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# YOGA <sup>TM</sup>

MAGAZINE

[www.yogamagazine.com](http://www.yogamagazine.com)

ISSUE 278/JULY 2026

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*Yoga for*  
**ARTHRITIS**

**Chris Nelson**  
**ASHIYANA** &

**5 PRACTICES TO**  
*Embrace Summer*

**7 NUTRITION STRATEGIES**

*The Science of*  
**WELLNESS**

**SECRETS OF LONGEVITY**



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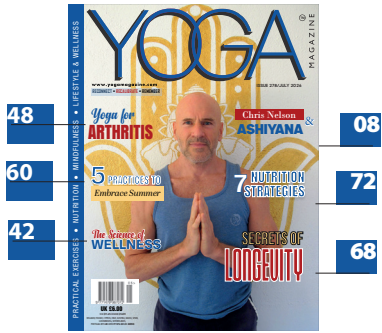
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# CONTENTS

ON THE COVER



## On the cover

Chris Nelson

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Photo: Nick Rice



08

## FEATURE

### 08 ASHIYANA

*A heartfelt exploration of Ashiyana's global retreat community, where healing, belonging, and personal transformation flourish through connection.*

### 16 BEYOND THE MAT: YOGA, ADDICTION AND THE PATH TO WHOLENESS

*A personal exploration of yoga's transformative role in healing trauma, addiction, emotional suffering, and restoring spiritual connection.*

### 22 FINDING YOUR WAY BACK TO BALANCE: A HEALTH EXPERT'S GUIDE TO BURNOUT

*A practical guide explaining burnout, cortisol imbalance, and evidence-based strategies to restore energy, resilience, and wellbeing.*



## PHILOSOPHY

### 36 TECHNOLOGY AND ANCIENT WISDOM: THE ORIGINAL CYBERSPACE

*A fascinating exploration of parallels between modern technology, ancient wisdom, consciousness, energy systems, and humanity's spiritual evolution.*

### 42 YOUR BODY KNOWS: THE SCIENCE OF INTEROCEPTION IN MIND-BODY PRACTICE

*Explores the science of interoception and how yoga, breathwork, and mindful movement strengthen emotional regulation and wellbeing.*

## HEALTH & WELL BEING

### 68 LONGEVITY (EXTRACT FROM THE A-Z OF LONGEVITY)

*Practical insights into optimism, balance, and social connection reveal simple ways to support healthy ageing and longevity.*

### 72 THE SEVEN NUTRITION HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE WOMEN

*Practical nutrition strategies help women build energy, resilience, hormonal balance, and sustainable lifelong health through everyday habits.*

## PRACTICE

### 48 YOGA FOR ARTHRITIS

*Explores arthritis from a yogic and Ayurvedic perspective, linking joint pain to emotional congestion and offering holistic remedies.*

### 52 SMALL PRACTICES THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE: 5 WAYS TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELLBEING

*Five simple, practical habits inspired by yoga philosophy to strengthen resilience, emotional balance, and everyday mental wellbeing.*





60

**BWY SPECIAL**

**60 OPEN TO ABUNDANCE: FIVE PRACTICES TO EMBRACE SUMMER**

*Five uplifting yoga-inspired practices encourage gratitude, mindfulness, connection with nature, and joyful appreciation of summer's abundance.*

**READER'S ASHRAM**

**78 ASK YOGI MAHARAJ DR MALIK**

**96 VEDIC ASTROLOGY**

**WHAT'S HOT**

**90 NEW BOOKS, ACCESSORIES AND PRODUCTS**

**NEWS**

**66 TAKE PART IN YOGA FOR HOPE**

*More than 20 international yoga teachers unite at Castle Ashby for a community celebration supporting vulnerable children in Kolkata.*



66

**SERIES**

**28 BUILT IN GRATITUDE: HOW DESIKACHAR CREATED A HOME FOR HEALING (PART 7)**

*The inspiring story of how gratitude, service, and vision led to the creation of the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram.*

**56 ARIEL'S ADVENTURES IN THE CHINE: THE GIRL IN BLUE AND THE SPIRITS OF THE BAY (CHAPTER 7)**

*Ariel enters a magical realm, begins faerie training, and embarks on trials that will shape her destiny.*

**84 THE KUNDALINI: MEMOIRS OF A YOGI – CHAPTER 43: THE DEVI OF DELHI**

*Mystical encounters, ancient mantras, and spiritual transformation unfold as a mysterious Devi arrives at Yoga Bhavan.*



28



78



48

# Open to Abundance

—••—  
FIVE PRACTICES  
to EMBRACE  
SUMMER ✿

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Author: Hana Saotome, Yoga Mentor  
and BWY Yoga Teacher Trainer

Photos: Cecilia Cristolovean

Summer comes for everyone. And I mean everyone. It does not matter if you have had the best year of your life or the hardest. Whether you feel on top of the world or like you're barely keeping up. Summer arrives anyway, unconditionally.

I was reminded of this recently by my little boy. The pure, simple joy of late evenings at the playground, paddling pools in the garden, picking dandelions and wild berries to churn into muddy and wonderful concoctions. Just as nature bursts into full bloom without a care in the world, my little boy lives it, completely, with his whole being.

Watching him, I noticed my own habit of waiting. Waiting until things feel more 'in order', more as they should be, before I allow myself to feel like I am living fully and freely.

Each season has something to teach us. Summer teaches us that joy is here now, within us, whatever our circumstances. As the Chandogya Upanishad tells us: "There is a light that shines

*beyond all things on Earth. This is the light that shines in your own heart."*

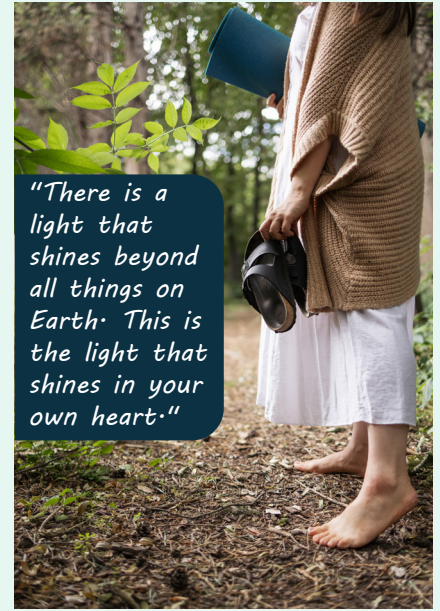
The summer solstice, on 21 June, is the longest day of the year, when the sun reaches its peak. For thousands of years, people have paused at this turning point to gather, reflect and give thanks. When the sun stands still, we are invited to do the same: to pause, to notice how much is already in bloom and to open to the abundance around and within us. There is so much to be joyful about, if only we stop long enough to notice.

Yoga reminds us that joy is not something we have to earn or chase. It is already here, woven into the present moment. Our work is to pay attention.

These are my go-to yoga practices for connecting with the season and embracing all that is here right now.

## 1 A Summer Ritual

Choose a morning or an evening when you have time to yourself. Go for a



walk. It doesn't need to be anywhere special: your local park, a quiet street, wherever you can find a little nature. As you walk, look around you, notice what you are drawn to and gently gather a few things that appeal to you. A wildflower. A stone that catches your eye. A feather, a leaf, whatever calls to you.

When you come home, create a small altar somewhere you will see it every day. Arrange what you gathered alongside a candle, some seasonal fruit, a photograph or a note from a summer you loved – something that holds a happy memory. There are no rules, just let it feel like you.

Then sit quietly in front of your altar with a notebook and write a list of everything that is abundant in your life right now. These can be as little or as big as you like: the beautiful trees in your street, the friends and family around you, the food in your fridge, the body that carried you through this year. Anything that we can feel grateful for is a form of abundance. Keep writing until you begin to surprise yourself, because you will!

This is your summer ritual. A moment to gather, to see, and to say, 'all this is here, now'.



## 2 The Lotus Flower Breath

In yoga, the lotus is one of the most familiar symbols. It grows in muddy water, rising slowly towards the surface until it blooms into something extraordinary, completely untouched by the mud it came from. For me, it's real beauty is its daily rhythm. Every evening, as the sun goes down, the lotus closes its petals and draws everything inward. Every morning, it opens again, fully, without hesitation. Opening when it is time, closing to replenish – both are part of the same wholeness.

This practice is an invitation to feel that same rhythm in yourself.

- Come to a comfortable seated position. Close your eyes and let your body settle. Begin to breathe a little more deeply with a fuller inhale and a long, slow exhale. Find your own rhythm.
- When you are ready, on your next inhale, sweep both arms wide out to the sides and up above your head- see photo 2. As the arms reach the top, bring your thumbs and little fingers together so your hands form an open bloom, like a lotus opening to the sun. As you exhale, slowly draw your hands back down to your heart, fingertips closing gently into a soft bud- see photo 3. Not flat like a prayer, but soft and cupped, as if you are holding something luminous inside.



- With each inhale, as you reach your arms wide, imagine gathering something that feels abundant in your life (a moment, a person, even something material). With each exhale, draw it home to the heart, quietly giving thanks. Repeat for 4-6 rounds.
- Once complete, take a moment to rest with your eyes closed and the palms facing upwards on your thighs. Feel open to receive the light and abundance this season brings.

## 3 A Walking Meditation in Nature

This practice is best done barefoot on grass or any soft, natural surface. But if you are short on time, you can also do

it with your shoes on, even on the walk to work.

- Find a place to pause and stand still for a moment. Close your eyes and feel the soles of your feet on the earth. Where is your weight resting more strongly? Is it in the toes, heels or more to one side? Simply notice, without trying to change anything.
- Open your eyes and begin to walk slowly and mindfully. Feel the contact of the ground with each step. Let your breath settle into its own natural rhythm. Then open your senses. What can you hear? What can you smell? What do you feel on your skin? What can you really see if you take the time to look?

- When you are ready, come back to stillness. Close your eyes again and feel your feet on the ground. Notice what has shifted.



## 4 A Yoga Nidra of Nature's Sounds

The word 'Nidra' means sleep, so this is a practice of yogic sleep. Usually, Yoga Nidra is done with a teacher or recording guiding you. Here, we use the natural sounds of nature as your guide instead.



- Find somewhere comfortable to lie down outside – your garden, a park, anywhere you can feel the ground beneath you and the sky above. Close your eyes and let the body settle completely.
- Begin by becoming aware of the sounds furthest away from you the distant hum of the world. Then gradually draw your awareness closer: sounds nearer to you, then right around you, the rustle of leaves, birdsong nearby. Closer still, until you arrive at the sound of your own breath at the tip of your nose.
- Rest here, with your breath amongst all of nature's sounds. You are not separate from the sounds around you; you are part of them. Follow your breath for 6-8 rounds. If you drift off, that is perfectly fine. It is, after all, yogic sleep.
- When you are ready to return, simply let the sounds guide you

gently back. To finish, allow your awareness to expand outwards again, breathe a little more deeply and take your time coming back to a seated position.

## 5 Take Your Yoga Practice Outdoors

There is something that happens when you take your practice outside that simply cannot be replicated on an indoor mat. The ground beneath you feels alive. The air moves. The light changes. And suddenly, the practice feels less like something you are doing and more like something you are part of.

Find a patch of grass – your garden, a local park, anywhere you can roll out your mat or simply stand barefoot on the earth. It doesn't need to be a full class or a perfectly planned sequence. Even five minutes of breathing, stretching and feeling the sun on your face is

enough. Let the sounds around you be part of the practice, rather than a distraction.

If you would like a little guidance, outdoor yoga classes in parks are more available than ever this summer. There is nothing quite like practising in community under an open sky. I run my own outdoor classes in Finsbury Park in London and it is one of my favourite things to do. If you are in London, come and join us. If not, look for something local.

Summer comes for everyone. And that includes you, exactly as you are, right now, with everything that is still unfinished, uncertain or not quite as you hoped. You do not have to be ready for it. You do not have to have earned it. It is already here.

Like the lotus, you have your own rhythm of opening and closing, and both are equally right. Summer is

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simply an invitation to pause at the peak of the light, look around at what has grown, and let yourself receive it. The joy and abundance of this life is not somewhere ahead of us. They are here now.



## Celebrate Summer Solstice

BWY invites you to experience its Summer Solstice special, a curated collection of five expert-led sessions (each 75 minutes) from UK-leading yoga and Ayurveda practitioners. Discover a rich blend of practices including qigong, vinyasa flow, myofascial release, sensory chair yoga, and Ayurvedic dietary tips to help you align with the season. Purchase the recording here:

[https://portal.bwy.org.uk/user/events/1111?utm\\_source=yoga-magazine&utm\\_medium=print&utm\\_campaign=summer-solstice](https://portal.bwy.org.uk/user/events/1111?utm_source=yoga-magazine&utm_medium=print&utm_campaign=summer-solstice)

**Hana Saotome** is a British Wheel of Yoga Diploma Course Tutor and teacher trainer based in London with eighteen years of full-time teaching experience. Her teaching is rooted in the belief that yoga is for everybody, exactly as they are. She runs an online women's membership, seasonal day retreats, a Yoga Teacher Mentorship programme and the BWY 300-Hour Level 4 Yoga Teacher Training.

Her next Yoga Teacher Training begins on **18 July 2026**, in person in London and online via Zoom.

Find out more:  
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