths. The calming breaths relax the physical body and calm the mind as well as increase oxygen absorption resulting in better overall health. The kriya breaths increase prana (energy or life force) resulting in cellular stimulation effecting the metabolism and immune functions. The activity of the breath itself has a direct relationship with, and is inseparably connected to, the state of your physical body, your nervous system and your mind, each continuously reacting to the reaction of the other. When you are stressed, or if you're afraid, anxious or angry your breath rate changes. When that happens your body reacts on multiple levels. Sometimes the flight or flight response is warranted, but if you're not in real danger the reaction is unwarranted. This reactive process is normal but it usually automatically affects your mind and body in a negative way. By regularly practicing Pranayama you'll notice firsthand how quickly you can change your internal environment through breath regulation. As a result you'll have the ability to recognize when your breath rate becomes erratic. And you'll be able to change it back, thus minimizing your reactive response to the perceived stress. By relaxing your breath you relax your body, nervous system and your mind. By doing this you feel better mentally, physically and emotionally and the stress, fear and anxiety are gone.

The **Relaxation** techniques help to reduce stress, release tension, and lower blood pressure. The more active our lifestyle is, the more we need relaxation. For most people relaxing just isn't a part of our lives. We figure we'll relax later, but later never comes. As a result our minds and our bodies panic, fatigue, break down and sometimes just fail. This happens when we have ignored the signals that the body sends to our brain to take time out. The technique of yogic sleep-relaxation is a highly effective method of recharging mind and body. Our bodies are designed (bio-engineered) to restore health at all times. During relaxation if you let go of your consciously and unconsciously held tension in your body, it will be able to carry out its restorative functions more efficiently. The healing energy can move freely and is unobstructed.

As a student in our classes you will be introduced to, and learn several different Breathing practices, Meditation and Relaxation techniques along with numerous Hatha Yoga Postures. Our long-term goal for our students is that throughout the time that you come to the classes you will learn these practices, figure out which ones you like the best or that work for you, and be able to take this experiential knowledge home. This way you'll be able to use these health-enhancing techniques within your daily life. The practices don't have to end when you leave your yoga mat. Within a relatively short amount of time you will be able to create your own practice at home.

As you continue to practice in class and/or at home your relationship with these practices will continually evolve. They will make more sense. As this happens, we will be happy to help you with your questions so that you can learn more about what's happening to you, this way you will be able to go deeper into the practices. Through practicing yoga, the relationship you have with yourself changes, your overall health is enhanced, you feel better, physically and mentally. And when you feel good overall, life is wonderful.