

10 Reasons to do Yoga over the Age of 40

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a purple tank top and blue leggings, is performing a yoga pose on a large, dark rock. She is in a side plank variation, with her right arm extended upwards and her left hand resting on the rock. Her body is arched, and her head is tilted back. The background shows a beach, waves, and a green hillside under a clear blue sky.

Don't practice Yoga to get better at Yoga
Practice Yoga to get Better at Life!

By Amber Muller

1. Introduction



Introduction

Reaching the age of 40 is a milestone, isn't it? I have just hit the next milestone of 50 years which I have to say feels fine so far, although I am only 4 months in.

I have been practicing Yoga now for 30 years and teaching yoga internationally for 20.

When I started Yoga, it wasn't really the thing to do like it is now. I was living in London studying a Business and Marketing Higher Diploma. I was stressed out, I suffered from anxiety and I was literally just searching for something.

I didn't fall in love with yoga straight away, but I did leave the yoga studio feeling calm and sleepy and that made me feel good - so I kept going.

Fast forward through 3 years of travelling and living on various communes where yoga was a given, I still practiced yoga here and there but didn't have a solid practice.

It was after my first child was born and I was living in Indonesia (my first 2 kids are half Indonesian) when I got invited to come and practice Ashtanga yoga with a guy called Danny Paradise - no really, that is his name. I came out of that first class as a 25-year-old with a lot of energy and drive and said to myself "that's it, this is the style I want to practice".

I then practiced Ashtanga for 5 years but was also lucky enough to be introduced to many different styles of yoga, with different teachers, during this period. This formative period resulted in the style I teach and practice now, which is a true amalgamation of all that I have learnt.

To say Yoga changed my life is true. Yoga gave this 'A type' personality a sense of calm, a sense of belonging and a discipline that taught me that even though life is sometimes stressful and uncomfortable, you can breathe through it and the stress passes.

Now coming into my 51st year I feel vindicated that I have reaped the benefits of being a yogi and the discipline of practicing frequently. As a Mum, wife, independent person, teacher and coach, the proof is in the pudding, so to speak!

I'm here to say it is NEVER too late to take up Yoga. I hope by reading this booklet, no matter where you are at right now, you will find the desire & motivation to start and bring the beautiful art of yoga into your life.

1. Its Important to Move your Body



Living in the digital age is great for sure, but it has had an impact on our overall health. Compared with our parents or grandparents, we are spending increasing amounts of time in environments that not only limit physical activity but require prolonged sitting—at work, at home, and in our cars and communities. We have all heard the phrase 'sitting is the new smoking'.

As human beings, we are hunter and gatherers and we are born to move. It's an unnatural state to sit for such long periods of time. Humans are built to stand & walk upright. Your heart and cardiovascular system work more effectively that way.

Sitting for long periods of time weakens your muscles, particularly your large muscles in the legs & buttocks that are important for walking and stabilising you. If these muscles become weak then you are more open to injury.

Moving your muscles helps your body digest the fats and sugars you eat. If you spend a lot of time sitting, digestion is not as efficient, so you retain those fats and sugars as fat in your body.

When you are physically active, on the other hand, your overall energy levels and endurance improve, and your bones maintain strength.

From a Yoga perspective the Yoga asanas or poses are designed to promote physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing and create an overall healthy body and mind.

Yoga movement gets your blood flowing, it improves circulation, boosts your energy, not to mention your morale. It helps with digestion and aids detoxification. These are just some of the reasons we need to move.

We have a saying in yoga, "You are as young as your spine". The yoga poses (asanas) we do in yoga are all focused around moving the spine to create flexibility and range of motion which also tones and rejuvenates the nervous system as the nervous system is housed in the spine.

The gentle side bending, forward bending, twisting movements bring flexibility to the other joints and muscles of the body. Internally, the bending, twisting and stretching is also massaging the internal organs, improving circulation and oxygenating the cells of the entire body.

Yoga is a great form of exercise. Yoga does so much more than give you flexibility. Yoga can get you very strong, it works your core constantly, as your core muscles are being used in twists, balances and many of the other poses.

Depending on the style, yoga can increase your heart rate and can therefore be counted as a cardio work out as well. Some of the dynamic yoga styles like Ashtanga, can leave you sweating and with a raised heart rate.

We are designed to move often not to sit for long periods of time. However, many jobs require that we need to sit for long periods of time which makes it even more important that we bring yoga into our lives.

Tip: Start small but be consistent

Set a timer every 40 mins and move for 5 minutes. Get up & walk around the office. If you work from home, do 2 sun salutations. Any movement is better than none.

2. Its never too late to Start Yoga



One of the things I often hear repeatedly is, I can't do yoga I'm not flexible. Followed by, I can't do yoga I have a dodgy knee or a bad back.

There are many different styles of yoga. A good yoga teacher will encourage you to work at your own pace, and not to compete with the class. If you feel you'd be too self-conscious at first in a class situation, it can sometimes help to start with a few private lessons (online or in person) to help you to understand the poses and gain some confidence.

Yoga will help circulation and it can also help shift emotional stresses and rigid thought patterns as your mind starts to relax, to let go, through correct breathing techniques.

Yoga is gentle enough that you can be in your 70s or 80s and still be practicing yoga.

Yoga is a low impact workout that lubricates the joints and massages the muscles. You can practice yoga for your entire life and use it as an aid for staying young and agile.

Some of the Yoga teachers I know that are still teaching well into their 70s, have a sense of grace about them and a calmness that surrounds them. Very Inspiring for all of us.

You can start practicing at the age of 2 or 3 and every age in between.

Yoga can also be dynamic and almost gymnastic like. If you want to build muscles and a strong body, you can do that too as Yoga has a lot of body weight exercises.

If you are injured, you can still often practice yoga gently to aid recovery because Yoga teaches us to listen to our bodies, and our bodies to respond to our mind.

For many years I taught yoga in primary schools and high schools, taught Mums 'n Bubs classes and at the same time taught the elderly in old age homes (chair yoga).

In fact, age is one of the least important factors in deciding whether to practice yoga or not. Our bodies are affected by other things, for example injury but yoga is about creating freedom in the body and freedom in the mind. Overcoming the restriction of injury is part of the yoga practice.

Yoga has been practised for thousands of years. It has stood the test of time. There are many stories of yogis in India living to a great age with all their physical and mental faculties intact.

Now that yoga has become mainstream and a lot more popular, being practiced by celebrities and professional athletes, this clearly demonstrates the benefits of doing yoga.

Its never too late to start yoga. One of my idols is Vanda Scaravelli.



In this picture she is 87 years old. Vanda did not start practicing yoga until she was 48, yet the flexibility and agility she has is amazing.

Tip: Stay Mindful- Do not let the thought of a lack of flexibility stop you from starting yoga. Flexibility is a by-product of a yoga practice and not a necessity to start.

3. Yoga allows you to be in the Present



The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit root word "yug," which literally means to yoke or unite. So, yoga is about the union of the mind, body and breath.

With all the technology around us, we are constantly distracted. How often are you driving while talking on your mobile, or thinking about work problems, or the things you must do? How often do you eat without thinking about the food you're eating? How often do you drift off while doing other things, thinking about something you messed up on, or worrying about something that's coming up?

As an example, I am sitting here writing this and I suddenly find myself looking at Yoga pants on online shopping. Believe me, I have more than enough yoga pants, yet my mind wandered off thinking about writing this yoga eBook to, which yoga pants I should wear today, then on to the internet searching for yoga pants!

To live in the present moment is not something that comes naturally to any of us anymore. Whether it's a deadline at work, the worry of raising a family, we have pressure coming at us from all angles in daily life.

This feeling of pressure causes us to stay in the fight or flight mode, which can be very destructive to our health and not allow us to be in the present. The result is we become reactive rather than responsive, and our overall mental and physical health takes a hit.

"The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, nor to worry about the future, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly." – Buddha

So, does living in the Now, or being present make you happier or improve your health? This is a great question.

According to an article in the Guardian, Psychologists at Harvard University collected information on the daily activities, and thoughts and feelings of 2,250 volunteers to find out how often they were focused on what they were doing, and what made them most happy.

They found that people were happiest when spending time exercising or in conversation, and least happy when working, resting or using a home computer. And the subject's minds were found to be wandering nearly half of the time, which consistently made them less happy.

The team concluded that reminiscing, thinking on what's ahead or daydreaming tends to make people more miserable, even when they are thinking about something pleasant.

Being present is when we focus on what we need now rather than what we think we need.

When we practice Yoga, our attention is on the breath & doing the poses. The more we practice, the more our focus improves. Once we have practised for some time, yoga becomes like a meditation in motion. We focus on the breath and the body moves like a wave as we bend and stretch and lengthen our spine.

Yoga teaches us through the asanas and the breath to be completely present in our minds without any distractions.

There is a lovely Indian story that Krishnamurti used to tell Vanda Scarevelli (author) to teach her to understand the state of attention we should have in daily life.

"You must always imagine that you are shut up in a cupboard with a cobra. The moment you are inattentive, the cobra will get you!"

Perhaps this seems a little obscure in our sanitised Western lives, but the point remains the same.

Tip: Learn to Breath - Try my [7 day Breathing Course](#), its a great place to start.

Get up 5 minutes early and sit with your eyes closed and just breathe. I often set a timer for 5 minutes, so I don't distract myself by wanting to peep at the clock.

4. Helps to Decrease Stress and Anxiety



You know sometimes when you feel like everyone wants a piece of you.

You can't seem to focus on any tasks at hand. Your kids are screaming at you, you have work you need to finish, the washing machine breaks down and then your partner messages you and asks what's for dinner?

Life is stressful. Stress is a natural human response when faced with all the above challenges and other situations. It's also the pressure and demands we put on ourselves which are different for everyone, but these also lead us to feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

"Concentrating on poses clears the mind, while focusing on the breath helps the body shift out of fight or flight mode." – Melanie Haiken

Experiencing stress is part of being alive. In fact, some stress helps increase our alertness and energy so we can meet challenging situations. For example, doing regular exercise helps keep your motivation and morale up, and stimulates the immune system.

Stress is helpful when it increases our ability to be alert, energised, switched on and resourceful in facing challenges we enjoy or challenges we need to deal with.

Stress is also a vital warning system, producing the 'fight or flight' response. When the brain perceives stress, it starts flooding the body with chemicals like epinephrine, norepinephrine and cortisol. This creates a variety of reactions, such as an increase in blood pressure and heart rate. Plus, the senses suddenly have a laser-like focus. Avoiding danger, is an example of this.

So firstly, lets establish some signs of too much stress.

Sometimes when we are in the thick of life, raising children, work commitments, and juggling a work life balance, it can be hard to tell how stressed out we really are.

There are some important ways however, that our body lets you know when you're struggling with too much stress:

- Inability to concentrate or complete tasks
- Get sick more often with colds
- Body aches
- Other illnesses like autoimmune diseases flare up
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Trouble falling sleeping or staying awake
- Changes in appetite
- More angry or anxious than usual

Stress and its triggers are different for everyone. Certain people, places or situations might produce high levels of stress for you. Think about what causes you stress and brainstorm solutions.

If public speaking or presentations make you stressed, start researching early and practice in front of the mirror. If there are friends or social situations that cause extreme stress, you may want to avoid them when you are already feeling tense or overwhelmed.

Yoga is a mind body practice. Yoga brings together physical and mental disciplines that may help you achieve peacefulness of body and mind. This can help you relax and manage stress and anxiety.

According to a paper written by the NCBI (National centre of Biotechnology Information)

'Yoga is recognized as a form of mind-body medicine that integrates an individual's physical, mental and spiritual components to improve aspects of health, particularly stress related illnesses.

Evidence shows that stress contributes to heart disease, cancer, and stroke as well as other chronic conditions and diseases.

Viewed as a holistic stress management technique, yoga is a form of movement that produces a physiological sequence of events in the body reducing the stress response.

The scientific study of yoga has increased substantially in recent years and many clinical trials have been designed to assess its therapeutic effects and benefits.'

Yoga is over 3000 years old and yet it has only been in the last 10 years that it has become more mainstream and recognised as a form of therapy, as well as a form of exercise.

Achieving the right balance and finding a teacher you 'gel ' with is very important.

Every person has a different body with different abilities. You may need to modify yoga postures based on your individual abilities. Your teacher or yoga coach may be able to suggest modified poses. Choosing a yoga teacher who is experienced and who understands your needs is important to safely and effectively practice yoga.

Regardless of which type of yoga you practice, you don't have to do every pose. If a pose is uncomfortable or you can't hold it for as long as the instructor requests, don't do it. Good instructors will understand and encourage you to explore — but not exceed — your personal limits.

I always say in my classes, "This is your yoga practice and you must work at your pace. You are in your body, I am not, therefore you must be the person to set that pace. As a teacher or coach, I am your guide."

Tip: Lie down with a thick book, no not to read, for its weight so it pushes into your abdomen slightly. Your knees can be slightly bent if you prefer. As your breath in, push your abdomen up and the book will rise. Breathing out, the book will fall. The pressure on the tummy makes it easier to breath in and out the correct way using your diaphragm.

5. Reduces Aches and Pains and gives you a strong posture



As we approach our 40s and definitely our 50s, we start to read or hear more about the effects of aging! Maybe in the hope of slowing the process down, maybe for health or maybe just for some knowledge because up until now we haven't given it much thought.

Suddenly things are starting to drop, we get the odd joint aches, maybe back pain from time to time, and wonder what is going on.

Being a yoga teacher, I often hear, "I feel like I've reached 45 and all of sudden I feel like I'm starting to fall apart". It's like it creeps up on us.

As said previously in this book, Yoga is a mind-body practice. It is still exercise that combines breath control, meditation, and movements to stretch and strengthen muscles.

What sets yoga apart from most other exercise programs is that it places as great an emphasis on mental fitness as on physical fitness.

Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years and has certainly stood the test of time. So, what makes it so good for combating aches and pains?

Yoga helps with pain because it naturally incorporates several things that help encourage pain relief. Yoga involves mild to moderate movement, exercise, that has been scientifically proven to reduce pain.

As our bodies engage in exercise, areas that would be, or are already affected by pain have the muscles around them strengthened. This includes both the region around the painful spot as well as the location of the pain itself.

A study published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* (A medical journal published by the American College of physicians) found that among 313 people with chronic low back pain, a weekly yoga class increased mobility more than standard medical care for the condition.

The other way that yoga works to combat aches and pains, as mentioned previously, is that yoga helps to combat stress. Stress causes our muscles to tighten and to go into spasm.

In the case of back pain, it is tight, aching muscles (which can grip in response to even minor injuries to tendons, ligaments, or other connective tissue) that experts now believe cause most of the pain.

The practice of yoga asana, beyond its ability to induce relaxation, can be an effective way to relieve muscle tightness.

Yoga increases the flow of oxygen to the brain which can increase your energy levels and your wellbeing.

For people with certain conditions, such as arthritis, moving your joints through their range of motion and stretching your muscles can decrease the intensity of your pain or relieve your pain completely.

Having a regular yoga practice can improve stress management and can have a feedback effect on improving chronic pain or aches and pains in the body.

Yoga also corrects a poor posture.

Your head is like a bowling ball—big, round, and heavy. When it's balanced directly over an erect spine, it takes much less work for your neck and back muscles to support it. Move it several inches forward, however, and you start to strain those muscles.

Hold up that forward-leaning bowling ball for eight or 12 hours a day and it's no wonder you're tired or have neck & shoulder pain. And fatigue might not be your only problem.

Alignment is very important in yoga.

I love teaching alignment, in fact I am pretty obsessed with alignment in my yoga classes. When you stand or sit with your body in proper alignment all the organs function as intended, including the stomach which is one of the reasons yoga posture helps improve your digestion.

When you have good posture, the bones and spine can easily and effectively balance your body weight which minimises risk of serious back and neck problems.

Practicing yoga as we get older also gives us a sense of achievement. Our flexibility increases, a sense of calmness increases and a feeling of taking your health more into your own hands by focusing on something that not only improves your muscle strength and vitality, but makes you feel good inside and out

Tip: Use a wall to help you correct your posture.

Stand with your back against the wall, keeping your head on the wall but the chin slightly curled into the chest. You can use this same technique with poses like Triangle pose and warrior pose.

6. Yoga Improves our Breathing Capacity



We can go weeks without food. Mahatma Gandhi survived 21 days without food. We can go for 4 days without water, but we can't go without Breath!

Yet, it always amazes me in my Yoga Beginners Workshops, how perplexed everyone looks when I say, ok, so how do you think you breath?

I mean, are you a mouth breather or nose? Do you use your diaphragm or not? Is your breath smooth or bumpy?

From a Yogic perspective the way we breath has a huge impact on our overall health. Deep Breathing helps to cleanse and nourish the body. As you inhale fully, you are supplying the body with oxygen, and element that is essential to every cell in the body. As you exhale, the waste products are being expelled. The oxygen rich blood returns to the heart and is then pumped to all parts of the body.

In Yoga we use many different breathing techniques to strengthen the body and to help control the mind.

So, for physical and mental functions, breath is very important. In Yoga practice, we integrate focus on breath during slow movements as well as while maintaining asanas or yoga positions.

A great exercise to do daily is to run a mental check over your body. If you find tension in an area, take a few deep inhales and with each exhale focus on releasing the tension and consciously letting go of it from your body. With daily practice of inhaling and exhaling you gradually increase the depth of your lungs.

According to 'Yoga Journal', a new study found that yoga could be beneficial for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), an incurable lung disease that includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both.

Study participants showed improvement in lung function, shortness of breath, and inflammation after practicing yoga for 12 weeks, according to a press release by the American College of Chest Physicians.

Once you have learnt some yoga you are then able to bring the yoga poses (asanas) and the breath together. It is then possible to relax more easily in the pose and bring your focus to your breath.

Another scientific research is showing that mindful breathing—paying attention to your breath and learning how to manipulate it—is one of the most effective ways to lower everyday stress levels. Therefore, Yoga is often seen as something you do to reduce stress.

Despite the inherently automatic nature of breathing, most people have a lot to learn and improve upon when it comes to the most basic of our physiological functions. We tend to breath quickly most of the time—anywhere from 14 to 20 breaths per minute is the standard, which is about three times faster than the 5 or 6 breaths per minute proven to help you feel your best.

Tip – Increase your lung capacity through Yoga Breathing exercises, to help improve your overall health.

7. Practicing Yoga Builds a Strong Active Body



When you hear the term strength training, you probably think weight training — numerous reps of muscle contractions using weights as resistance. But if you've ever had sore muscles after a good yoga class, you've probably wondered: Does yoga count as strength training?

Once you reach the age of 40, doctors & health professional's advice is for you to do some form of weight training twice a week as a measure to prevent bone loss. For many people the vision is in a gym surrounded by sweaty people lifting heavy weights. Or standing in a gym looking at these odd-looking weight machines and totally overwhelmed with what to do.

So, is there another way to build a strong body?

People often ask me 'Do I lift weights?' I smile and reply, 'I lift my own body weight in yoga quite a lot.'

When you do yoga, you are putting your body in positions and orientations that you ultimately must support with your muscles. So, effectively you are weight lifting.

What makes a regular yoga practice so different from working out at the gym, is that you become in touch with your body and how it feels. You start to 'listen' to your body.

In Yoga your muscles are stretched and strengthened at the same time. This is a different process to how your muscles responds in a gym class. During Yoga, the muscle fibres and connective tissue elongate, while the added resistance creates tension that increases collagen fibres to maintain a lean and toned appearance.

Yoga targets every large muscle group and the effect of this is a strong body. Then with the added focus of deep breathing, it also creates a calm and focused mind.

Most other forms of exercise take you out of your body and into your head. Often so you can push through the pain, run that extra mile or just get through the cross fit session. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with that, it does get results for sure, I'm just saying that practicing yoga also gets results, but its aim is to connect you with your body.

Yoga uses full body movements that encourage the body to move as nature intended it to. Every single muscle is used in strength and balance. This tone's and shapes your body through isometric and isotonic movement.

Often you lose weight because active muscle tissue burns fat- the stronger your muscles are, the stronger your metabolic fire burns. On this though, you also lose weight because you are so much more in touch with your self that you become more conscious of what you are putting into your body.

With a regular Yoga practice, you will start to feel calm, more energized and alive.

Tip: Start with just adding 10 minutes in to your day.

Try the [21 Day Yoga Course](#). Perfect for the beginner starting out.

8. Yoga Improves your Balance



As you get older your ability to balance declines. This is due to loss of muscle strength and joint flexibility, as well as reduced vision and reaction time. And the risk of inner ear dysfunction increases with age, which can throw you off balance.

The words balance training are starting to be popular now, and for good reason. Our ability to balance is extremely important.

This simple balance assessment is a great place to start. To begin, be sure to have something sturdy to hold onto nearby, and then close your eyes and stand on one foot. Keep track of how long you were able to hold this position.

This can be an eye-opening experience for those who believe they have good balance. Longevity researchers agree that good physical balance can turn back the clock not only physically but functionally.

The time, in seconds, that you are able to hold this position correlates with your functional age.

28s = 25-30y

22s = 30-35y

16s = 40y

12s = 45y

9s = 50y

8s = 55y

7s = 60y

6s = 65y

5s = 70y

Functional age is the combination of an individual's physical, mental, emotional and actual chronological ages.

According to the Yoga Journal, when we balance, we align our body's centre of gravity with the earth's gravitational field. Quite literally, we place ourselves in physical equilibrium with a fundamental force of nature.

However, we can't stand completely still for a long time so we must keep adjusting our balance, moment to moment. When we practice this in yoga, for example in tree pose (Vrikshasana), we bring physical balance into our bodies, but also our nerve impulses, thoughts, emotions, and consciousness. Hence, we feel calm. Equilibrium brings equanimity.

Sometimes, practicing the balance poses can be frustrating and we can beat ourselves up a bit about not being able to do them perfectly. But despite the frustration, one-legged balancing asanas offer so many benefits that it's well worth the trouble to practice them. .

In addition to promoting concentration and calmness, these poses strengthen our core muscles and build our coordination and balance, improving our ways of standing and walking as well as how we perform many other everyday activities.

Finally, these benefits might prolong our lives, helping us avoid the falls that often lead to injuries and death among the elderly.

Tip – Try standing on one leg in tree pose whilst doing everyday thing. For example, cleaning your teeth, waiting for the kettle to boil, even standing at the photo copier at work!

9. Yoga is good for the Brain



As we approach 40, there is an awareness that we just don't remember things like we use to. Familiar names and places don't spring to mind like they did, and car keys are always moving themselves to different places around the house.

Studies have shown that yoga can improve your memory and can be as effective in stimulating your brain as brain training exercises.

As we get older, it is inevitable that there will be some weakening in mental function but emerging science suggests that we might be able to slow and mitigate the decline by how we live and, in particular, whether and how much we move our bodies.

A study in the Pub Med which was published in April, in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, showed researchers at the University of California and other institutions, decided to test whether yoga, a relatively mild, meditative activity, could alter people's brains and fortify their ability to think.

They began by recruiting 29 middle aged and older adults from the Los Angeles area who told the researchers that they were anxious about the state of their memories and who, during evaluations at the university, were found to have mild cognitive impairment, a mental condition that can be a precursor to eventual dementia.

The volunteers were divided into two groups. The first group began a well-established brain-training program that involves an hour a week of classroom time and a series of mental exercises designed to bolster the memory. The volunteers were asked to practice at home for about 15 minutes a day.

The second group took up yoga. For an hour each week, they visited the U.C.L.A. campus to learn yoga movement, breathing exercises and meditation.

Both groups of volunteers practiced their programs for 12 weeks. Then they returned to the university's lab for another round of cognitive tests and a second brain scan.

By this time, all of the men and women were able to perform significantly better on most tests measuring their cognitive ability.

But only those who had practiced yoga and meditation showed improvement in their moods – they scored lower on an assessment of potential depression than those in the brain-training group – and they performed much better on a test of visual spatial memory, a type of remembering that is important for balance, depth perception and the ability to recognize objects and navigate the world.

So, it seems that yoga does differ from other brain improvement exercises. And of course, the yoga breathing exercises help a great deal in calming your body and invigorating your mind.

As we have said previously in this book, yoga does help with stress. Stress and anxiety can cause your brain to malfunction. Yoga helps regulate the vagus nerve that deals with your body's mood and stress levels.

Tip – Try doing a few calming yoga poses before you go to sleep to help with stress levels and to help the body to relax and the mind to switch off. .

10. Your Body will thank you for it



There are so many different styles of yoga, nowadays. Some yoga classes have you lying down in a candle lit room doing gentle supported poses, other classes seem almost militant in putting you through a fast-paced sequence and pushing your physical capacity.

Some focus on physical alignment, while others offer a heart-centred approach. There is so much variety that describing them all is impossible.

However, with all these different styles and teachings, they all have one thing in common, they make you feel good!

Put simply, you walk out of your chosen yoga class and you just feel better.

Sometimes its hard to describe why you feel so great to other people, but you just know that Yoga makes you feel good.

Have you ever heard a person come out of a Yoga class and say, "Wow I feel terrible, that was awful "?

During 20 years as a professional Yoga Teacher, never have I heard that! So, let us explore why?

Why could this be that Yoga makes all these millions of people that are now practicing yoga all over the world, why does it make you feel better, feel good.

You may have heard, one reason asana leaves you feeling so good is that it activates your parasympathetic nervous system; thanks to two elements that almost all asana practices have in common—the lengthening and strengthening of the spine and muscle tissue and calm, even, restorative breathing.

The parasympathetic is the part of your nervous system that slows you down—it's responsible for telling your muscles to relax, improving your digestion and assimilation, boosting immunity, and helping you sleep better.

It also normalizes your blood pressure and lowers your heart rate. The parasympathetic nervous system counteracts many stress-related symptoms and the negative by-products of our modern, fast-paced, high-output lives

Another reason our body thanks us for practicing yoga and we leave classes feeling so good, is Prana or life force. Almost all styles of hatha yoga increase the flow of prana, or life force, in your body.

The process of holding a yoga pose, whilst breathing through it, is the action that dissolves

Different postures unlock prana in different ways.

Forward bends, for example, increase the types of prana that calm, soothe, and ground; Backbends unblock pranic forces that are more expansive and revitalizing.

The principles of how prana, life force and yoga affect the body and the mind are explained in numerous books on Ayurveda, and Hatha Traditional yoga so I won't go into any more detail here.

Tip: Practice some yoga even if it's only one pose a day, at the same time each day. If you do it this way you will form a habit. Repeat this daily for a minimum of 66 days - this is what the research is now saying is needed to imprint a habit.



So, you now have 10 reasons why, as we get to 40 plus, that Yoga is a great thing, and in my mind, a necessary thing to be doing.

On a personal note, as I said in the intro I have now practiced yoga for over 25 years. During those 25 years, I have had 3 children, moved 16 times, and lived aboard 2 sailing yachts overseas for 18 months at a time. So, to say my regular practice has been my anchor (pun intended), would be an understatement.

Like all of us, sometimes life got in the way, but I always returned to my practice. I have continued to do Yoga nearly every day (even if it was only 10 or 15 minutes).

On top of that, I have been teaching classes most days, for over 20 years.

Yoga is such a gift for me. I would put myself into the category of an 'A personality' so yoga has had a huge grounding and reflective effect on me. It has taught me to be present, to let go, but mostly, to come from the heart. I strongly believe that Yoga can also be a gift for you!

I hope all of you enjoy this book and it inspires you to do yoga, meditation or at least, to breath well.

Namaste Yogis

Amber

If you would like to learn yoga with me, but in your own time I recommend starting with the 21 Day Yoga Challenge [Click Here](#)

Check out the Membership Live Sessions here. 20 Weekly classes on offer for you to access and learn as you go. [Find out more Here](#)

Ambers Yoga Retreats Internationally can be found at the [Retreats page Here](#).

Try a Coaching Session

At Wellness with Amber, where yoga is paramount to a healthy wellbeing way of life. Amber also works with people to help them find a path that aligns with their values, their desires and how they want to live their own unique life

Amber is offering a 30 minute free consultation if you would like to experience just what coaching is all about.

[Click here to Learn more.](#)

Learn more

*"When you listen to yourself,
everything comes naturally.
It comes from inside,
like a kind of will to do something.
Try to be sensitive. That is yoga."*

-Petri Räisänen

