

Yoga—More Popular than Ever

Jean Lee, CBS Market Watch, March 2005

Hi, Dr. Crutchfield. I started a new paragraph whenever a new person started speaking and put names of the people you listed in front of those particular paragraphs.

Welcome, there is disco yoga, prenatal yoga, hot yoga, even dogma – yes, yoga for your dog. The Asian art is newer than ever. Jean Lee takes a look at how yoga poses are leading to profit

Fitness has always been important to Seth Asher. A cyclist for ten years, he also worked out regularly at a local gym until he tried out a yoga class with a friend.

Seth Asher: I loved it immediately. I mean, I went to every class that the gym offered. It was only twice a week but I was there religiously.

He has now given up his gym membership and practices yoga six days a week. Seth isn't the only one who has caught the yoga bug. A recent survey found that 11 million people are now enlightening their minds and bodies through practicing postures, liked downward dog and tree pose

The rising number of yoga enthusiasts has created a booming market for all things yoga, from classes to equipment.

Cyndi Lee, Director of Om Yoga: When I started there weren't very many studios in town. But it quickly took off and we outgrew the space and about a year-and-a-half ago moved to this studio. We have over twice as many classes. We have a variety of different kinds of classes and twice as many people are coming. And it's growing still.

The leading yoga magazine has also seen an explosion in subscribers.

Hillari Dowdle, Editor in Chief, *Yoga Journal*. The magazine has grown exponentially over the last six years. Our circulation has tripled from about 90,000 to 310,000, and we think that we have somewhere in the neighborhood of a million readers per issue.

And those readers aren't just taking their classes at yoga studios anymore.

Yoga is now available at about 75% of all health clubs and gyms in the United States and that figure is probably growing by about 100% over the last seven years.

Ten years ago we had around 6,000 people participate in our yoga programs. Today, that number has jumped to over 150,000 a month participating in yoga alone.

The last person speaking, her name was Sadie Lincoln, with 24-Fitness Center. Once again, you will hear some redundancy here so sorry about that.

Over 150, 000 a month participating in yoga alone.

Retailers are also eagerly cashing in on the demand for yoga gear.

Cynthia Lee, spokesperson for Wal-Mart: Just in the past year, our sales have doubled in that category, and to meet the increased demand, we have expanded our assortment significantly by about 80% both online and in stores.

Bed, Bath, and Beyond, Barnes & Noble, Target—they all sell videos. I mean there's books about every kind of yoga, kids yoga, newborn yoga, prenatal.

Another reason for the rising popularity, more men getting turned on to yoga.

A lot of sort of weekend athlete guys come because they think they need to stretch and then they find out that they're not as strong as they thought because yoga works your whole body. All the muscles, all the bones, all the time in every pose. So they get really into it.

The yoga craze is even catching on with children. There are now a number of classes exclusively for kids 6 to 12. The young students say yoga helps them deal with school, stress, and sports.

As more men and women get toned up and distress through yoga, the companies behind the classes and products say yoga brings not only spiritual piece but also profit. Jane Lee, CBS Market Watch, New York.