



Yoga for the Worrier

A Regular Yoga Practice Can Quiet Even the Most Worrisome of Minds

by Lara Azzarito Ward

For most people, a day doesn't go by without one worry or another creeping into the mind and distracting productive thoughts and actions. Some worries can be a positive motivator to save for a rainy day; to plan for unexpected events or even remind us to have annual check-ups. While others, such as concerns for the economy or a natural disaster, may linger on the mind leading to chronic stress, anxiety attacks or depression.

A natural solution for those who wish to quiet the mind and nervous system has been shared for centuries by yogis. In yoga, surrendering negative thought patterns and replacing them with new tools is a lesson that is shared. Simple in nature are tools such as becoming fully present, simple breathing techniques and repeating calming affirmations. When the mind's attention is in the very moment that life is being experienced then worries, fears and anxieties for the future dissipate. As worriers practice yoga and the old habitual negative thought patterns of worry begin, a light of recognition turns on and the new techniques replace the old



Lara Azzarito Ward Demonstrates Yoga for the Worrier

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experiences. Trepidations and anxieties then dissipate.

Learning to become fully present often begins with simple breathing techniques. A traditional yoga breathing technique is to count to 4 while exhaling, pause to a count of 6, inhale to a count of 2, and again pause for 6. Allowing a pattern such as this calms the nervous system, bringing a peaceful wave through the body and mind.

Easing worries and alleviating anxieties begins with taking one attentive breath at a time.

Lara Azzarito Ward is a certified 500 hour yoga instructor and is the Founder and Director of Lotus Gardens Yoga School. Lotus Gardens is the first Yoga Alliance approved teacher training in CT and has certified more than 165 instructors who now teach throughout the world. She resides in Sherman, CT with her husband, Will and her two dogs. See ad pg 25.

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Women undertaking a 10-week program of restorative yoga classes experienced a 50 percent reduction in depression and a 12 percent increase in feelings of peace and meaning after the yoga sessions, according to a recent study published in the journal *Psycho-Oncology*.

Source: PhysOrg.com

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