



WIM HOF

WIM HOF'S SCIENTIFIC BASED METHOD FOUND ME 2 ½ YEARS AGO WHEN I FACED EXTREME ANXIETY, PANIC ATTACKS, STRESS AND BOUTS OF DEPRESSION AFTER SEPARATING FROM MY NOW EX-HUSBAND. LEAH SCOTT WRITES HOW WIM HOF HAS CHANGED HER LIFE PHOTOS JOSH BURKINSHAW

Through a process of transformation and reawakening, I've been able to shed my past conditioning. This process caused me to question what I'd previously just accepted was how my mind and body worked and lead me to explore new ways of thinking and living. I experimented with various bio hacks, but nothing came close to Wim's breathing technique and ice water swimming in nature.

This was the beginning of an epic journey. In retrospect, I never would have expected this man and his method would influence me the way it has, particularly in such a short period of time.

My morning starts at 5am with breath work. The controlled deep breathing, which trains my body to adapt to a hypoxic (low oxygen) state, releases a high amount of adrenaline, boosting blood flow throughout my entire body, followed by meditation, my nervous system is calm, balanced. I follow this up with yoga or a run, and then I'm ready for a swim in the Thredbo River.

With the temperature below zero, I park at the picnic area in the Kosciuszko National Park and, dressed in my Patagonia jacket and Mont tracksuit pants I make my way under the bridge. The ground is

covered in frost, occasionally snow, and the river is half frozen over. I stand on the icy bank, exclude the world around me and prepare myself to enter the water. In the past, I've screamed and sworn, whatever it took to get me in there.

When we have dysphoria to these uncomfortable feelings, we release the chemical dynorphin, which increases the number and sensitivity of our endorphin (feel good chemical) receptors. By making ourselves physiologically uncomfortable and overcoming what we fear, we increase our ability to feel good.


That negative voice is still present with me on that bank, however it is quieter these days. Through the Wim Hof Method I've built a deep sense of self-awareness and resilience, a knowing of what is good for me. Going to the edge of my comfort zone daily has given me a real insight on how much our mind affects our bodies, especially our nervous system.

Once upon a time the ice would take my breath away, but not these days. We can adapt so quickly. My heart flutters. The arteries, veins and capillaries in my fingers and toes close. The pain is intense. However, changing my perception and

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what I focus on is key. I use my breath to influence my ‘autonomic’ nervous system, to take control of my heartbeat and calm down. Staying focused on my breath and the warmth of my core allows me to let go of the pain in my extremities caused by cold-induced vasoconstriction. I feel the warmth of adrenaline hit the bottom of my spine and travel up into my brainstem. My eyes open with the most incredible awareness and presence. Peace. My senses sharpen. The ice water activates our reptilian brain, the oldest, deepest part of our brain,

the part in control of our innate and ‘automatic’ self-preserving behavioural patterns. Floating, I open my eyes to see the beauty of the planet that we live in. I feel a strong connection to the core of nature, to myself. I scan my body, aware of the signals of when it’s time to get out of the water, and do just that, maintaining my focus and savouring the experience for a little longer. I start my day in euphoria and it’s not even 7:30am. I’ve learnt to control my mind, my body and my fears by learning to control my breath in that river.



We learn and grow when we train our adaptive mechanisms outside of our comfort zone. The cold, as a tool, takes you there and will help you truly learn about yourself. It has taught me how to respond and cope with the difficult things in my life. It helps me intuitively sense and comprehend others too. I live truthfully, vulnerably, confident, childlike and incredibly grateful.

It was an epiphany the day I truly understood that 'feelings' are biochemical.

If you're stressed you've released cortisol

and you're low in dopamine. If you're anxious or depressed, you need serotonin. If you're tired and foggy and want to live in the present moment, release noradrenaline by getting into ice water (Just two minutes a day is a life changer). Do it naturally, without the come down; we don't need pharmaceuticals to unlock these hormones.

Every cell in our bodies is eavesdropping on our thoughts. Every thought releases a chemical, so every chemical that is released in the brain is a message that feeds the physical body. Our body begins

to feel the way we've been thinking. People think we have a mind up here and a body down there, that only the mind is trying to be in charge. We've become disconnected. We don't have to be our negative thoughts and feelings. Stop over personalising them. Create distance between yourself and these characters so you can see what's really at play. Don't label yourself as the 'feeling'. Investigate it, change it, grow from it. We can change our mental state, train ourselves to become mentally-flexible, our state is not fixed.

We're the most overweight, stressed, depressed, addicted, burnt out generation ever thanks to wealth, luxury, pressure and comfort. We're so stuck in our heads. Excess suffering in your life should be treated as evidence that you're not doing something quite right yet. We make our world a worse place when we don't take care of ourselves.

Don't like the results in your life? Look at your inputs; your thoughts, health, the people you surround yourself with. We're a product of our choices. Take responsibility, face adversity, do what you fear. Comfort is familiarity and predictability. You know what's wrong with you. Transcend your suffering. Everything we need lies within us not outside of us.

I have a love for life, I want to age well, not degenerate. I want control over my mental state, my own wellbeing, and my cognitive and physical performance.

I know the feeling of having nothing, having to adapt to solitude, failing over and over. But in the suffering, I still saw the beauty of the world.

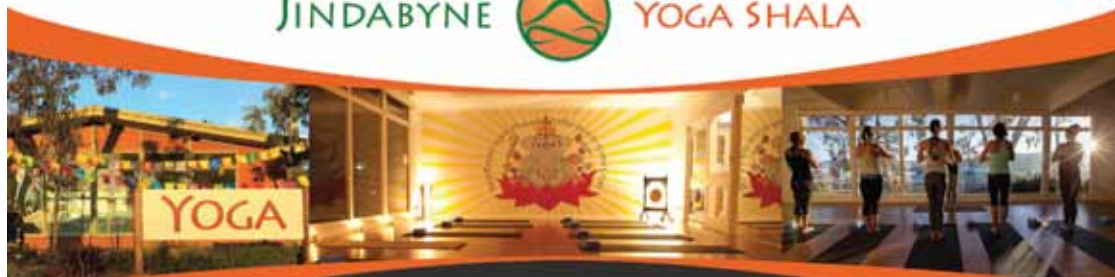
I choose to pass on the Wim Hof Method, not to save or rescue people, but to give them the knowledge of how to access their own inner power so they can choose to help themselves. Let's all aim to inspire the next generation too.

Like Wim says, be happy, strong and healthy and the rest is bullshit

Leah is holding the first Wim Hof retreats in Australia in May, June and October. She also does workshops and private lessons Australia wide

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