

SPECIAL FEATURE

Yearning for Yoga

To the uninitiated, the art of yoga, a mysterious, strict discipline with an ever-growing number of followers, can be hard to understand.

Yoga promises a lot but on the surface it seems like one hardly needs to exert much effort to achieve those seemingly unachievable things. However yoga is more than just exercise and meditation; it is a lifestyle.

Catching up with Anika Rabbani, one of the most well known yoga teachers in the country, we learn more about yoga, clear some misconceptions and get an actual firsthand account of how and why yoga is important.

A serious tailbone injury at the age of fourteen, during one of her many adventures, resulted in Anika taking up yoga. For the next few years, she continued with the discipline intermittently. However, yoga seemed like her calling and the more yoga she did the more her body and mind demanded it. It was like the fitness bug experienced by gym goers but seemingly more pronounced. Yoga made Anika feel better. She ate better, slept better and had much less of those nagging pains some of us wake up to in the morning. This sense of renewed fitness and freshness has been a benefit enjoyed by many yoga followers. According to Anika, yoga also helped her to discipline herself and her mind while getting in touch with her more spiritual side. Waking up to greet the sun every morning and meditating with the sunset can help anyone nurture their souls and on the other hand, meditation further helps to train and calm the mind.

Speaking of her experiences, Anika explains how she got to where she is today. "I travelled to Southern India to stay at an ashram and immerse myself in yoga studies for a two month period. At the end of my stay, study and practice I had to take a few exams and then became a certified teacher at a school accredited by the World Yoga Alliance," she explained. Apart from that she also learned under the tutelage of senior ashtanga teachers David Garrigues and Laruga Glasser and visited various shalas (yoga schools) to make use of every learning opportunity she got.

Anika Rabbani now shares her techniques with anyone who has an interest in learning. "I teach ashtanga vinyasa yoga, the primary series - modified, broken down and much much more diluted than the original sequence. The practice is a flowing, dynamic form of yoga that heats up the body and makes one sweat profusely. The heat is generated by a special breathing technique called ujjayi or the conqueror's breath and the practitioners have to use one breath per movement. This is known as a vinyasa," she explained. "There is also the use of dristi or gazing points (nine in total) which train the mind to stay focused and on the self alone. Finally there are the bandhas or energetic locks which send energy in the 'correct' direction within the body, harmonising and healing



both the body and mind," she continued.

She believes in the philosophy of the late Shri K Pattabi Jois who said yoga is "99% theory and 1% practice and that it cannot be practiced by lazy people".

Jois used to say that "Yoga, as a way of life and a philosophy, can be practiced by anyone with inclination to undertake it, for yoga belongs to humanity as a whole. It is not the property of any one group or any one individual, but can be followed by any and all, in any corner of the globe, regardless of class, creed or religion."

Anika's Yoganika classes have proven to be quite popular and in the future she hopes



to open a studio in Mohakhali and later perhaps even a yoga school. To learn more, seek her out for yourself here: Classes at Studio107 - Road 107, House 14, Gulshan 2

Beginners

Friday & Saturday 4-5pm

Women

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 10am - 11am

Kid's Yoga @Baransu -

Lane 13, House 546/2, Baridhara DOHS

Friday 10-11am, Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/yogini.anika>

Facebook Page [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Anikas-](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Anikas-Yoga/1535590810055639)

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By Osama Rahman

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