

YOGATM MAGAZINE

www.yogamagazine.com

REFLECT ■ RESTORE ■ REBALANCE

ISSUE 280 / SEPTEMBER 2026

JOSEFIN STRID
HANDSTANDS
&
PREGNANCY

RAQUEL ORTIZ
TANTRA AS
A PORTAL

THE YOGA
CORRECTION

AGEING
Well with **Yoga**

Yoga & the
NEW HUMAN



UK £6.00

LGIUM, FRANCE, CYPRUS, ITALY, AUSTRIA, MALTA, SPAIN,
LUXEMBOURG, NETHERLANDS,
PORTUGAL €11.00 JAPAN ¥1572.00 UAE AED58

The Science of Meditation

CONTENTS

ON THE COVER

08

20



56

70

28

64

PHILOSOPHY

20 THE YOGA CORRECTION: HOW MODERN PRACTICE DRIFTED FROM ITS ROOTS — AND HOW TO FIND THE WAY BACK

Has modern yoga lost its way? Return to breath, awareness, classical principles and yoga's transformative roots in this thoughtful correction.

28 YOGA, ANGELS AND THE NEW HUMAN

Explore how yoga, consciousness, self-love and ancient wisdom can help us navigate uncertainty, transformation and the emergence of the New Human.

64 THE SCIENCE OF STILLNESS: WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BRAIN DURING MEDITATION?

Discover how meditation may reshape the brain, strengthen focus, ease stress and support emotional resilience, healthy ageing and everyday wellbeing.

60 THE ART THAT REFUSES TO BE SOLD

Contemplation offers a playful, sensual alternative to commercialised mindfulness, inviting us to pause, awaken our senses and rediscover wonder.

20



12



FEATURES

12 THE NERVOUS SYSTEM RESET: YOGA AND NUTRITION FOR STRESS, CORTISOL AND BURNOUT

Discover how yoga, nutrition and somatic practices can calm chronic stress, balance cortisol, restore energy and help your nervous system recover.

70 AGEING WELL IS A YOGA PRACTICE ON AND OFF THE MAT

Discover how yoga and Ayurveda can transform ageing into a journey of nourishment, vitality, awareness and graceful, purposeful living.

50 ANCIENT PRACTICES FOR HORMONAL BALANCE AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Explore Ayurvedic nutrition, yoga, breathing and massage practices designed to support hormonal balance, strength and reproductive wellbeing through midlife.

24 YOU ARE STILL ALLOWED TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Caring for ageing parents can quietly consume your life. A powerful reminder that self-care is not selfish—it enables sustainable, loving care.

76 UNDERNEATH THE CALM: WHAT YOGA MAY BE DOING TO THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Explore the science behind yoga's calming effects, from interoception and vagal activity to GABA—and discover what current research really tells us.

50



UTTHAN ASAN

*Build lower body
strength and
pelvic stability.*

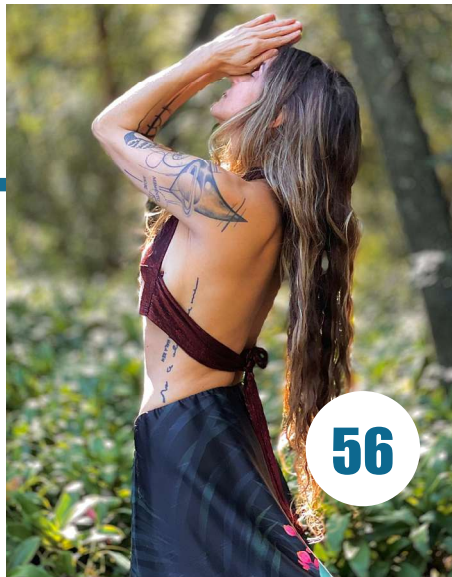
Dhruva
Foundation

#Mindfulandwell



70





BWY SPECIAL

34 YOGA BEYOND THE MYTHS: YOGA IS FOR EVERYBODY AND EVERY BODY

Forget the myths: yoga isn't about flexibility, perfect poses or a particular body—it's about awareness, connection and belonging.

INTERVIEW

56 RAQUEL ORTIZ: WHERE TANTRA BECOMES A PORTAL

Raquel Ortiz explores Shamanic Tantra as a portal to embodied transformation, ancestral wisdom, sacred sexuality and deeper connection with life.

08 UPSIDE DOWN, STRONGER THAN EVER: JOSEFIN STRID ON HANDSTANDS, PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD

Josefin Strid shares how pregnancy transformed rather than diminished her handstand practice, teaching her strength, adaptation, trust and presence.



SERIES

40 THE HEART OF YOGA (PART 9)

Discover how TKV Desikachar's lifelong study of the Yogasūtra-s shaped his teaching, scholarship and enduring contribution to authentic Yoga.

84 THE KUNDALINI MEMOIRS OF A YOGI (CHAPTER 45): THE SILENCE BENEATH THE 79TH PASSAGEWAY

As sacred visitors arrive at Yoga Bhavan, Muni discovers that true understanding lies beyond thought, within the profound silence.

46 ARIEL'S ADVENTURES IN THE CHINESE GIRL IN BLUE AND THE SPIRITS OF THE BAY (CHAPTER 9): TRIALSA

Ariel faces magical trials testing courage, perception and harmony, unlocking ancient knowledge as she moves closer to the golden Key.



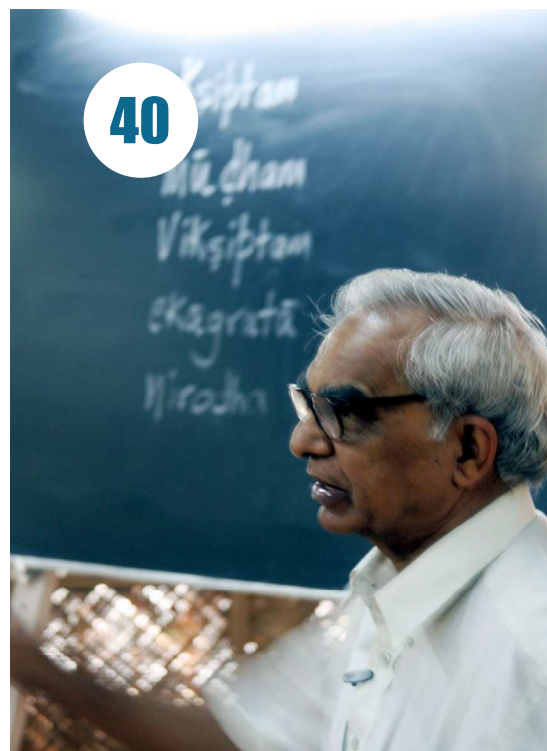
READER'S ASHRAM

80 ASK YOGI MAHARAJ DR MALIK

94 VEDIC ASTROLOGY

WHAT'S HOT

89 NEW BOOKS, ACCESSORIES AND PRODUCTS



LEARN, CONNECT AND THRIVE WITH BWY

BWY

60 YEARS
AT
THE
HEART
OF YOGA

- 🌸 Be part of a supportive community
- 🌸 Enjoy local and online yoga events
- 🌸 Member discounts
- 🌸 Learn more and develop your practice
- 🌸 Progress your teaching career through CPD, specialist courses and further training
- 🌸 All from less than £4 per month

bwy.org.uk

YOGA BEYOND THE MYTHS

Yoga is for Everybody
and Every Body



Author: Sunnah Rose, British Wheel of Yoga Course Tutor

Photos: Sunnah Rose – www.stretchingpeople.co.uk

For many people, yoga can feel simultaneously inviting and intimidating.

On one hand, yoga is often presented as a pathway to greater wellbeing, reduced stress, improved mobility, and a deeper connection with oneself. On the other hand, the images most commonly associated with yoga frequently tell a very different story: perfectly toned bodies balancing effortlessly in advanced arm balances, practitioners folded into seemingly impossible backbends, and social media feeds filled with aesthetically flawless postures.

These beliefs are based on misconceptions rather than reality. The truth is that yoga is far more adaptable, accessible, and inclusive than popular culture often suggests. At its best, yoga is a practice that meets people where they are, not where they think they should be.

By challenging some of the most common myths surrounding yoga asana, we can help create a culture in which more people feel welcome to explore the benefits of practice without feeling they must first change themselves.

**MYTH
1**

Yoga Is All About Flexibility

I am sure other yoga teachers would agree that if you tell anyone you are a yoga teacher, the first thing they say is: 'I can't do yoga because I can't touch my toes!'

It's odd as we don't expect to be experts when we begin any sport or hobby – whether it's learning to swim, taking up gardening or trying a new recipe. Yet with yoga, there's a persistent belief that you need to be flexible before you begin, rather than understanding that flexibility is one of the things that develop along the way.

The truth is, yoga is much more than how far you can stretch. While flexibility may improve with practice, the deeper rewards lie in improved mental and physical health and wellbeing: calmer breathing, greater body awareness, sharper focus, enhanced balance, or reduced stress – which are less obvious from the outside.

Yoga postures develop a wide range of physical and mental qualities – strength, stability, coordination, mobility, concentration and resilience. You'll learn how to regulate your breath, move with greater awareness, and cultivate a healthier, more supportive relationship with your body.

Interestingly, some highly flexible people face challenges that are rarely discussed. Without adequate strength and stability, excessive flexibility can increase the risk of strain or injury. For

these practitioners, yoga becomes less about improving range of motion than building support and control.

We have to remember that every body is unique. The shape of your hips, the length of your thighs, your spinal structure and shoulder anatomy – all these natural variations can significantly influence how a pose feels and looks. What is comfortable and accessible for one person may be completely inappropriate for another.

The ability to approach practice with curiosity, patience, and awareness is ultimately far more valuable than the ability to touch your toes.

Let's look at two classic poses where, in my experience, students often feel they're 'failing' if they can't achieve what they imagine is the 'full' version.



Downward Dog: Does it matter if your heels touch the floor?

Whether or not your heels reach the floor in Downward Dog comes down to a few things: the flexibility of your hamstrings and shoulders, and simply the unique shape of your body. We're all built differently, so it doesn't make sense to expect every body to look the same in a pose.

- 1** In a traditional Downward Dog from all fours, my heels stay lifted – but I still enjoy a lovely stretch along the back of my legs.



- 2** If I walk my feet a little closer to my body, my heels can reach the floor, but this impacts my shoulders.



- 3** If I walk my feet further back, I can get more lift from my hands to my hips.



So, which one is 'correct'? Or are they all simply variations of the same pose? If it's the latter, then what makes a pose a yoga pose? Or is it about your experience in the moment – your connection to your breath, your ability to stay present, to release tension, to find a little more space?

I'll give you a hint: it's the latter.

Standing Forward Fold: How far should you go?

Uttanasana – or Standing Forward Fold – is another pose that varies greatly from person to person, depending largely on the flexibility of your hamstrings and back muscles.

Here are three ways I might approach it:

- 1** With a gentle bend in my knees, my spine stays neutral, my back feels supported, and my hands can reach the floor.



- 2** If I straighten my legs fully, my lower back rounds into flexion. Yes, my hands can still touch the floor – partly because I'm flexible, but also because I have a longer torso than legs.



- 3** But does this make my version more 'real' than if I simply held opposite elbows, or even folded only to a 90-degree angle at the hips?



The answer, of course, is no. What matters is how the pose feels for your body, not how it looks from the outside.

MYTH 2

You Need the "Right" Body to Practise Yoga

One of the most damaging myths about yoga is the belief that there is such a thing as a "yoga body."

I can truly relate to this as someone with a curvier figure and shorter limbs. But here's the truth: Everybody is a yoga body. Yoga is a practice for everybody and EVERY body.

For decades, mainstream media and advertising have often portrayed yoga practitioners as young, slim, athletic, able-bodied, conventionally attractive and able to perform impressive, flexible postures. The trouble is, if you don't see yourself represented in those images, it's easy to feel that yoga isn't for you and that you don't belong in the room.

The reality is quite different. People of every age, shape, size, gender

identity, ethnicity, and physical ability can practise yoga. Around the world, yoga is being adapted for older adults, children, people living with chronic pain or disabilities, cancer survivors, athletes, office workers, and countless others.

A more inclusive yoga culture begins with a simple but powerful recognition: every body is already a yoga body.

MYTH 3

Deeper, 'Perfect' Poses Equal Mastery

Social media has reinforced the idea that yoga mastery can be measured through photographs. But as we've already explored, there's no such thing as a perfect pose. Images may capture moments of physical achievement, but they reveal very little about what is actually happening beneath the surface. A photograph cannot

show whether someone is breathing comfortably. It cannot reveal whether a posture feels stable or strained. It cannot capture self-awareness, compassion, concentration, or mindfulness.

Yet these are the very qualities that lie at the heart of yoga.

Two people may appear identical in a posture while having completely different experiences. One may be struggling, forcing, and holding tension. The other may be calm, balanced, and fully present. How a pose looks from the outside tells us very little about the quality of the practice. Mastery in yoga is not about creating picture-perfect shapes. It is about developing a deeper understanding of yourself, and this is reflected in how you respond to challenge, how you relate to discomfort, and how you cultivate awareness both on and off the mat.

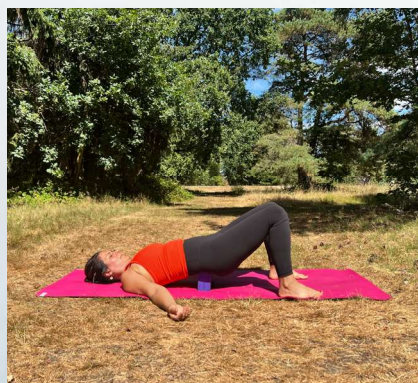
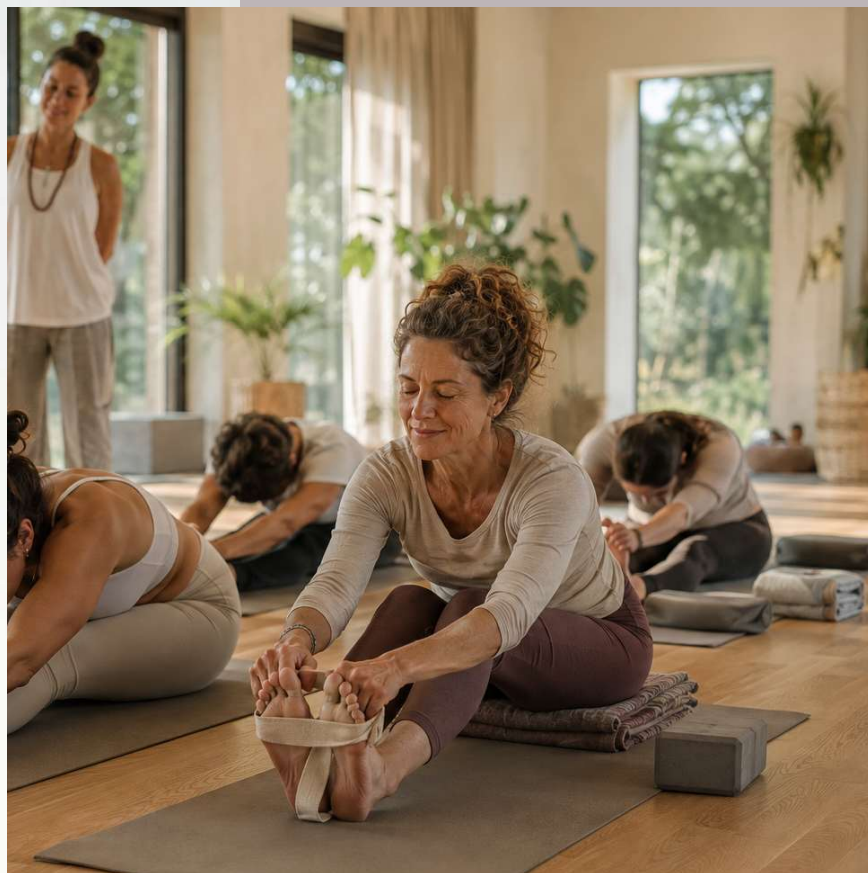


In the words of T.K.V. Desikachar:
"However beautifully we carry out an asana, however flexible our body may be, if we do not achieve the integration of body, breath, and mind we can hardly call it yoga. What is yoga after all? It is something that we experience inside, deep within our being."

Making Yoga More Inclusive

Something that we focus on a lot in British Wheel of Yoga Teacher Trainings is how to make yoga more inclusive. Inclusive yoga is not simply about inviting more people into existing spaces. It is about creating environments in which people genuinely feel welcome.

This may involve using accessible language, offering multiple variations of poses, incorporating props without stigma, representing diverse bodies in marketing materials, and recognising that practitioners arrive with different experiences and needs.



We also need to remember that not every student wants to achieve advanced postures. Some may simply want to feel their body move a little, to feel better after a long day at the desk, to build strength and mobility so they can get down to the floor without help – or perhaps they just need some time out from the demands of everyday life.

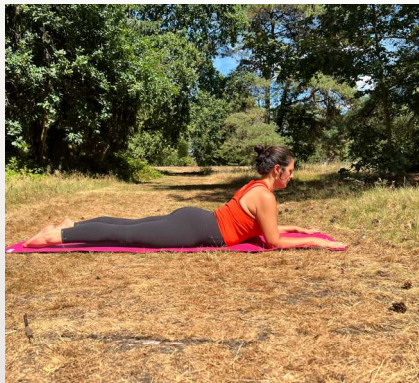
Conclusion

The myths surrounding yoga postures can be powerful barriers to participation. They can make people feel excluded before they've even begun and encourage practitioners to judge themselves against unrealistic standards.

Yet yoga has always been capable of being far more inclusive than these myths suggest – and perhaps that's one reason why it has stood the test of time.

Yoga is not only for the flexible. It is not only for the young, slim, or athletic. It is not reserved for those who can perform advanced postures, and it is certainly not defined by the pursuit of perfection.

At its heart, yoga is a practice of awareness, exploration, and connection. It invites us to meet ourselves honestly, work with the bodies we have, and cultivate greater understanding through experience. When we move beyond external appearances and embrace a broader vision of what yoga can be, we create space for more people to participate, benefit, and belong.



facebook.com/official.yogamag

Sunnah Rose is a BWY Teacher, Foundation Course Tutor and Diploma Course Tutor.

She teaches weekly yoga, pregnancy yoga, postnatal yoga and private classes in and around North London and runs a yearly BWY Foundation Course and BWY Teacher Training Certificate in High Barnet.

She also runs Yoga Weekends and Yoga Holidays in the UK and abroad.

For more information on Sunnah, her classes, training or retreats please visit:

www.stretchingpeople.co.uk or [@stretchingpeopleyoga](https://www.instagram.com/stretchingpeopleyoga)

