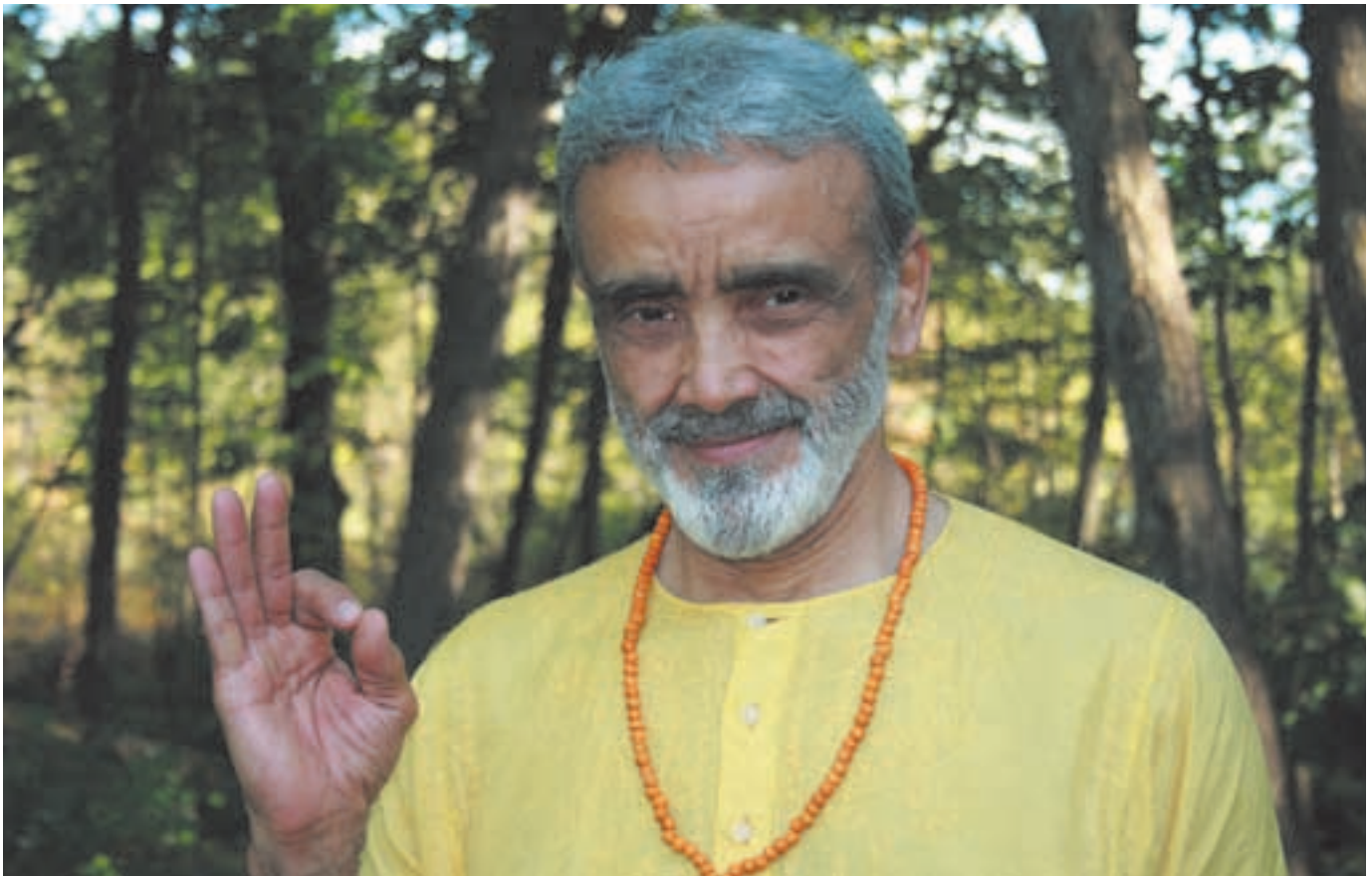


accepting our soreness and injury



The Divine Principles of Yogic teachings have their foundation in the Laws of Karma. These laws state that everything we are experiencing is a result of our deeds from the past. If one can accept this idea and deeply recognize it as truth, one has already made great progress along the path to enlightenment. Keep in mind that the concepts within these laws can take

By Sri Yogi Dharma Mittra

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lifetimes for the Guru to impress upon the disciple. Those that engage in the regular practice of *Asana* or Yoga postures, the third limb of Maharishi Patanjali's Eight-Limbed "blueprint" concerning the practice of Hatha-Raja Yoga, occasionally experience soreness or injury as a result. One must employ discrimination when dealing with the feedback one receives through the vehicle of the mind and the senses. One must learn to appreciate when the body or mind is only behaving like a small, lazy child and when it is giving one urgent messages that perhaps one is trying too hard in the wrong way. Angry determination can sometimes allow one to move beyond soreness or pain to achieve a breakthrough. At other times, one ignores the body at their own peril and may risk losing the opportunity to practice postures for a period of time to allow the body to heal.

Soreness can be dealt with in a variety of ways. Occasionally, one just needs a day-off. There are, as you well know, many ways to pursue practice beyond *Asana* and the breathing practices (*pranayama*) and deep relaxation (*yoga nidra*) are important ones. Often soreness is the body's way of saying, "I'm tired. And I need a little rest and care, or a change of routine." The trick is learning when to listen and when one can work-through the soreness. In general, be sure to get adequate rest each night, but especially when the body is sore. In this way, one insures that the body has the optimum chance to repair the damage of the day. A fifteen minute soak in a warm bath with or without a handful of sea salt added to the water often helps everything that's tight from over-exertion to unwind and relax. It is a simple and cheap healing method everyone can accomplish at home.

It is also important to look at ones diet. Soreness or injury brings a good opportunity to begin a better diet routine. Here are some of the dietary practices I always recommend to aid in the healing transition:

- Fresh pineapple and fresh-squeezed pineapple juice greatly speed the healing process as the mineral, vitamin and enzyme combination naturally present in the pineapple helps the body to heal muscular micro-tears and heal faster.

- Wheat Gluten is difficult for many people to digest, and sometimes cutting-down on the amount consumed for a time or eliminating it from one's diet altogether brings rapid results, particularly as regards joint pain.

- Sometimes a watermelon fast for even one day does an enormous amount of good for any sort of healing required by the physical body as the energy normally devoted to digestion can be re-purposed for healing.

- Both lemon and celery possess natural, anti-inflammatory properties. Celery is a wonderful addition to any fresh, green juice, as is lemon. One can also squeeze lemon over a big bowl of salad or into a tall glass of warm water first thing in the morning with a little raw honey, maple syrup or Agave nectar.

- Adding one or two tablespoons of raw, organic, cold-pressed flaxseed oil to your daily eating regimen will help promote joint health and act as a preventative against this type of discomfort before it manifests as such.

One brings their injuries wherever they go. One often comes to practice or class desiring or ripe for injury without having



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any awareness that this is the case. Recognize that if in practice one dedicates the fruit of all action to the Supreme Self or God, then the injury and associated pain or discomfort is a great reminder of what one was doing when the injury was sustained and can help one to remember to continue dedicating each action whether during formal practice or in the greater arena of practice, which is life. The tips for dealing with soreness above can also apply to treating injury, but remember that the path to bliss-consciousness can be navigated by many means beyond just the practice of the physical postures. Sometimes, an injury can be a great teacher in its own right; forcing us to discover the other forms of practice with greater attention or by revealing something to us about ourselves or our practice we may not have recognized before. Remember, Yoga is not about all these fancy poses or putting your lower leg behind your neck. It is about settling the mind into silence and a true teacher can help one to discover a multitude of methods towards achieving this goal; the great goal and purpose to being incarnated in human form.

Dear ones never lose sight of the truth that what you really are is so much more than the body or the mind. Soreness or injury is just something else one passes through on their way to Union with the True Self. Have faith, be regular in your practice and don't worry since everything will come at the right time and in the right way since everything is already perfect. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih.

Legendary Sri Dharma Mittra, now 70, an early independent Yoga teacher in New York City, has been teaching since 1967. He continues to teach daily at his shala and conducts "Dharma Yoga Life of a Yogi" certifications worldwide. Join his Master Class daily 12-2pm Monday-Friday, Psychic Development Techniques on Wednesdays 7:30-8:30pm with Free Kirtan following at 8:45pm. For complete details on Sri Dharma Mittra's life work, class schedule, teaching programs, visit www.dharmayogacenter.com. Try a free Dharma I class until December 15. Dharma Yoga Center 297 Third Avenue at 23 St., New York City. Call 212-889-8160 or visit www.dharmayogacenter.com for more information.