

# Yoga Therapeutics

With Naime Jezeny

By Edie Weinstein-Moser



**T**he hardwood floors of Yogaphoria, the New Hope studio that was the setting for a transformative experience, awaited the fifty students that over the course of two days would be stretched out on a rainbow sea of yoga mats. Ranging in age from 20's to 70's, these eager individuals came looking for helpful ways to make their practice more fulfilling and in many cases, pain-free. For some, what drew them to yoga was recovery from injury. For others, they sought a way to make their bodies more flexible, strong and agile. My reason for attending this workshop was that as a relatively new yoga student whose practice began in May 2004, I had yet to achieve the proper alignment that led to a hyper-extension of my right elbow in an asana called "a downward facing dog." What resulted was an arthritic-like ache that at 47, I felt I was far too young to carry. So I sought out a man who takes the subject of yoga therapeutics (focusing on posture and function and structure) and actually makes it fun and light-hearted.



Jezeny, a transplanted Californian who came Eastward with his wife Sue Elkind, is a nationally recognized teacher who also teaches at Yogaphoria. He describes yoga therapeutics as, "Aligning the physical body in a specific way that can be applied to yoga postures and be healing in any movement modality. I have worked with people who don't do yoga. It is alignment that can be applied to life or any activity." He acknowledges that, "It is Amulti-purpose, not just for on the mat." He takes this work on the road to places of business and in the training of athletes.

The physical, emotional and spiritual benefits abound. When your body doesn't feel well, you don't feel balanced on an emotional level. You're not centered and far less patient. Jezeny comments, "I've worked with people who have chronic pain and it can seriously affect your mood. People go into depression with pain. Using the physical body as the window and the opportunity to heal that, you can affect someone's heart, mind and body."

Jezeny found his way into yoga originally as a personal practice in 1988. He comments, "I have always been a physical, active, athletic person, and at the same time knew yoga offered something more than just that." His college major was exercise physiology which included courses in kinesiology and biomechanics. He was interested in the therapeutic applications of movement. Over the

years, Jezeny has studied with just about every famous yoga teacher in the world and over the last eight years has studied with John Friend. He recommends that, "Whatever exercise modality people engage in, it needs to be done with alignment. If you're not doing it with alignment, in a way that's healing, you're actually going to get hurt."

Alignment, according to John Friend, focuses on not only the physical realm, but that which takes place in mind and spirit. You can look at it as the alignment of your thoughts and the people with whom you align. What we do on the outside, affects the inside.

His classes are for Anewer followers and long-term practitioners. In the class, his playful demeanor sets clients at ease. Participants were able to laugh uproariously as many of us were "models" for the injuries and postural variances that were representative of many among us. In my case, both the elbow aches and sacral spine pain that had arrived this summer were eased as Jezeny demonstrated various exercises.

Jezeny reiterated that, "Anewar is something that is applicable to a wide range of folks. I've worked with 90-year-olds who want to get a range of normal function back, business professionals and Olympic athletes. It's not just for yoga students."



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