

YOGA STYLE: *Yogabeats*

THE BACKGROUND: MUSIC IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE TRADITIONAL-MEETS- FREESTYLE YOGABEATS

David Sye has been practising and teaching yoga for 24 years. In his twenties he suffered with a digestive disease, which he overcame through yoga. He has studied a number of different styles including Tibetan yoga and now travels the world teaching teachers and novices his own style of 'Yogabeats'.

WHAT IS YOGABEATS?

"A 'West meets East' approach, it combines moving postures, breathing and relaxation with music (sometimes live DJs), making classes engaging and fun. I introduced music into my yoga to drown out the sounds of war

when I was teaching soldiers in Bosnia in the early 1990s. By turning the music up, my ashtanga vinyasa flow (sequence of flowing postures) got mashed up and I added bandhas (body locks) to quickly give the body pleasure – it's about getting high! Also, rather than holding still in postures, I use 'micro movements', which came from teaching children. They move spontaneously to get comfortable with their bodies. It's about feeling good in the postures."

WHO DOES IT SUIT?

"Yogabeats is for everyone – there is no barrier because you ask your body for permission to do it. If you can blink you are flexible enough to do Yogabeats! I don't care if people keep up or not, you respect your own physical parameters. It's for anyone who's after ultimate pleasure or a spiritual experience to feel joy and pleasure. A

90-year-old came to my class recently, and I also teach ten to 18-year-olds through the charity Youth At Risk. It's extraordinary how the yoga can take them away from their awful situations."

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

"There are so many. I recently taught someone suffering with a bad knee injury she had through cycling, which got better. I've also taught a woman in her sixties who's wheelchair bound, and the density of her spine improved. I had a woman turn up recently to class with serious eating disorders, who had been sectioned – she was crying with relief and joy at the end. She now comes every week. It's not about the physical body first, but our emotional body."

ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS

"Look at all the styles. For me, it's about reading the whole menu before choosing what to eat."

Initially, it's important to find the right teacher – find someone you like, you want to hang out with – you'll feel it. There's a saying in Tibetan yoga: 'To see the results of the yoga, look at the teacher.' I've been through times of being a really austere yogi. I didn't drink, I was macrobiotic, I was practising hard, then my teacher Clara offered me a brandy and told me to drink it, saying we're here to be human beings, not to do yoga. I realised I was living a lie. Keep away from seriousness and ego – posturing is the hallmark of ego and there is a lot of posturing in yoga! That's self-important, whereas yoga is about joy. If you can't find joy in yoga, do salsa or something else. Yoga is about a path to enlightenment but there are many ways to get there."

FOR INFORMATION

Visit yogabeats.com. A Yogabeats iPhone app is now available. ➔



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