

Yoga for Everyone

by **Serenity Lopez**
Montgazette Staff Writer

When you think of someone who practices yoga, a slender girl with dreadlocks who only drinks fresh pressed juices may come to mind. Or perhaps a bunch of housewives in a 100-degree room all pristinely in "tree pose."

Most of us wouldn't dream of attempting a handstand, or twisting our torso into painful positions just for the sake of good exercise. Yoga comes with many benefits and almost all of us have utilized parts of a yoga practice into our lives already having not realized it. When we get stressed out we are taught to take three deep breaths in order to calm

ourselves. This breathing exercise is part of a yoga practice.

There are over ten types of yoga practices, two popular ones include Bikram and Hatha. According to "Women's Health Magazine," Bikram yoga is a form of "hot yoga." It is performed in a room that is over 80 to 100 degrees in temperature and there are a series of about 26 yoga poses that are done. Hatha yoga, on the other hand, is described as a type of yoga that helps to prepare the body for other types of yoga. The teaching there is mostly how to properly balance and align the body.

There are many benefits to yoga that don't include impressing your friends by

being able to balance on your head. The American Osteopathic Association lists the benefits of a consistent yoga practice include increased flexibility, increased muscle strength, improved respiration and energy, maintenance of metabolism, weight reduction, cardio and circulatory health, protection from injury and managing or relieving stress.

Some people want all the benefits of yoga but are wary to give yoga a try because they don't have the money for classes or are embarrassed to be in a room full of people who are experienced. The great thing about yoga is that you can take on a self-taught practice, with the rise of personal blogs and YouTube

videos.

Sara Pousesny, a former student at Montgomery County Community College explains how her self-taught practice has benefited her. "What I liked most about teaching myself yoga was that I could go my own pace and I could focus on certain parts of my body for as long as I wanted. I didn't feel like I had to rush into the next pose like I did in a class." She went on to describe how teaching herself yoga boosted her self-confidence.

Montgomery County Community College students today need not look far for a chance to learn yoga. Our school offers Hatha yoga as part of physical education. The course syllabus describes

the class as an Introduction to Hatha Yoga, including postures, breathing exercises, influences, meditation, poses, mental discipline, terminology, precepts and practices.

Yoga is a very personal experience. It is about you getting to know your body and how to utilize it to its best performance. Yoga is not about impressing others with flexibility or losing weight; it is being one with your body and understanding it.



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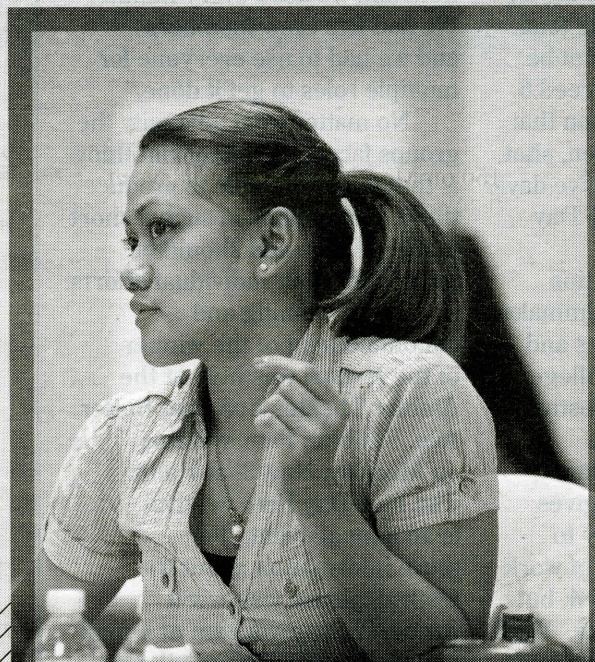
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