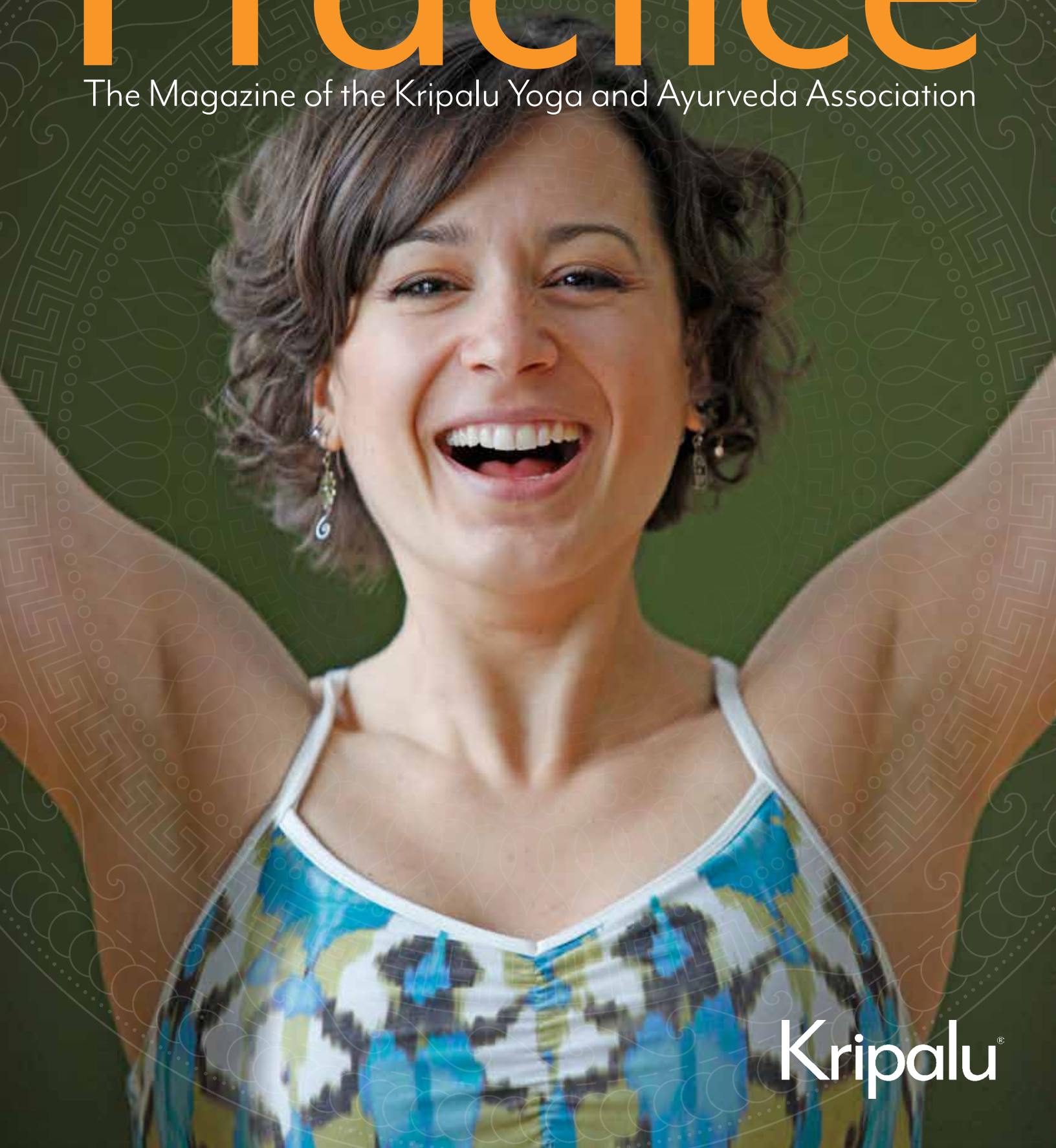


Practice

WINTER 2015 | Volume 24 | Issue 4

The Magazine of the Kripalu Yoga and Ayurveda Association



Kripalu®

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Inside This Issue

WINTER 2015 | Volume 24 | Issue 4 | **Practice**

- 1 ➔ Letter from the Director
- 2 ➔ Awareness: The Goal of Yoga and Ayurveda
- 3 ➔ Seeing Clearly Through the Body
- 4 ➔ Winter Recipes from the Ayurvedic Kitchen
- 6 ➔ Classical Yoga: A Manual of Liberation
- 8 ➔ Going Inward in the Season of Darkness
- 9 ➔ Holiday Rituals from Our Faculty
- 10 ➔ Advanced Posture Spotlight:
Knot Piercing (Granthibhedhanasana)
- 11 ➔ Upcoming 2016 Trainings in the
Kripalu School of Yoga
- 12 ➔ Yoga and Sleep
- 14 ➔ KYAA Membership Benefits

Kripalu[®]
Center for Yoga & Health

Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to empower people and communities to realize their full potential through the transformative wisdom and practice of yoga.

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Letter from the Director

Dear friends,

December is upon us once again, and with it comes a natural time for reflection, as we take stock of the past year and look ahead to 2016. For the Schools, 2015 has been a remarkable year, as we have launched a reinvigorated 300-hour training curriculum and built our Yoga Teacher Specialist Trainings for those interested in deepening their studies in specific areas. The coming year promises many exciting new initiatives, and I am pleased to be able to share one of them with you now.

Starting in January, the Kripalu Yoga and Ayurveda Association begins producing high-quality video classes and lectures, to be delivered to your inbox eight times each year. These videos will be an exclusive benefit for KYAA members. Now you will be able to see and hear your favorite Kripalu faculty and access an ever-growing library of resources created to empower you with dynamic teachings.

The other four months of the year, you will continue to receive our quarterly magazine, *Practice*, with substantive content produced just for you. With fewer and fewer devices being created for playing CDs and DVDs, and knowing the extensive environmental footprint that comes with their packaging, delivery, and (ultimately) their disposal, we are happy to “go green” while adding value for you!

Your [full list of membership benefits](#) is included in this issue. I hope you can see and sense our sincere, joyful effort to continually innovate and improve upon our offerings to better serve and empower our students and graduates.

No matter how you honor the darkest time of the year and the return to the light, I wish you comfort and connection, through the practices you love and the people you share them with. May the fruits of your efforts continue to guide you and your communities, so that our shared vision of a more awakened, compassionate, and connected world is realized for all of us, each and every day.

Happy Holidays,

Micah Mortali
Director, Kripalu Schools of Yoga and Ayurveda

Joy to the World

Joy is the word
I receive when I
open my being and
let awareness lead.
One word, resplendent
in its simplicity,
like a star atop the tree.

Awakened and free,
joy dances through me,
takes my hand, spins me
round 'til I grow dizzy.
Joy points at my heart
and grins, points at my
head and nods, traces a
circle with one arm,
making sure the whole
of me is inside its
wide circumference,
and then gestures to
include the earth and sky.

Joy is everywhere.
No exceptions. None.
One word for the world
to live by is enough.

—Danna Faulds

From *Breath of Joy: Poems,
Prayers, and Prose*, © 2015






Awareness: The Goal of Yoga and Ayurveda

by John Douillard

Most of us believe that we are in control of our thoughts, desires, and aspirations, but science begs to differ. What we actually have control over—our conscious mind—determines only about five percent of our behaviors. Surprisingly, it is our *unconscious* mind that controls ➔ **95 percent** of the things we do, say, feel, and think—not to mention involuntary actions such as breathing and blinking.



While the Vedic sciences of yoga and Ayurveda offer many benefits, chief among them is their ability to help us become more conscious of our limiting behaviors and move beyond them.

We receive much of our brain's programming in the formative years between birth and age six. All the positive and negative impressions we get, from our parents, siblings, classmates, environment, and community, are responsible for the unconscious aspects of our personality, which often develop as survival mechanisms. These childhood behaviors and beliefs then become the driving force of our adult lives. These patterns are mostly reward-based, negative, and/or built on illusory fears that might have protected our feelings as children, but no longer serve us as adults.

To feed those patterns, we seek satisfaction in the stimulation of our senses, through eating, shopping, the latest action movie, or the new house, car, job, or partner. Dr. Gregory Berns, an Emory University neuroscientist and the author of *Satisfaction: The Science of Finding True Fulfillment*, researches dopamine levels in relationship to the anticipation of novel stimuli. He describes ➔ **the complex neurochemistry of retail therapy**: When you go shopping for shoes, for example, your dopamine levels start to rise. The promise of satisfaction peaks as you find the perfect pair of shoes, and dopamine floods the brain. Once you take

them to the register and swipe your credit card, your dopamine levels come crashing down. The reward—the anticipation and excitement—is over.

Your brain, now stripped of satisfaction, pulls out its “how-to-get-happy” menu and, the next thing you know, you’re steering your friends to the nearest Cinnabon. Once the reward route has been set and you head in that direction, your dopamine levels begin to rise again. By contrast, ➔ **giving without expectation activates oxytocin**, which has been shown to improve health and extend life compared to reward-based activities.

In Chapter 2, Verse 48 of the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna expresses deep concern about going into battle and killing his own cousins, who have been deceitful. To ease his pain, Krishna tells him, “Arjuna, Yogasta Kuru Karmani”: “Arjuna, Establish Being, then Perform Action.” While the Vedic sciences of yoga and Ayurveda offer many benefits, chief among them is their ability to help us become more conscious of our limiting behaviors and take action to move beyond them. Ayurveda uses lifestyle, herbs, exercise, detox, and rejuvenation to bring the body back into balance and enhance self-awareness. Yoga uses breathing and asana to move prana (life force) through the physical body in order to activate the subtle nadi pathways in the pranamaya kosha. The nadis transport awareness into both the annamaya and manomaya koshas, where they link mind and body. Awareness is key in the quest to stop needing to “be loved” and to find fulfillment in “being love.” □

John Douillard, DC, CAP, is the creator of ➔ LifeSpa.com, the leading Ayurvedic health and wellness resource on the web, with more than 600 articles and videos offering evidence-based validation for the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda.

John Douillard teaches ➔ **650-Hour Ayurvedic Health Counselor Certification, Module 2: Etiology, Pathology, Clinical Assessment, and Pulse Analysis**, with Rosy Mann, Larissa Hall Carlson, and Jyothi Bhatt, February 12–21, 2016, and ➔ **Ayurveda for Balancing Weight, Energy, and Emotions**, February 19–21, 2016.

Seeing Clearly Through the Body

by Jonathan Foust (Sudhir)

The role of the body can be incredibly powerful in bringing you into present-moment awareness. Through mindfulness of the body, you begin to see the nature of change, the nature of suffering, and the nature of the self. Bodyworkers and somatic healers have the saying, “Your issues are in your tissues.” Your trauma and your experiences of fear and helplessness are held as somatic memories, as well as your experiences of joy and bliss.

When you bring your attention to the present moment, there’s an unbelievably rich experience—the movement of breath, the aliveness of sounds, the aliveness of your body. You become aware of your patterns of thought, the habitual ways you are *not* in the here and now. This disconnection from our body creates challenges—just Google “texting and walking” to find proof of this! There are some amazing visuals of people walking off piers, walking into fountains, utterly disconnected from the body. When we’re disconnected from the body, we tend to make choices that aren’t really grounded.

When I speak with people about their regrets, they often say, “I wasn’t really thinking.” Actually, I think they weren’t paying attention to what they were feeling, because they had disconnected from present-moment awareness. This practice is about making friends with the body, honoring the body, because the body lives in the here and now—it’s the mind that goes into the past and future.

The Buddha said, “Within this body, you will find all the teachings.” When you use the body as a tool for insight and transformation, you begin to see into the nature of reality. You begin to see more clearly the nature of change. Everything that is born out of causes and conditions is subject to change. Noticing this quality of change naturally leads your attention to another characteristic of reality: your relationship to what is changing. A friend of mine put together a lovely birthday party for his six-year-old, and in the middle of the party, his son burst into hysterical tears. When his father asked him what was wrong, he said, “It’s going to be a whole year until I have a birthday again!” That speaks so beautifully to our relationship to change and our resistance to things slipping away.

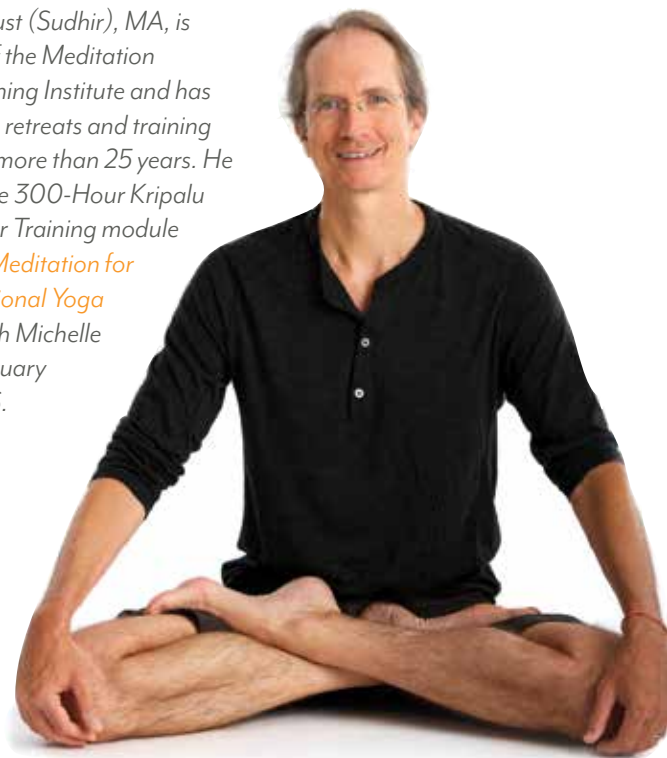
You know those carts for children in the grocery store with steering wheels, so the kids think they’re driving the cart when

they’re really being pushed? That’s us! One of the things you get to see in relationship to your body is what you have control over and what you don’t. It’s a doorway to insight as you begin to see your habitual patterns of reactivity. Meditation is akin to the process of detox. Every time you come back and relax into the here and now, it’s like you’re pouring clear water into a pitcher.

I love Joseph Campbell’s analogy: imagine a big circle with a line through the middle of it; above the line is what you’re aware of, and below the line is what you’re not aware of. The line can move. As far as I can tell, the line moves in direct relationship to your capacity to relax and pay attention. As you relax and pay attention, you begin to feel and sense more, and you become aware of mental patterns just below the surface.

That’s where the transformational edge comes up in meditation—the capacity to hang out on that line, to allow what is unformed to come into a greater sense of awareness. The body becomes a powerful tool for unwinding and unpacking anything that’s between you and feeling free. □

Jonathan Foust (Sudhir), MA, is cofounder of the Meditation Teacher Training Institute and has been leading retreats and training teachers for more than 25 years. He coteaches the 300-Hour Kripalu Yoga Teacher Training module [➔ Guiding Meditation for Transformational Yoga Teaching with Michelle Dalbec, February 19–28, 2016.](#)



This article is excerpted from a talk given in June 2015. [➔ View the full talk, including a guided meditation.](#)

Winter Recipes from the Ayurvedic Kitchen

These three hearty treats offer warming spices, sugar-free sweetness, and enhanced immunity and vitality.



BAKED OATMEAL

Serves 6

3 cups rolled oats
 ¼ cup raisins
 ¼ cup chopped, pitted dates
 ¼ cup chopped Turkish figs
 ¼ cup maple syrup
 1 cup almond milk
 3 tablespoons melted ghee or coconut oil
 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 1 teaspoon ground ginger
 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
 ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 ¼ cup unsweetened apple sauce
 ½ cup chopped apples
 Seasonal berries (optional)
 Whipped cream or coconut crème (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix all dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Set aside the applesauce, and combine all other wet ingredients. Mix well. Combine wet ingredients with dry ingredients. Add applesauce and chopped apples. Mix well. Scoop mixture into a greased baking pan and bake for 40–45 minutes. Serve warm. Top with seasonal berries and whipped cream or coconut crème if desired.

PEAR BAKE

Makes one 9x9-inch baking dish

4 large pears, with skin, cored and chopped
 Juice of 1 orange
 3 tablespoons coconut oil or ghee
 2 tablespoons maple syrup or raw honey
 ½ cup soaked almonds, crushed or chopped
 ½ cup rolled oats
 ¼ cup almond meal
 ¼ cup raisins
 ¼ cup chopped dates
 ½ cup chopped pitted prunes
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 ½ teaspoon cardamom
 ½ teaspoon nutmeg
 ½ teaspoon powdered ginger
 ½ teaspoon powdered clove
 1 cinnamon stick, broken into pieces
 1 tablespoon raw honey or maple syrup for garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Mix well, and pour into a 9x9-inch casserole dish or equivalent round baking dish. Bake for 25–35 minutes, or until the tops of the pears begin to brown just a bit. Serve warm. Drizzle raw honey or maple syrup on top for extra sweetness. Top with soaked prunes.



→ continued on page 5

SESAME COOKIES

Makes about 24 cookies

Sesame is a rainy-season crop, revered in Ayurveda as an ojas builder and often used for making sweets in the winter and for devotional festivals. Sesame is special because it contains an unusual trio of tastes: bitter, pungent, and sweet. Its naturally balanced composition of heating, cooling, and building qualities makes it a tonic for increasing strength and immunity. Note: This cookie should retain a chewy inside.

- 1 cup sesame tahini
- ¼ cup almond flour
- ⅓ cup maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ginger powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg, whisked
- 2 teaspoons sesame seeds, plus extra for decoration

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare two baking sheets by lightly greasing with ghee or coconut oil or else lining with parchment paper.

In a medium mixing bowl, mix the ingredients together in the order listed. If the batter is too runny to shape, put it in the fridge for 5–10 minutes (but batter that's a little runny bakes nicely). Shape batter into tablespoon-size balls or drop with a spoon onto the prepared cookie sheets. Leave a few inches between the balls, as they will puff up when they bake. Lightly press down on the balls with a fork. Sprinkle with extra sesame seeds.

Bake for 10–12 minutes, until the cookies are firm enough to touch without your finger sticking. Let them cool completely before removing from baking sheets and serving. □



This recipe comes from Kripalu School of Ayurveda graduate Kate O'Donnell, author of *The Everyday Ayurveda Cookbook: A Seasonal Guide to Eating and Living Well*. Congratulations, Kate, on the publication of this beautiful book!



Classical Yoga: A Manual of Liberation

In this installment of our series elucidating various aspects of yoga philosophy, we focus on Ashtanga, or classical yoga, which Swami Kripalu described as “a great tree” in whose eight branches all yogas were contained.

Understanding the historical development of yogic wisdom that brought Kripalu Yoga into the world deepens our knowledge of the tradition and informs its modern expression. In this series drawn from the writings of Yoganand Michael Carroll and Shobhan Richard Faulds, we elucidate various aspects of yoga philosophy. Here, in the third installment, we look at the classical yoga of Patanjali, drawing forth the eight-limbed process of liberation.

Historians have noted that classical yoga is a syncretic approach, meaning that the Yoga Sutras are a diverse set of ancient wisdom traditions, including theistic and nontheistic, dualist and nondualist—and a large overlap with Buddhism for good measure. Even the Greek aphorism “First, do no harm,” which is the basis for modern Western medicine, can be found at the root of this classical yoga text, as the practice of ahimsa. One might argue that this synthesis was made possible by and then designed to serve the varied audiences along the established Mediterranean-Asian trade routes. The end product, the Yoga Sutras, is portable, quantifiable, and adaptable to a variety of settings, including the modern Western yoga studio and retreat center.

Classical yoga presents a set of techniques to reverse the flow of the soul’s descent into matter and return it to a state of liberation, a systematic path to freedom, power, and elevation of consciousness. Perhaps the greatest contribution from classical yoga to Kripalu Yoga is the practice known as samyama, an approach to meditation that includes three stages of concentration, flow, and union—the basis for the three stages of Kripalu Yoga.

—**Randal Williams**, Curriculum Manager,
Kripalu Schools of Yoga and Ayurveda

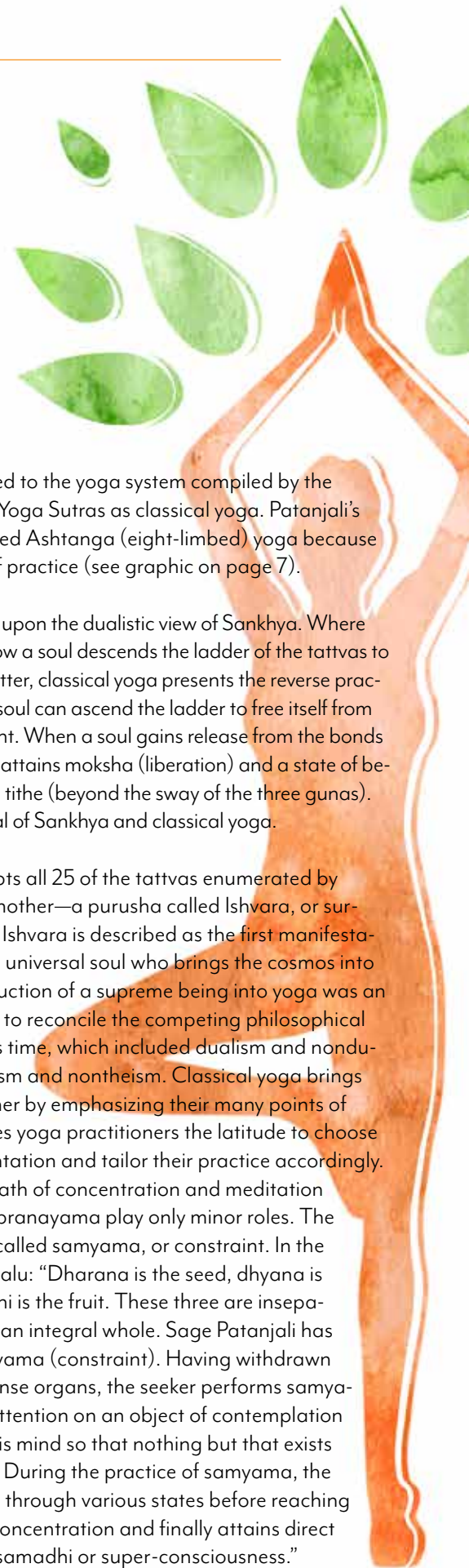
Ashtanga Yoga as defined by Maharishi Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra is a great tree. All yogas are included in its eight branches. It is this that has become known as Yoga, a unique method for the development of body and mind and the realization of Brahman.

—**Swami Kripalu**

Scholars have referred to the yoga system compiled by the sage Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras as classical yoga. Patanjali’s approach is also called Ashtanga (eight-limbed) yoga because of the eight stages of practice (see graphic on page 7).

Classical yoga builds upon the dualistic view of Sankhya. Where Sankhya describes how a soul descends the ladder of the tattvas to become bound in matter, classical yoga presents the reverse practice through which a soul can ascend the ladder to free itself from material entanglement. When a soul gains release from the bonds of prakriti (matter), it attains moksha (liberation) and a state of being known as tri guna tithe (beyond the sway of the three gunas). This is the shared goal of Sankhya and classical yoga.

Classical yoga accepts all 25 of the tattvas enumerated by Sankhya but adds another—a purusha called Ishvara, or surrender to the Divine. Ishvara is described as the first manifestation of Brahman, the universal soul who brings the cosmos into creation. This introduction of a supreme being into yoga was an attempt by Patanjali to reconcile the competing philosophical views prevalent in his time, which included dualism and nondualism, as well as theism and nontheism. Classical yoga brings these systems together by emphasizing their many points of agreement. This gives yoga practitioners the latitude to choose a philosophical orientation and tailor their practice accordingly. Classical yoga is a path of concentration and meditation in which asana and pranayama play only minor roles. The essential practice is called samyama, or constraint. In the words of Swami Kripalu: “Dharana is the seed, dhyana is the tree, and samadhi is the fruit. These three are inseparable and constitute an integral whole. Sage Patanjali has termed this trio samyama (constraint). Having withdrawn the mind from the sense organs, the seeker performs samyama by focusing his attention on an object of contemplation and concentrating his mind so that nothing but that exists in his consciousness. During the practice of samyama, the seeker’s mind passes through various states before reaching the state of perfect concentration and finally attains direct knowledge through samadhi or super-consciousness.”



Classical Yoga: A Manual of Liberation

continued from page 6

In another attempt to reconcile competing views, Patanjali presents two modes of samyama practice in his Yoga Sutras. The first mode emphasizes the liberating power of discriminating intelligence (*viveka*), which is sharpened through renunciation and nonattachment (*vairagya*) and then used to differentiate between what we truly are (*purusha*) and what we mistakenly believe ourselves to be (*prakriti*). The second mode of practice emphasizes *Ishvara-pranidhana*, or surrender.

Regardless of the mode of practice employed, its goal is to disentangle the soul from its false identification with matter and realize *kaivalya*, the ecstatic aloneness of the *purusha* freed from its bondage to matter. This occurs when the power of the yogi's *samyama* slows and ultimately stops the fluctuations of the mind. Cultivating this ability to focus, slow, and stop the mind is a critical factor in classical yoga, as it is what enables a practitioner to withdraw consciousness up the steps of the Sankhya chart until *purusha* "shines in its own glory." (Yoga Sutras 1:3)

A sophisticated psychology underlies Patanjali's yoga, which explains how the relentless activity of the mind can be tamed. The keystone of this psychology is the concept of *samskara*, subliminal activators that lie hidden in the unconscious mind. When external circumstances activate a *samskara*, it generates *vasana*, the motivating force of desire. Desire leads to *vritti*, a whirlwind of associated thought. *Vasana* and *vritti* give rise to *karma*, purposeful activity to satisfy desire, which further reinforces *samskara*.

The Yoga Sutras introduce a clear strategy to bring an end to this unconscious pattern of human motivation and behavior. All *samskaras* are seen as arising from the five *kleshas*, the afflictions that are the root cause of human suffering: *avidya* (ignorance of our true identity); *asmita* (egoism); *raga* (attraction); *dvesha* (aversion); and *abhinivisha* (clinging to life). The Yoga Sutras direct a yogi to engage in the constant practice (*abhyasa*) of *samyama* to resist desire and attenuate the activity of *samskara*. This makes it possible to meditate deeply; gain *vidya*, or self-knowledge; and uproot the *kleshas*. This process is sometimes described by Kripalu teachers as "burning the seeds of future karma."

Patanjali distills this psychology into a succinct definition of yoga: *Yogash chitta vritti nirodhaha*, or "yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind." Implicit in this definition is a belief in the power of *samyama* to surface and destroy the unconscious network of *samskaras* and *kleshas* that bind the soul to matter. Swami Kripalu considered Patanjali's practice as *chitta yoga*, meaning that it utilized the mechanism of focusing awareness to produce its results. For those choosing the practice of surrender to *Ishvara*, Patanjali recommends *japa* (recitation) of the *pranava* mantra and the sacred syllable *om*. *Ishvara* is described as being entirely free of the five *kleshas* and recognized as the first guru of the ancient sages. Considered the vibrational name of *Ishvara*, the repetition of the *pranava* mantra, along with reflection on its meaning, destroys *avidya* and leads to omniscience.

Scholars believe that Patanjali lived around 200 CE. The eight-limbed path set out in his Yoga Sutras appears earlier, in the Upanishads. Classical yoga was strictly a path for renunciate monks. Sankhya and classical yoga are taught in the Bhagavad Gita in a format suitable for householders. □

Eight Limbs of Yoga

1. Yama

Character-building restraints

2. Niyama

Character-building observances

3. Asana

Physical postures

4. Pranayama

Breath regulation as a means to align with subtle prana

5. Pratyahara

A state of introversion based on the flow of prana

6. Dharana

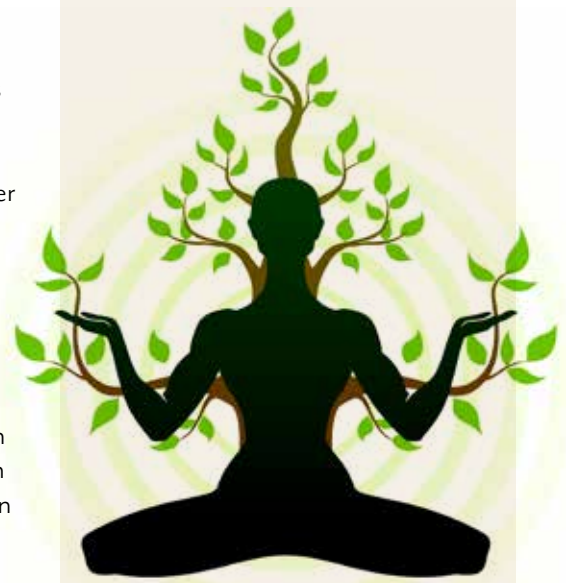
Initial stage of meditation as one-pointed concentration by a subjective observer on a chosen object

7. Dhyana

Intermediate stage of meditation as the flow state between subjective observer and a chosen object

8. Samadhi

Advanced stage of meditation wherein the subjective observer and a chosen object are meditating an experience of Oneness





Going Inward in the Season of Darkness

by Micah Mortali

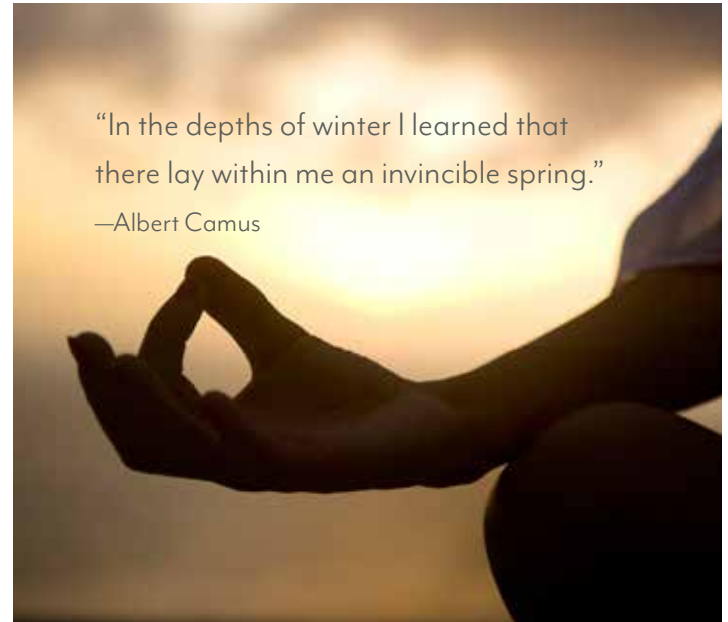
The winter solstice is the darkest, shortest day of the year. Because of this, it has served as a marker for human beings, a day when we have celebrated the turn back toward the light as the days begin to grow longer. But, for those of us living in cooler climates, December 22 is really just the beginning of the cold, dark time of year.

In fall and winter, as the leaves drop from the trees and the vital sap is drawn into the core of the earth, all living things begin a process of drawing inward and conserving resources. Yogic texts reference a similar process that occurs in the course of practice, when the senses become less externalized and attention turns inward. Patanjali called this process *pratyahara*, withdrawal of the senses.

Like a turtle drawing its limbs inside its shell, yogis pull their attention inside their bodies, minds, and hearts, and explore what dwells there. Winter is a natural time to align with this inward journey. Just as night comes after day, so does the restful time of winter follow the active time of summer, healing and reinvigorating us through darkness and sleep. Winter can be a time to reflect, write, rest, and practice. Then, in spring, when the earth softens and warms, we head out to explore the world and begin to manifest the visions of winter's dreamtime.

Obviously, we can't all stop what we're doing and hibernate all winter, but we can light candles; eat warm, soothing foods; and otherwise slow down and enjoy time spent cozy and close with ourselves and our loved ones. As yoga teachers, we can guide our students in this process by aligning our classes with the organic rhythms of the season. We can access and teach the benefits of slowing and deepening our breathing (like bears), calming our minds (like snow falling gently on the earth), and settling into the cave of our hearts (like squirrels burrowing into their nests). We can embody the principles of winter and offer these qualities to our students.

In yoga, the outward flow of attention—when we are having a conversation, watching TV, or driving a car—is referred to as *apana*. *Prana* refers to the inward flow of energy. *Apana* is usually strong when we come into a yoga class. After 45 minutes of *asana* and *pranayama*, our focus begins to shift within. Our eyes close more easily, our thoughts slow down, and we settle into the sensations of our bodies. *Prana* allows us to relax and transition into integration, *yoga nidra*, and the dream state in which we are restored.



“In the depths of winter I learned that there lay within me an invincible spring.”

—Albert Camus

Ayurveda teaches that many illnesses—whether rooted in physical, mental, or spiritual “dis-ease”—arise from a disconnection from and lack of attunement to the cycles of nature. We stay up way too late, staring at bright screens that disrupt the natural release of sleep-inducing melatonin. Winter, with its natural push to draw inward, can provide a much-needed balance to the constant activity of the mind and the outward flow of attention. If daytime and summer are the phases of *doing*, nighttime and winter represent the time for *being*.

In Norway, even though their days are shorter and their winters longer, the rates of seasonal affective disorder are **→ not significantly higher** than in the United States. **→ Recent research** suggests that the reasons for this might be cultural rather than physiological. People in Norway tend to enjoy getting cozy, drinking warm beverages, lighting fires, and being with friends and family, as well as skiing and spending time outdoors. Their culture celebrates the natural beauty of winter.

More than anything else, as teachers, we help people see the potential that each moment has to offer. We guide our students to open to the wisdom that nature has placed in and around them. When we focus on the opportunities for balancing and healing that winter brings, we shine a light in the restful darkness of the season. □

Micah Mortali is the Director of the Kripalu Schools of Yoga and Ayurveda.

Holiday Rituals from Our Faculty

We asked a few of our Kripalu Schools of Yoga and Ayurveda faculty to share their favorite rituals for the season of celebration.



➔ **CAT PACINI**, Program Coordinator, Kripalu School of Ayurveda:

I like to take some time on the winter solstice to sit in the dark, offering gratitude for the past year and stating my intentions for the next year, and then light a candle. I love sitting in the dark on this darkest day of the year, and then lighting the candle, welcoming in the return of the light, knowing that the sunlight will grow slowly, day by day.



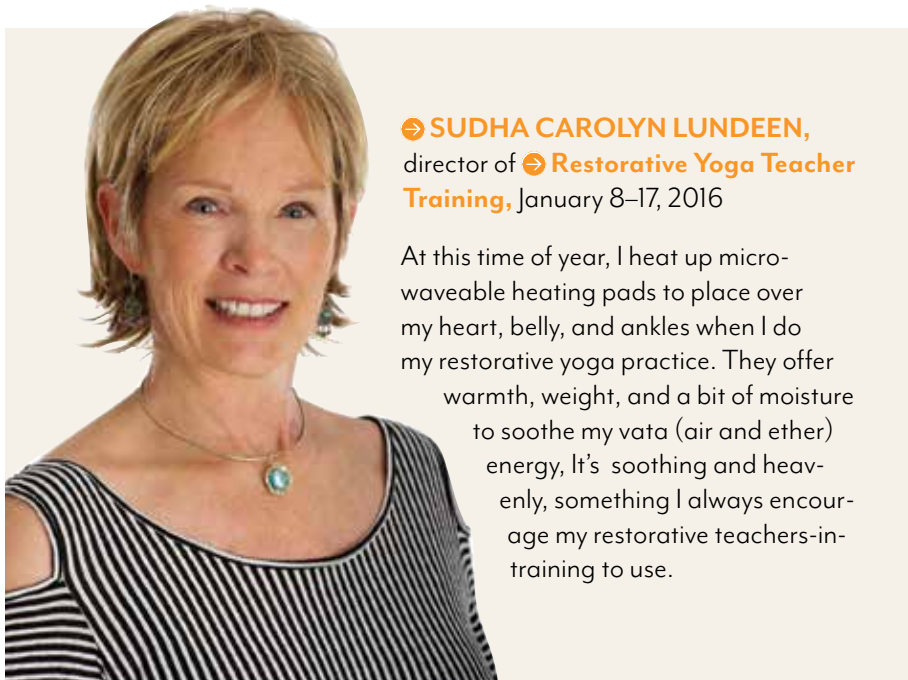
➔ **JASHODA RONA EDMUNDS**, Kripalu School of Yoga faculty:

On either New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, I do a gratitude practice, reflecting on my highlights of the year gone by, and I ask my husband to tell me one thing he's been grateful for. We do this every night reflecting on that day, but looking back and giving thanks for the entire year is particularly powerful.



➔ **TOSHIRO MIURA**, Kripalu Yoga teacher trainer at Yoga of Life in Tokyo, Japan:

On the first day of the new year, we practice 108 Sun Salutations at the studio.



➔ **SUDHA CAROLYN LUNDEEN**, director of ➔ **Restorative Yoga Teacher Training**, January 8–17, 2016

At this time of year, I heat up microwaveable heating pads to place over my heart, belly, and ankles when I do my restorative yoga practice. They offer warmth, weight, and a bit of moisture to soothe my vata (air and ether) energy. It's soothing and heavenly, something I always encourage my restorative teachers-in-training to use.

➔ **JANNA DELGADO**, Kripalu Yoga in the Schools Teacher Training faculty:

Every year, I make a special ritual of wrapping up my Christmas presents. Instead of letting it be a chore, or just another thing on the to-do list, I mindfully gather the gifts, along with beautiful wrapping paper, ribbons, and notecards, and set them all out. I light a candle, play some sweet music, and have a cup of hot tea by my side. Then, one by one, I send thoughts of love and appreciation to each friend or family member as I wrap their gift. It is a heartfelt way to reconnect with my intention for giving holiday gifts.



➔ **ERIN CASPERSON**, Academic Coordinator, Kripalu School of Ayurveda:

I relish the long nights, short days, and minimal light at the turn of the year. I find this to be a special time to dive inward. When I lived near the coast of Massachusetts, I spent many New Year's mornings jumping into the freezing-cold New England waters to remind myself of how alive I am! Since living in the Berkshires, I have been taking a 10-day silent meditation retreat at the turn of the year. There is something magical about spending the end of one year and the beginning of the next in silence. More than anything, for me, it is important to be in reverence for the darkness and the light. □

Advanced Posture Spotlight: Knot Piercing (Granthibhedhanasana)

with Yoganand Michael Carroll, Dean of the Kripalu School of Yoga

Swami Kripalu praised this asana and recommended it for pranayama practice. Any pranayama can be practiced while in this pose. You can hold just one elbow in order to free a hand for Nadi Shodhana or Alternate-Nostril Kapalabhati.

Students who are just learning to use the bandhas with pranayama might find this posture helpful, as we use the strength of the arms and shoulders to hold the waist long, which keeps the belly open. I teach students that when they hold external breath retention in this posture, the lock expands throughout the whole body as the work in the arms, shoulders, and back enhances and extends the root and stomach lock.

Name Origin

Granthi-Knot, Bhedhana-Piercing

Key Principles

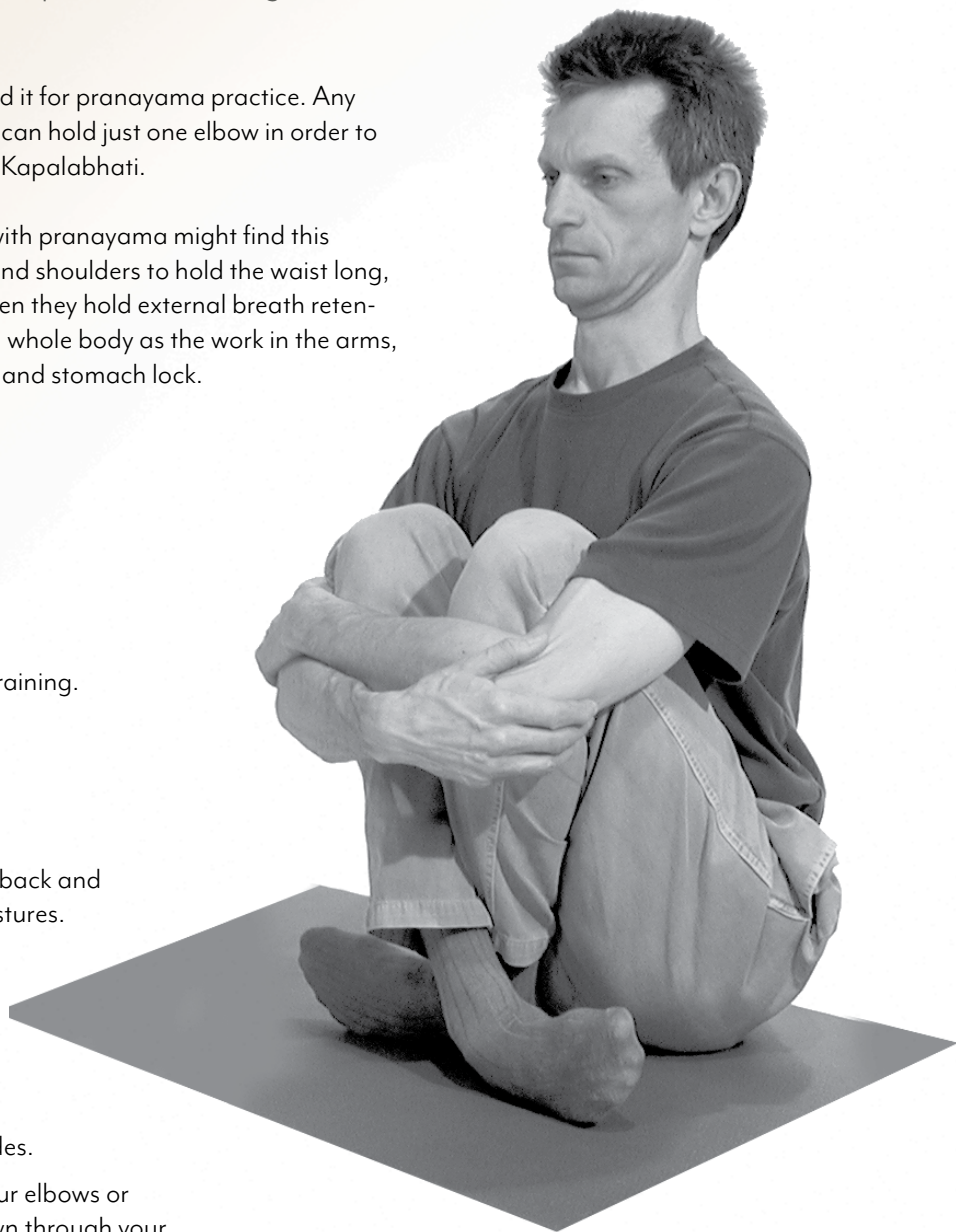
- Keep the back as straight as you can without straining.
- The shoulders are pulled back and down.

Preparation

Hip flexion and rotation are needed here, as well as back and shoulder strength. Practice Hero and Cow Head postures.

Instructions

1. Sit with your ankles crossed, right foot in front, close to your pubic bone.
2. Lift your knees and point your toes out to the sides.
3. Wrap your arms below your knees and clasp your elbows or forearms. Press up through your crown and down through your sitz bones. Pull your shoulders back and down, hugging your thighs into your abdomen. Hold and breathe.
4. To release, let go of your elbows or forearms and lower your knees to a sitting position.
5. Cross your feet the other way and repeat on the other side. □



➔ Yoganand Michael Carroll teaches
➔ Illuminating Yoga Practice with
the Wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita,
April 8–10, 2016.

Kripalu School of Yoga Advanced Teacher Trainings in 2016



300-Hour Kripalu Yoga Teacher Training

DATES	9-DAY MODULE	FACULTY
February 19–28	Guiding Meditation for Transformational Yoga Teaching: Exploring the World Within	Sudhir Jonathan Foust and Michelle Dalbec
March 4–13	Instructing Yoga for Special Populations	Sudha Carolyn Lundeen
June 3–12	Integrating Ayurveda into Yoga Teaching: Balancing the Doshas	Larissa Hall Carlson and John Douillard
July 22–31	Teaching Pranayama and Advanced Asana: Essential Practices for Yoga Teachers	Larissa Hall Carlson and Michelle Dalbec
August 12–21	Leading Vinyasa: Breathe, Feel, Flow	Coby Kozlowski
November 11–20	Guiding Meditation for Transformational Yoga Teaching: Exploring the World Within	Sudhir Jonathan Foust and Michelle Dalbec

Tuition: \$1,049 per module plus room & meals. The total cost of the training is determined by the tuition plus your choice of accommodations. Scholarships are available. Please contact a Registration Advisor at 800.741.7353 for detailed information about housing choices.

Yoga Teacher **Specialist** Training

DATES	PROGRAM	FACULTY
January 8–17	Restorative Yoga Teacher Training	Sudha Carolyn Lundeen
July 1–10	Kripalu Yoga in the Schools Teacher Training	Janna Delgado and Iona M. Smith
October 14–23	Chakras, Granthis, and Nadis: The Inner Structures of Hatha Yoga	Yoganand Michael Carroll

Tuition: \$1,049 per program, plus room & meals. The total cost of these 9-day trainings is determined by the tuition plus your choice of accommodations. Scholarships are available. Please contact a Registration Advisor at 800.741.7353 for detailed information about housing choices.



Yoga and Sleep

by Sat Bir S. Khalsa

The statistics around sleep are enough to give you nightmares. More than → 50 million Americans suffer from chronic disorders of sleep and wakefulness, and → 95 percent of these remain unidentified and undiagnosed.

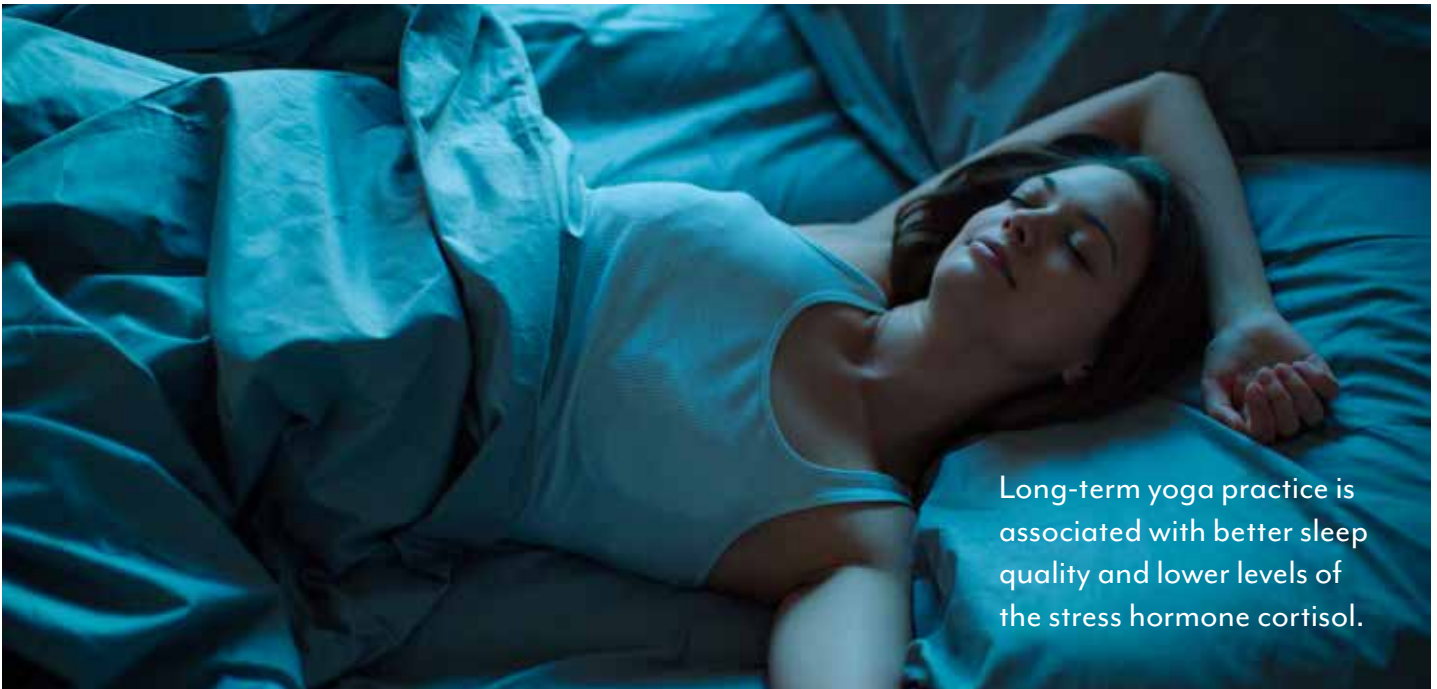
On a societal level, the results of these impairments are staggering. → One out of every six fatal traffic accidents and → one out of eight crashes requiring hospitalization are due to drowsy driving, and disasters such as Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, Challenger, Bhopal, and Exxon Valdez were officially attributed to errors in judgment induced by sleepiness or fatigue. The annual cost of insomnia-related problems might be as high as → \$100 billion, including direct and indirect costs such as consumption of medical services, increased accident risk, and lost workplace productivity. At a physiological level, sleep deprivation has multiple negative effects, including decreased → cognitive function, → immune function, → endocrine function and → appetite control.

Traditional Treatment for Sleep Disorders

There are three major categories of sleep disorders: parasomnias, insomnia, and disorders of daytime sleepiness (see

sidebar). Treatment for these disorders can take several forms. In some cases, it's possible to isolate and treat the underlying cause, such as sleep apnea (a breathing disorder that interferes with sleep), chronic pain, depression, or anxiety. Conventional medical treatments for sleep apnea include bedside devices that aid respiration; treatments for insomnia include over-the-counter medications, including antihistamines, melatonin, and valerian, or more commonly and more effectively, prescription sleeping pills. However, these are not always effective over the long term and unwanted side effects are not uncommon.

Fortunately, for insomnia, which is the most prominent sleep disorder, there are now multiple well-validated and effective behavioral treatment approaches. One of these focuses on improving sleep hygiene using common-sense strategies to aid sleep, such as avoiding caffeine, alcohol, large meals, and vigorous exercise before bed; creating regular pre-sleep routines; and reducing light and noise in bedroom. Insomniacs are often told to use their bed only for sleep and sex, not for reading, watching TV, working, or other sleep-incompatible behaviors, in order to retrain the mind-body in establishing the bedroom as a place for sleep. Cognitive therapy for sleep challenges dysfunctional



Long-term yoga practice is associated with better sleep quality and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Yoga and Sleep

continued from page 12

thinking about sleep that's common in insomniacs, replacing faulty beliefs and misperceptions with more constructive, less stressful thoughts.

Relaxation training for sleep disorders employs cognitive and/or somatic techniques to reduce tension and arousal, as it is now well-established insomniacs typically exhibit → **physiological hyperarousal** of their neuroendocrine system. These techniques include mind-body practices such as progressive muscle relaxation, biofeedback, guided imagery, meditation, and yoga.

Yoga for Insomnia

There have been → **a growing number of studies** on how insomnia is affected by mind-body interventions, such as meditation, mindfulness, cognitive behavioral therapy, and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. These types of interventions have been shown to improve insomnia, increasing both sleep efficiency (the percent of time asleep in bed at night) and total sleep time. The research on the efficacy of yoga for improving sleep looks promising as well, which is not surprising, since yoga inherently combines a number of beneficial practices, including physical postures, breathing techniques, deep relaxation, and meditation/mindfulness practice. → **A study** published in the journal *Biological Psychology* tracked subjective sleep quality and hormonal modulation in 26 long-term yoga practitioners (minimum three years of practice). The results indicated that long-term yoga practice is associated with better sleep quality and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

→ **In another study**, published in the *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*, researchers looked at sleep quality and quality of life among older practitioners (aged 60 and up). Self-reported data revealed improvements in both areas. In a prospective research → **study of 120 residents** in a home for the aged, participants were randomly allocated to three groups: a yoga group that practiced physical postures, relaxation techniques, and pranayama, and were given lectures on yoga philosophy; an Ayurveda group that was given an herbal preparation; and a control group. The groups were evaluated with self-assessment of sleep over a one-week period and again after three and six months of the respective interventions. The yoga group showed a significant decrease (average 10 minutes) in the time taken to fall asleep and an increase in the total number of hours slept (average of one hour) and in the feeling of being rested in the morning. The other groups showed no significant change. In our study of chronic insomnia at Brigham and Women's Hospital using a self-care yoga breathing intervention, research subjects have been shown to exhibit statistically significant improvements in sleep characteristics after → **an eight-week intervention**. Furthermore, our Kripalu Institute for Extraordinary Living studies of yoga in the public school setting reveal that sleep improvement is one of the common experiences that adolescents → **report after practicing yoga**. Clearly, the efficacy of yoga for sleep and insomnia warrants further study—and suggests that regular yoga practitioners can rest easy. □

→ **Sat Bir S. Khalsa, PhD**, Research Director for the Kripalu Institute for Extraordinary Living, is assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Over the past decade, he has conducted research on yoga's impact on insomnia, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic stress, and mental health in public schools.



The Three Types of Sleep Disorders

Parasomnias. A variety of odd and potentially harmful or disturbing behaviors during sleep, including night terrors, nightmares, sleep walking, sleep eating, nocturnal bruxism (grinding the teeth), hallucinations, and sleep paralysis, in which a person temporarily experiences an inability to move, speak, or react while falling asleep or awakening.

Disorders of Daytime Sleepiness (Hypersomnolence). Excessive daytime sleepiness. Underlying issues include central nervous system disorders such as narcolepsy or idiopathic hypersomnia, sleep disruption due to disorders such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome, and inadequate sleep duration due to self-imposed sleep restriction or shift work.

Insomnia. Ongoing difficulty (at least six months) in falling asleep and/or staying asleep. The most prevalent among the sleep disorders, insomnia affects → **23 percent** of Americans and is a risk factor for the development of medical illnesses and psychiatric disorders, and directly causes cognitive impairment, higher health care costs, increased accident risk, higher absenteeism, and reduced quality of life.

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