

Life Force Yoga

to Beat the Blues

Level I

WITH
AMY WEINTRAUB



*My beloved child,
Break your heart no longer.
Each time you judge yourself,
You break your own heart.*
Swami Kripalu/Carolyn Dell'uomo

www.yogafordepression.com

DEAR FRIEND

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to guide you in a gentle practice that can help you lift and manage your mood. In addition to warm-ups and postures, this practice includes yogic breathing called pranayama and kriya and uses Sanskrit tones to vibrate the 70% of you that is fluid. These breathing exercises and toning have been shown in numerous studies to elevate mood. All the practices you will do on this DVD are designed to help you clear away what is no longer serving you, the obstructions in your physical and mental body, so that there is more room for your own awakened healing energy to flow.

Not every practice is right for every body, but there is a yoga practice that's right for you. If this isn't it, don't give up. Find a recommended yoga teacher in your area who can help you design a practice that meets your mood, your physical capabilities, and your constitution. You might talk with friends or your health care provider for a recommendation. You may also look for a certified yoga teacher or yoga therapist on the following web sites:

Yoga Alliance: www.yogaalliance.com

International Association of Yoga Therapists:
www.IAYT.org

Or, if you like the style of yoga represented on this DVD, you might find a teacher to work with who was trained in a similar manner:

Kripalu Yoga: www.kripalu.org

LifeForce Yoga: www.yogafordpression.com

There are numerous styles of yoga, many of which are described in my book, **Yoga for Depression**, and elsewhere. Some styles place more emphasis on postures, some include the breath and meditation, some are more athletic, some are more restorative, and some address yoga therapeutically from a structural/physiological or an emotional/mental health perspective. Each style is a doorway into a deeper experience of feeling at home in your physical and emotional body and reconnecting you to who you really are, beneath your symptoms or moods or the masks you wear in daily life. If you find a style you like, visit the website to locate a teacher in your community.

There is a yoga practice for you.
A warm namasté,
Amy

NAVIGATING THE DVD

Please use the **Play Program** option on your Main Menu to view the entire sequence at least once. This sequence has been carefully designed for maximum benefit, and works best when practiced from the Joint Warm-up at the beginning, all the way through to Yoga Nidra at the end. However, there may be times when you feel you would like to practice individual segments of this program, or to practice the segments in a different order. After viewing the program all the way through once and practicing with it, you may wish to use the **Chapter Selection** Screen to design your own practice.

Chapter Selection:

Introduction

Joint Warm-ups

Centering Meditation

Breathing Exercises

Warm-up Poses

Cultivating Will: Standing Poses

Will and Willingness: Backbending Poses

Will and Surrender: Forward Bends and Twists

Surrender: Yoga Nidra

Basic Guidelines

- Please check with your health care professional before beginning this or any other exercise program.
- View this video at least once before practicing.
- Please practice with an empty stomach.
- Practice within your own limits and capabilities. Listen to your body and rest when you need to.
- This practice is meant to supplement your home practice. Please learn the poses and breathing exercises from a certified teacher.

Postures ~ Asana

The warm-ups and postures on this DVD are suitable for most beginners on the path of yoga. Please modify when you need to. We are not creating a synchronized yoga team. We are creating a safe and sacred space where you can honor your body's limitations and create a more loving relationship between your mind and body. Please cultivate an accepting attitude toward your body, just as it is now. Practice without pushing or forcing. Invoke the words of the poet Rilke:

*Let what I do flow from me like a river.
No forcing and no holding back.*

Some of you may wish to deepen the poses, for example, in the separate leg forward bend (modified *Parsvottanasana*), I suggest that you place your hands on your thighs. More experienced practitioners may bring the hands down to either side of the foot.

Most modifications to ease the poses are demonstrated on this DVD.

SOUNDS ~ *Nada Yoga*

Throughout this DVD, you will be invited to practice Sanskrit sounds called mantras with your postures. These tones vibrate through the 70% of you that is fluid, calming the central nervous system and energizing specific areas of your body. The Sanskrit language is based on verbs, so each of the sounds has an activating quality, even if chanting the sound soothes your busy mind.

Here are a few of the sounds you will be invited to chant:

Om

This is the primordial healing mantra, a sound that some believe to have been the sound of creation, emitted at the moment of the Big Bang. It is a sound that connects individual consciousness to the consciousness of the cosmos, the Absolute.

So Ham

This mantra signifies that there is no separation between the energy that surrounds you and the energy that you are. It means, "I am that."

Maha Ra

In Sanskrit, "Maha" means grand or royal. "Ra" is the sound for the sun. "Ma" is a calming, feminine sound. Ra is a masculine sound. When used together, you are inviting the sun to shine within you, invoking an image of calm strength.

Mahaha!

This tone is taken from the mantras that traditionally prepare the mind, body, and spirit to chant the ancient Gayatri mantra. It is a sound that stimulates the energy of the heart chakra.

Bija Mantras

These tones activate specific energy centers or chakras.

CHAKRA / MANTRA

- Chakra One**, Muladhara (Base of spine): Lam, red
- Chakra Two**, Svadhishthana (Low abdomen): Vam, orange
- Chakra Three**, Manipura (Solar plexus): Ram, yellow
- Chakra Four**, Anahata (Heart): Yam, green
- Chakra Five**, Vissudha (Throat): Ham, blue
- Chakra Six**, Ajna (Third Eye): Om, violet
- Chakra Seven**, Sahasrara (Crown of head): Nnng, white

Breathing Exercises ~ *Pranayama & Kriya*

Precautions

- If you have untreated high blood pressure, please avoid holding the breath. Practice the kriyas with caution or not at all.
- If you are pregnant, menstruating, suffer from IBS or another inflammatory condition, and/or are living with bipolar disorder and have a tendency toward mania, please do not practice the kriyas on this DVD.
- Please study yogic breathing with a qualified yoga instructor before practicing with this DVD.

Ocean-Sounding Victory Breath (*Ujjayi*)

This breath both calms and energizes. It activates the parasympathetic nervous system and creates a state of mental alertness. It can be practiced in a seated position, lying down, or as I instruct here, throughout your posture sequence, bringing a fresh supply of oxygen to the cells. To begin, inhale through your nostrils with a slight constriction of your throat, making a snoring sound. Maintain the slight snoring sound on the exhalation, and imagine that you are actually breathing from the back of your throat. I like to think of the sound as a wave gently rolling across pebbles. Breathe slowly, expanding the belly, the ribcage and the upper chest. As you exhale, pull the abdomen in and up to empty your lungs completely. If you are pregnant, do not draw the navel back to the spine.

Bellows Breath (*Bhastrika*)

This is a kriya (complete purifying action) or cleansing breath. Note precautions above. Sit with your spine erect. Make fists with your hands and bring them to the inside of your shoulders with the forearms hugging the torso. Take a normal natural breath in and out. As you inhale through the nostrils, send your arms straight up, over your head with great force as you open your palms out to the front, spreading your fingers wide. Exhale with great force through the

nostrils as you bring your hands arms back to the starting position, making fists with your hands. Do this at a moderate pace twenty times.

Breath of Joy

Stand with the feet a comfortable distance apart and your arms at your sides. Inhale one-third capacity through your nostrils and swing your arms up to shoulder level. Inhale to two-thirds capacity and stretch your arms out to the sides. Inhale to full capacity and swing your arms up over your head. As you exhale through your mouth, lean forward and stretch your arms out to the sides and slightly behind you. Repeat.

Skull Shining (*Kapalabhati*)

This breath is a *kriya* (complete purifying action), which cleanses not only the nasal passages but the entire system, flooding the body with prana. Skull Shining breath is a wonderful way to wake up the dormant prana if you are feeling depressed. Note precautions above.

Sit with the spine erect. Exhale forcefully through both the nostrils, while snapping the belly back toward the spine. The inhalations are so passive that you barely notice them. Simply receive the breath. Begin with 20 slow repetitions. As you become more proficient, you can increase the speed and number of repetitions.

External Retention with Locks (*Kumbhaka*)

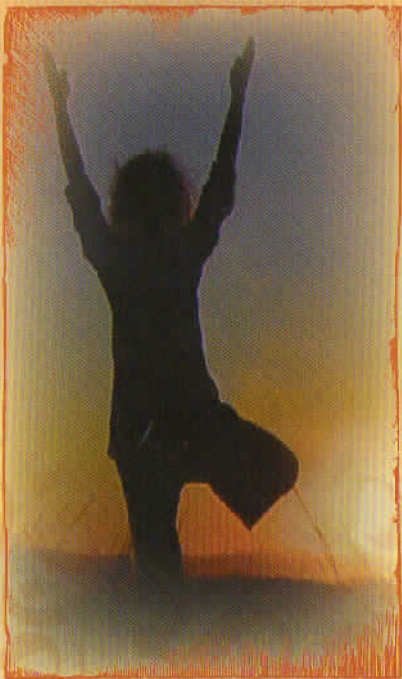
I will invite you to use an external retention in two poses on this DVD: Rabbit (*Sarvangasana*) and Posterior Forward Bend (*Paschimatanasana*). Please practice with caution or not at all, if you have high blood pressure. With the breath held out, lift the pelvic floor, using the root lock (*mula bandha*). Next, draw your navel back and up toward the spine. This movement of navel to spine is called the stomach lock (*uddiyana bandha*). You may also drop your chin towards your chest as you raise your chest to meet your chin. This movement is called the throat lock (*jalandhara bandha*), and it stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands at your throat chakra (*vishuddha*). Hold the breath out for a count of five to ten, using all three locks, if you are comfortable with them. When you need to inhale, release the locks, beginning first with the root lock, next the stomach lock, then the throat lock.

Practicing for Positive Mental Health

May this beginning yoga experience nurture your spirit and lift your mood, bringing balance to your physical, emotional, and mental body. Please practice with this DVD every day until you have learned enough to safely explore yoga on your own.

Remember, if your goal is to relieve symptoms of depression, you must practice daily to maintain your positive mental health. If you are practicing with attention to the breath and the sensations in your body, you will experience an immediate feel-good effect from your yoga practice. However, it may take months of regular practice for the results to manifest in your biochemistry. If you're currently taking medication for your mood, please continue to take it. Follow the guidance of your prescribing physician if you are considering a reduction in your medication.

I honor the light within you,
Amy Weintraub



Creative Credits

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Misty Productions

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www.cavernstudiosucson.com

"Gayatri Mantra"
"Om Namoh Bhagavate"
Sung By M.J. Bindu Delekta
www.sacredcircleofyoga.com
Recorded at Parr Studios
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

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The Desikachar family

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www.yogafordepression.com



LifeForce Yoga to Beat the Blues – Level 1

INTRODUCTION

JOINT WARM-UPS

CENTERING MEDITATION

BREATHING EXERCISES

WARM-UP POSES

CULTIVATING WILL: STANDING POSES

WILL AND WILLINGNESS: BACKBENDING POSES

WILL AND SURRENDER: FORWARD BENDS AND TWISTS

SURRENDER: YOGA NIDRA



AMY WEINTRAUB, MFA, E-RYT 500

is the author of **Yoga for Depression** and founder of the LifeForce Yoga Healing Institute. She offers workshops and professional trainings throughout North America and is featured on the CD,

Breathe to Beat the Blues.

"Clear and bright, Amy's obvious love of Yoga shines through every moment of her DVD. I will enjoy her 'LifeForce Yoga' DVD and continue to learn from it, for years to come."

**Richard Miller, PhD; President, The Center of Timeless Being;
author, *Yoga Nidra: The Meditative Heart of Yoga***