

THE UAE'S TOP INSTRUCTORS ON WHY YOGA IS THE WAY TO GO

THE INSIDE STORY

Why bother with yoga? Here's why. Tips, praise, stories and pictures shared with us by some of the UAE's best and most loved teachers.

Sasha Quince
Teaches Core Strength Vinyasa Yoga, Prenatal Yoga, Kids Yoga across Abu Dhabi (www.letsyogoyoga.com)



"Before yoga I literally was living in a bubble, completely self-absorbed. I am now fully connected, more present. It has offered me peace of mind, patience, the ability to self-nourish, release control of things that really don't matter in the long run.

Top tip? You don't have to practise an hour to get yoga's benefits. Yoga is the breath first and foremost, never compromise that to get into a pose.

In fact, yoga is anytime you breathe and are conscious of it. Yoga is a few postures just nourishing the body, depending on what you need that day. Yoga is how you respond to others. Yoga is how you judge and self-critic yourself. Yoga is a constant journey and one where you learn and grow along the way."

Caroline Leon (right)

Teaches Vinyasa Flow and Yin Yoga and Pilates through her wellness company A Life of Energy (www.alifeofenergy.com)

"Yoga has changed the way my body feels; it's strong and flexible, but most importantly I feel connected to it.

"Through yoga I've learned to respect my body, with the food I put into it and the thoughts and actions I allow into my life. If I eat badly my body doesn't work as well. By elevating the quality of food you put in, you're elevating all aspects of how you function. On the mat itself, this lesson is just as powerful - there have been many times where I have not respected my body, and as a result injured it."

Kimberley Stokes

Teaches Urban Yoga, Vinyasa & Yin Yoga in Dubai (www.urbanyoga.ae)



"I've done a lot of things, moved a lot of places and generally lived a high pace, mobile life. Yoga is the one thing that doesn't change. No matter where I am, I can do yoga. It's the one grounding constant in my life. Change is fun, but a few constants - my yoga and my husband - help keep me sane during the chaos!

"You don't have to be a hippie or a vegetarian to have 'the yoga mindset'; I think the best yoga mindset is to just be yourself. Being yourself can be really hard sometimes, especially in corporate environments and even social environments. So try to take off all the masks you



Connecting to her body: Caroline Leon.

wear and just be yourself.

"You don't need tools to start either; you just start... and know that the tolls will be developed over time. Just have fun learning."

Angela Müller-Habig

Full-time instructor at Abu Dhabi's Bodytree Studio (bodytree-studio.com)



"Yoga keeps me centred knowing that while I cannot influence what happens outside, I can always determine how I react to it, take a breath and stay out of attachment."

How can one practise yoga in their everyday lives? "Just practise awareness; awareness of yourself, your reactions, your patterns. Give; find your peace; forgive yourself; breathe some more."

Noura El-Imam

Teaches Yogalates in Dubai, as well as organises regular retreats and teacher trainings via www.yogalatesblissindubai.com



"The greatest lesson I've learned through yoga is patience; slowing down and really taking the time to

give back to yourself some "love". I also learned to breathe - our breath is usually short and tight from driving, running errands, work, stress... to naturally take long inhales and exhales has a profound effect on the nervous system.

A simple tip for keeping yoga practice consistent? "I love Gaiam TV so you can take your practice on the road (when travelling); also useful for when you've missed your yoga class and would like to roll out your mat at 12am at home. There should be no excuses, and the online option is wonderful."

Debra Kochanczyk

Private freelance teacher and co-founder of Abu Dhabi's internationally accredited yoga teacher training school OmAge Yoga (www.omageyoga.com).



"When I embarked on my yoga journey I had no idea how much my life would change. I learned to look for the positive, removed stress from my life, developed a positive attitude, cultivated an attitude of gratitude, became more patient... not to mention my stamina, strength and flexibility improved. A total body improvement!

"Yoga is not just a physical

practice, it's a way of life, and one that teaches us that what we have is enough.

"In our everyday lives, we can practise yoga simply by taking a moment or two before we react to a person, a place or a situation that may be upsetting us. Be responsive, not reactive."

Liz Terry
Founder of Satya Flow Yoga (satyaflowyoga.com), teaches Vinyasa Flow, Foundations and Yin Yoga at Zen Yoga (yoga.ae)



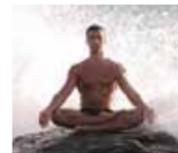
"The new yogi needs nothing but the courage and willingness to step into discomfort (both physically and emotionally), to face yourself as you are, and let go of who you think you should be. In this way, yoga forced me to face reality and take responsibility for myself and my actions; still a work in progress, but it's been a very empowering journey.

"Yoga is a journey rather than a mind-set. To me, a journey involves new experiences, unlearning, learning, and unlearning again, and it also means that at every twist and turn there's something new to learn about ourselves. A mind-set, to me, is more rigid, that somehow yoga means we must live a certain

way or be a certain way in order to practice. This negates the point of the yoga practice to begin with."

Walid Tebarki

Teaches Ashtanga and Vinyasa Yoga with a special workout for inversions at Dubai's The Hundred Wellness Center (thehundred.ae)



"Yoga and meditation regulate and balance the energy of the body and mind. Practising regularly helps to better face and handle any of life's stresses.

"Being surrounded by man-made machines (mobile phones, microwaves, A/C etc.) creates an imbalance in the human biofield that leads to inflammatory conditions, fever, toxic accumulation, tumours, depression etc., and practising Yoga is necessary to stay healthy. Whatever makes us feel better is whatever we will end up doing more often, so get curious about yoga and meditation, healing through yoga etc... With awareness comes the motivation to carry on, and Yoga is awareness."

Salina Bakaou

Teaches Acroyoga, Vinyasa Flow, Yin and Kids Yoga outdoors (mostly in Abu Dhabi)



"I do think that people spend far too much time "having to...", "needing to...", "being expected to..." so I believe that when you get on the mat, take the opportunity to just "be"; to be free of judgment, especially your own. "You are about to go on a wonderful journey into the unknown. Come with an open mind and willingness to explore."

Cheryl Parsons

Teaches Vinyasa and Hatha Flow at Zen Yoga (www.thepeaceilly.com)



"We see Instagram and Facebook accounts of incredible yoga bodies and it can leave us feeling deflated and inadequate. But, that's where the real yoga comes in - it is a constant practice of letting go of judgement, criticism and comparison, and it teaches us to accept and work with our limitations, as well as embrace our strengths.

"As a busy mum (with baby number two on the way), I don't always have time to do a big physical practice, but I've come to accept that every day my yoga can be different - one day it might be just five minutes of quiet time, breathing - the next my yoga might take the form of being fully present with my daughter, watching her laugh and play.

"I love Jean Couch's quote: "Doing anything with attention to how you feel is doing yoga."