



Happy New Year!

Happy New Year! Hopefully you all enjoyed the last few days of 2019, and have started off 2020 with lots of joy and gratitude. Most of all though, we hope it's all been with a gentle outlook on things, as we all know how the new year can bring up all of those feelings of needing to achieve and accomplish things. However you celebrated, or even if you didn't, a new year brings a new chapter on this path, on this adventure of life. Heck, each day and each moment adds new chapters and new pages into this book we're all collectively writing. On the topic of paths, we wanted to look back to our previous topics of the past month or so on the different types/ paths of yoga. We talked about Bhakti Yoga (devotion), Karma Yoga (action), Jnana Yoga (knowledge), and Raja Yoga (mind and meditation). However, one that must not be forgotten, because it so accurately brings us to the state of yoga today, is Hatha Yoga. And that, my friends, is what we'll be discussing today. Perhaps it's even fitting for the start of the year to inspire you, but you can be the judge of that!

Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga today is most often associated with physical yoga classes that are much gentler, slower, and easier. It's interesting how this has come to be, since the word Hatha actually means forceful or willful. Hatha Yoga, in the traditional sense, is actually the use of various postures (asanas) as well as breath work (pranayama), to achieve a sense of balance, align the body and mind, and improve the flow of energy, in order to more effectively come into a state of meditation. We can also translate "ha" as sun, and "tha" as moon, which, in essence, balances the more dynamic, masculine, and active side of our nature, with the more restorative, passive, and feminine side as we move through the practice. While some Hatha Yoga these days can be quite demanding, most classes in the West are slower and gentler. When we think about the traditional style of Hatha Yoga, however, and the way it is practiced in India for example, it is quite demanding. We practice various poses and breathing practices, to achieve a complete state of wellbeing, so that we can go into deeper states of contemplation and meditation. It's important to know, though, that Hatha Yoga is the root of all physical yoga practices. All the various physical types and styles of yoga we know today stem from this traditional form of yoga. Hatha Yoga, the yoga of the physical body.



Which Yoga Do I Choose?

There are so many different types of physical yoga. We have Vinyasa/ Flow, Ashtanga, Iyengar, Yin, Forrest yoga, Vini, Restorative, Prenatal, Kundalini, Bikram, Hot, Jivamukti, Power, Sivananda, Hatha, and so many more. And it seems like each day someone is inventing their own set of yoga postures and sequences. Yoga is changing every day and sometimes it's hard to keep up. Sometimes it even feels a little overwhelming because



there are so many different ways to practice. What we have found is that it's important to take a step back and look at things from a slightly different perspective. If you're interested in learning or going a little bit deeper into the physical practice of yoga, and are not sure where to begin, ask yourself what it is that your body and your mind crave right now? As we begin this new year, set a moment to think about the kind of energy you want to cultivate. What do you need right now? Perhaps getting onto your mat will help you achieve this. What's wonderful, in our opinion, is that because there are so many different types and traditions and lineages in yoga, there is truly something for everyone. There is something that we all can, in one way or another, take up. So whether you're interested in beginning your own yoga practice, or want to deepen it, or even if you just want to try something different, here are a few questions you may want to ask yourself before going to your next yoga class.

Do I want to start with the basics, to learn various poses as well as breath work?

- Try Hatha.

Do I want something more dynamic and physically demanding?

- Try Ashtanga (a set of fixed postures), Vinyasa/ Flow (flowing sequences from posture to posture linked with breath), or Power Yoga (core).

Do I want to sweat?

- Try Bikram, or Hot Yoga.

Do I want a classical style of Yoga?

- Try Sivananda or Hatha.

Do I want a passive/ more meditative practice that increases range of motion and flexibility in my connective tissues (i.e., joints, ligaments, fascia)?

- Try Yin Yoga.

Do I want deep rest and relaxation?

- Try Restorative (gentle, calming poses held upwards of 20 minutes).

Do I want to make full use of props during my practice (i.e., blocks, blankets, wall, chair, etc.)?

- Try Iyengar.

The list is endless, but each has something to offer, and we truly believe that this practice is, and can be accessible to all, no matter our differences or similarities. Yoga is not a religion, but more a way of showing up in this world. And one way we do that is through our physical bodies. Though we discussed the various paths of yoga in previous newsletters, yoga as a physical practice it seems is most popular today. In next week's letter, we'll dive deeper into how this has come to be and more! Stay tuned. 😊

EndorphinGirl® News

If you didn't get a chance yet, check out EndorphinSon™ Erik's article in the blog on Kombucha. Perhaps you're already a bucha drinker, or you're interested in learning more before you decide to try this fermented bubbly. This **“State of Kombucha”** article will tell you all about this drink that seems to be gaining popularity by the minute! EndorphinGirl® Barbara recently completed her Reiki II training and is now offering Reiki sessions. Contact her for details and pricing at endorphingirls@gmail.com if you are interested in an intro to Reiki and/or a private in-person healing session. She is also offering donation-based distant Reiki Healing; reach out to the same email for details if interested in receiving distant healing.



EGFam Updates

A quick EGFam update! EndorphinGirl® Barbara is easing into 2020, including her 21-day Reiki self-practice. EndorphinDaughter™ Mia is enjoying the 'slightly' lighter days up in Lapland as the sun is slowly starting to make its way back up again. Polar Night has officially ended! Whew! EndorphinSon™ Erik is enjoying his last few weeks of winter break before he hunkers down for his final semester of college in the sunny state of Arizona. These EGKids are sure living in totally opposite climates!

Stay tuned for more adventures with EndorphinGirl®!