

WATER YOGA: RIDE THE WAVE OF TRANQUILITY

Dr. Guy F. Fain, III

"My body glides effortlessly into the warm water. Its softness embraces me and caresses me like a silk scarf. I'm instantly transported into another world, far removed from the hustle and bustle of daily life. As I lie back and begin to float on the smooth surface, I feel completely nurtured, comforted and safe."

Water Yoga is a meditation in movement. It combines the therapeutic properties of water with the restorative healing of Yoga. As a leading edge approach to wellness, Water Yoga complements today's current body/mind philosophies of health and healing. A gentle flow to soft music allows the practitioner to release deeply held tensions within the body and brings one into a mind set of total release.

Water Yoga is a major treatment for:

- Heart and circulatory ailments
- Respiratory conditions including asthma
- Muscular and arthritic pain
- Post surgery treatment and rehabilitation
- Strengthening the immune system
- Low back and postural problems
- Pregnancy edema (swelling, many women suffer from in the ankles and feet)
- Stress
- Insomnia

What is special about the Water Yoga program?

This program offers balancing and stretching poses that not only strengthen the muscles and increase flexibility, but quiet the mind and restore the spirit - a totally holistic approach.

Benefits of Water Yoga:

- due to the resistance of the water, you burn more calories in less time
- reduced stress to joints, bones and muscle tissue
- fantastic way for our aging population to stay fit without suffering the injuries associated with joint-jarring land activities
- meditative effect of immersing yourself in water
- facilitates the reclamation of inherent health and well-being

Is Water Yoga for me?

Water Yoga is suitable for almost everyone: young and old, male and female, healthy and disabled, fit and unfit, swimmers and non-swimmers. The water acts as a cushion allowing even those with chronic pain brought on by accident or illness to be able to participate fully. Each participant is encouraged to progress at their own rate instead of following a group norm.



Sigrid & Monica, Water Yoga instructors demonstrating the Partner Tree Pose

Athletes of sports such as hockey, soccer, skating, to name just a few, have noticed considerable improvement in performance through increased muscular flexibility and concentration. In addition, the emphasis on breath work supplies adequate oxygenation to all muscles. According to Steven Del Col, former Toronto Argonaut, "After playing football for many years, I experience great relief from previous wear and tear doing Water Yoga." Erik

Ter Beek, former university and provincial soccer player, comments: "Water Yoga has helped me to regain range of motion and flexibility after extensive surgery from numerous injuries."

Where can I do Water Yoga?

In addition to doing Water Yoga in a pool, you can work in the bathtub, shower, Jacuzzi, wading pool, shallow, firm river bed or beach. Ensure that the water temperature is at least 86 degrees Fahrenheit (33 degrees Celsius).

A typical Water Yoga class begins with a warmup, followed by balancing poses, twists and several cardiovascular movements. At the end of class, participants release their bodies into a floating pose on their back (aided by a noodle, if necessary). This can be a major achievement for non-swimmers.

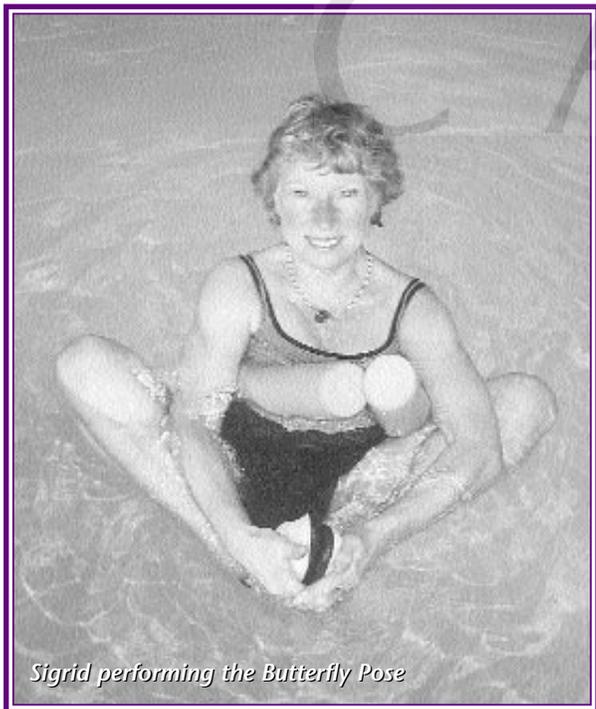
Here is an example of a typical Yoga posture, the Butterfly, modified for the pool:

How to do the Butterfly Pose:

Place the noodle behind the back under the armpits. Lean back, lifting feet off the bottom of the pool. Let the soles of the feet touch, as the knees open out to each side. Reach down and take hold of ankles, pulling heels closer to groin. Rest the head back and release the shoulders. Relax, breathe deeply and float carefree like a buoy in the ocean.

Why to:

This powerful stretch affects the adductor and



Sigrid performing the Butterfly Pose

groin muscles while easing out tension in the lumbar spine. This pose is a beautiful hip opener, in which the abdominal muscles must be activated for balancing in the water.

Dance therapy, another form of movement in water, is especially beneficial for physically handicapped clients, including those in wheelchairs. These people may have limited mobility on land and will often experience increased freedom of movement while in water. Movement and expression, in water, is extremely satisfying and encouraging for these individuals, since the benefits of weightlessness and mobility are greatly enhanced.

Sessions can be offered for individuals as well as groups of no more than 15 participants. This allows greater care for safety and correct execution of postures.

How do I learn to teach Water Yoga?

Monica and Sigrid have developed a unique and creative program to bring Yoga postures into the pool. A Two Day Teacher Training Course will be offered to CALA Aquafitness Instructors. It will include the basics of Yogic philosophy, postures, deep abdominal breathing, body awareness, imagery and relaxation techniques. All postures will be taught on land first. You will learn how to work with non-swimmers and with people in rehabilitation. The next Teacher Training is scheduled for September 30th to October 1st, 2000.

Feel free to contact for more information:

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or Monica Cordes (905) 479-5676

Sigrid Igel is a Federation of Ontario Yoga Teachers Certified Yoga teacher, who has been teaching for over 30 years. Concurrently, she has developed a Water Yoga program, teaching it to all ages and ability levels. She also instructs dance therapy and gives several workshops a year. Sigrid is available to teach in your area.

Monica Cordes has Yoga Teachers Certificate from FOYT and the Kripalu Centre for Yoga and Health. Impressed by the therapeutic benefits of movement in water, she has created an original series of Water Yoga postures and flows. Several times a year, Monica leads powerful and transformative workshops. Monica is passionate about living life to the fullest and of passing her enthusiasm on to others.