

PRACTICAL EXERCISES • NUTRITION • MINDFULNESS • LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS

YOGATM MAGAZINE

www.yogamagazine.com

ISSUE 218/ JUNE 2021

STAY HEALTHY IN BODY & MIND

WIN

1 MONTH SUPPLY OF

SUN CHLORELLA & MORE

5 TIPS TO GET STARTED WITH MANTRAS

AUTOGENIC TRAINING & YOGA

UNRAVELLING chakras

KEEP YOUR WEIGHT OFF FOREVER

INFINITY THROUGH kriya yoga



UK £5.75

USA \$11.25 CANADA \$14.99
BELGIUM, FRANCE, CYPRUS, ITALY, AUSTRIA, MALTA,
SPAIN, LUXEMBOURG, NETHERLANDS,
PORTUGAL €11.00 JAPAN ¥1572.00 UAE AED58

facebook.com/official.yogamag

YOGA AT ANY AGE

Quality over Quantity

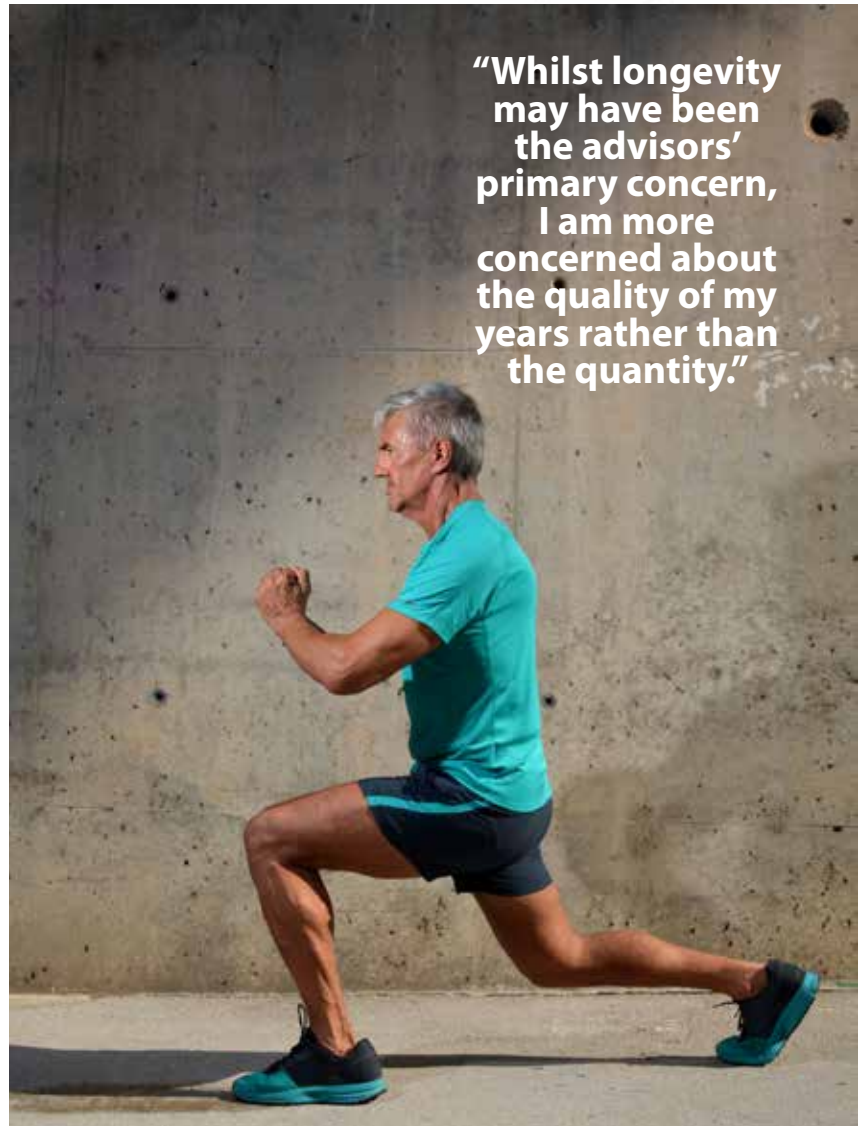
Words: James de Albuquerque



Members of the older generation have been 'in the spotlight' during the pandemic. Otherwise dormant fears of vulnerability have been rudely awakened by the coronavirus but so too has the necessity for attending to mental and physical well-being. Many of these needs can be met by the simple practice of Yoga.

I am not a spiritual narcissist and I have not been blessed with a supple, bendy body. My progress with postures goes one way whilst my decrepitude approaches from another, but there is no doubt that stretching, folding, twisting and turning has done me a power of good. I may stumble and totter from time to time but the only one who minds is me. As some wise person said, you have had one problem throughout your life, and that is you.

I underwent a 'financial review' recently which required me to face up to expert analysis of my life expectancy. I now know why I have avoided doing this for so long. A character in Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time* says 'Growing old is like being penalised for a crime you haven't committed. I feel like the man in the ghost story scrambling over the breakwater with the horrible thing behind him getting closer and closer.' I am that man sometimes, but have found that yoga is a massive



"Whilst longevity may have been the advisors' primary concern, I am more concerned about the quality of my years rather than the quantity."



help to the mind, body and spirit. Whilst longevity may have been the advisors' primary concern, I am more concerned about the quality of my years rather than the quantity.

For those that might like to give yoga a whirl, or perhaps have whirled and given up, or been intimidated by the sight of pictures of lithe young people in trendy garb, let me explain: It really is not like this. It is not intended to be difficult and it must not be made difficult. Yogic movements do need to be experienced consciously in order to align the mind and body so focus on the internal experience rather than the external appearance of the movement. This is a mercy for us 'oldies', so take heart.

I have been practicing yoga for twelve years. I started at the tender age of 60. I joined a local class in which I was the only male. I made for a corner of the studio, primarily so as only one unfortunate woman would have to be next to me, but also because I would then have a wall behind me and another to one side. I had no idea of how things might pan out. I was

also quite near the door just in case a discreet exit from proceedings was necessary to preserve my dignity.

Even though I may have drawn sympathetic looks from the teacher on occasions when she must have been wondering why I was in that extraordinary position or how on earth I got there, I have persevered. The only postures I can claim to have nailed are the Tumbling Man and the WTF, neither of which are found in books or on YouTube.

The compensation for the less able is that the movements in and out of postures are as important as the posture itself.

Yoga is more than a physical practice. Breathing is at the heart of it. It is estimated that each of us will take, on average, about 670 million breaths in a lifetime, so each one is really quite precious. Many of us have already used up a sizeable chunk of these millions. Awareness of one's breathing is a good thing and may be called mindfulness. Breathing in harmony with the exercises/postures will help to create a magical feeling of calm. Letting go on

the exhale reduces stress and muscular tension. The right amount of effort will get the heart pumping and improve our blood flow. This helps to create energy as we take in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. It also reduces cortisol levels (the primary stress hormone) whilst boosting oxytocin (said to be one of the happy hormones).

Beware of the effects of the changing seasons. The excitement and energy of the spring and summer may be replaced by the melancholy and lethargy of autumn and winter.

The practice of yoga has served millions of people for thousands of years and is very much alive today. Do not be put off by cynical comment or popular images of stylish people in stunning locations. Yoga is for everybody, anywhere.

Moving slowly will help remove the fear of falling down or losing balance and tipping over, and will also help you to deal with the cautionary messages being sent from the brain to the body that may be inhibiting your real ability to either bend and twist or stretch.

Try and take your ego out of the equation. Keep in mind the wise words of Olin Miller who said 'you probably wouldn't worry about what people think of you if you could know how seldom they do'.

There is an old Zen saying that 'you should sit in meditation for 20 minutes a day, unless you are too busy, then you should sit for one hour.'

James is a recently retired, 72 year-old Shipbroker, married with three daughters and four grandchildren.

He has been practicing yoga for twelve years near where he lives in North Hampshire (an area blessed with excellent teachers). Yoga, for him, has been an enormous help during these extraordinary Covid-19 blighted times.

jamespdea@lineone.net