

# WELKIN WORDS

**Namaste,**

How is everyone?

This is an exciting spring season for me. Not only have I been able to prune my schedule so that it includes only those pursuits that bring the most fulfillment, but I have had the opportunity to add some fun new yoga programmes.

Beginning May 25, The Fitness Centre is offering **Yoga for Girls** and **Yoga for Moms and Children**. These classes are offered Wednesdays at 11am and 2pm respectively. Non-members are welcome and people can join for a pro-rated fee mid-session. If you ever watch children move, you will notice that they spontaneously assume yoga poses. Our bodies crave these movements and children are naturally attuned to that. I am deeply looking forward to the opportunity to give these young yoginis a solid foundation for a lifetime of practice.

As mentioned previously, our annual **Yoga Retreat** has been booked. The theme of the retreat continues to morph as more participants voice their hopes for content. "Life's Purpose and Passion" seems to be evolving into "Fulfillment". Space is very limited and I am beginning to advertise to the general public now so if you are thinking of attending, please contact me for details.

Peace,  
Erin

You can understand and relate to most people better if you look at them -- no matter how old or impressive they may be -- as if they are children. For most of us never really grow up or mature all that much -- we simply grow taller. O, to be sure, we laugh less and play less and wear uncomfortable disguises like adults, but beneath the costume is the child we always are, whose needs are simple, whose daily life is still best described by fairy tales.

~Leo Rosten

## Recipe – Potato and Zucchini Casserole

We enjoyed this during a meal at the first yoga retreat. The recipe is in the book from which I practice yoga, *Yoga: Mind and Body*, published by the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre.

30 mL sunflower seeds  
2 mL tamari  
700g potatoes, peeled and diced  
3 large zucchini, scrubbed and sliced  
1 can organic lentils  
45 mL organic soy milk  
15 mL fresh basil  
Salt and pepper to taste  
75g jalapeno soy cheese (available at the Farmer's Market in Jackson Square)  
2 mL paprika

Preheat oven to 350'.

Toast sunflower seeds for 5 minutes, then toss with tamari.

Boil potatoes until soft. Drain well and mash with milk, salt, and pepper.

Lightly steam zucchini. Place in oiled baking dish and top with lentils, sunflower seeds, and basil.

Spoon mashed potatoes on top. Sprinkle with cheese and paprika.

**Anyone who practices can obtain success in yoga but not one who is lazy. Constant practice alone is the secret of success.**

*Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

**The average child laughs 250 times per day; the average adult laughs five.**

### Laughter is the Best Medicine

We've heard that before. Sure, it feels great to chuckle; it is the sound of happiness, joy unleashed. The vibration of laughter frees the delight that already lives in the heart, allowing us to connect with a flow of authentic love. When we laugh, we are completely in the moment, thinking of and experiencing only what is in front of us. Concern for what has passed and what is to come dissolves into giggles. Part of our practice involves remaining conscious at all times, which means allowing ourselves to completely experience each moment as it passes.

Clinical evidence shows that there are great benefits to laughter. When we laugh, the pumping of the diaphragm massages the pericardium, thereby relaxing the heart. The diaphragm also pushes against the abdominal organs which promotes regular digestion. The exhalant bursts flex and release the abdominal muscles, improving core strength. Additionally, we are forced to draw in more oxygen which helps remove impurities from the bloodstream and internal systems. Laughter has been shown to inhibit the release of stress hormones and increase levels of "happy" neurotransmitters such as serotonin. Laughing regulates blood pressure. It boosts the immune system. One hundred good laughs are equivalent to ten minutes of rowing. Now that's what I call healthy living!

Laughter chemically alters the brain so that we continue to feel good even after the laughter has stopped. It releases endorphins, the body's natural painkillers which also bring a sense of euphoria. We also feel less anxiety when we laugh. Simply activating the muscles required to smile deactivates the neurological fear (fight or flight) response. This is why it is recommended to maintain a smile when public speaking or performing stressful tasks. Other studies have linked laughter to improved learning, memory, creativity, and alertness.

Although it is important to give all of our emotions authentic expression, it is also important to choose to focus on what is positive. Have a folder filled with your favourite jokes ready for you on those stressful days. Buy or rent your favourite comedy pieces to watch when you need them. Post comics in your work area. Tell someone about the last time you laughed uncontrollably. When we live in laughter, we are aligned with the Joy and Light that is our true nature.

**"Laugh it up, fuzz ball."**

### Featured Asana



**Balāsana Child's Pose** – This is a wonderful pose to assume when having trouble sleeping. I have spent many a camping trip this way, fitting myself between tree roots and dozing fitfully. Child's Pose activates the parasympathetic nervous system, or relaxation response. It stretches the back, releases gas, and deepens breathing.

Rest abdomen and chest on or between thighs and the forehead on the floor or a pillow. Knees may be apart. Feel connection of the third eye chakra to Earth. Imagine sending busy thoughts into ground as the mind clears and the centre of the forehead draws in healing energy. Breathe deeply, feeling the ribcage expanding to the sides and back.

### Recommended Reading

*The Power of Now*, Eckhart Tolle

Erin Byron 519-751-1368

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

Park Fitness 519-756-3220

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

*Laugh! I Thought I'd Die (If I Didn't)*, Anne Wilson Schaef

The Fitness Centre 519-751-2500