

# THE YOGA PROMISE



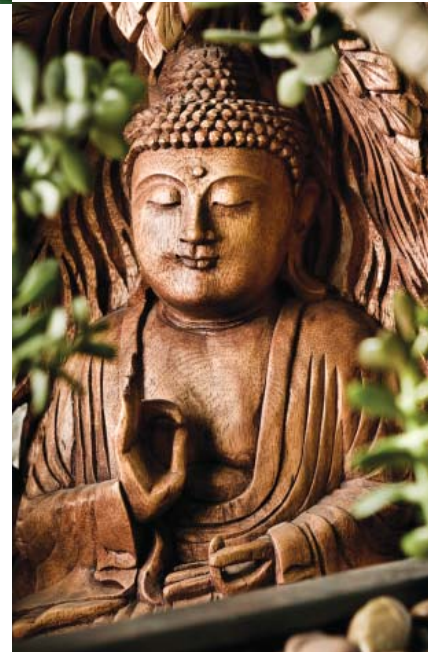
PUT YOUR MIND AND  
BODY INTO MOTION,  
AND BEGIN YOUR  
JOURNEY INTO HEALTH  
AND ENLIGHTENMENT.  
IT STARTS WITH  
THE CHALLENGE ON  
YOUR MAT.

BY CANDICE MUTSCHLER

While many people think of yoga in terms of physical fitness, it actually began some 5,000 years ago as an intensive spiritual practice designed to surpass limitations of the mind and free the soul from the material world. The ancient ritual evolved from a mostly spiritual practice to one that incorporated exercises meant to unlock the human body's potential. The body was, after all, considered the temple of one's immortal soul.

Since the 19th century—when yoga was introduced in the West—it has proliferated, crossing cultural and language boundaries, enticing more than 30 million devotees to practice on a regular basis. It is one of the fastest growing health movements today.

Correlating with this trend is the number of travelers who wish to continue their practice while on holiday. Mindful of this desire, leading luxury destinations such as Naples Grande Beach Resort and Edgewa-



ter Beach Hotel have added yoga to their recreational amenities.

For yoga's devotees, the path usually begins with a desire for a supple body. While conventional weight training and cardio programs meet that particular need, yoga's fans get something more. The notion of a more-unified approach to well-being—one that challenges both body and spirit—is what keeps them coming back.

“When we do yoga, we begin to have a better understanding of how our bodies and minds work together. We learn how to find peace of mind through movement, even when we are not in class,” says Lisa Moualem, yoga instructor at Naples Grande.

As one masters the mechanics of yoga—the postures, the breathing—clarity follows. The body is transformed from pain or stiffness into an instrument of power, strong from its very core. Each muscle is used in strength and balance. Metabolic





fires ignite. Stores of energy long dormant become available. The body is liberated, the spirit is awakened.

If it sounds strenuous or intimidating, relax. “Yoga is fabulous for just about anyone,” Mouallem insists. “It is great for the average man or woman looking to find peace in their busy schedule, those looking to lose a few pounds, children, pregnant women, and people with [health] issues.”

Learning proper breathing, or *pranayama*, may be the most powerful aspect of yoga. From the yogic point of view, proper breathing brings oxygen to the blood and the brain, ultimately affecting one’s energy. And that can be done anytime, anywhere, Mouallem says. “Yoga can be done stand-

ing up, sitting down, or even in a chair.”

From that starting point, there are numerous styles of yoga based on the same physical postures, or *asanas*, but with a particular emphasis. *Hatha* (gentle), *Vinyasa* (breath-synchronized movements), *Ashtanga* (fast-paced power yoga), *Iyengar* (body alignment, props), *Kundalini* (awakens energy at the base of the spine) and *Bikram* (a.k.a. “hot yoga,” involving a heated room) are some of the more widely practiced styles. New methods are emerging as yogis expand on existing styles by incorporating meditation, chanting or spiritual teachings.

The benefits of yoga are well documented and address such health concerns as high blood pressure, joint pain, lower back pain,



## GET UP! GET BUSY! GET ACTIVE!

- **YOGA:** Golden Door offers classes for guests and members at Naples Grande Beach Resort and Edgewater Beach Hotel. Personal and group sessions are available by appointment. Physically limited guests can be guided through beneficial sessions that focus on breathing and meditation.
- **OTHER CLASSES:** Include core strengthening (Pilates), power circuit training and Beach Boot Camp programs. Certified staff members can help you choose a class that best supports your health and fitness goals.
- **FITNESS CENTERS:** For those who prefer an equipment-based workout, Naples Grande and Edgewater Beach offer pleasant, modern facilities that provide opportunities to relieve stress, overcome travel fatigue and build a better body. Both feature LifeFitness machines; Naples Grande has steam and sauna facilities. Guests have reciprocal privileges at either property.

**For more information about exercise classes or fitness centers, contact the spa concierge at (239) 594-6321.**



cardiac and lung care, arthritis, insomnia and more. The poses also encourage the body to absorb more oxygen into the blood stream, which is said to detoxify the system. “Many common physical ailments can be improved through the regular practice of yoga, and it is never too late or too early in life to take it up,” Mouallem says.

Indeed, anyone with an appetite for growth, personal discovery and improved health can benefit from a healing yoga practice. Mouallem explains with a simple analogy: “When all the parts of a car work properly and in harmony with one another, the car runs smoothly,” she says. “Our bodies are similar in the sense that when we integrate our parts mentally, emotionally and

physically, we are working at our prime.”

Newcomers to yoga quickly learn that, unlike some sports or fitness programs, yoga isn’t about competition or comparison. In fact, it’s impossible to watch your neighbor when in pose because all your attention is on form and breathing.

Beyond the physical, yoga is said to help alleviate depression, promote a renewed sense of purpose, and even inspire someone to make positive changes in other areas of life. By mastering the postures and learning to breathe, participants gain health and confidence and lose pain and anxiety—sending participants down the ultimate path to mental, spiritual, emotional and physical fitness.

**YOGA IS GAINING MORE AND MORE PRACTITIONERS LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE EXERCISE PROGRAM AS WELL AS A SENSE OF PEACE FROM LIFE’S FAST PACE. GOLDEN DOOR SPA FEATURES YOGA, BY APPOINTMENT, AMONG ITS MANY HEALTH AND WELLNESS OFFERINGS.**