

PRACTICAL EXERCISES • NUTRITION • MINDFULNESS • LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS

YOGATM MAGAZINE

www.yogamagazine.com

ISSUE 246 / OCTOBER 2023

AWAKEN YOUR POTENTIAL

SPIRITUAL LESSONS *from*
OSHO

Yoga
FOR CANCER RECOVERY

गुण पिंड
MOON GAZING

THE POWER OF
YOGA &
Mantras

YOGA *for*
DOWN SYNDROME

ENROOTMENT METHOD



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Model: **Fiona McDonald**
 Active Wear: **Unity Crop Top £29** worn with **Enduro Leggings £55** in Verdant Print from **BAM Bamboo Clothing**
 Photographer: **Luke Halliley**

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08 YOGA FOR DOWN SYNDROME

Discusses the characteristics and benefits of practicing yoga for individuals with Down Syndrome; emphasises the importance of adaptability, mindfulness, and enjoyable physical activities in yoga classes designed for this community; and provides a set of Halloween-themed yoga poses.

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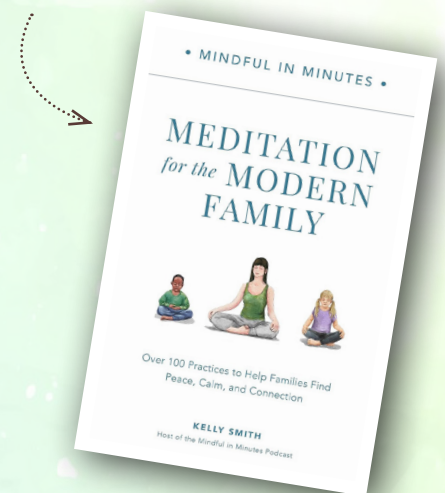
66 CREATIVE, HEALER & MUSICIAN DINO VIDOVICH

Multi-talented creative, healer, and musician, discusses the intersection of mindfulness, spirituality, and creative practices, emphasising the importance of meditation, yoga, and embracing one's spiritual path to enhance creativity and personal growth.

BWY SPECIAL

50 HARNESSING THE POWER OF YOGA FOR CANCER RECOVERY

Focusing particularly on breast cancer, Kari offers five specific yoga techniques that include joint-freeing, wind-relieving, rolling cat-cow and Warrior 1 poses and a seated meditation designed to promote healing, self-compassion, and mindfulness during the recovery process.



BWY SPECIAL FEATURE

HARNESSING THE POWER OF YOGA FOR CANCER RECOVERY

*In Honour of Breast Cancer Awareness month,
KARI KNIGHT,
BWY Teacher Trainer and 'Specialist Yoga for
Cancer' Tutor explores five techniques for healing.*

On waking this morning did it occur to you to smile into your cell community or to acknowledge its power and connectivity? Whether you are a survivor of cancer or know of one, honouring the way our cell community goes about its business is something worth paying attention to.

There is within you a cell community which is constantly communicating and coordinating itself like an orchestra of cells playing out a daily sonata. Keeping our cell community positive and well-maintained will ensure that we can fight disease with the help of our immune system. In the case of cancer, we need a healthy cell community to encourage the removal of rogue cells which may turn cancerous. On the day that the sonata is disrupted by a discordant note, aka a rogue player who has turned its back on its fellow players and switched off

its communication with the immune system, we can turn to yoga to retune and reconnect.

There are many positives to gentle stretching: new nutrition available to the cells, increased elongation of the wonderful stuff called fascia or connective tissue which houses our cell community, increased range of motion, reduced stiffness and risk of injury to name a few. Added to this commendation is another important benefit through a recent clinical study by [YOCAS](#), or Yoga for Cancer Survivors. This breakthrough study on the effects of gentle yogic stretching on cancer survivors has come up with one big positive, “yoga significantly reduces inflammation among cancer survivors”.

In 2018 there was a study on [mice](#), their tails gently lifted whilst the front paws grasped a bar while holding the stretch for ten minutes. Sounds pretty cruel, but this remarkable experiment found a link between stretching and

reduced tumour growth. Now this new YOCAS study shows reduced inflammatory markers in those undergoing gentle stretching using yoga. The work conducted by the American Society of Clinical Oncology for YOCAS is an impressive clinical study, but yoga teachers have long held the belief that gentle stretching for all has tremendous health benefits and that includes those with cancer – or other life-challenging illnesses for that matter.

The approach to working with cancer needs to be therapeutic. The stretching advocated here has certain qualities: gentleness, involves the breath, mindful attention to the sensations of the body and involving attitudes of self-compassion (particularly to that one rogue cell – it’s just a cell after all trying to survive). This approach sounds a bit like mindful movement, you can call it that if you wish. When we stretch and breathe into that awkward space something



can change. Yogic stretching done sensitively with the breath and with increased awareness (a skill which is learned from a training of attention over months not weeks with a good teacher), is key to this approach. There is no fancy name for it or gimmicky drop phrase. It's just to go slow and notice more and if you're beginning to move areas after surgery following a cancer diagnosis, working this way may avoid the problems of inflammation noted by YOCAS as an indicator of increased inclination to secondary cancers or return of cancers. Whatever restriction is felt in the connective tissue post-treatments or other interventions during a cancer journey, it is important to keep active. Yoga, under the guidance of a respected teacher, perhaps one that holds specialist training from a recognised and respected teaching school in the UK, will mean a therapeutic delivery which is safe.

In the case of breast cancer, any stretching around the area of the shoulder girdle is highly beneficial. The key is to encourage individuals to explore discomfort without being forceful, as small movements can bring change in the connective tissue. That's why it's important to be guided by a yoga instructor trained in working with cancer patients. A normal class might not suit and sometimes creates problems of too much weight bearing which can, in some cases, trigger lymphoedema or swelling, a risk that can persist long after recovery.

The big C is really C for Change. How can we change unhelpful habits that may make us more vulnerable to cancers? How can we develop an immune system that is working well enough to spot and kill the cancerous cells? Can we change our thinking, our lifestyles, our choices? Yoga helps us to look inside ourselves and make these changes because it is a transformational therapy and much more than an exercise regime.





3

ROLLING CAT-COW

Rolling cat-cow gently encourages weight bearing in the arms and is great for breast cancer recovery.

Start on all fours with sloped arms and hands positioned in front of the shoulder joints. Move the weight forward towards the hands and let the spine feel gently supported by the abdominal muscles as you take a slight backbend avoiding lifting up the head. Now let your cat-to-cow roll so there is a seamless transition and you come towards weight bearing in the arms and move away, rounding the spine into cat and letting the pelvis move backwards in space on the exhale. Rest by taking the buttocks towards the heels in swan pose and support the forehead if it is off the mat and breathe into the spaces of the upper arms, armpits and upper shoulders.



2

APANASANA (WIND-RELIEVING POSE)

The pose works to release tension in the gut – an extensive network helping us to digest food and emotions. The pose also helps to release tension across the pelvis, hips and lower back which are often tight areas of holding on.

First lay in a supine pose and feel into the pelvis, hips and lower back. Take the right leg and fold it gently into your chest and let the other leg be soft and supportive in the bent-leg position. You can combine this movement with the exhale to massage into the abdominal area. Now swing the leg outwards as if you were swimming the leg in breaststroke and do this a few times before repeating the other side. When you've finished both sides, hover both knees over the chest with legs bent, lifting the legs from this position up to the ceiling and then slowly allowing them to fold towards the chest. Now shimmy the pelvis side to side to release the lower back – an area prone to discomfort due to a number of factors when undergoing treatments or surgery.



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4

VIRABHADRASANA 1 (WARRIOR 1)

Take your feet hip-width apart. Walk forward with the right leg, and bend the knee over the ankle joint while anchoring through the back leg and heel. As you walk forward push the hands forward with open fingers (as if you were resisting a wall). Walk back with the front foot while making fists and draw the arms back, elbows tucked in. Repeat 5-7 times before moving to the other side.

These small repetitive movements promote the movement of lymph through the subsidiary lymphatic channels in the buttocks and the sub-scapular channels in the shoulder region. Useful if you have had sentinel lymph nodes removed.

5 SEATED MEDITATION

Try a form of gratitude meditation by bringing your awareness to your cell community and giving thanks for what it does.

Take a chair or come into a seated position where you feel most supported and the spine is relaxed but gently alert. If you need to be lying on a floor or mat that is fine. If seated, a block or a bolster is useful to elevate the pelvis. Find the breath and settle the mind into the breath observing the rhythm and pace of your breathing. Allow it to come as it wishes and let go of any judgement of your breath. Call on the power of self-compassion and make an intention for your practice – what do you need? What attitude will you bring? Now widen your awareness of the breath as if it is breathing through the whole body.

Contemplate your cell community and dwell on the life force of your breath, nourishing the cell community, helping it coordinate its efforts to keep you healthy. Imagine the cells co-operating and coordinating their effort. Smile into this cell community and continue to contemplate this beautiful community in your body. Judgements about your cancer or your cells may come up and allow them space, be present with them simply observing without a sense of wanting to control them. If you feel unsettled, come back to the sensations of your breath for a while until you feel settled and then return to the meditation. Perhaps there is part of you that needs help from your cell community. Dwell there in this place in your body where there are difficult feelings/sensations and emotions or perhaps an area where your cancer is still present. Breathe into this area and let your cells know that you need their help, soothing into this space.



Kari Knight trained with BWY (British Wheel of Yoga) under Margaret Woodley, a Viniyoga teacher and her teaching style is greatly influenced by the breath-centred practices of the Viniyoga tradition and the Vanda Scaravelli approach. Additional training in the therapeutic application of mindfulness and self-

compassion has enhanced Kari's interest in yoga as practical philosophy for transformation. As well as being a BWY Teacher Trainer, she teaches the British Wheel of Yoga's module 'Working Therapeutically with Cancer', teaches cancer support online in the community, and runs yoga and sound-healing retreats in Sweden. Her next course will be online and open to teachers and cancer survivors in 2024. Visit www.bwy.org.uk/training/. Kari is also co-teaching the workshop, Reconnection and a Call for Intimacy, in March 2024 alongside cancer survivor and movement therapist, Kat Hesse.

www.kariknightyoga.co.uk