

## What is Yoga?

"Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow." ~ *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Yoga is a wonderful blend of practices that work on the whole person; it is not just about your physical well being but it also works on your emotional, mental and spiritual well being. There are so many benefits in practicing yoga:

- increases the strength and flexibility of muscles and joints, improves our posture
- improves circulation of all the fluids in the body
- helps boost the immune system
- regulates your breathing, giving you stamina and improves clarity of the mind
- helps you release and let go of tension and stress

## What to expect in a class.

Yoga is suitable for everyone...as long as you are breathing you can practice yoga! During class you are encouraged to listen and respect your body. Yoga is all about your own experience and there is never any expectation of you. It is not competitive and you will be asked to stay within your own comfortable limits.

A typical class with me follows this pattern:

- we start by settling the body into a comfortable sitting position (chairs available if needed), feeling your breath, and chant the mantra 'OM'.
- the asana (postures) work connects us with the whole of the physical body. This work varies and there will be some repetition so that you become more familiar with the postures so you can practice at home. It is this work that helps to open up the physical body and allow it to strengthen where needed.
- Breath work (pranayama) – this work is so valuable as you will be taught how to develop your breath and also some useful practices you can use in every day life
- Meditation – this is part of every class, as I encourage you to be mindful in how you work. Meditation is something I work with a lot and it is an integral part of yoga.
- Relaxation – we always finish with relaxation and often it will be a yoga nidra, which is a very deep relaxation.
- We close the class with the chanting of OM. As you progress other mantras will be added.

## What to bring to class.

- Wear clothing that is comfortable and allows you to move with freedom. Use layer –stay warm.
- A yoga mat – proper sticky one so it stays in place and keeps you safe. You will be asked to remove shoes and socks
- A blanket – to use as padding and during relaxation
- Blocks, cushions, bolsters - I do have a couple for borrowing
- Water
- Sense of humour!