

March 2016

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Finishing Well Yoga

Yoga at home and in the workplace

Dear Friend,

I recently traveled to two completely different environments and it made me wonder if yoga could become an anti-anxiety business.



My wife, Sandy, and I enjoyed a yoga retreat in a Canadian dwelling that was off grid. It was relaxing and serene with little to no anxiety. Our activities consisted of eating delicious, balanced meals, living cohesively with 18 other individuals, participating in yoga classes, meditating, doing pranayama, and walking to beautiful Rice Lake that was 10 acres away.

Following that, we flew to New York City to celebrate a family birthday and be immersed in a population of over 8 million people. It was amazing that a high level of stress and anxiety was noticeable the moment we landed in La Guardia airport.

Though we enjoyed both adventures, these extremes encouraged me to look more deeply at the benefits of yoga in our culture today, particularly at the educational level. In the schools, in populations large and small, students are faced with growing up, the desire to be recognized, and the need to be accomplished to prepare for their future. How do they cope?

As I explore activities in my own life to help relax, reduce stress, self-regulate, and generally reduce anxiety and have fun, I am excited to have created an Anti-Anxiety Tool Box to help all my yoga students. This Tool Box contains twelve different techniques that specifically address anxiety and, whether it's for high school or my outside classes, the benefits extend beyond the yoga students themselves. As they become more adept at tuning into and adjusting their own level of stress using these techniques, everyone they come in contact with is affected in a positive way.

Though yoga is a 2500 year old practice, it's adaptability to use in today's hectic world makes it a remarkable practice for anti-anxiety that can help us to Finish Well.

Namaste,

Ron Collins

My 2016 Classes

Yoga for All Ages

Thursday nights at the Saugatuck High School Cafeteria.

"Moderate Yoga"

6:00pm - 7:00pm
Building core strength and expanding yogic poses.

"Gentle Yoga"

7:15pm - 8:15pm
For new students, building leg strength and balance.

\$45 for a 6 week session
\$10 a night for walk-ins

Current session 3/17 - 4/28
(no class 4/7)

Click [here](#) for more information.

Click [here](#) to register or call 269-857-1444.

Kripalu Yoga in the Schools (KYIS)

Grades 10, 11, & 12
Saugatuck High School

3/16 - 5/13
Wednesdays & Fridays
10:34am - 11:47am

Co-teacher: Ms. Austin

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health Stockbridge, MA



Click [here](#) for information.

Private Sessions

Call 616-340-7338 for private sessions.

Click [here](#) to visit my website for more information.



Definitions Corner



Prana

Sanskrit word for the life force or vital energy which permeates the body.

Self-Care Article

Building Ojas and Nourishing Your Vitality

There is a concept in Ayurvedic medicine that our bodies have the capability of building ojas, creating physical health, vitality, and vigor. Ojas is a milky mucus substance in the cells that protects the cells, and our organs. An abundant supply offers a strong foundation in our immune system, creating tejas (ones glow, radiance, luster, and sparkle) and holding prana (ones energy or life force) in the body. The benefits of building and sustaining ojas offer us physiological as well as psychological balance.

Though it takes only 24 hours to digest the food we eat, ojas takes approximately 30 days to manifest, as it goes through many processes to develop. A wealth of information on the subject and the process can be found in John Douillard's website article on [Got Ojas? Nourish Your Vitality](#).

Ojas helps sleep and relaxation, immunity, vitality, and the body's response to stress. Positive results of healthy ojas are reliant upon many factors. To help build ojas, the following are offered:

- Eat foods that are naturally sweet (a Sattvic diet), fresh, unprocessed, and organic
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables (except garlic and onions)
 - Whole grain, particularly rice, wheat, and oats
 - Beans (in moderation), especially mung, adzuki, and tofu
 - Raw soaked nuts and seeds, especially almonds, sesame seeds, and coconut

- Raw and /or organic dairy products from cows, especially milk and ghee (clarified butter)
- Natural sweeteners like raw sugar, honey, maple syrup, and molasses
- Sweet spicy ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, fennel, mint, and tulsi (a type of basil)
- Prepare food with love and awareness
- Chew slowly
- Use herbs like ashwagandha, shatavari, bala, and other herbs that build strength and rejuvenate
- Control (quiet) the senses
- Control sexual energy (brahmacharya)
- Maintain devotional practices

If we are not offering self-care to ourselves, the process can break down and no ojas will be produced. Some actions that negatively affect ojas are:

- Not getting proper sleep
- Eating processed foods
- Being away from nature
- Disagreeing and arguing with others
- Being selfish and grasping for more than is needed
- Not getting good physical exercise

The term 'ojas' is relatively unheard of in western culture, possibly because it is too small to measure, but an understanding of the benefits of ojas maintenance has been common knowledge in eastern cultures for a very long time. It is my belief that ojas is the positive product of living a clean and healthy life. The process includes a balanced diet, rest, physical exercise, stress and anxiety control, living in a safe environment, and being kind and loving toward others. The results include health, vitality, longevity, joy, and the ability to finish well.



Ojas Milk Recipe

This delicious drink contains several ojas-enhancing ingredients and is a nourishing warm drink ideal for small gatherings, at the end of yoga class, or just before you snuggle into bed to enhance sleep. This recipe is for one and can be multiplied for any quantity.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup raw whole organic milk or almond milk
- 10 almonds, soaked overnight then peeled and chopped
- 2 whole dates, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered cardamom
- 1/4 teaspoon poppy seeds
- Pinch of saffron



Place all ingredients (except saffron) in a saucepan and bring to a low boil, stirring often. If you like, use a standing blender or immersion blender to blend the mixture to a creamy consistency.

Pour in a mug and add a pinch of saffron.
Enjoy!

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