

## The Athlete's Guide to Yoga: An Integrated Approach to Strength Flexibility and Focus

### Sage Rountree

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According to legend, the first marathoner, Pheidippides, ran from the Greek town of Marathon to Athens to announce that the Greeks had defeated the Persians; also according to legend, he promptly fell down dead.

Today, millions of athletes run the distinguished distance that Pheidippides established, and many other athletes participate in a variety of road races, triathlons, distance cycling, and swimming competitions. These athletes spend a lot of time and dedication on their sport of choice, yet, according to Rountree, author of *The Athlete's Guide to Yoga*, they could all be better at their sports with the practice of yoga.

Rountree's assurance in the opening pages of her guide that "yoga will make you a better athlete" is credible because she is, herself, a marathoner and triathlete, as well as a certified yoga instructor. She notes her personal experience in the book's preface, commenting, "Yoga has been an integral part of my training regimen and my modest success as an age-group triathlete."

Her knowledge about both the practice of yoga and the endurance of distance athletes establishes her as a reliable instructor on both subjects. Athletes and non-athletes alike often find yoga a difficult discipline to learn from the pages of a book. Rountree makes the practice accessible with the prolific use of pictures that clearly demonstrate the poses discussed in each chapter, and her explanations are thorough and easy to follow.

If those two elements aren't sufficient, the book also comes with a short DVD. For those who participate in endurance sports, the training can become difficult and draining. But Rountree assures her readers that with yoga, an athlete can feel stronger, more flexible, better balanced, and more sharply focused for any level of training or racing. The last chapter of the text includes methods for incorporating yoga into a training schedule—"exactly when, where, how much, and what kind of yoga" an athlete should practice on any given day.

Perhaps if the Pheidippides had practiced Rountree's advice for incorporating yoga, he would have been able to complete that first marathon, and live to run another.

JESSICA HIGGINS (December 11, 2007)

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