

Rehoboth & Lewes

The key to your community

Life

Integrative Health Fair
POWER OF SELF CARE
Belly Dancing Interest Grows
HIP EXPRESSIONS
Eye on Nature
WILDLIFE PHOTOS



March 2014

Hanging Loose

Surfer Honored at Major Hawaiian Meet

Yoga for Golden Warriors

Practice helps counter the effects of too much sitting and years of poor posture.

Sue McCarthy
Community contributor



Photo courtesy of Sue McCarthy

When it comes to yoga, it's never too late for you to begin your practice!

As a registered yoga instructor, I specialize in yoga for the 50-plus population or the "golden warriors." Not only have I have experienced the "yoga-tizing" effects on my body since beginning my practice in 2009, but I have witnessed my students transformations as well.

Yoga has been shown to help alleviate or reduce many health challenges, making it an increasingly popular exercise choice for older adults. The many benefits have long been said to slow down or even slowly reverse the aging process. This is undoubtedly a part of the reason this more than 4000-year-old practice has survived and is now flourishing. It's also a primary reason that yoga, according to the 7th Annual IDEA Fitness Programs Report (the world's largest association for fitness and wellness professionals), "has experienced the most growth of any fitness program over the past seven years."

In just a short period of time, yoga can awaken your body's power of regeneration, leading to more energy, enhanced physical well-being and a more positive attitude toward life. You will achieve increased flexibility and range of movement, especially around your shoulder area and lower back. You will regain the mind-body connection, tap into your inner creative power and best of all you will feel younger!

Yoga is an ideal exercise program especially for those older than 50, since regular practice helps to open up worn-out and forgotten parts of your body. With age, stiffness sets in as the spine compresses resulting in decreased joint mobility and balance, as well as loss of muscle and bone mass. By age 50, we begin to feel the effects of too much sitting and years of poor posture commonly resulting in neck and back problems. And yes, even active individuals experience the effects of aging.

A lack of muscle strength, increased stiffness of the joints and muscles, decreased agility, balance and coordination, plus a decreased ability to cope effectively with occupational and life stress are all associated with the 50-plus adult. Many problems

associated with aging such as circulatory disorders, arthritis and digestive complaints are a result of lack of exercise, poor diet, and shallow breathing. Yoga is ideally suited as a "one-stop shop" for all of these conditions.

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Yoga is an ancient practice that connects the mind, body and spirit through body poses and controlled breathing techniques. There are three age groups for which there are specific and suitable forms of yoga: the young and restless (teens to 45), prime of life or mid-lifers (45 to 75), and older adults (75+).

Each group and stage of life requires a different yoga practice. The younger yogi is building and challenging the body. By midlife, the focus is on maintaining optimum health including injury prevention through yoga lifestyle (e.g. mindset, bio-mechanics, safe user-friendly routines, advanced breathing techniques called pranayama, proper food choices and relaxation).

When people begin yoga at age 50 and older, they usually have various health related challenges commonly associated with the aging process such as increasing stiffness, back and neck pain, kyphosis (rounding of the spine), problems with balance, arthritis, osteoporosis, knee and hip replacements, heart health and blood pressure issues. Therefore, it is important for individuals to begin their practice of asanas (postures) at a slow and gentle pace.

During each class, students experience how slow and gentle movements into and out of poses allows them to go deeper into the pose without over exerting their bodies. I encourage my students to always honor their body by respecting their physical limits. Within a short period of time, they get to experience things they never thought possible in their newly "yoga-tized" bodies! Watching this transformation in my students is my greatest joy.

For information on class days and times or to schedule a private yoga session, call 302-245-6133 or visit my website at yogagarden-de.com. Namaste.

—Sue McCarthy is a certified massage therapist and registered yoga instructor in the Lewes/Rehoboth area.