



## Happy New Year!!

### Schedule Update

You can double check the website

Ren will no longer be teaching at the La Canada studio. We thank him for sharing his knowledge of Bikram yoga with us.

The 10:15am classes resumed on January 3, 2008. We will keep them at least until the end of the 60-Day Challenge (March). During this time, we will consider how many students are attending each class regularly. If the demand is there, we will keep the classes, if not, we will consider other options, like dropping the Thursday class or adding a 1pm class.

You can always talk to specific instructors about setting up a **private lessons** outside of the usual class times (see bottom of the next column).

### Annual 60-Day Challenge

Our Annual 60-Day Challenge will begin January 29th and run through Saturday March 30th. You are welcome to start early. We will have the new board up soon. What do you get for doing the 60-day Challenge? Good Health!! A new body, gold stars and a Pizza party!

### International Yoga Asana Championship Comes To LA!

### Yogi Q&A: Elaine Woo



#### Been doing Bikram Yoga since

I've been doing Bikram for about four-and-a-half years.

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

Aside from chasing two kids around, I had not done any regular exercise for several years and felt really out of shape. So I decided to get behind the curve and give yoga a try. I was not a heat-loving person, so I started slow -- about twice a week, mainly on weekends, and felt completely wiped out after every class. Funny thing how it became addictive. I gradually felt less stupid in the poses and began to see changes in my body. I dropped about 12 pounds the first year by doing nothing but Bikram twice a week. Now I come four to five times a week (that monthly unlimited is bang for the buck!) and wish I could come more.

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

I have tried Bikram at another studio, which made

### Nutrition Spotlight: Eating for Yoga

In the past few months we've covered a lot about diet and nutrition. To start the year off right, we offer a glossary of terms about just what's what in the vitamin and mineral world, how much of it you need, and most importantly, in what foods to find it. So now you know why mom always said to "eat your greens."

**Beta Carotene** is converted to vitamin A, a nutrient essential for healthy vision, immune function and cell growth. It also acts as an antioxidant that neutralizes free radicals. There's no RDA for beta carotene but plenty of dark green vegetables and orange vegetables and fruits (papaya, mango) weekly to meet your vitamin A needs and reap beta carotene's potential antioxidant benefits.

**B12** is used in making DNA, the building block of genes, and in maintaining healthy nerve and red blood cells. 2.4 micrograms a day for people 14 and older provides all the body needs; some researchers have argued that a daily intake of 6 micrograms would ensure absorption.

B12 is bound to protein, so foods like meat, fish, eggs and dairy products like yogurt and milk are the principal sources.

**Chromium** is required by the body to turn food into usable energy, helping insulin prime cells to take up glucose. Despite



This is a chance to see postures we do every day done by competitors from all over the world--and some from our very own studio, including our own Mairén Cabuto and SoCal Men's Champion Jeffrey Rangel, La Canada Teacher Emeritus.

Our very own studio hosted the SoCal regionals in October, and next month, the International Yoga Championships come to the Westin Hotel LAX, Feb. 1-3!

The weekend kicks off Friday night with the annual opening night gala-slash-Bikram's birthday party from 7-11 pm. The evening includes dinner, dancing, a fashion show, sometime even surprise celebrity guests, hosted by Bikram and Rajashree Choudhury. It's free; just RSVP to [antonia@bikramyoga.com](mailto:antonia@bikramyoga.com).

The US Finals start at 10 am Saturday Feb. 2, with Men's/ Youth/ and Women's, with the International Competition continuing Sunday Feb. 3.

The LAX Westin is located at 5400 West Century Blvd., zip code 90045, and the event is free.

## Posture Highlight: Tuladandasana, Balancing Stick

me appreciate La Canada Bikram much more. Thanks to great teachers, the students here are very disciplined. And Rose has added a lot of nice touches, including the amenities in the ladies room and those lines on the carpet that she paid for! I love having the 6 a.m. classes, though there are days when I curse at the alarm and have to drag myself out of bed. The miracle is that I'm always glad I did.

### Why Bikram Yoga?

Wish I could say I had researched it thoroughly and made an informed decision but I chose it mainly because it's three minutes from my house. I work full-time in addition to being a mom, so convenience and ease of access is paramount. In hindsight I can say that I made a great decision to try Bikram. I have since read Bikram's book and found his story and his philosophy quite compelling. I especially liked the pictures of Bikram then and now doing the poses.

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

What's been really interesting is how I keep discovering things about the various poses. Some get harder, some get easier -- it's all a big cycle in which the experience changes as long-slumbering muscles wake up and do their job. As my core strength has improved, I find I can stretch my body forward more easily in bow, for instance, and find a second or two or three of balance. When that happens, it's sublime, and it gives me the motivation to come back and try again. We're talking non-athletic nerd for most of my life, so it is neat to find a place where I can achieve some mind-body unity and not feel totally embarrassed by my non-athleticism. And to do something kind of well that my know-it-all teenage daughter can't do -- well, that just gives my trampled mom ego a tremendous boost.

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

That said, there are still several poses that are a mystery to me, like rabbit. I'll forever be walking my knees up to try to touch my forehead. On the other hand, after Ren yelled at me recently, I am a hair away from touching my fingers between my toes in triangle. Thank you, Ren!

### 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 just staying in the room and trying not to pass out. The second hardest thing for the longest time was the breathing at the end -- it took me forever to get the hang of it until I realized that you don't have to think about the breathing in. Duh!

disappointing findings on chromium supplements and weight loss, the body still needs it. The daily recommended intake for adults is 50 to 200 mcg. Best sources of chromium are whole-grain breads and cereals, meat, nuts, prunes, raisins, beer and wine.

**Vitamin K** is used by the body to produce an array of different proteins. Some of them are used to create factors that allow blood to coagulate critical in stemming bleeding and allowing cuts and wounds to heal. The current recommended daily intake of vitamin K is 90 micrograms for women and 120 for men. Luckily, vitamin K deficiency is extremely uncommon. K is found in kale, spinach, broccoli, asparagus, arugula, green leaf lettuce, soybean oil, canola oil, olive oil and tomatoes.

**Potassium** is involved in almost every vital body process: maintaining blood pressure, heart and kidney function, muscle contraction, even digestion. Surveys show that most Americans get less than half the recommended amounts of potassium, which is 4,700 milligrams (mg) daily for adults and teens.

Foods that are closest to their original states are best for potassium, so be sure to choose whole, unprocessed foods as often as possible, especially fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, fish and lean meats.

**Magnesium** is necessary for some of the body's most basic processes, triggering more than 300 biochemical reactions most importantly the production of energy from the food we eat. We need a round 300 mg/day (women) and 350 mg/day (men), with the upper limit for supplemental magnesium at 350 mg. The mineral is abundant in avocados, nuts and leafy greens including acorn squash, kiwi and almonds.



It may be the shortest posture in the series, but Balancing Stick is also the most challenging, calling on every muscle in your body to be contracted and and absolute commitment to the posture. As Bikram says, "If you wait even half a second, it's over."

A key to understanding the balanced stick is to break it down into its components. The stick part is basically your set-up from half-moon, the arms up over the head, the lifted chest, the aching shoulders ("shoulders are supposed to hurt" Bikram reminds us), the length in both the shoulders and the hamstrings that bow and forehead to knee have brought us to. Once you have your stick, it's time to balance.

This is the aggressive part. We don't often think of yoga in these terms, but in Balancing Stick you literally have to attack the posture, in terms of committing to it and maintaining it.

One thing to keep in mind is that the posture is a balanced stick, so for every bit of energy you put into charging forward to bring your body parallel to the floor, you use your legs, both the standing and extended, but lock them out.

Beginners and even regular practitioners with still-tight hips tend to roll their extended leg hip up, kind of like how in bow you tend to do a little of the dancer turn-out hip. A way to compensate for that is to keep lifting your upper body forward, as if you were delivering a tray to the mirror, to balance the effort of reaching the extended leg back. Keeping the weight forward can help you square your hips but more importantly balance the posture. Over time, you'll feel like your stretching your torso--or at least supporting it--more than just trying to lift your arms and legs. The result will be a straighter posture, as Bikram puts it, "No broken umbrellas," but also a sense of how the posture is building on the other one-legged postures by both locking the standing leg but also developing the core strength and flexibility to keep the hips relatively square. Not bad for just ten seconds of work.

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

Aside from losing weight and toning up, I've noticed that I rarely get colds anymore. If I do get the flu, it's generally over in 24 hours instead of 72. Doing Bikram also has fortified me mentally. I'm a reporter and deadlines can be stressful, but I know that if I can survive 90 minutes in a steaming hot room pushing my body to the max, I can write 500 or 1000 words in a couple hours, no problem, then go home, get the dinner and homework train moving and live to see another day.

### **Any words of wisdom to new students?**

My advice to new yogis is to keep coming, and to suck it in (your stomach muscles) because that really does strengthen and protect your back from injury. I speak from experience.

## **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.