



## Way To Go 60-Day Challengers!!!

### Seminar with Bikram in San Diego

This Saturday, February 23rd, Bikram himself will do a full day seminar in San Diego. The cost is \$200. For more info [Click here](#). Rose, Andrea, Kimberly, Mark James and others will be there. Come join the fun. This may be one of the last seminars that Bikram does in Southern California in a long time. We have fliers at the studio. Pick one up from the table near the front door.

### February Schedule Update

We welcome new teachers Nafisa Abdul-Jillil, Liz Baghaei and Suzanne Buerkle to Bikram La Canada, and welcome back Professor Emeritus Jeff Rangel.

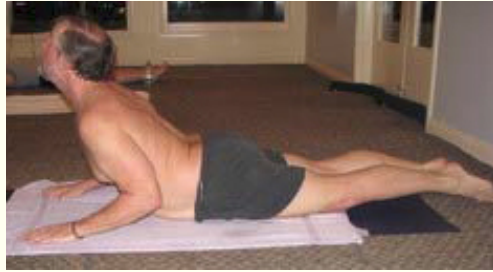
The 10:15am classes are still on, least until the end of the 60-Day Challenge (March). Tuesdays are doing well, Thursdays could use support. If the Tuesday and especially Thursday 10:15 ams work for you, show your support by showing up!

For those of you who attend 4:30 pm classes, we realize the classes have been somewhat full (yeah!). We could, say, add a 2:30pm class, or even a lunchtime one instead if enough people can make it. So if 2:30 or even a noon class would work for you, please contact Rose and provide feedback.

Keep in mind you can always talk to specific instructors about setting up a **private lessons** outside of the usual class times (see blurb two columns over). Just ask.

### International Yoga Asana Championship

### Yogi Q&A: Duane Thorin



#### Been doing Bikram Yoga since:

The records show I started in August, but I think I really caught on with it and started "doing" it seriously in October of last year, after I took a little camping trip that brought home to me how important it was that I really go for restoring my strength and stamina if I wanted to do some of the things I have planned for my life and really enjoy them.

#### How many times a week do you practice?

After that realization, I dedicated myself to the notion of going at least five times a week, which I think I have managed to do since November.

#### What inspired you to start Bikram Yoga?

My friend Ellen Brown had been raving about it for some time. I had met her, in fact, because we had the same massage therapist, and she had been needing that particular therapy, although it was effective, less and less over the past months, 'til she hardly never went at all anymore. She said doing Bikram Yoga was unlike anything she had done before, but it was making her feel better than the massage, and actually fixing some long standing problems with her body as well, with many unexpected other positive results.

Little did I know how tough it was. It seemed almost insane to me and I practically passed out during my first visit. But there was Ellen, and everybody else in the room, standing there and doing it. It dawned on my heat-exhausted, oxygen-deficient brain that I must really, really need this, if I was doing so badly. It was a shocker to me, because until I challenged my body, I had the misconception that I was doing OK and just needed to get in shape a little. I had no idea that many of my body's systems were barely functioning, and had no headroom for any challenge or trial that it might take on. I realize that I was physically crippled, now that I have overcome so many of the barriers that I

### Nutrition Spotlight: What's So Pro- About Anti-Oxidants?

We've talked a lot about what foods are good to complement your yoga practice, and this month we're ready to talk about why. You hear a lot about the anti-oxidant qualities of foods and supplements and with good reason. Oxidants are linked to disease and aging and are the result of the body's natural production of free radicals. Free radicals are the result of cells interacting with each other, and in those reactions knocking loose an electron, which then sends the now-freed radicals through the body looking for an electron, which can disrupt other cells. This imbalance of electron-hungry cells, looking for other cells to snag electrons from, can actually cause cells to break down, which is why oxidants are like rust to our cells. In higher concentrations, they are synonymous with disease and even cancer.

To understand oxidation, take an apple, cut it in half, leave one half untouched and sprinkle lemon juice on the other. Look what happens. The lemon side stays bright like it was just cut, the non-lemon side starts to turn brown, a result of oxidants accelerating the apples aging process. Doing yoga does its share to slow the aging process. By bringing oxygen to cells and keeping your body's normal ability to process free radicals in tip-top shape, you can effectively slow the aging process down: you're boosting the living process up!

Eating a diet rich in anti-oxidants not only complements your yoga practice, it also makes your body function better at ridding itself of toxins. Vegetables are a great source of antioxidants, because almost all contain one or more of the following:

## Results

It was a cold and rainy weekend in LA but that didn't put any damper on the National and International Yoga Asana Championships held February 2 & 3 at the LAX Westin Hotel. Our very own Jeffrey Rangel won the US Men's Championships Saturday, while our very own Mairén Cabuto competed in the first-ever International Junior Competition Sunday. This year marked once again a truly international competition, with the men's category featuring winners from Thailand, Chile, Italy, the Netherlands and India. The big difference this year, is that Indian competitors were able to obtain visas to compete, and they dominated the Junior division.

The International Women's, however, was dominated by Americans. Alisa Matthews, a former La Canada instructor, tied with San Diego's Sara Baughn for the US title, only to edge her out for the international title. Full competition results and photos of winning poses can be found at [Click here](#) Click on 2008 Bishnu Gosh Cup Results; it's below "More News"...

## Posture Highlight: Bhujangasana, Cobra Pose



Cobra pose is like the locked-knee of the floor series. It sets up the lower spine strength and cobra tail for the rest of the spine-strengthening series, which ultimately pays off in camel. In fact, you can think of the Cobra series as what gets your back ready for the camel series, and in that sense it is as much of a backbend as it is a frontside stretch. A key to understanding Cobra pose is

encountered on that first day.

### Why Bikram Yoga? Had you done other kinds of hatha yoga

Bikram makes total sense to me, because it accomplishes so many things at once. The one form of detox I know really works--and am a great believer in--is sauna, or the old "sweat lodge" notion that has been practiced for centuries. I had once done a sweat detox program after working around many chemicals in the printing trade, that transformed my life.

More importantly, Bikram Yoga makes sense to me because the heat enables you to go farther in stretching the muscles without triggering the stretch reflex that causes spasms from overstretching. I have studied and practiced a form of muscle therapy, and the stretch reflex is one of the great contributors to tightness and spasm. And I have done stretching that has had a bad, tightening effect on my muscles, and left me in pain for days. No such thing has ever happened with Bikram due to the heated room.

### What are your favorite things about Bikram Yoga La Canada?

It's so clean and aesthetic and efficient inside. Not gym-like, really. (Gawd I hate gyms). It's down to business, with everyone focused on the task at hand, and supportive of each other as they "suffer" together. The shower is a real big plus for me, as I can keep going on with my day if I like, without having to return home.

The teachers are attentive and professional. And varied, which is fun and interesting, and also leads to lessons learned from each in their own way.

The feeling's one of camaraderie and support.

### When you started what was the hardest thing about the yoga and how did you overcome it?

The hardest thing for me at first was my heart rate, which would get so very high I would have to stop, even though I didn't want to. What I found was that I was not breathing properly, or "relaxing into the posture," as the instructors had been saying all along. (There can sometimes be a time lag of weeks, by the way, before I actually hear and obey these instructions. I can't wait for it to dawn on me what else I have not been hearing).

Plus, I was in the old competitive paradigm, trying to do everything at once. I began to focus on "doing the first part of the instruction" thoroughly before trying to rush the rest of the posture, and to breath correctly, and pace myself well. Progress could then take place for me.

### What's your favorite pose and hardest pose and why?

My favorite pose is the floor bow pose. At least for now. It all keeps changing as I change my body. But I like it because it a relatively successful pose for me, in terms of being able to achieve the form, (unlike my standing bow pose, which is still in its beginning stages). And I love the compression in the reverse bowing of the back and hip joints, etc, which seems to be the complete opposite of what happens to the body all day. It is actually a sense of balance of motion, and relief, as well as strengthening, that

Vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium and beta carotene, all hailed for having high antioxidant properties.

Dark green vegetables (spinach, brussel sprouts, broccoli, watercress, asparagus, green peppers), red peppers, yellow peppers and tomatoes are all excellent sources of Vitamin C.

Vegetable oils (olive, soybean, corn, cottonseed and safflower), legumes (such as beans, lentils and split peas), as well as dark leafy green vegetables, are all excellent sources of vitamin E.

Dark orange, red, yellow and green vegetables, such as broccoli, kale, spinach, sweet potatoes, carrots, red peppers and yellow peppers, are all excellent sources of beta carotene.

Teas are also great natural anti-oxidants. The darker the tea, the more it has effectively oxidized, so white and green teas deliver the anti-oxidant qualities without too much caffeine.

So when you're wondering what to eat after yoga, or just what's going to be better for you on those off-days you might not get to practice, eating an anti-oxidant-rich diet can be like meal-time yoga. Happy eating, and happy yoga!

## Private Lessons Available

One way to firm up your practice and accelerate your progress on the Bikram Yoga learning curve is by considering **private lessons**. Instructors are available on an individual basis to share their knowledge and insight into your practice. Especially if certain class times just don't seem to work for you, or those hips just don't seem to want to open, or you're ready to get that little extra edge in understanding your body and your practice, private instruction is an excellent way to fit yoga into your schedule--and fit yourself even better into the postures. Teachers are available for one-on-one or semi-private basis for a suggested fee of \$100 an hour. Just ask.

remembering that it is your torso that you are lifting, lengthening and opening. Your cobra tail--your locked knees, your legs zipped up like a cobra's tail--anchors you so your hands can help your stomach and spine-strength lift your torso. That's why much of the set-up of the posture is devoted to what to do with your hands and arms. And that is to basically neutralize them.

Hands flat--not cupped or turning in or out. Elbows bent at 90-degree angles, and hugging to the body. Look up and lift up your head and neck, palms still flat, make sure your cobra tail is still engaged, then put a little weight in your hands until you are up as high as your navel. Then it's more stomach/less shoulders: bring your chest up, your shoulders down, show your trapezius muscles to the mirror, all things that mean your spine strength is doing the work once your hands get you up as high as your belly button. Coming out of Cobra is as important as how you go into it: slow and with control. you never want to tweak your back muscles, and you build your core strength as well as your back's health and flexibility by coming out of Cobra slowly and surely.

Though you are backward bending, you are technically stretching your spine and torso, though you may feel some compression in the lower back. One of cobra's greatest benefits--besides demythologizing a part of your body that usually all you know about it is that it hurts--can relax your whole nervous system.

I feel in this pose.

### **What's your hardest pose and why?**

It does change. My hardest pose up until two weeks ago was Camel Pose. Amazingly, one day I was just able to do it, after months of failure. I will mention it anyway, because of what happened with this pose, although maybe Standing Head to Knee is my more current nemesis. When I went to get into Camel Pose by standing up on my knees, I would feel immediately ill in my stomach, and bereft of oxygen in my chest; I could not even tilt my head back without the whole room going white, and the sound of singing angels pounding in my ears. I was ready to pass out and meet St Peter. It actually scared me to try to do the pose, as it was beginning to feel like a near death experience, (can I say that here?).

But then I realized that if I could not do it, there must be something in that pose that would fix a serious problem that I did not even know I had, so I began to put a lot of intention into finding out what that was...by doing the pose.

After 5 full months of backing off the pose quite a bit, I decided to test myself and really attempt to do one. Once I finally did one without passing out, I focused on that posture each visit, and now, after two weeks of doing it, I am making it my favorite.

What I realize is that as a teen and young adult, I had suffered from chronic bronchitis each flu season, for years and years. I think that between this pose, and by really pushing the air into my lungs during the opening breathing, I opened up areas in my chest that had been shut down for years.

I'm a singer, and I immediately noticed how the new openness has affected the depth and consistency of my voice.

### **What changes has doing this Yoga brought to your life?**

Let me count the ways! I never seem to run out of energy. I can work or play all day and recover quickly, and continue if I want. I feel light, with my spine uncompressed. I get out of bed and walk around the house.