



December 2017

### **THANK YOU:**

At the conclusion of another year it is time to disconnect from the rush of everyday activity and gain perspective. What I observe is extremely gratifying. A student remarked to me yesterday that I looked very happy as they arrived in the reception area of the studio. They are correct. I am extremely happy as each of you comes in to practice.

It is very rewarding working with you all and I derive tremendous pleasure and satisfaction from working with you. I am blessed to have a vocation that brings me such pleasure and blessed to be able to associate with such good and worthy people as you all.

I am sometimes asked about whether I will be going away over the Christmas/New Year period. The answer is that I will not be doing anything other than what I truly love which is teaching yoga. I have not had a holiday since July 2014. I had a brief 5-day stint in Auckland last year but that was when my younger son was having surgery up there. I have had breaks away in late 2014, early 2015 and September 2017 to attend training programmes. These breaks away from the normal routine of studio classes are not holidays and are a lot of hard work wedged between long-distance travel, but they do serve to refresh and reinvigorate me.

The essential truth is that being at work, interacting with you all and sharing in the energetic experience of yoga practice is fulfilling for me.

Margo and I are highly appreciative of you all and wish to thank you all for your patronage of and support for Apollo Power Yoga over the course of this year and we look forward to seeing more of you all throughout 2018. Margo and I wish you all happiness, love and connection over this special time of the year.

### **Power Groove Drinks:**

After Power Groove on Friday 22 December we will put on some pizza, sushi and drinks and you are welcome to join us for conversation and community from around 6:45 to 7:45 pm. All are welcome.

### **Christmas/New Year Timetable:**

You will see from the studio reception that our timetable of classes for the period 24 December 2017 to 7 January 2018 is available. There is a timetable on the wall for you to peruse, hard copy timetables on the reception desk for you to take away and a new tab on the menu of our website called Christmas/New Year Timetable.

We are open every day except Christmas Day, generally for three practices per day, one in the morning and two in the evening. The evening classes typically are the last two classes of each day on our normal timetable.

Do pick up a timetable from reception or snap a picture of the wall timetable or get on-line and see what is on offer and come in in to practice. We are here for you.



### **Apollo Power Yoga giving back to the community:**

**Africa Yoga Project:** As you are aware, we run a Sunday morning contribution class. The proceeds from this class together with the regular monthly donation of one student in particular go to the Africa Yoga Project in the form of a monthly salary for Kriza Mandela.

Kriza is a young Kenyan yoga teacher employed by AYP. Funded by your donations Kriza trains at AYP and teaches outreach classes to his community where the students can practice for free.

Kriza teaches to a particular community as he is deaf. He was educated in schools for disabled people and his outreach classes are in such schools.

We have contributed approximately \$2500 to AYP this year.

The founder of Africa Yoga Project, Paige Elenson, has been honoured in Louisville, Kentucky, USA, receiving the Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Award for Global Citizenship for her work with disadvantaged youth in Kenya on September 23, 2017.

At the award ceremony Elenson shared, "Muhammad Ali said, 'Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.' Tonight has been an inspiration for me to continue and grow my rent check." Many youth in Africa have resorted to relying on foreign aid to survive, but Africa Yoga Project creates opportunities for Africans with Africans. "I really want to thank everyone in Africa who rolls out their yoga mat every day and does the work, because there would be no jobs for yoga teachers without students," said Elenson.

AYP is spread across 15 different African countries. It has 70 Academy members, including Kriza, 50 in Nairobi. So far this year AYP teachers have taught 11,427 free classes to 166,468 students. And your donations on Sunday mornings are helping making that happen and are helping change the lives of others for the better. Congratulations and thank you.

**Heart Foundation:** Margo and I, in the name of Apollo Power Yoga have donated \$540 this year to the Heart Foundation and have a regular monthly payment in place to continue doing so.

**City Mission:** In celebration of International Yoga Day, Apollo Power Yoga collaborated with Lululemon and other yoga teachers from around the city to create a day of asana and discussion. Margo and Hamish together with James from Apollo Power Yoga all contributed their time to this event and many Apollo students bought tickets with surplus proceeds from the event going to the City Mission.

**Movember:** Most recently we held a fund raising class for Movember and the cause of men's mental health and suicide prevention that raised over \$600.

*Thank you, everyone, for being part of the change we all seek in this world.*

## Santa:

Well, I could be referring to the mythical figure abused for commercial gain across the world or I could be using the Sanskrit term to describe one of the seven fundamental states of human consciousness described by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras.

You guessed correctly if you decided I am referring to the latter. And *santa* (pron. “shanta”) in this context is a beautiful concept.

The seven fundamental states of human consciousness described by Patanjali are:

- Vyutthana – the wandering consciousness in which the mind is restless, distracted and unsettled.
- Nirodha – the restraining consciousness in which you deliberately attempt to concentrate and focus your mind.
- Santa – the pause between the wandering and restraining conscious states. This state is like the pause between inhale and exhale.
- Ekagra – this is single-pointed consciousness. By concentrating on the pause (*santa*) the wandering state of mind is transformed into single-focussed attention.
- Chidra – in this state the individual becomes proud of the state of ekagra or complacent and careless to maintain attention. As a result fissures between the seer, the individual’s true self, and their mind open up and the individual must recommit to yoga practices to restore clarity.
- Nirmana – this is a steady state of consciousness in which the consciousness is at one with itself.
- Divya – this is a state of pure or divine consciousness. When all impurities of mind are extinguished pure virtues pour from the heart of the individual.

For present purposes it is *santa* that we are concerned with. Patanjali encourages us to cultivate this state of consciousness. Do so by being awake and attentive. In idle moments, rather than seeking distraction in screens or food or meaningless activity, focus and meditate upon the silence and limpid clarity of the space between thoughts.

It is my experience that at times when I am still I suddenly feel uncomfortable and restless. It is my perception of others that just when you approach a state of stillness you react and move or fidget or otherwise allow your mind to disturb the peace of your body and soul.

*Santa* is about being comfortable with stillness and, with attention, building stillness in your mind and body. *Santa* offers peace and tranquillity so do not resist it. Choose to stop the relentless agitation of your mind. Relax your awareness to the space between one thing and another and stay there.

In the quiet of this intermediate space you will gain access to a sense of self that is not mind or ego. You will gain access to your inner truth. You will experience the calmness and clarity of a meditative state, even if only for a few moments.

Unlike Santa Claus, this *santa* is not a fiction but a real state of consciousness that can be accessed by everyone – and that means you. Be awake, attentive and watchful but watch for the space between thoughts rather than for the next thing that your mind wants to hang onto for entertainment and distraction.

My resistance to the point of *santa* is that I doubt that I will be comfortable with myself. I wager that for you, the resistance is the same. Cultivate the space of *santa* and you will be rewarded with the discovery that you can be with yourself. It is peaceful, calming and safe.

**Lululemon Athletica Christmas Market –  
Thursday 21 December 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm:**

Lululemon Athletica have a Christmas Market coming up in store on Thursday 21 December 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. They are collaborating with local business for it. For anyone hoping to tick some things off their Christmas list you'll see Lyttelton Lights candles, wreaths from Bunch floral, Chocolate from Bennetto and yummy treats from Gre3n and A Mouse Called Bean. Lululemon Athletica will be posting more about vendors and activities in the event page on Facebook also.



Here is a link to further information:

[https://www.facebook.com/events/314331799071026/?notif\\_t=plan\\_user\\_joined&notif\\_id=1512888143776015](https://www.facebook.com/events/314331799071026/?notif_t=plan_user_joined&notif_id=1512888143776015)

**Asana Spotlight:**

Hanumanasana. Hanuman is the monkey god and he was asked to help a king, Rama, recover his wife, Sita, from bad people who had stolen her away and were escaping towards the island now known as Sri Lanka. As the rescuers approached the sea they feared that the chase was a lost cause as they did not have vessels to carry them across the water. Hanuman, however, gallantly leapt at full stretch over the sea and rescued the queen.

We know it as splits pose.

- From downward facing dog, step your right foot forward to a long lunge. Lower your left knee to the floor.
- Walk your fingertips back towards your hips and straighten your right leg. Dorsiflex your right foot (flex the toes of your foot back towards your shin). This is half monkey or ardha hanumanasana. You may wish to spend some time here allowing your hamstrings to relax and lengthen before progressing further.
- Now, carefully work your right foot further forward on your mat. Avoid any sudden movements that will acutely hyper-extend your groin. Maintain plenty of support in your hands as you open out the length of your base – even rest your hands on blocks if you need.



- When you are in balance, reach your arms straight over your head and press the palms of your hands together. As with a Warrior 1. Reach up as high as you can and then arch backwards.
- If you stop before you are in full splits maintain plenty of stability in your hands to avoid dramatically and potentially injuriously collapsing into the pose. A block placed under your right buttock or the back of your right thigh can be an aid to stability here.
- You will notice that if you externally rotate your left leg and hip somewhat it gives you access to greater depth. However, resist the temptation to open out in this way.

Maintain a square orientation of your hips towards the front of your mat. This may restrict depth to some extent but it will be more intense. Do not rush in search of depth but move carefully through the resistance and stay in good form.

- As you progress you may gain access to new depths. In the second image you will see Margo has folded her torso forward over her right leg. This forward fold is possible as her hips are square with the front of her mat and she has moved through all the resistance of her hamstrings into the open space of freedom.



- Another variation Margo takes adds a quadriceps stretch of her left thigh. In this variation bind your left hand to your right foot. Bend your left leg up behind you. Reach back and bind your left foot with your right hand. Sit up tall and balance the forces through your left hand/right foot and your right hand/left foot.

Open up to new possibilities in hanumanasana. Your hamstrings will speak loudly and in high voices. Relax, be patient and gradually ease your way into a new expression of your body.

**From Baron Baptiste:**



Namaste

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