

# Welkin Words

**Namaste,**

I hope that you are all keeping well this summer! As usual, I am having no trouble filling my days. I continue to teach private lessons and yoga in various health clubs in Brantford. There have been a few exciting additions to my schedule! This fall I begin teaching at the Rotary Centre in Lyons Park. I recently began working with Grand Experiences in Paris, Ontario (442-3654). I will be dropping in on canoe expeditions to stretch and relax those fatigued adventurers. Visit [http://www.grand-experiences.com/womens\\_packages.html](http://www.grand-experiences.com/womens_packages.html). I will also lead weekend Yoga/Canoe Retreats on select weekends through October. I feel blessed by this opportunity to commune in Mother Nature's glory, sleep under the stars, paddle the gentle waters, and practice yoga in clean air!

More exciting news is that I finally rented office space. As many of you know, I graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Counselling Psychology last April. I studied the many healing benefits of yoga in relation to abuse and post-traumatic stress, which is my area of expertise. I am now applying all those years of study and experience to my private psychotherapy practice. What may be of interest to you all is that I also practice both Yoga Therapy and Reiki out of that space. Please contact me if you want further information on any of those services.

May you find many fun and creative ways to incorporate your yoga practice into your summer activities!

Thank-you all for your on-going support and commitment to your yoga!

All the best,  
Erin

*My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.  
- The Dalai Lama*

Yoga is nondenominational. As a spiritual practice, it teaches us to appreciate the Beauty of all life. For those who worship, yoga can bring us closer to our Higher Power, no matter the religion.

## History of Yoga

Yoga is an ancient spiritual discipline that arose in India millennia ago. There is evidence of yogic practices and teachings dating back as far as 5000 years. More structured writing and

concrete history dates back to around 2500-500BC, the same time as Hinduism arose. Yoga is closely related to Hinduism and Buddhism, though it is an individual spiritual path, not a religion. Religions are organized around stringent belief systems and worship of a Higher Power, while yoga is a scientific system of personal growth, health, and self-realization. One need not practice any worship to reap the benefits of yoga. It is a spiritual path that teaches us how to unite with and remain connected to our true selves.

The main branches of yoga are: *Bhakti*, *Jnana*, *Tantra*, *Karma*, *Hatha*, *Raja* and the newly added *EcoYoga*. These branches sprout from the same roots, where restraint of the mind and contact with our true nature are the ultimate experience of yoga. *Bhakti* yoga is the path of love and devotion to a Higher Power, recommended for those emotional in nature. Practitioners connect with their Higher Power through acts of worship such as chanting, meditating in prayer, and making small offerings of nature and beauty. Hopefully, they also connect with their own true selves on this path. *Jnana* yoga is perfect for the intellectual, as it is a philosophical approach: the yoga of wisdom. Those who choose this discerning path seek enlightenment through discrimination against and dispassion for the illusory material world. *Tantra* yoga is a highly spiritual path with a range of beliefs. It involves deep meditations and visualizations to connect with the life force energy (*prana*) and true spiritual self within. *Karma* yoga is an active practice as work, deeds, and service are offered as a form of worship. *Hatha* yoga is a psychophysical practice whose traditional methods of mental control over the body can be quite extreme. It is what is most widely recognized as “yoga” in the West. *Raja* yoga is the scientific path to enlightenment, focussing on meditation. It is based on Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*. *Raja* yoga is also known as *Astanga* (eight-limbed) yoga because it presents eight steps to enlightenment. In *EcoYoga*, practice involves devotion to the Earth and awareness that what we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves. Each of these branches of yoga, when followed devoutly, will lead to self-realization simply because we are focussing our thoughts, actions, and intentions in a pure and loving way.

## Summer Session

There are not many changes to the yoga schedule at this time. My classes in local fitness centres continue as usual. I am still available for private/semi-private lessons. Watch for big news in the autumn!! This fall I intend to add several new classes to my schedule, occurring at Welkin Yoga Studio, 44 Oxford Street. I will also be offering sessions focussing on many areas of interest for those students interested in deepening their practice or understanding of yoga. I will also resume monthly afternoon workshops at that time. Some students have expressed interest in a retreat at the beginning of November. Please let me know if you are interested.

## Featured Asana



*Sarvasana* (Corpse Pose)

If you only have one spare minute in a day for your practice, do this supine relaxation pose. This posture allows us to completely relax the body so that we may leave it behind as we connect to higher places. Conscious relaxation is the most important part of yoga practice. Lie on your back, or with bent knees if you have lower back trouble. Bring ankles wider than hip width and allow the toes to fall out to the sides. Turn the palms up and let arms rest at a thirty-degree angle from the torso. Take the time to relax body from toes to head, one part at a time. Each time the mind wanders, bring it back to the flow of breath. Go inside, notice what is happening, and bring peace into mind, body, and spirit.

## **Recommended Reading**

*The Yoga Tradition*, Georg Feuerstein

*Light on Yoga*, BKS Iyengar

*Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramhansa Yogananda

*The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Sri Swami Satchidananda (trans.)

*The Upanishads*, Eknath Easwaran (trans.)

*The Bhagavad Gita*, Eknath Easwaran (trans.)

## **Recipe**

### **Berry Soup**

This dish makes a wonderful appetizer on warm summer nights. It is also a great snack when you are hungry but don't want to fill up before yoga class.

1 pint of your favourite berries

1 tub (170g) Pete's Peach Mango Dessert Tofu

250mL pineapple or orange juice (President's Choice now makes organic OJ at a competitive price!!)

Honey, to taste

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Garnish with sliced or pureed fruit and a sprig of mint.

My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world.

-- Gandhi

Be kind to yourself and one another.

Namaste.