FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Body, Mind & Spirit

Yoga: Mastering the Basics
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Himalayan Institute Press
978-0-89389-155-8
(August 31, 2000)

"Through yoga it is said that one may gradually be united with something higher, more subtle, more universal, and more profound than we find in everyday consciousness—the pure nature of self." The authors of this user-friendly manual for beginning or already hooked practitioners of yoga offer guidance through words and images.

The book begins with some of the spiritual and philosophical foundations of yoga in India where it has been practiced for more than forty centuries. This is followed by a brief overview of things to remember when getting started with a routine. Two complete forty-five minute sequences of postures are described and illustrated with an emphasis on flexibility, strength, and balance in the first case, as well as deepening practice, and further strengthening in the second case. Diagrams, and drab, but useful black and white photographs assist in understanding the movements complemented by clearly written descriptions of why and how movements should be executed.

Other chapters focus on "Training the Breath," "Relaxation," "Meditation," and "Yoga in Action." The authors balance a succinct presentation of this ancient discipline to a western, and potentially unfamiliar audience, with at least some serious discussion of the more esoteric and advanced aspects of Hatha yoga. Their view is that "As new students, we most often turn toward yoga because we are losing our agility, because we need more quiet in our lives, because our health is imbalanced, because we have lost our sense of direction, or because we crave relief from the strain and stress of modern life." With these objectives in mind, the style of yoga presented seeks to remedy such states.

Both authors are long-term practitioners of yoga and are resident teachers at Himalayan Institute centers, where yoga is incorporated into a holistic approach to life, with physical, mental, and spiritual growth based on both eastern and western teachings and techniques.

Though their own lives and work enable a serious and committed pursuit of the yogic path, they are aware that the lifestyle constraints that most people face require that a book of this sort be easy to use, and encouraging, with goals that are within reach.

Holly Wren Spaulding