

Behind the Pose



by Pam
Teves

Quite a few people recently asked me if I read the New York Times article, “How Yoga Can Wreck Your Body.” As a yoga instructor and practitioner, it was a tough article to ignore. In the wake of this article many people have written about its inaccuracy. Although it does give some over the top examples of yoga related injuries, it also brings up a good question: when is yoga harmful?

The article discussed various injuries that people suffered while doing yoga, but like all physical activities the risk of injury is real. In fact, walking into my living room is a risk when the light is off and if I forgot where I left my shoes (whoops). The point being, with mindfulness I won’t trip over my shoes. In a yoga class we ask students to be mindful; every day brings different thoughts, ideas, and even different levels of flexibility and strength.



In yoga philosophy, the term “ahimsa” means “non-violence” and is part of the 8-limbs of yoga in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras. Ahisma can be interpreted in many ways including non-violence to animals, the environment, others, and/or one’s self. You

should bring the idea of not harming yourself into every one of your practices. Listening to the cues that your body is

signaling to you is a way to keep yourself safe. While in a yoga class wanting to take the pose to the next level can be overwhelming, but with mindfulness and the thought of ahimsa you can take it to a place that can be a challenge, while at the same time keeping you from pain or injury. Looking inward and really defining your practice is a healthy way to keep you on your mat and advancing. Yoga is not just about getting into arm balances and crazy twists, but creating a healthy balance physically and mentally.

The most important part of a yoga class, for me, is to have a fun and safe practice. A yoga practice is something that is on going, so enjoy the journey and have fun. Otherwise, what's the point?

Please join me for classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 5:45pm at Synergy Physical Therapy (17 Sarahs Way, Fairhaven), and for more details please check out www.southcoastyoga.net.