

# Enhancing Well-being Through Yoga

by Paula Heitzner

Yoga offers gifts that enhance life and well-being through the strengthening of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual systems. The test of time supports the phenomenon that is yoga today, and science continually proves how its practitioners are supported and sustained by its practice.

The benefits of a body in equilibrium are numerous. *The Annals of Human Biology* discusses the 37.2 trillion cells the body contains and how they contribute to its function. Every single cell is constantly making a critical choice in acute situations to keep the body alive and healthy. These interactions maintain the equilibrium of every physiological and biological system on the cellular level and is known as homeostasis. Because of it, the body is able to be accountable for vitality.

Homeostasis ensures the body's constant temperature, blood pressure and pH levels, supports the cardiovascular system for circulation of oxygen and the removal of cellular waste, moves the lymph system and helps eliminate disease-producing organisms, supports white blood cells for increased anti-bodies and aids the digestive system. Through the systems of homeostasis, the body has the nutrients needed for energy, growth and repairs. Additionally, of course,



there is the respiratory system to inhale oxygen, life-force, light and prana, followed by the exhalation of carbon dioxide and mental toxins.

The body is constantly engaged in establishing an ideal homeostasis, but when that balance is disturbed or interrupted by deficiency or toxicity, it may enter a state of 'dis-ease' or disease. To return to balance and health depends on the way the body is treated. A yoga practice is an incredible resource to help regain homeostasis. The asanas create internal space and strength for the life-force to flow with healing energy and the breath provides the empowering fuel to finish the repairing. Meditation, an important component of yoga, brings balance and healing by reducing stress and aids pain management. Yoga encourages its practitioners to look within and see how they self-sabotage. It encour-

ages everyone to become 'warriors' in their efforts to reclaim who they were meant to be.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention states the key factors influencing health are heredity at 18% and environment at 19%, while everyday lifestyle choices and decisions count for 53%. Clearly, family history is important, such as by learning from past mistakes. Personal decisions and choices support health through homeostasis as does a yoga practice that encourages mindfulness and conscious awareness.

*Paula Heitzner is the founder of the Nyack Yoga Center, located at the New Age Center at 1 South Broadway in Nyack. Heitzner, Robin Laufer and Jeannie DeMarco all teach classes at the New Age Center that ground, center and align with bringing about the highest good for their students. Feel free to stop in and meet them, experience the space and feel the positive energy that has been accumulating for over 40 years. The studio is enhanced by its affiliation with the Yoga Teachers Association (YTA) which has monthly workshops with presenters from all lineages addressing many aspects of yoga. For more information, contact 356-5613 or visit NyackYogaCenter.com.*

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