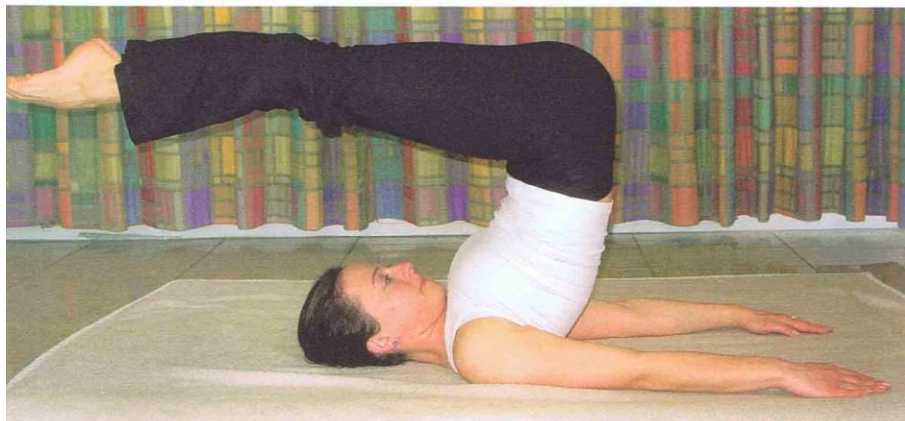


POWER YOGA

THE POWER FOR LIFE



It all started with the ECB Sports & Cultural Club (SCC)'s initiative last year to offer one of the mind and body techniques par excellence: Power Yoga.

There are many yoga systems, one of which is Power Yoga, as it is known in Western societies. It refers to the system taught by Indian yoga master K. Pattabhi Jois and goes under the Sanskrit name of Ashtanga yoga. Literally, this means "eight-limbed yoga" and refers to the eight limbs outlined in the Yoga Sutra of Patañjali. This yoga path includes moral and ethical guidelines, postures, breathwork, sense withdrawal, concentration and meditation.

Jois' Ashtanga yoga comprises a precise series of postures (āsanas) performed in sequence combined with breath control (prāṇāyāma). The Ashtanga practice is detailed in an ancient Sanskrit text called the Yoga Kurunta, which was rediscovered in the early twentieth century by

T. Krishnamacharya. Jois studied with him and contributed significantly to the worldwide expansion of this particular and probably the most popular yoga path.

Power Yoga at the ECB SCC is very physical and athletic. We go through a prescribed set of āsanas, channel energy through the body using both our own locks (bandhas) and breath and concentrate on single points via a fixed gaze (drishti). This focusing helps to calm our thoughts. Once you start practising yoga, however, you will notice that it is far easier to calm down one's body than one's thoughts: something you realise during the last fifteen minutes of the class, which are dedicated especially to relaxation techniques.

Although traditional Ashtanga yoga classes begin with an invocation to Patañjali chanted in Sanskrit, we do not chant as not everybody feels comfortable with it. Instead, we spend more time at the end of the class

on meditation and practising single breathing techniques, which everybody can always use for their own well-being. Proper breathing relieves the body and helps to reduce stress: deep, long, conscious breathing instead of shallow, short and unconscious breaths.

Many people avoid yoga because they feel that they are not flexible enough. In yoga, flexibility is not necessarily a gift. Practising yoga is not about flexibility. Yoga is about flexibility of the mind. Yoga teaches you how to control life energy through breathing.

Now, you are probably asking yourself what it is exactly you would gain from practising Power Yoga. The answer is a whole lot more than just the desired flexibility: yoga helps to reduce blood pressure and stress, which, unfortunately, everybody suffers from to some extent. It also increases lung capacity and improves metabolism, physical awareness, self-perception, fitness, concentration and general health. Various injuries and chronic pain such as back pain, spinal protrusion/herniated disk(s) can be cured through regular yoga practice and specific postures. Furthermore, practising yoga will raise your awareness of the importance of healthy nourishment: organically grown, fresh and cooked food alone will nurture your body and allow your life energies to flow unhindered through its meridians. You will feel rejuvenated and gain new power, the power for life.

By Zrinka Katarina Fidermuc Maler*

* certified Ashtanga yoga and Pilates teacher.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

EUROBADMINTON 2005 and EUROTENNIS 2005 will take place in Frankfurt on 26-29 May. The ECB will be hosting 14 different central banks for these two separately organised four-day events.

The ECB is also sending a team to EUROBRIDGE 2005, hosted by Danmarks Nationalbank, which will take place on a cruise ship at the end of May.

Once again the ECB will be participating in the annual Frankfurt Dragonboat Festival on 28/29 May. If you wish to join the team, contact the river sports section.

This year's JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge will take place on Thursday, 2 June 2005 at 7.30 p.m. The Chase is a 5.6 km running race around the streets of Frankfurt, which you can take as seriously

or as easy as you wish. Last year over 50,000 took part, including over 150 from the ECB! An e-mail inviting entries will be sent around to all staff in early April.

110 ECB Sports and Cultural Club members are participating in EUROBANK 2005 in Montpellier from 4-8 May.