

# Peaking Interests

The quarterly newsletter  
of Apex Physical Therapy

Winter 2007 Volume two Issue two

## Yoga's Benefits

### *Body, mind and soul*

*An ancient practice provides health benefits for the new millenium*

**By Maureen Priest**  
**Certified Yoga Instructor**  
**Breathe Yoga Center, Skippack, PA**

There's really nothing mysterious about yoga. To put it simply, it is an age-old discipline that explores, develops and integrates the body, mind and spirit. In fact, in Sanskrit, yoga means "to unite or join."

In recent years, however, yoga has been rediscovered by many individuals who recognize its weight loss, stress reduction, and physical and psychological healing benefits.

The physical benefits of yoga are vast. Practicing yoga systematically stretches and strengthens muscles throughout the body; increases circulation to internal organs and glands; lubricates joints, ligaments and tendons; quiets the nervous system and realigns the muscular and skeletal systems to improve posture.

The psychological benefits of yoga are often overlooked by some beginner yogis. But for those who practice regularly, yoga can bring vitality, self-awareness, focus, deep relaxation, confidence and peace of mind. Through the three facets of

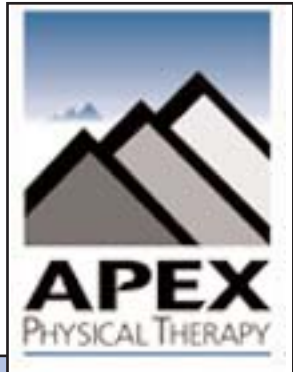
yoga – breathing (pranayama), poses (asanas) and meditation – anxiety can be transformed into a sense of calmness and relaxation

Breathing is often said to be the most important aspect of yoga. It may seem foolish to think that one must be taught to breathe properly. Yet, breath can become restricted in times of stress, fatigue or overexertion. Unhealthy habits like slouched posture, can also adversely effect one's breath. Yoga teaches students to breathe fluidly through different poses, a practice that can easily be carried over into everyday life.

The next step is learning the yoga poses, which are performed in various positions, including standing, sitting, lying on a mat or even upside down. They are performed slowly, with control and focus.

Interestingly, a common misconception of people who are interested in yoga is that they can't do it because they are inflexible. The truth, however, is the gentle practice of certain yoga poses will "loosen you up." It's simply a matter of dedicating oneself to the practice.

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#### Now serving Five locations

**Royersford**  
341 10th Avenue  
Suite 101  
Royersford, PA 19468  
610-792-8100

**Blue Bell**  
676 DeKalb Pike  
Suites 105-106  
Blue Bell, PA 19422  
610-270-0300

**Chalfont**  
1500 Horizon Drive  
Suite 102E  
Chalfont, PA 18914  
215-712-0300

**Pottstown-Coventry**  
10 Glocker Way  
Pottstown, PA 19465  
610-323-4300

**Lafayette Hill**  
466 Germantown Pike  
Suite 200  
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444  
610-832-7510

#### Hours of operation

Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sat: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

#### Check out our Web site

[www.apex-pt.com](http://www.apex-pt.com)

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# Yoga's health benefits go far beyond mere meditation

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Many people are interested in trying yoga, but don't know how to get started or have injuries that deter them from trying. For beginners, it is important to find a yoga studio where you are instructed personally and learn yoga in a safe environment. Only a trained personal instructor can teach you how to adjust your poses to account for your individual fitness level and physical limitations.

Aches and pains should not preclude you from practicing yoga, but it is important to speak to your physician or physical therapist to ensure yoga is safe for you. It is also important to tell your teacher what you are feeling at the beginning of class so he or she can adjust your practice to avoid discomfort or injury.

Practicing yoga during or after physical therapy can support and speed the healing process. If you are participating in yoga classes and are experiencing pain or functional limitation, consult a physical therapist for an evaluation of your condition. If you are receiving

physical therapy and are interested in beginning yoga, speak with your therapist to discuss whether it is safe for you, given your injury or condition.

Breathe Yoga Center is owned and operated by Maureen Priest. Maureen has studied yoga with both nationally and internationally recognized yoga instructors. She is nationally certified in Forrest Yoga. And she holds continuing education credits in yoga therapy from Thomas Jefferson University.

At Breathe, classes operate seven days per week for yogis of all levels. It is recommended that students attend class 2-3 times per week. However, the beauty of yoga is that you can practice at home. Many students with busy schedules drop in for class as their schedule permits.

If you are interested in learning more about the practice of yoga, stop by to see Maureen at Breathe's studio, located at 4402 Skippack Pike in Skippack, Penn. She can also be reached by phone at 610-584-1108. Or you can visit Breathe's website at [www.breatheyogacenter.net](http://www.breatheyogacenter.net).

*Yoga can be a useful tool following physical therapy. It is a good way to maintain core strength and flexibility and it can also help in preventing further injury. For me, personally, practicing yoga at Breathe has increased my core strength, improved my flexibility and given me the opportunity to grow my own yoga skills in a safe and comfortable environment. The teachers at Breathe are personable and knowledgeable, and I feel confident referring my patients to Maureen and her studio.*

*- Kamala Bongiorno, MPT  
Owner of Apex Physical Therapy*

## News from the Top What's happened and happening at and around our clinics

### Welcome to our new staff members

Apex would like to welcome and introduce some of our newest staff members. They include:

- Dorothy Wagner, receptionist in Blue Bell
- Shonda Kraemer, receptionist in Pottstown-Coventry
- Sharon Duffey, physical therapist in Lafayette Hill

### Staff achievements

Apex is proud to announce that Marsha Berger Grant, Chalfont's Managing Director, received her doctorate in Physical Therapy from Arcadia University in December of 2006. Congratulations to Marsha on this great achievement!

### Community events

Apex is excited to announce that, for the second year in a row, we will be participating in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. The event will take place in May 2007. Apex will be a part of the team "Beth's Bumblebees." If anyone is interested in being a part of the team or would like more details on the event, please contact Jamie Mast in the Royersford office at 610-792-8100. She can also be reached via e-mail at [jamie@apex-pt.com](mailto:jamie@apex-pt.com).

### Thank you!!

The staff of Apex would like to thank each of our past and current patients who have referred your family and friends to one our clinics. In addition, we would like to extend a special thanks to Sheree McMullen, who has referred ten patients!

## Treat<sub>(ment)</sub> for your Tummy



### Chocolate Chip Angel Food Cake

*Angel food cakes earned their title as the "food of the angels" from their airy lightness. But this version, with its chocolate undertones, brings a touch of the devil to an overall heavenly dessert.*

#### Ingredients

- 3 oz bitter or semisweet chocolate
- 1 cup cake flour
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 13 large egg whites
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 large egg whites
- 1/2 tbsp cream of tartar
- A pinch of salt
- 3 tps pure vanilla extract

**Prep/cook time:** 1 hour, 30 min

**Servings:** Approximately 8 pieces

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Pulse chocolate in food processor until finely ground; reserve.
3. Whisk flour and 3/4 cup of sugar in medium bowl; reserve.
4. Mix egg whites, cream of tartar and salt on low speed until frothy.
5. Increase speed to medium, beating egg whites until they hold soft peaks.
6. Stir in remaining 3/4 cup of sugar and beat at medium-high speed until fluffy and just stiff.
7. Sift 1/3 flour mixture over the egg whites. Fold in with large spatula until just blended.
8. Add vanilla. Fold in remaining flour mixture in two batches. Fold in ground chocolate. Scrape batter into a 10-inch tube pan.
9. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, about 45 min.
10. Invert pan and place tube opening over the neck of a bottle to suspend the cake. Let cool completely, at least 1 hour.

#### Seven-minute frosting

1. Bring 1 inch water to simmer in large saucepan. Combine sugar, egg whites, salt, 1/4 cup water and cream of tartar in large stainless steel bowl.
2. Set bowl over simmering water. Beat egg whites with whisk until mixture holds soft peaks. Remove bowl from heat and continue to beat until cooled and fluffy. Beat in vanilla and frost cake.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Everyday with Rachel Ray

# Meet our Apex Staff



**Anne Schutt, DPT**  
Managing Director  
Pottstown-Coventry

Anne joined the Apex team in September of 2004 as a therapist at our Royersford office. She took on the role of Managing Director with the opening of the Pottstown-Coventry clinic in March of 2005.

Anne's educational background includes a Bachelor's

degree in Health Science and a Master's degree in Physical Therapy from Philadelphia's University of the Sciences. She also received her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Temple University.

Anne is an active member of the American Physical Therapy Association, as well as a member of the organization's Orthopedic and Hand Therapy sections.

Continuing education is also important to Anne and she takes multiple courses each year in order to stay up to date on the newest manual treatment techniques. In the clinic, Anne's primary interest is in spinal rehabilitation.

Outside of the clinic, Anne enjoys spending time with her husband, as well as taking part in outdoor activities such as camping, hiking and rock climbing.

yoga • \yoh-guh\ • *noun*

1. a system of exercises useful for attaining bodily or mental control and well-being
2. a system of exercises utilizing terminology with which a beginner may be unfamiliar. Here's a little help:

**Yogi** - one who practices yoga

**Asana** - a yoga posture, held steadily and comfortably

**Chakras** - nerve centers or "wheels" of energy, located along the spine, considered to be part of the "subtle body," that is, the psychomental aspect of the human body

**Drushti** - sensitive awareness of your entire body and/or focus in a given yoga pose

**Prana** - vital energy; life breath

**Pranayama** - the practice of breath control in yoga

**Bandhas** - inner locks, of which there are three, that hold pranic energy within different chakras of the body; involving subtle muscular adjustments effecting the physiological rather than anatomical body

**Vinyasa** - the transient fluidity of movement, involving synchronization of the breath and body, that connects yoga postures in a sequence

**Om** - a sacred Hindu sound used for meditation and invocation of the divine spirit

**Shavasana** (corpse pose) - a yoga pose intended to rejuvenate one's body, mind and spirit; often used for relaxation at the end of a yoga session

**Namaste** - a Hindu expression, typically used at the end of a yoga session, that roughly means: "the divine within me sees and honors the divine within you"



## Do it Right: Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

Downward-facing dog is one of the most widely recognized yoga poses. It is generally done many times during the course of a single yoga class because it is both a transitional and restorative pose. It is useful for strengthening the arms and legs, as well as stretching the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, arches and hands. It is known to relieve stress, back pain and fatigue. However, when doing the pose, don't forget to listen to your body and don't be afraid to make modifications to avoid pain or discomfort.

### How to do Downward-Facing Dog

1. Come onto the floor on your hands and knees. Set your knees directly below your hips and your hands slightly forward of your shoulders. Spread your palms, index fingers parallel or slightly turned out, and turn your toes under.
2. Exhale and lift your knees away from the floor. At first, keep the knees slightly bent and the heels lifted away from the floor. Lengthen your tailbone away from the back of your pelvis and press it lightly toward the pubis. Against this resistance, lift the sitting bones toward the ceiling and, from your inner ankles, draw the inner legs up into the groin area.
3. Then, with an exhalation, push the top of your thighs back and stretch your heels down toward the floor. Straighten your knees, but don't lock them. Firm the outer thighs and roll the upper thighs inward slightly. Narrow the front of the pelvis.
4. Firm the outer arms and press the bases of the index fingers actively into the floor. From these two points, lift along your inner arms from the wrists to the tops of the shoulders. Firm your shoulder blades against your back, then widen them and draw them toward the tailbone. Keep the head between the arms; don't let it hang.

# Achieving the Apex

What real patients are saying about their successes with our clinics



Photo courtesy of [www.ultimate-snowboarding.com](http://www.ultimate-snowboarding.com)

*"The results of my therapy have been amazing. Initially, I was skeptical and thought nothing would help my back/spine problems. Through regular therapy sessions and follow-up exercise at home, the improvement was phenomenal! I feel physical therapy was crucial in my recovery!"*

– Rosemary M.

*"When I first came to Apex, I could barely stand because my leg and knee hurt so badly. My leg was swollen from the knee to the ankle. My therapist started me on a slow program. The exercises were mild and never caused additional pain and my therapist's instructions were clear and easy to follow. She always found the time to give me the attention I needed. Thanks to her, my knee feels fine. She is a miracle worker!"*

– Cindy G.

*"Apex makes other therapy centers seem like a gym-like experience. The one-on-one therapy at Apex and the fact that only one person is scheduled per half hour makes the therapy more focused and individualized. I would never go back to another therapy center after my experience with Apex."*

– Anon.



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