



Water Yoga

**A wonderful step on your journey to improved
wellness with yoga**

A brief essay by

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ISBN: 13 digit 978-0-9825312-0-4 ; 10 digit 0982531206

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Bio:

Yogini dharmananda(Heather Johnstone) found the healing effects of water with yoga as part of her own work with her yin deficiency pattern. She has been working with yoga since childhood and finds it to be an integral part of her being.

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Introduction – Yoga as a wellness modality

Yoga is very effective in working to strengthen and tone the body, as well as balance the mind-body-spirit complex. It is useful for anyone at any place along the wellness spectrum.

If you are at your prime, yoga can be used to help you stay there, performing at your optimal level each and every day. The physical effects work to strengthen any or all systems of your body, depending on your style and duration of practice. If you opt for the more physically intense forms of yoga or practice for over 90 minutes per day, you will be working out your entire body. It will help to strengthen the muscles, bones, as well as tonify the skin and balance your internal organs. Toxins will be eliminated to a greater degree. The asanas, or postures, work on a deeper level, as well, so that your mind, emotions and spirit are strengthened.* Your thoughts will be more clear. Your emotions will be evened out. And your spirit, regardless of religious or spiritual interest, will become stronger. You will be more you, your essence.

If you are finding yourself challenged with pain, limited mobility or balance problems, yoga can play an important role in helping you to feel better and maximize your function. Gentle, thoughtful practice will work to gradually improve your pain, mobility, or balance problems. Even 5 minutes a day with a few asanas practiced several times a week can help reduce your limitations. And the yoga practice will work, as it does for those with fewer health issues, to improve your thought processes, your emotions and your sense of a glorious living being here on Earth.

Integrating the use of water into your yoga practice

Why perform yoga in water?

Philosophically, human beings are mostly comprised of water. Performing any portion of your asanas, chanting and/or mudras in the element of water strengthens the energetic impact on our bodies. Those of us with predominance of other elements in our patterns can find great relief by surrounding ourselves by necessary balancing water element. And those of us with primary water element as our natal presentation can find rejuvenation by strengthening our natal element.

Practically speaking, water acts to provide our bodies with an increased resistance while providing a cushion and a sense of buoyancy. So the water can challenge the physically fit while supporting those of us with less than optimal function.

Physically fit persons

Those of us who are at their best can use the water yoga as part of a warm-up or cool-down routine. It can work to loosen the tight areas of the body as part of the warm-up and cleanse the toxins as part of the

cool-down. The additional water element exposure can be useful in energetically watering the body which is dry from all the physical activity.

Persons with health challenges

This practice can be performed alone or with other wellness routines. If access to pools is limited, use of a bathtub or simple foot soak which then exposes the person to, at least, the energetic properties of the water while the asanas are performed, can be useful. Pay extra careful attention to your movement through the postures as the supportive water will give you surprisingly fluid movements, similar to Bikram yoga.

Method

The temperature of the water should be left to the choice of the person, as both hot/warm and cold/cool waters have applications. Those with yin deficiencies and yang excesses will tend to prefer cooler waters while those with yin excesses and yang deficiencies will usually prefer warmer waters.

Please work to use natural bodies of water for your practice. If that is not possible, please use water which is minimally treated. The more basic the element the more effective the water is in facilitating balance at the deeper levels.

The order of the asanas is unchanged in water practice except as is needed for depth of water. If one has access to zero depth pools, one can comfortably perform floor postures. Otherwise standing or sitting asanas are performed so that usual breathing rhythms can be maintained.

Summary

With this brief explanation of the use of water with your yoga practice, I hope that I have highlighted a new area for you to explore on your journey to optimizing your time here on Earth. Shanti ~

*Performing chanting or mudras along with the asanas potentiates the effects of the asanas. And if needed, they can be performed instead of the asanas to reach some of the same benefits of the asanas.

