



March 2018

Easter Opening Hours:

On **Friday, 30 March (Good Friday)** we will be open for the following classes:

- 9:30 am PAL 60
- 4:00 pm PR 60
- 5:30 pm PG 60

Our normal classes will run on Saturday 31 March and Sunday 1 April.

On **Monday, 2 April (Easter Monday)** there will be the following classes on:

- 9:30 am PAL60
- 4:00 pm PB 60
- 5:30 pm PAL 60
- 7:00 pm PR 60

Our normal schedule of classes will run again from and including Tuesday 3 April.

Thank You:

Many of you have inquired after Margo's absence over the last few weeks. Her mother died and she has been home in Canada as a consequence. Your concern and best wishes are greatly appreciated. Margo will be back by Easter.

Step into your Power:

Step into your Power, Apollo Power Yoga's yoga intensive/teacher training, runs **21-28 April 2018**.

If you have thought about doing this course then DO IT! If you are anxious about doing this course, DO IT! If you have done 40 Days to

Personal Revolution then your next step is to DO THIS COURSE!

Our promise is that:

1. You will learn more about yoga as an holistic practice of meditation, asana and personal inquiry,
2. You will engage in personal development to access your best self,
3. You will learn a great practice and great methodology for teaching yoga,
4. You will experience the unexpected,
5. You will connect with a fantastic group of diverse people in an amazing shared process.



Places are limited so do not delay in seizing this opportunity to shake up business as usual in your life and create a new sense of vitality and empowerment in your way of being.

As one person who trained with us in 2017 and 2018 said:

I came to the trainings to challenge myself physically, and left with far more than I could

have imagined - physically, mentally and spiritually. Your ability to read people and hone in on what they are saying (or aren't!) and what they need in that moment is a real gift, you have taught me a lot about myself, encouraged me to drop a lot of stuff I don't need, and helped me to create a new way of thinking that ultimately makes me a better person.

To apply or for more information contact Hamish (hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz or by phone on 0210551884).

Tricks and Transitions Workshop:

Sign up NOW for **Tricks and Transitions** on **Saturday 7 April, midday to 2:00 pm.**

This is a fantastic workshop offering extension to you in the means by which you transition from pose to pose and introducing you to some fun poses not normally offered in class but which arise out of and are extensions upon those you are already familiar with.



Bring new intensity and possibility to your practice and get more from your classes.

Bookings are essential and places are limited. To be part of this great session book by signing up at reception at the studio, by emailing Hamish (hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz) or by phoning Hamish on 0210551884.

Venue: Apollo Power Yoga, 46 Salisbury Street

Fee: \$50 (Apollo annual members pay just \$25)

We will start tight on midday so please be on time. Thank you.

Why Yoga? – Here's One Reason (of many):

In social situations when what I do for a living comes up there are a variety of different responses that people give when they hear I am a yoga teacher.

Some look puzzled as if they cannot understand why I do not have real job. Some look like I must be dim-witted or stupid. Baron Baptiste tells a story of a conversation he had with one of his sons. His son was talking about teachers at his school. He said that the teachers who were no good taught gym and that teachers who were no good at gym taught yoga. Baron warned him to be careful because it was a yoga teacher who was buying his birthday presents!

Typically some people, generally men, say they can't do yoga because they're not flexible enough!! Others hitch their pants up over their bellies and say they should do something like that.

Many people start talking about what they do for exercise since they regard the conversation as having taken a turn to the physical rather than the vocational or spiritual – or perhaps to justify their non-participation in yoga because they are actively engaged elsewhere or perhaps to say they have no need to degrade themselves with something so gentle as yoga.

Some say they have done some yoga as if they have experienced all that yoga has to offer. There are so many different manifestations of yoga (as asana, as meditation, as worship and so on) that a few classes of one type hardly constitutes knowledge of "what yoga is".

As everyone who practices at Apollo Power Yoga knows, yoga can be very dynamic, athletic and challenging but we also know that there is a feeling in our bodies and minds after class that is different from the way we feel after other forms of exercise.

Some people crave the feeling they get when exercising really hard by running, cycling, playing rugby, practicing martial arts or some other form of high energy activity. One of the reasons they have that craving is because of endorphins which are chemicals released in the human body. Endorphins trigger the opiate response in the body and have the effect of masking pain.

That is correct. Hard physical exercise that stresses the body through over-exertion or high impact activity creates a chemical response that is akin to taking drugs but the effect is generated because the activity is creating pain that your body feels the need to mask or protect you from.

Having played rugby for 20 years of my life and having run as my primary form of training for rugby and as my primary form of exercise for a decade after I stopped playing rugby, I am all too familiar with the sensation of my own chemical cocktail of feel-good hormones.

I can recall experiences on the rugby field where I was injured but played on and the extent of the injury was hidden from me because of the chemical responses in my endocrine system.



The first year I played open grade rugby my team had limited resources among the tight forwards where I played. About 20 minutes into a game I felt a strain in my calf. I played

on with the strain feeling progressively worse but I felt that as long as I kept moving and kept it warm it would be OK. A few days afterwards I was feeling a bit better about the injury and was almost ready to train again. That night I experienced tremendous pain in my calf. I sought medical advice. My GP referred me to a specialist who said I had a torn calf muscle and a blood clot. He gave me blood thinners and anti-inflammatories. I hobbled around on a cane and was unable to play for some weeks. It was a dumb idea to play on. It worsened a calf strain into a tear and ultimately caused a blood clot. Those things cause strokes or even death if they get into your brain!

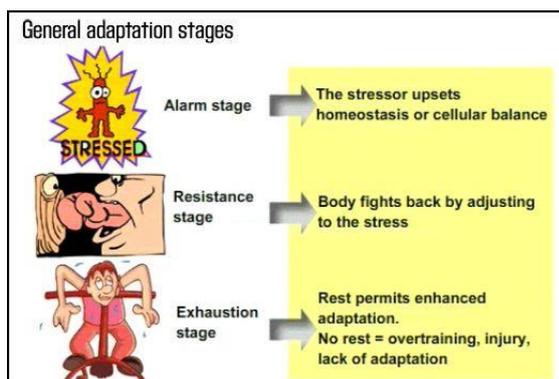
I can recall the difference between running at an even training pace over a particular route and running the same route hard-out. The former was rather "meh" and the latter was exhilarating. I did not understand at the time what was happening to me but, looking back from the vantage point of what I now know, I understand that the stresses I placed on myself by running hard or by playing on through the pain of injury were causing my body to hide my pain behind the veil of endorphin-induced pleasure. It was not that in feeling good I was doing no harm. Rather, the good feelings were a response to the harm I was doing.

This brings me to Hans Selye. Selye lived from 1907 to 1982 and was an Austrian endocrinologist (he studied the endocrine system and the nature of our hormone responses to different circumstances and the effect of our hormones upon us).

In 1936 he published works on what he described as the general adaptive response (GAR). He asserted that when the body is exposed to stress the sympathetic side of the nervous system (typically referred to as the fight/flight response) is activated and generates hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline to prime the body to deal with the

stress. These hormones lift the body's heart rate and blood pressure and stimulate the body's muscles for fast action and strength.

If the stress circumstances continue then the body's parasympathetic nervous system activates to return many of the body's normal functions to their usual levels while the body's energies are directed towards dealing with the stress factor.



In this period, called by Selye the resistance period, there continue to be markers of high stress in the body such as elevated blood-glucose levels, elevated blood pressure and heart rate, faster breathing and high levels of cortisol and adrenaline.

Even though there are some signs of normalcy about the person, their body is on high alert.

The final phase in the GAR is called exhaustion. If the stress factors continue and the body expends all its energy in attending to them, then the outcome is a collapse – call it adrenal fatigue or burn-out.

Someone who is exposed to continual stress factors through work or their relationships or through financial difficulties or whatever may be drawn to hard, high intensity exercise that generates a chemical masking effect and even may produce a feel-good sensation. This hard-out exercise expends the nervous energy generated by the stress experience but does not resolve the stress response which continues.

The hard exercise, while consuming the spikes in energy produced as a result of experiencing stress, does not remove the body from a state of high alert.

Ultimately, hard, high impact exercise will not resolve the issue of stress in the life of the individual. When I was in my 20s and working as a lawyer I felt the stresses of my life and work. Rugby was an outlet for the excess energy generated by my circumstances. I played golf too. Fewer cupboard doors were kicked in but I still experienced outbursts of anger and temper tantrums.

I could hit as many golf balls as I liked and I could play rugby as much as I could but the stress factors of deadlines at work and the need to be correct in my advice and to solve problems that were not clear and needed hard thought and a lot of legal knowledge did not go away.



History shows that I got out of the stress environment of legal practice. However, I found new things to worry about and maintained old patterns to resolve feelings of stress.

This is where yoga enters the picture. My own experience is that I am a calmer person now than I was before I started practicing yoga. One of my sons, who has lived through the before and after yoga versions of me, observes that I am a calmer person now than I was before I started practicing yoga.

What yoga does that other forms of exercise, that simply burn off stress energy without removing the body from high alert, do not do is rewire the body's endocrine system to generate an inner state of peace.

Yoga, through breath focus and low impact movement, creates a shift in the body from the sympathetic to the parasympathetic side of the nervous system. In place of cortisol and adrenaline, yoga functions on and stimulates serotonin and similar hormones and neurotransmitters that create inner peace and peace with respect to one's circumstances.

It is not that I have removed stress from my life. A major stress factor that I have been triggered by since my teenage years is money. Starting up Apollo Power Yoga was an expensive process and keeping it afloat in the first two years when expenses exceeded outgoings was very hard. Sustaining a lifestyle (mortgage, school fees etc.) predicated upon Margo's income as a partner in a successful law firm when earning the income of self-employed yoga teachers is very difficult for our family. I am daily exposed to financial stress factors but I am not triggered by them as I was in earlier times.

Breath is absolutely the key to this. Breathe through your nose and with attention and awareness to your breath and you will shift your endocrine response from the sympathetic to the parasympathetic side. Some students new to yoga reveal their inexperience by habitually breathing through their mouths.

I used to justify breathing through my mouth in yoga because I have a deviated septum (I was not born that way but had my septum smashed violently to one side courtesy of the thuggery of an opponent in a rugby game) which



effectively blocks my right nostril and makes breathing through my nose less easy than if both nostrils were unimpeded. Yet, I now breathe through my mouth very little as I have trained myself in ujjayi breathing and, deviated septum or not, I can breathe effectively through my nose. Everyone can.

Even if it is not your normal pattern, persist, be patient and cultivate the technique of breathing through your nose as you practice yoga, as you go about your day and as you sleep.

Couple ujjayi breathing with spiritual focus in the teaching of our style of practice at Apollo Power Yoga and you will have both a means of regulating your body's response to circumstances but you will gain new perspective on your circumstances.

That new perspective is highly relevant. When running I would fume over the things that were bothering me. I would use my own point of view to reason my way to me being right and to justify myself. With yoga I use perspective to diminish problems and create acceptance rather than resistance. Through yoga I hope we all make it rather than that I win and others lose.

After a rugby game I felt fatigued all over. My shoulders would be raw and sore. My ribs and back would feel beaten up. My muscles were sore from hard impacts. My joints were sore from sudden, violent misalignments in the course of the game. The only way that felt

“good” was because of the temporary chemical response inside that hid all that was going on for me.

After a hard run, especially a race where I had pushed myself to my limits I also felt fatigued. As with rugby, the chemical cocktail left me in a feel-good state but only for a short time and it did not change my perspective on circumstances. I could be impatient and irritable with circumstances within five minutes of returning from a run.

After a session in a gym pushing weights I would not even feel good. In fact, I could feel quite angry after a gym session (I was never good at pushing tin and generally felt inadequate and frustrated by weights sessions – as well as bored).

In savasana I feel something different. I feel physically tired (if I have been practicing a vinyasa class) but in no pain and utterly relaxed. The state of calm I experience over the closing stages of yoga practice is not fleeting as was the “feel good” after other forms of exercise. Rather, I carry that forward with me through the rest of the day. My whole relationship with the world around me changes having practiced yoga asana or having meditated. My understanding and belief is that this is due to changes wrought at the level of my nervous system and the state of my consciousness.

Yoga is not my way of letting off steam or getting away from it all. Yoga is my means of creating a state of being that leaves me less susceptible to stress factors and that brings me into acceptance with the world rather than in conflict with it – not perfectly so and not all the time. I am as flawed as anyone else and prone to being triggered occasionally but I am different and, I believe, am improved from the experience of having practiced yoga.

Practice yoga to gain access to a new experience of yourself in your nervous system and to gain a new appreciation of yourself with respect to your circumstances and live life free of the experience of stress and free of the danger of adrenal fatigue and burn-out.

Asana Spotlight:

Continuing the poses of the Grounding series from Journey into Power, this month we focus on prasritta padattonasana (straddle leg forward fold).

- Begin in downward facing dog. Step your right foot forward to warrior 1, then take warrior 2.
- Straighten your front leg and turn both your feet to face the left side of the room. Have your feet parallel or slightly pigeon-toed.
- Set your hands at your hips, engage uddiyana bandha, breathe in and lift your chest, fold forward from your hips.
- The strong temptation for many people here is to flex and round their spines. The essence of this forward fold is not spinal flexion but folding and hinging at your hips. Keep your back straight, focus your movement into the joints of your hips and fold deeply.
- Tight hamstrings will act as an impediment to this forward fold. Be prepared to bend your knees and release the tension from the back of your legs and gluteal muscles to gain greater access to freedom and fold at your hips.
- Ground the outer edges of your feet to the earth and press the big toe mound of each foot to the floor. It is common for students to have an imbalance in the feet with too much weight in their heels and their hips pressed behind the line of their ankles. Instead, root the centres of your heels to the floor then shift some weight to the balls of your feet and take your hips

forward until they are vertically stacked over the line of your ankles.

- Pull your leg muscles to the bone and turn your inner thighs internally towards the wall behind you. The contraction of your quadriceps muscles on the front of your thighs will help aid the relaxation and lengthening of the hamstrings in the backs of your thighs.
- Reach your hands to the floor and place them just wider than shoulder width apart. If you are less adept at this forward fold place your hands in front of the line of your toes. As you deepen, walk your hands backwards between your legs towards the wall behind you.
- Again, it is easy at this point to collapse into flexion in your spine. Instead of wrapping your arms and shoulders towards your chest, draw your arms and shoulders towards the back of your body and lead your chest through between your arms.
- Relax your neck and reach the crown of your head away from your hips. Draw your shoulder blades away from your ears.
- Breathe long and free with ujjayi pranayama. In an inverted position such as this, gravity aids the work of your diaphragm to give power to your exhalations. Give equal attention, length and power to your inhalations.



- There are many different variations of this pose that you may try. One is to take a

bind with the index and middle finger of each of your hands at the big toes of each of your feet. In this variation, rotate your upper arms inward and wing your elbows outward and upward. Draw your shoulder blades flat onto your back. Use the strength of your hands and arms to draw your torso deeper into the forward fold.



- Another variation is to straddle your feet as wide apart as you can. Remember to keep the outer edges of your feet grounded and maintain a stable base for your pose through the soles of your feet. In this variation the stretch focus moves from your hamstrings in the backs of your thighs to the adductor muscles and gracilis on the inside of your thighs. The wider apart your feet, the lower you will be able to reach your torso towards the floor. You may choose to rest your forearms on the mat in this variation.



- You may also wish to elongate your torso straight forward from your hips and extend

your arms out to right and left from your shoulders like wings. This last variation requires strong engagement of your back muscles in towards your spine and a strong lift of the pit of your belly towards your spine.



- From the original prasritta padattonasana you may wish to take arm variations. One is to simply clasp your hands together behind your back, straighten your arms and stretch your arms forward over your head. Another is to take a gomukhasana arm bind. A third option is to hold your hands in reverse namaskar (prayer hands behind your back).
- The original variation described here is also the basis for a tripod headstand. More on that another time!

Straddle legged forward fold is an opportunity to build your foundations on rock with strength and stability in your feet and legs whilst at the same time creating openness and a water-like quality of flow in the joints of your spine. Press down through your feet into the earth. Pull in your leg muscles to their bones. Lift up your hips and sitting bones towards the sky. Flow your spine towards the floor like a river running from the mountains to sea.

Richard Sinke on The Terrace:

Richard Sinke has been operating in the hospitality business in Christchurch for many

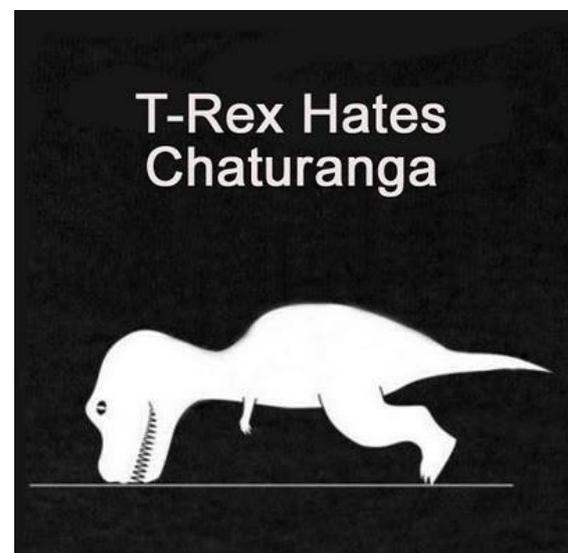
years. Anyone who lived in Christchurch before the earthquakes in 2011 would have a story in their life of the Dux de Lux in the Arts Centre which was Richard's business.

After the Arts Centre site was rendered unavailable to him following the earthquakes Richard opened two new establishments: Dux Live for music and dance in Addington and Dux Dine for the aquatarian-style of cuisine that the Dux de Lux used to feature. Subsequently he opened Dux Central on Lichfield Street and Poplar Street in the central city with a variety of bar types including a cocktail bar, craft beer bar, wine bar, and a function room.

Now, Richard has opened The Terrace Tavern on Oxford Terrace. He has patiently waited (because he is a yogi) for The Terrace to complete its construction and fit-out and now he is open and trading. Best of luck, Richard with your new venture.



An Oldie But A Goodie:



From Baron Baptiste:



Congratulations to these students and to their coaches with whom we have been proud to work.



Namaste

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Congratulations:

Over the summer we have had students from Christ's College and Christchurch Boys' High School practicing yoga with us as part of their preparation for the Maadi Cup secondary schools rowing regatta. That regatta was held at Lake Ruitaniwha near Twizel over the course of the last week.

Christ's College won the marquee event, the under-18 boys coxed eights event for the Maadi Cup, and also won gold in four other A finals and won silver in one A final.

Christchurch Boys' High School won three A finals, five silvers and a bronze. Their crew was third in the Maadi Cup event and they were pipped in a very close finish in the under-18 boys coxed fours event (the Springbok Shield).