

Yoga for Arthritis

Description

Gentle Reader,

I have a diagnosis of arthritis, osteoarthritis and spinal stenosis. I gave up *yoga for arthritis* about 6 years ago, as it seemed to exacerbate the pain in my hips and spine. However, when my youngest daughter Ruth raved about her 6 a.m. yoga class and the teacher, I took notice. She convinced me that Laura could instruct me in a way that would build from the core so that I would not hurt myself. Furthermore, Laura and Beattie, her partner, were conducting a yoga retreat at the hot springs retreat center in Oregon called [Breitenbush](#). I have always wanted to go. It would be wonderful to spend a weekend with my daughter. I signed up.

Have you ever enrolled in a program only to have buyer's remorse? My thoughts raced around my head: I can't do **yoga for arthritis**. I'll hurt myself again. How will I spend my days with no internet or telephone? (That's right. No connectivity at [Breitenbush](#).) I planned to take a book, attend the first hour and bow out politely.

With the right yoga instructor, yoga for arthritis is not only possible but builds strength, stamina and flexibility. That is an all-important caveat: the right yoga instructor. I not only lasted the first hour-and-a-half session on Thursday night, but the morning two hours on Friday as well. I took the Friday afternoon session off. By 10 a.m. on Saturday morning, Ruth and I had soaked in the [hot springs pools](#) four times. I was ready to try again. Not only was I able to practice with the other 12 participants for two hours on Saturday, but again that afternoon.

And, Ruth and I took a spectacular [4 ½-mile hike](#) through the emerald green forest surrounding the Breitenbush site. Sunday morning's two-hour session was beautiful. I did not try handstands or back bends, but everything leading up to those poses was restorative and strong.

How do you choose a yoga instructor that will help and not hurt your arthritic joints? If you are serious about including *yoga for arthritis* management, I recommend you visit studios and sit in on the session labeled hatha yoga, slow-moving emphasis on arriving at the pose from a core-strengthened place. I found of the various yoga practices. If you have

arthritis, I would not recommend the fast moving practices. Participate as best you can, stopping short of anything that twists or hurts.

If you are a Type A competitive person used to high achievement goals (that would be me), you need to monitor your progress in a class very carefully so as to not over do. The personal triumph of the weekend retreat at Breitenbush was to opt out of the Friday afternoon class without feeling like a failure. I needed to rest my body in order to benefit from the rest of the weekend.

Open heartedness and acceptance are two attitudes to cultivate as you find a yoga practice for arthritis. Leave your judgments at the door and listen to your body.

I have posted information about [Peggy Cappy](#) many times before. She is a Public Television personality and yoga teacher who works with older people. Her videos and especially her CD mediation for healing the arthritic back are part of my daily routine.

The joy of practicing in a room full of other people over the weekend reminded me how much I have missed breathing, moving and meditating with others. I loved the group experience so much, I have been to one of Laura's and Beattie's [Seattle classes](#) and I plan to incorporate their practice in my week.

Do not settle for less than a careful, hands-on instructor if you want to use **yoga for arthritis**. It could get you into trouble. I wish you luck in finding a good instructor. Let me know how it goes with yoga if you already incorporate this modality in your arthritis or other health management.

Be well, Do well and Keep Moving

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Date Created

February 2014

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