

# BALANCING ACT

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IT TAKES A LOT OF DISCIPLINE to calm a busy mind.

It takes total trust to surrender into mindfulness while posing upside-down on a stand up paddle board in sirasana (headstand pose).

We are drifting down the Noosa River in warrior II pose. Floating free under a dreamy sky as sunshine sparkles illuminate a slow-moving tide. My body feels strong, my mind is calm and I'm oblivious to everything except my breathing. I'm a back-to-nature waterbaby at heart, so this outdoor, floating yoga session works quickly to manifest my happiest chi.

I used to do yoga, and now I'm wondering why I stopped.

Yoga comes in many forms and continues to unite yogi enthusiasts globally like a wise, old soul. Stand up paddle yoga is the new wave of wellbeing wisdom floating around the world.

Finding a teacher who radiates a kindred synergy and who teaches in an inspiring environment is a blessing. Kat Harding may not know this, but her recent teachings re-awakened my inner-yogi and my mind, body and soul are blissfully happy about it.

Kat is like a gentle breeze with a sparkling soul. Her positivity, passion and patience with people are heart-warming. Kat already had a business degree majoring in human resource management, but her devotion to yoga, the outdoors and healthy wellbeing has inspired her to design a life she loves, teaching yoga and SUP yoga in beautiful locations around the world. Kat completed her Hatha 'Vinyasa' Yoga Teacher training in London. Missing the sunshine, she returned home to Queensland to complete her SUP board and SUP yoga training, becoming the first qualified SUP yoga teacher in Australia.

"SUP yoga is a unique experience," she says. "Being outside and practising yoga on water heightens our mind/body awareness. Nature provides the magic. Like when the sun comes out after rain, or when a kookaburra laughs at the end of a silent meditation. Connecting with the bigger picture makes it easier to put things back into perspective."

Our class met at 7am at The Woods end of Hastings Street. Our boards were lined up along the sand bank. It was a pretty setting and a lovely group, all seeking a yoga experience with a difference. We waded out together, stood up and started paddling.

"A group dynamic is sacred. Nature's backdrop changes but we all come together on common ground. The shared experience, bond and trust created within the group is very special," Kat says.

Standing up while travelling used to happen at the cost of my patience. In contrast to many wasted hours standing on overcrowded buses and trains during peak hour traffic, this concept of standing up on a board, paddling through clean water, fresh air and tranquil surrounds to find our zen space for a floating yoga session is pure liberation.

We paddle under a bridge and over to a secluded spot behind Witta Circle. There is a wonderful sense of freedom. Sounds soften and my eyes feel like they are cushioned by the muted colours of this beautiful morning.

## FLOATING FACTS

- SUP yoga is for everyone who can swim and has the willingness to get back up again if they fall in. SUP yoga heightens awareness of inner core strength and the bigger picture.
- Mind/body balance is an important part of holistic wellbeing.
- A correct breathing technique massages the nerves, which is a great discipline for reducing anxiety, stress or pain.
- Key terms:  
**Yin:** relaxed, calm  
**Yang:** movement, hot, energetic  
**Chi:** energy force  
**Yogi:** a practitioner of yoga

Surprisingly, paddling a SUP board is not complicated. The board is quite wide so balance when moving is not tricky. But balancing on an unstable foundation in downward-facing dog pose is tricky ... at first. The hardest part is to stop thinking or fearing. We gather our faith, inner chi and go with the yoga flow.

Kat's classes are made up of a combination of fluid movements. She adapts each flow to suit the class and encourages us all to work into a pose that feels right for our bodies. If anyone falls in (which I did), it doesn't matter.

"During the class, I am very conscience of what energy I project onto others, to create a safe, comfortable and calm space. Fun is part of the experience," Kat says.

Our floating moment comes to an end in the asana pose – sitting still. Everything feels alive: the breeze, the trees, the water, even the silence.

Kat's voice tapers back into our thoughts with a beautiful blessing that I love: "May you have peace, may you have happiness and may you have love in your heart."

My eyes open to take in a world that seems more splendid than before. My mind is cleansed and my soul nourished with gratitude.

Namaste. ☺

Kat's SUP yoga classes are held weekly from October 31 to December 24. You can also find Kat at the Wanderlust Festival Sunshine Coast from October 15 to 18 or yoga retreat from October 23 to 25 at Noosa Heads.

[kathardingyoga.com](http://kathardingyoga.com)

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