



mindfulness matters

By Dr Tamsin Betts

Yoga

In the current climate, with all the pressure of COVID affecting both how we work and our home lives, there is a lot of talk about how best to look after ourselves. We know that exercise is beneficial for both our mental and our physical state, and there is increasing evidence that yoga and meditation are good for our health. In the past, we may have gone to gyms, or a class, or for a swim. Suddenly, we need to think of different ways of taking care of ourselves.

Yoga is an ancient practice which has been shown to help with physical, mental, and emotional state. People often think of yoga just as a series of physical poses designed to improve stamina, flexibility, balance, coordination, and to relax the body, however this only represents one small aspect of the tradition of yoga as a whole.



Yoga, as a complete practice, involves living with more integrity, self-discipline, a respect for nature, and a connection with the spiritual aspects of life. It has no connection with a particular religion. Alongside the physical poses, students may also practice breathwork and meditation in a class.

Many different styles of yoga have developed over the years, which can be confusing, but this provides a whole variety to choose from, enabling each of us to find a practice that suits us physically and supports us emotionally.

There doesn't tend to be a 'one size fits all' approach, and I know I have days when I don't want a very strong physical class, more a slow, short relaxing one. Listening to what your body needs on a daily basis and going with that is far more beneficial than pushing yourself when exhausted, just because you feel you should. The essence of yoga is just that: learning to tune in and use the tools of practice to support our mind and body.



In this current climate, we have to practice at home, so classes now have to take place online. The best website I have come across is www.movementformodernlife.com and it is presently free for NHS workers for ten weeks. It features all different styles of yoga and a whole range of excellent, renowned teachers. There are beginners' courses, or more advanced ones. Choose a class based on the amount of time you have available, or on any needs such as back pain, stress, low mood, etc. There are also Pilates, Qi Gong, and meditation sections. YouTube can be great, if you know and like a teacher, though it can be a minefield if you don't!

Dr Tamsin Betts is a qualified doctor, trained yoga teacher, and executive coach.

She runs her own business coaching professionals and teaching yoga, mindfulness, and meditation. She has a keen interest in health, well-being, and nutrition, and recognises the importance of physical and emotional wellness in enabling people to perform at our best on a professional and personal level.

Tamsin worked as a GP for several years, before training as a yoga teacher and then an executive coach. She is married to a practising GP and has retained strong links with the NHS. She is aware that working in the NHS can bring enormous stresses, but also sees how rewarding and fulfilling it can be in the right circumstances. She currently also works coaching GPs through the **PCWC**, and has recently started as a case manager for the Wessex Professional Support Unit supporting doctors in training.

