

YOGA THREADS

Deepen your practice, inspire your life

Teaching

Yoga 2.0: Tech Tools for Teachers

Need a little help with headstand? You could swing by your local yoga studio. Or you could log onto YouTube and watch some 2,000 *shirshasana* demonstrations. Countless yoga teachers are using modern technologies to share ancient practices and wisdom. “Technology is wonderful for sharing heart, for sharing soul,” says spiritual teacher and author Ram Dass, who connects with far-flung students via live broadcasts over the Internet. His “interactive satsang” (ramdass.org) has replaced the whirlwind speaking tours of decades past. “I can stay in Maui and communicate with everybody in the world,” says the 78-year-old counterculture icon, who is confined to a wheelchair.

If you’re a yoga teacher looking to connect with students outside the studio, consider blogging, writing an e-mail newsletter, or networking through free services like Facebook and Twitter. If you have more of a techie side, give these tools a try:

Digital Voice Recording: Students sometimes have trouble remembering instructions. That’s why Larry Payne, founding president of the International Association of Yoga Therapists, records private sessions and sends students home with a CD. “On days when they’re not motivated, they just put it on. That’s worked out really well,” he says. You can record right onto your computer with free software such as Audacity, or invest in a portable recorder like the Olympus WS-210 (\$70).

Podcasting: If you’re comfortable sharing your recordings with strangers, podcasting lets you do it. A podcast is a series of audio or video files that are distributed over the Internet. In 2006, yoga teacher Elsie Escobar began recording her Los Angeles classes for students who wanted to practice while on vacation. *Elsie’s Yoga Class: Live and Unplugged*, available through iTunes and Escobar’s website (elsieyogakula.wordpress.com), found fans in Europe, Asia, Africa, and aboard a military ship. A listener in Korea called the podcast “nothing short of a lifeline” in an e-mail to Escobar. Podcasting requires recording software or equipment, plus an account with a hosting service such as Switchpod or Hipcast. The most basic plans cost a few dollars a month.

Voice and Video Chat: A long-distance teacher-student relationship can thrive with the help of free or low-cost voice and video chat services such as iChat or Skype. New York City yoga teacher Andrew Sugarman met Bianca Chumley, who teaches in Louisiana, at a Viniyoga workshop in Pennsylvania. Now he’s teaching her to chant Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* via iChat. “The technology is really up to it,” says Sugarman (artofbreathing.com). “When I learned the *Yoga Sutras*, I’d watch the teacher’s mouth. I’d watch how he was making the sounds. A lot of it has to do with the jaw and the tongue. Bianca and I can hear each other really clearly, and I can see what she’s doing. It’s almost as good as being there.”

—Anna Dubrovsky >>

Inspired Asana

Meditation Training

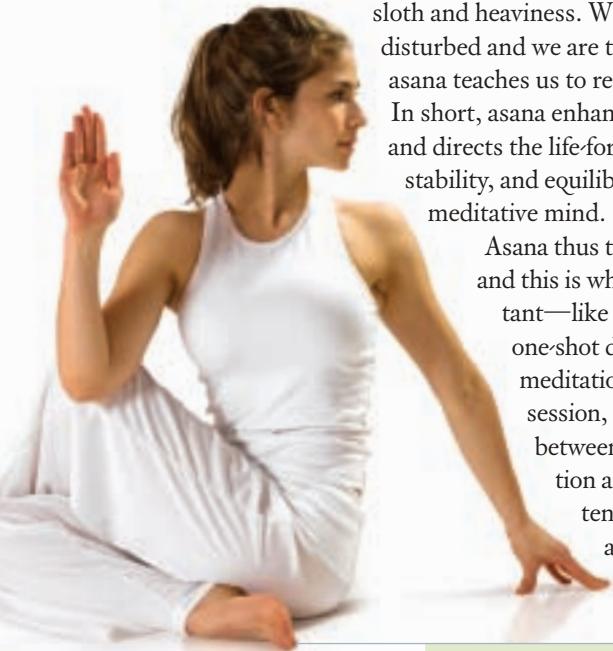
Asana is the art of manipulating the body to alter the *pranic* (vital energy) flow at the interface between the body and mind.

When that flow is stagnant, asana invigorates us, dispelling sloth and heaviness. When that flow is disturbed and we are tense and agitated, asana teaches us to relax and center ourselves.

In short, asana enhances *sattva* (see below) and directs the life-force into the realm of stillness, stability, and equilibrium—the realm of the meditative mind.

Asana thus trains the mind for meditation, and this is why regular practice is important—like all forms of training it is not a one-shot deal. Asana before sitting for meditation can also prepare us for the session, and may make the difference between a deeply satisfying meditation and a struggle with a stiff, tense body, erratic breath, and a drowsy (or racing) mind.

—Sandra Anderson



In Sanskrit

Sattva

Sattva is purity of being; lightness and radiance. This calm brilliance is tempered by the other qualities that make us who we are: *rajas* (momentum and *tamas* (inertia)). Present in different proportions, they give the mind a particular cast: calm and disciplined, intently focused, or easily distracted. Balanced living increases *sattva*, bringing clarity to our actions.



Everyday Ayurveda

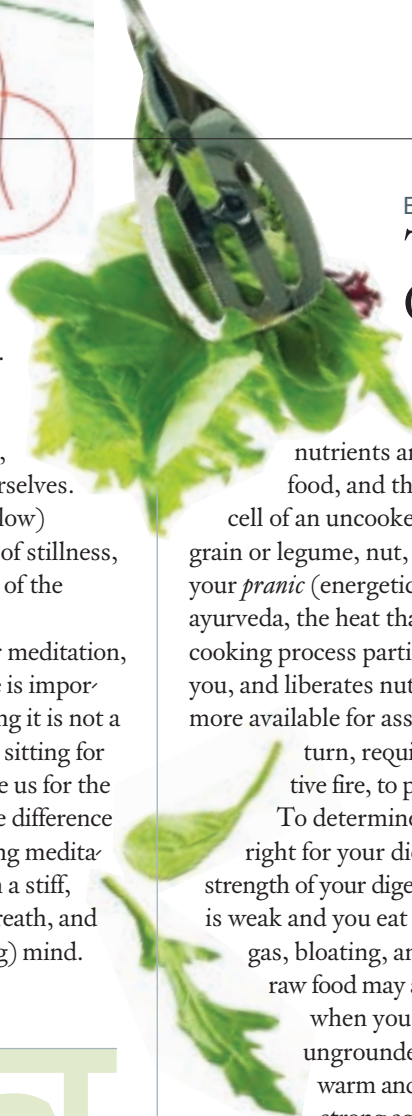
The Raw Food Question

Raw food has its benefits: it contains more nutrients and enzymes than cooked food, and the life that animates each cell of an uncooked vegetable, sprouted grain or legume, nut, or fruit also invigorates your *pranic* (energetic) body. But according to ayurveda, the heat that's generated during the cooking process partially digests the food for you, and liberates nutrients so that they are more available for assimilation. Raw food, in turn, requires more *agni*, or digestive fire, to process than cooked food.

To determine how much raw food is right for your diet, pay attention to the strength of your digestion. If your metabolism is weak and you eat sprouts, they may cause gas, bloating, and constipation. Eating raw food may also throw you off balance when you're feeling worn out or ungrounded. But when you feel warm and clearheaded—signs of strong *agni*—eating raw food can have an energizing effect on your body and mind. Make sure to chew it thoroughly, and if you feel nourished by it, go ahead and help yourself to the salad bar.

—Crystal Ketterhagen

+ Find easy raw food recipes at yogaplus.org/raw.



To Your Health

Watermelon-Rose Punch

Need to cool off on a hot summer afternoon? Try this refreshing thirst-quencher.

Carve the flesh from a **watermelon** (about 8–10 pounds), removing the seeds. Juice the melon, then mix in **4–6 Tbsp. rose water** and **2 Tbsp. raw sugar** (optional). Garnish with **mint sprigs** and **rose petals**. Chill before serving.

Variations: Juice 1 pint of fresh organic strawberries with the watermelon.

Health Benefits: According to ayurveda, rose water has a cooling effect on the body, mind, and emotions. Watermelon is cooling, too—and rich in potassium, as well as antioxidants like vitamin C and beta-carotene. —Veera Sanjana >>



Events

Summer 2009

■ **HARMONY FESTIVAL**
 June 12–14, Santa Rosa, CA;
harmonyfestival.com

This family-friendly, sustainably planned festival features musical performances from over 50 artists, such as Michael Franti and Matisyahu; a showcase of the latest trends in natural foods and holistic healing; and interactive workshops on eco-awareness, community activism, and spiritual wisdom. You can even wander around an eco-village or relax in a meditation garden.

■ **2009 LIFESTYLES OF HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY FORUM**
 June 17–19, Boulder, CO; lohas.com

Network and exchange ideas with like-minded business leaders focused on health and fitness, sustainable living, personal development, and social justice.

■ **HIMALAYAN INSTITUTE'S SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION CONFERENCE**

July 10–12, Honesdale, PA;
himalayaninstitute.org/conferences
 Explore the integral relationship between personal and social transformation with acclaimed yoga and ayurveda experts, social reformers, and spiritual teachers, including Pandit Rajmani Tiganait, Rolf Sovik, and Rod Stryker.

■ **TELLURIDE YOGA FESTIVAL**
 July 10–12, Telluride, CO;
tellurideyogafestival.com

Take in the mountain scenery while enjoying yoga in various styles and levels from notable instructors like Richard Freeman, Sarah Powers, and Scott Blossom. Committed to karma yoga, the festival organizers will donate 25% of net proceeds to the local chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

✚ Find more events at
yogaplus.org/calendar.

Conscious Consumer

The Yoga Wear Shortlist

Our top picks represent the unsung clothing lines; you may not find them at your local yoga studio yet, but these brands offer first-rate style and function for your asana practice. —C.K.



Premium Performance Gear

Zobha offers breathable, quick-drying fabrics and elegant cuts that won't confine. zobha.com



Sleekest Eco-Line

Alo's athletic attire utilizes a variety of sustainable materials such as recycled plastic bottles, moisture-wicking bamboo, and all-organic fibers. alosport.com



Top Men's Wear

72K features high-performance yoga shorts and trendy shirts just for the guys. 72k.com

Finest Designer Threads

Versatile layering pieces made with lightweight hand-dyed fabrics, **Donna.M's** collection fits like a second skin. Look for Donna.M at theycatalog.com.



Best Value

American Apparel's Sustainable Edition creates timeless and budget-friendly organic T-shirts and more for men and women, perfect for a gentler hatha practice. americanapparelorganics.com



Clockwise from top: Zobha katbarine bra, \$38; Alo bamboo long-sleeve tee, \$34; Donna.M Shirred bra cami, \$58; cotton stretch slim sarong pant, \$82; American Apparel unisex organic fine jersey short-sleeve t-shirt, \$18; 72k kaipo pants in mocha, \$49. >>

Clockwise from top left: Courtesy of Zobha; Courtesy of Alo; Courtesy of Donna.M; Courtesy of American Apparel, Inc.; Courtesy of 72K

Spirituality in Action

Brown and Yellow Make Green (Jobs)

Pittsburghers don't have to drive to the country to see fields awash in brilliant flowers—they can drive by a former steel-making site along the Monongahela River. It's slated for redevelopment, but until builders and public officials arrive with their ribboned shovels, it's a sunflower garden. In the nearby neighborhood of East Liberty, bright yellow canola flowers decorate once-derelict lots.

Sunflower and canola are biofuel feedstocks: crops used to make clean, renewable alternatives to fossil fuels. Until recently, no one had thought to cultivate them on urban brown fields and other blighted properties. Now, the idea hatched by graduate students at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University is taking seed in New Orleans and other cities grappling with diminished populations and increased property vacancies.

Several city blocks of feedstock crops aren't producing a great deal of biofuel, but that's beside the point, says Andrew Butcher, who heads Growth Through Energy and Community Health

(GTECH), a nonprofit born of the Carnegie Mellon thesis project. The gardens improve soil quality, land values, and morale in economically distressed communities. And the young people who tend them gain experience in the growing green sector. "We're connecting them to emerging opportunities that they may or may not know about," Butcher says. Visit gtechstrategies.com for more information. —A.D.



Universal Wisdom

Cultivating Kindness

Each of us has been born into this world, and each of us has been provided with a way to help others. A kind attitude of concern for those in our respective field of activity will affect them, even if it is just 10 people, bringing them more comfort and less strife. If each of them, in turn, treats their associates in a similar way, then even though the effect will be gradual, it will in time be transformative. This is how we can change the world. —*His Holiness the Dalai Lama*
From *Becoming Enlightened*. © 2009 by *His Holiness the Dalai Lama*.

Living Yoga

Wisdom from the Big League



Baseball player and "karma yogi" Ryne Sandberg

YOUR DAILY DUTIES

are a perfect opportunity to practice yoga—*karma yoga*, that is. Usually defined as selfless service, karma yoga is better understood as the act of performing your duty cheerfully and skillfully. Here's the secret: first, find what is yours to do; then, do it with full attention and respect. It's not just the action that matters, but the frame of mind and motivation. Your intention counts!

Consider the words of baseball player Ryne Sandberg at his Hall of Fame induction speech: "A lot of people say this honor validates my career, but I didn't work hard for validation. I didn't play the game right because I saw a reward at the end of the tunnel. I played it right because that's what you're supposed to do, play it right and with respect. If this validates anything, it's that guys who taught me the game...did what they were supposed to do, and I did what I was supposed to do."

yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam
Yoga is skillfulness in action.
—*Bhagavad Gita 2.50*

Doing your duty with respect, whether pleasant or unpleasant, and relinquishing your stakes in the outcome—that is karma yoga. At the end of the day, it's not about whether you "win" or "lose," it's how you play the game. ■
—S.A.