

Yoga for Christians

Mondays at either 10:00 am or 7:00 pm.

Cost \$5 per class.

Sponsored by Avon United Methodist Church

Instructor: Jan Dorsey

Certified through Yoga Alliance

Why yoga?

**Individual's lives are
filled with people who
continually make
demands on them.**

Co-Workers Community

Support staff Supervisors

At Work

Colleagues Clients

Company officials

Friends

2nd Job

Community

Outside of Work

Church

Family

People tend to be so focused on others, they neglect themselves.

The reality is most jobs extend far beyond regular hours. Issues and concerns filter into our “off duty” time.

Most jobs can easily become multi-tasking, energy draining, time consuming work ...



**Despite excellent time
management skills and
endless hours -**

**the work is never
done which...**

Leads to...

- * Inconsistent exercise, if any
- * Poor eating habits
- * Lack of sleep
- * Loss of focus
- * Fatigue
- * Pain



Otherwise known as ...

STRESS



How can you ...

Reduce the effects of stress

Decrease body aches and pain

Create healthier habits

Improve overall health

YOGA!

Yoga's purpose is to train the mind by changing the way one thinks, sees, and feels.

Yoga is an individual practice that can be done in a group setting.



Yoga is “...movement from one point to another...moving what has been previously beyond our reach.” Desikachar p. 17



Yoga honors each individual where she/he is at a given moment.

It will “...begin where we are, and how we are, and whatever happens, happens.”

Desikachar p. 7

Anyone can do yoga!

Yoga honors individual uniqueness.

**It starts where YOU are, goes
at YOUR pace, pays attention to
what feels good to YOU, and
stops if there is pain.**

Yoga is the antithesis of ...

No pain - No gain!

Yoga challenges you to push to your limit or edge but to stop or modify the pose if there is pain.

We recognize and accept
our own starting point
then focus on gradually
improving from there.

Why?

Every person is unique!

Even an individual's two sides are different, with one side generally stronger and more flexible.

Every time you come to the mat what you can do will be different.

Everyone is encouraged to do as much (or as little) as she/he wants.

In Yoga there is ...

- * No Judgment

- * No Comparison

- * No Competition

Yoga's Three-Fold Goals

* **Strength**

* **Balance**

* **Flexibility**

These are gradually built through intentional, mindful behavior.

Scientifically, yoga has been proven to ...

Reduce stress Reduce pain and stiffness

Tone and and strengthen muscles

Improve concentration Promote wellness

Increase energy and vitality

Prevent illness

Maintain healthy body systems

Yoga originated in India and has been practiced for thousands of years.

Western yoga is more contemporary & focuses primarily on the physical practice and breathing.

The language of yoga is Sanskrit, but English terms will predominately be used in class.



Traditionally, Yoga has 8 Limbs

1. *Yama* – Social consciousness
2. *Niyama* – Individual consciousness
3. *Asana* – Poses or postures
4. *Pranayama* – Breath control
5. - 8. *Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samedhi* – Levels of Meditation

Yoga can incorporate a spiritual element (meditation), but it is **NOT** a religion;

However, it can foster one's spiritual beliefs, and Jan's class will have a strong Christian emphasis



AUMC yoga classes will focus on only two limbs – the poses (*asanas*) and the breath (*pranayama*) – with the use of scripture and hymns.

The two elements (movement and breath) are crucial to be a healthy individual.

MOVEMENT

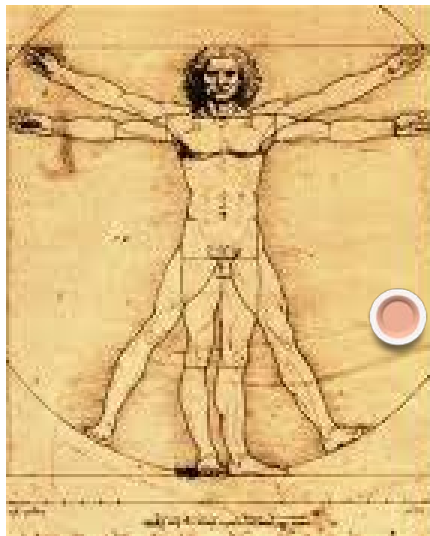
Do you ever wonder why your body is stiff and achy?

No, it is not because you are getting old!

The truth is:

You're not moving enough!

“The body is a motion machine. The bone-levers and muscle pulleys make that perfectly clear...Motion is absolutely crucial to the body’s operations and overall welfare.”



Egoscue, p. 4

Our musculoskeletal system is based on “...specific muscles assigned to move specific bones by contrasting and relaxing within a clear skeletal design of parallel lines and angles.”

Egoscue, p. 9

In other words, our bodies function best through regular use – continual movement.

Without movement, muscles deteriorate which negatively impacts our overall physical health.

Most pain comes from misalignment and improper misuse of muscles.

We fail to notice the gradual deterioration of our bodies (poor posture, using secondary muscles to counter pain in main ones).

Many aches and pains are caused by unnatural, repetitive motion that the body was not originally designed for.

We live in a society that requires less and less motion.

This, in turn, is causing greater, serious health issues.

Why do so many people suffer from headaches? Stiff necks? Tight shoulders? Sore feet?

How do most people look while sitting at their computers?

Yoga has a great term for this ...

Slumpasana



Well-being is defined as “...using our bodies in a way they were intended to be used.”

Egoscue p. 34

Think about life 150 years ago.

What daily physical demands were required of people?

Why aren't those physical demands required today?

The downside of convenience is causing a societal decline of our physical strength and abilities.

Our bodies automatically are adapting to less physical demands, but at what cost?

What were some physical activities you regularly did during your childhood?

When was the last time you...

Sat on the floor

Stood on tip toes

Climbed a tree

Bounced a ball

Rode a bike

Threw a ball

Hung by your hands

Crawled under or through something

Our Society is ...

**... depriving our bodies of
movement and ...**

**Healthy bodies require
continual, varied movement!**

Yoga fosters proper movement!

Its emphasis is on keeping proper vertical, horizontal, and parallel alignment of the 8-load bearing musculoskeletal joints.

It honors the design of the human body – restoring and maintaining the S-curve of the spine, protecting shoulders, hips, knees, ankles, and neck.

A typical yoga class engages every muscle and joint of the body, using poses and counter-poses to foster steadiness and comfort, flexibility, balance, and strength.

Yoga helps us become mindful of how we move and breath.

Yoga is “...acting in such a way that all of our attention is directed toward the activity in which we are currently engaged.”

Desikachar p. 6

This attentiveness to action within a yoga practice eventually enables us to learn to be present in whatever we do.

Attentiveness [mindfulness] helps us to perform each task better because we are clearer focused.

Our first focus in yoga practice is poses (physical exercises) – *asana*.

Our other focus is on breathing – *prayana*.



- * Breathing is essential to life.**
- * Breath gives us energy and focus.**
- * Breath provides organs, muscles, tissues, and cells the vital oxygen it needs to function.**

Ever watch a baby sleeping?

**A child naturally,
instinctively breathes
by expanding the chest
and abdomen on the
inhale; contracting
them on the exhale.
That is the correct
way to breathe.**



Most people breath incorrectly!

- * Shallow, chest breathing
- * Pulling abdomen in on inhale
- * Limiting the use of the diaphragm
- * Providing their bodies with insufficient oxygen

**Yoga asks us to constantly
think about our breathing.**

**It asks us to consciously link
breath with movement.**

**Breath leads every yoga movement
We breathe and then we move.**

To breath consciously is to ...

***Inhale:* Breath air in, starting at the navel, pulling air up and out into the abdomen and chest.**

***Exhale:* Push air out by contracting the abdomen then the lungs down to the navel**

The basic breathing technique in yoga is called the *ujjayi* breath – the breath of the ocean.

This gentle, controlled breath allows us to hear and feel our breath.

This sound and sensation of the *ujjayi* helps raise our awareness of breath flow; thus helping our focus.

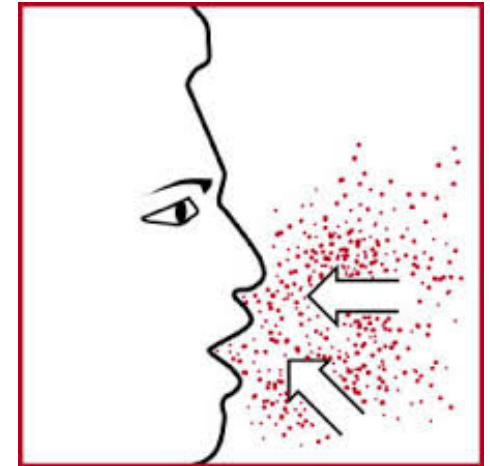
In Ujjayi Breathing ...

- * Air is warmed through the nose**
- * It then flows to the lungs, into the blood, through the body**
- * It exits through the mouth**
- * This breath awakens the body to natural movement in asanas. Stephens p. 248**

Practicing *Ujjayi* Breathing

Inhale through the nose, expanding from the navel to abdomen to chest.

Exhale through the mouth, making the sound like the ocean, contracting the chest then abdomen then navel - think Darth Vader or trying to fog up a window.



Basic Breathing Rules

Rule 1: When contracting muscles (bend, twist) = Exhale

Rule 2: When expanding muscles (straighten, lengthen) = Inhale

**Are you ready to give
yoga a chance?**

**Are you interested in
participating in the
Yoga for Christians
class at Avon UMC?**

YEAH!



What You'll Need:

- * Comfortable, flexible clothing
- * Avoid loose-fitting tops
- * A yoga mat
- * A bottle of water

Recommended:

- * A yoga blanket or block
- * A yoga strap

A few other words of advice:

- * Don't eat before doing yoga.**
- * Drink lots of water –
before, during, and after class.**

**For more information on
yoga, contact Jan Dorsey at
*jpdorsey78@gmail.com or
Cell: 317-373-0771***

Hope you will join us!

Namaste'

This is the typical blessing, said by all, at the end of all yoga classes.

“I honor the place in you which is love, truth, light, and peace.”