

Studio Announcements

So Cal Regional Championship!

Yes, we will host the Regionals again! November 1, from noon to 4pm, at the Lanterman Auditorium. This is an inspirational event. See what the postures look like when done to the fullest expression! Many of you have signed up to volunteer. Thank you so much. We still need sponsors... Talk to Rose for details. There will be a Party to follow the event, all are welcome to attend. We will have a schedule change for the morning classes. Haven't figured that out yet... and the 4:30pm class will be canceled due to the party. More details to come in the October newsletter.

Jason Winn Seminar a Heels-Over-Head Success!

Jason Winn led an amazing class and seminar August 9th, highlighting the hows and whys of each and every posture with his trademark blend of discipline and compassion. For those who attended, bravo, your triangles will never be the same, thank goodness. For those that didn't, get that hip down!!!

New 1 pm classes Thursdays and Fridays!

Lunch, schmunch: get your stretch on!!! Thanks for your support; Fridays are doing well... Thursdays may need to be canceled. If you like the time frame, please attend. It is your attendance that makes the difference.

Our Very Own Teacher-Trainee Blogs From Acapulco!

Dena Depompa's down in Mexico at the Teacher Training, and between the two-a-day classes, marathon evening lectures, and even a few invitations from Bikram to have the whole teacher training stay up all night watching movies with him, she

Yogi Q&A: Sherene Abay



Name: Sherene Abay

Profession: Middle school Language Arts/history teacher at Foothill Progressive Montessori Academy in La Canada

Been doing Bikram Yoga since:

October 2003, did four days a week, completed the 60-day challenge in 2006, gave up in June 2006, and made a come back after 22 months in April 2008.

How many times a week do you practice?

Six days a week since coming back in April!

What inspired you to start Bikram Yoga?

I had finally found something that suited me, my lifestyle and my purpose. I wanted to lose weight. I had tried many diets and many forms of exercise like aerobics, dancing, jogging, kickboxing, but gave up because I fell out of breath and could not complete the duration of the class. That did not happen to me with Bikram Yoga. I stayed in the room the whole 90 minutes in my very first class, and this was a reason for me to come back. I was able to control my breathing and complete each 90-minute lesson.

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

No. This was my first attempt at yoga, and I began to love it. With each class I felt a sense of achievement. I began to know my own body.

What are your favorite things about Bikram Yoga La Canada?

It's a very welcoming place. I could come back even after a lapse of 22 months, and everyone would help me get back on track. The teachers have been very understanding no matter what your body type and even if you cannot do all the poses, the teachers' words of encouragement motivate me to go further.

Posture Highlight: Standing Bow-- Dandayamana Danurasana



The Standing Bow is your second locked-knee posture and it balances out the forward bend of your forehead-to-knee with a backward bend.

The key to this posture is to build it proportionately and progressively, allowing it to deepen. There's probably no other posture in the standing series where you can feel so acutely and obviously how tightness in one part of your body (hamstrings, shoulders) affects other parts of your body (ribcage, spine).

A way to stay on track with Bow is to think of it in terms of stretching your torso. Yes, it will stretch your standing leg hamstring, your kicking leg top of your thigh and ultimately your shoulders, but think of all these components adding up to a stretch of your torso, and finally, your spine. Like you are getting longer toward the mirror.

To start, scoop up your ankle from the inside, palm facing out, letting your ring finger settle into that little groove in your ankle. Stretch your other arm straight up

still has time to write about it and share pictures. As the Eagles once put it, "It could be heaven or it could be hell," just like the yoga itself, and teacher training is both. Show your support and see what life on the front lines of teacher training, check out: <http://denagardeniadays.blog.com/>

Loving Yoga Etiquette Reminders

Give The Class Before Yours Five Minutes of Savasana Please!

Most of you who come to the 6:15 pm classes have been very good about observing the five minutes of savasana after the class ends. Which admittedly is not always right on time, so sometimes that five minute window can get real close to 6:10 pm. Students in the 4:30 pm classes have made their needs known that they would like an opportunity to have a little longer in savasana before the next class sets up, and it is just yoga etiquette to allow for an uninterrupted final savasana. Just don't take Aaron Fishman's spot, okay?

Sign-In First Before Setting Up Please!

Which brings us to our next point: sign-in first BEFORE you set up your mat for class. Not only will this make the front desk run smoother, it will also allow for more time between classes if we finish the sign-in before setting up for the next class. For all you regulars anxious to get your spot, well, for most of you waiting a few more minutes won't affect that and if it does, it may be just the subtle nudge out of your comfort zone to occasion some real breakthroughs in your practice. Thanks in advance for your cooperation and willingness to work more together for a more satisfying yoga experience for all students.

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

The hardest thing for me was attending class because of my weight. Not only was I the heaviest female in the room but because of my weight, I could not bend as far and this hindered me from doing all the poses. The teachers were very understanding and gave me tips and modifications which helped me overcome this difficulty. They also encouraged me to come as often as I could, and I felt myself improving each day. I felt more comfortable with the class and myself every day.

What's your favorite pose why?

My favorite pose is the standing bow. I feel free, like I have gone to my maximum, I can do anything. I feel great!

What's your hardest pose and why?

There are a few. Standing forehead to knee, the third part of wind removing pose, half-tortoise, and toe-stand--and they all stem from one problem: my abdomen! But I am trying, and I know with each class, I have improved and need to keep working at them.

What changes has doing this Yoga brought to your life?

I feel so positive and focused. Lots of positive things have are happening in my life since the yoga. My attitude has changed. I carry the focus and control I feel in class into to the school where I teach. Dealing with 13 and 14 year-olds can be hectic.

What keeps you motivated?

I have lost the 30 pounds I put on while I discontinued Bikram Yoga for 22 months. I lost it in four months. I am now 30 pounds lighter. I feel great. I want to work at it and never make the mistake of staying away too long. Not more than one day, because one day will lead to two and so forth.

Any recent breakthroughs you'd like to share?

What is so special about my experience with Bikram Yoga is that I could come back to a program I had abandoned and get back on track within the first three months. The encouragement motivated me, and I began to become my old self again. My only regret is that I did stay away for so long. I keep thinking where would I have been in my practice had I continued, or how would I have looked and felt if I had only stayed. Now, when I cannot do a pose that I had no problem with before or not being able to go to my edge like I used to, I cannot believe what I have lost in not continuing. I am still nowhere compared to where I was.

Any words of wisdom to new students?

Bikram Yoga is for people all ages, shapes, and sizes. It is not easy; it demands a disciplined commitment, and as you practice and see the changes, you begin to respect it. My journey with Bikram Yoga is like the poem "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. I took the Bikram Road, a silent road with struggles, heat and sweat, and it

palm facing the mirror. Now make your torso just as square and long to the mirror as you can, building on your form from half-moon.

A challenge right away is to let that arm straighten, which means not over-gripping your foot. let your wrist go straight and use your ring finger the way, say, your instincts tell you to use your thumb. In other words, let the wrist go blank, make your hand a hook.

Next bring your knees together, chin to the shoulder, two hips in one line and, keeping your kicking leg hip forward, start to kick your leg up and back. Though, yes, you do want to bring your body parallel to the floor, it is because you are kicking it down there, not just flopping down and kicking later. This makes the posture more continuous and thorough. As Bikram says, "Charge your body forward, from the base of your spine."

"Base of the spine" means the energy is coming from the core, and that means getting your kicking leg away from your standing leg as you charge forward equal and simultaneous. Notice the language: Charge your body forward--not down; the kick will bring you down.

The goal is kicking and reaching 50-50, equal and simultaneous. That means feeling the pressure of your foot ankle against your hand as you keep charging forward. In fact, it may be necessary to keep your reaching arm up and your chin and chest up a little more; you'll feel it more as a back bend this way. Eventually you'll see the toes up over the top of your head; eventually you kick and reach so far forward, your two heels are in one line from the side.

What you'll find is that the more forward you charge and the more you kick, it lets you get into that back shoulder more, and that's your final posture: two shoulders in one line, your front shoulder closer to your chin. You'll start to feel it more in your ribcage and that's a good sign you're charging forward more from the base of the spine. Remember, all roads lead back to the lower spine and that's ultimately where the strength is coming from. If you can, you'll even be using that kicking leg glute.

It's not uncommon to experience a little dancer turn-out as you do this, and one of constants of this posture is locking the standing leg and charging forward from it. That's one of the reasons one you get

has made all the difference to me, a difference that I take into my body, my health, my attitude, my work, my relationships. Try it with that determined commitment and I'm sure you will find the difference too. And do not stay away too long!!!

your beautiful bow shape to bring the body down. You don't want to sink into that standing leg hip, you want to lengthen forwards and back away from it, 50-50, as Bikram says, "equal and simultaneous." Happy bow-ing.