

Kundalini Yoga

No Downward Dog, Just “Pranaya”

IMAGINE INTERLOCKING YOUR FINGERS WITH INDEX FINGER touching index finger. Your arms are kept perfectly straight. Now, imagine sitting cross-legged and lifting your arms from floor to ceiling, ceiling to floor continuously, all the while keeping those arms straight. Easy? Say, ten, maybe 20 reps? Try 15 minutes worth. The practice of Kundalini Yoga takes physical action and sends it into another realm. In Kundalini, it is the intersection of breath, mind and body that produces a spiritual awakening.

At Tenth Gate Center for Yoga and Meditation in Portsmouth, founders Reinette Fournier and Thomas Speare teach, what for several thousand years was a secret in India, passing only from master to select students. Kundalini Yoga is one of many styles on offer at the center, but it is the only one to incorporate the entire yogic system. Fournier calls it “Bootcamp for life.” Kundalini is about confronting yourself when the physical exercise stretches strength and stamina to the absolute limit. At this point, a decision must be made: give up or continue into another world. Helping overcome this breaking point is the breath, the “Prana.” Pranaya, or the practice of breathing, is a key element to this style of yoga. The breath stirs the chakras (force centers) and awakens the glandular, nervous, respiratory and circulatory systems. Breath is the healing and balancing component. During the practice, the body literally pulsates and hums as though it were a tuning fork through the sharp intake of breath, followed by its equally powerful release. It is the effects of this type of yoga that has drawn a growing group of practitioners to the center. And it is their testimony that speaks of the immediate changes experienced through Kundalini that reinforces in Fournier and Speare the belief that what they are teaching is a powerful remedy for any number of medical and psychological ailments. In the battle for the eternal sunshine of a spotless mind, Kundalini helps the soul be as it should be: healthy, happy and holy.

—MICHAEL PERSSON



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