

Title:

Yoga And Weight Loss

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Summary:

Yoga can be more than just the exercise part of a weight loss program.

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Many people in America today try all sorts of things in pursuit of healthy, permanent weight loss. Unfortunately, they mainly seem to try fad diets, diet pills, celebrity diets, the grapefruit diet...you name it. In fact, stick an adjective or noun in front of the word "diet", and you might be the creator of the next diet craze.

While someone might temporarily lose a few pounds with a "diet", diets are not successful when it comes to permanent weight loss and healthy weight loss.

As they say, I have some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that there IS a known and proven way to achieve significant, healthy, permanent weight loss. More good news is that, although some modification to what you presently like to eat will be necessary, extremely drastic changes are seldom required. Oh, yes, you might have to learn to substitute something you don't like that much right now for something you do like, but, in time, you can get accustomed to this, and even learn to like the new flavors and foods. I know. I've been there.

The bad news is that, along with modifications to your eating habits, you are going to have to become more active. Dare I say it....?

You will have to exercise!

The benefits of exercise is an article in itself, and I have written elsewhere about how exercise can take many forms, so there is no need to lock yourself

into an unpleasant or painful exercise regimen. What I really want to do here is give a small pitch for the practice of yoga as my exercise program of choice. Remember, however, my exercise program of choice might not be yours. As much as I like yoga, you will have to decide if yoga is right for you.

Before I speak specifically about yoga, let's just list some of the known benefits of regular exercise in general. Exercise...

>Reduces the risk or affects of many illnesses and conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, arthritis, high blood pressure, and osteoporosis to name a few. Some studies even show possible reductions in the risk for some cancers.

>Elevates mood and reduces depression.

>Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles, joints, and nervous system.

>Delays affects of ageing, making seniors more mobile and self sufficient and less likely to fall prey to injury or illness.

>Reduces risk of premature death (sounds like a big one to me).

>Helps maintain a healthy weight.

Okay, since any good exercise program can provide these benefits, what does yoga have to offer that makes it special?

In addition to providing the basic benefits of exercise in general, yoga does have a few specific things going for it.

1. Despite the apparently agonizing contortions seen in every yoga book, the benefit is in the attempt to achieve the position. The models in the books arrived at their present level of ability over time, and many a skilled practitioner of yoga today began in the same shape you're in right now. It is okay to modify a position or to come out of it a little early if your body is not ready yet. The regular practice of your best version of the movement or position (asana), combined with yoga breathing techniques (easily learned) will produce progress over time.

2. No personal trainer or special equipment is needed, nor is it necessary to go to the gym or even out in public at all. You can do yoga naked if you don't have a pair of gym shorts, and a carpet is just as good as a yoga mat...at least at first. Yoga is actually so simple that it CAN be learned from a book,

although it certainly wouldn't hurt to get guidance or training from a certified instructor.

3. Yoga is relaxing and relieves stress. Not only is this of great personal value in today's world, but if any part of your weight loss problem is stress related, and I can almost guarantee some relationship, the stress relief offered by yoga can ease that portion of your weight loss journey.

4. In addition to being good for your health for several reasons, simply learning yoga breathing and practicing it regularly can help you burn fat.

5. As you begin to progress in your ability to better perform yoga poses (asanas) you will notice a sense of control, of mastery of life and self, which will become more evident. This new inner strength will aid you in facing difficulties, including temptations concerning eating and your new eating behaviors. You will also find yourself more forgiving, not only of others, but of yourself as well, and when you slide a little, you will be better able to shrug it off and get back on your path to success.

6. With more progress in your yoga practice, you will begin to experience new feelings of health, strength, and well-being. These feelings will in turn motivate you to take even more control of your life so that you can continue your progress with no desire or temptation to return to the way things used to be.

Nothing is perfect for everyone, but, as you can see, the practice of yoga does have some benefits to offer which may make it valuable in the pursuit of healthy, permanent weight loss.