

5 Surprising Health Benefits Of Yoga

By Kristen Domonell for Life by DailyBurn

Yoga increases flexibility and reduces stress, but the practice can do more than help you twist your body into pretzel shapes and find inner peace. These hidden benefits will help you in the kitchen, office and bedroom -- and will give you five new reasons to show off your yoga skills (plus recommended poses for each one!).

1. Boost Immunity
A recent Norwegian study found that yoga practice results in changes in gene expression that boost immunity at a cellular level. And it doesn't take long: The researchers believe the changes occurred while participants were still on the mat, and they were significantly greater than a control group who went on a nature hike while listening to soothing music. Yoga also helps to boost immunity by simply increasing overall health, says Mitchel Bleier, a yoga

teacher of 18 years and owner of Yogapata in Connecticut. "As you breathe better, move better and circulate better, all the other organs function better."

Strike A Pose: Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)
This sequence of eight poses performed in a row can be found in almost any yoga class. It creates great circulation and tone, plus sweat, says Bleier.

2. Ease Migraines
Research shows that migraine sufferers have fewer and less painful migraines after three months of yoga practice. The cause of migraines isn't fully understood, but Bleier says it could be a combination of mental stressors and physical misalignment that create migraines and other issues. Hunching over a computer or cell phone with your shoulders up and head forward

causes overlifting of your trapezius and tightening of the neck. This pulls the head forward and creates muscle imbalances that can contribute to headaches and migraines.

Strike A Pose: Bridge Pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana)
Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet hip-distance apart on the floor. With your hands resting on the floor, begin to press down into your legs and draw your hips toward the sky. The key, Bleier says, is to keep your shoulders in line with the base of your neck, moving the back of the shoulders together so the shoulder blades are close. Lift your chest towards your chin and your chin away from your chest, so the upper trapezius muscles flow away from the head.

3. Boost Sexual Performance
Studies have found that 12 weeks of yoga can



Yoga Day

How Yoga Could Help Kids in School

By Allsion G. Walton

Scientific evidence is mounting daily for what many have long sensed: that practices like mindfulness, meditation, and yoga can help us address certain intractable individual and societal problems. Prominent companies -- Google, General Mills, Target, Apple, Nike, AOL,

and Procter & Gamble among them -- and prominent individuals have already embraced this possibility. Tim Ryan, the Ohio congressman who wrote the book A Mindful Nation, has been a big proponent of bringing mindfulness to the masses. He, along with others, believes that

mindfulness should be a part of everyone's day, to help wire our brains to deal with our many modern stressors.

And, perhaps more importantly for our global health, for kids dealing with extreme stressors, traumas and abuse, putting these