

YOGA

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sides of my body” for a change. And “the way I looked at my life started to change.” Her left side – beyond just the physical, “tends to be more gentle, more laid back, not so into nitty-gritty details, and I began to appreciate that more instead of putting that down” (in herself and her body). Yoga helps you “to condition your body to live in the vastness of who you are” – rather than on only one side (or aspect) of yourself that you always fall back on, she indicated.

Now “I’m much more compassionate” – as well as having strengthened her left side and eliminated pain in her hip that made her more tense physically and prone to favor one side physically, said Alex. “Not having to live with nagging discomfort going on all the time frees up your energy (overall). You’re not spending energy masking your discomfort. You free up a lot of energy, relaxed energy” that also makes you feel great, not tired and tense all the time, said Alex. She has become “more gentle on myself” mentally as well as physically stronger as a result of getting in touch more sides of herself through yoga.

Alex has studied all manner of styles of Hatha yoga but most often teaches Svaroopo yoga – “a gentle style and very deep in terms of what it releases” emotionally and how it helps physically. “It unravels deep-seated layers of tension in your body and creates a healing and personal transformation.”

“Svaroopo, being gentle, doesn’t exacerbate pains or physical disabilities,” she says. “I always tell people it is not a workout like going to a gym, it’s more a meditative style and targets opening of all the tensions along the spine. It’s generally for reclaiming” oneself “on all sorts of levels.”

Alex teaches mostly adults but also has some younger students, particularly ones with disabilities that can be improved considerably by yoga.

Alex says “the Western model” of exercise “is to knock yourself out in the gym and then feel relaxed and tired. Doing yoga, you feel relaxed as you practice yoga, and “afterwards you feel energized” because you’ve relaxed your entire body, loosened it’s tensions, de-

Lesley Reilly of B~CalM Yoga teaches throughout MetroWest.

stressed and you’re afterwards not using your energy to fight pains, tension etc.

Svaroopo, she says, also has a healing aspect, and “can make transformative changes” in you “and give you deeper experiences of being uplifted, enlightened, illuminated - but not just esoterically - there’s a brightness to you that you experience inside” after doing svaroopo. But, she notes, with yoga “you don’t *have* to go in any of these directions. People take what they need” from yoga.

Alex has taught all ages but focuses mostly on adults and older teens including some teens “with scoliosis” – painful from-birth spine problems. She also teaches “yoga for your back” and her students “get very good results.”

“Yoga is also good for sciatica, (persistent) cramps in legs and feet, neck

and shoulder issues, TMJ (severe recurring jaw pain), carpal tunnel syndrome” (arm pain) and more, says Alex.

Alex’s svaroopo yoga students use props that ease them into yoga positions, very helpful if they have disabilities, tight muscles, etc., she explained.

“Props help you get into yoga poses a little at a time and ‘not push beyond’ ” your physical ability too fast. Instead, you progress in slow but steady and safe increments with yoga and svaroopo.

Alex’s students have found, as did Alex, that svaroopo helps physically - and also has emotional-spiritual benefits. Her students include those in search of pain reduction, improvements in body movement or just emotional-spiritual benefits of yoga.

“The theme is everyone is slightly different” from each other in abilities and

interests “and whenever you’re ready to start, just come.” Alex’s classes are ongoing, just divided into 8-week sessions payment wise. Eight-week session packages cost \$144 for adults and classes run 75 or 90 minutes. “You don’t have to wait for the beginning of the next 8-week session, though - you can start anytime,” says Alex.