

The 3P's of Yoga at SRI: the Poses, the Pain, and the Purpose

By Don Shockey

Note: SRI's yoga instructor, Julie Rice, after teaching on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 5 years, was leaving, and Kathleen, the SRI fitness center manager, hired Sarah Westbrook (Tuesdays) and Lee (Thursdays) to take her place. Julie's classes were very strenuous--she really pushed us-- but we students benefited greatly.



Two times a week we're too tired to speak, because Julie has been to the gym.
I think she enjoys how she slowly destroys our joints stretching us out limb by limb. A sadist I'm
thinking, cause I see her winking and smiling while we are in pain.
But she's really not happy that we're feeling crappy, she smiles cause she knows it's our gain.

With grimacing faces we're put through the paces, no talking—it's all monologue.
There's a crow and an eagle, a plow and a beagle (the beagle, she calls downward dog). Any pose
that you
wish, there's a cat and a fish, and a chair and a bridge and a tree.
A dolphin, a camel, a sun salutation, and the masochistic Warrior Three.

Oh she stretches our biceps and lengthens our triceps and pulls our hip joints out of place. All our
muscles
are toast, but the ones I work most are the muscles I have in my face.
"Twist further" she shouts, even though we're maxed out, and she wouldn't relent if we begged. I'd
love
to obey, but there's really no way, because man, my painmeter's pegged!

We thought Thursdays and Tuesdays would be our "good news" days; those days we'd be off the

hook.

But just to be mean, our quote "friend" Miss Kathleen, went out and pulled in Miss Westbrook.

"Sarah, give us a break. We have all we can take". But Sarah just turned us down cold.

The first pose she showed us?—a triple full lotus!—she and Julie were from the same mold.

And Lee's not much better. We hoped all together that with him our bad luck had turned. His could

NOT

be tough as the Julianne stuff, but at his first class we soon learned

Lee isn't for "Lee"nient. It's rarely convenient for him to call out child's pose. He'd rather demand an inverted stand and I usually land on my nose.

But the poses and strain bring on purposeful pain that reveals to us our inner light. The holds and the

motions release our emotions and keep us from being uptight.

Without strife or denials we now handle life's trials, whether problems are perceived or real. Our awareness is heightened, our outlook enlightened—a new way to think and to feel.

Julie, Sarah, and Lee, we're in debt to you three for helping us enjoy our lives more.

We're relaxed, we're less stressed, we have renewed zest and more energy than ever before. You're helping us find peace in body and mind, and we're much better for it today.

Oh, how can we show you the thanks that we owe you? There's only one word—Namaste.

-Don Shockey, December 22, 1997