


Yoga – unifying body and mind to change your life

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“Yoga is trendy,” says Isabelle Thill in her dulcet voice as she explains the popularity of the practice that she has been studying for ten years. I have the impression that trendy is not exactly a positive attribute in Thill’s mind. “In America they have after-work Yoga, Yoga for Valentines. I have even seen underwater Yoga.”

We are sitting in her studio at the top of her home in Bertrange, where she offers myself and Steve Eastwood a cup of Chai while we chat and she throws effortlessly graceful poses for the benefit of the camera. Except the benefit is also quite clearly Thill’s – Yoga is, she says, a way of unifying body and mind to create a balance that allows the corporal to become a vehicle for spiritual fulfilment. It can, she believes, be inspirational in truly changing the life of its practitioners.

Certainly Thill is living proof of her own belief. She says she feels much better physically and mentally now than she did ten years ago. “I am kinder to myself, aware of the energy in my own body and in control of my emotions,” she explains. “That can be scary. You never feel like shouting,” she laughs.

Thill truly started learning about Yoga in India – literally the spiritual home of the practice. She studied at Sivananda Ashram in Kerala and then with Sri K. Patthabi Jois at the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute in Mysore. Other workshops and course in China and various centres in Europe have followed – includ-

ing one with Manju Jois, son of Sri K. Patthabi, in Luxembourg. “It is a journey for life,” she explains. “I often wonder whether I would ever get bored doing Yoga, but it really is an evolution every day.”

And the beauty of Yoga, of course, is that it can be practised every day. All you need is a space on a floor and to be in the right frame of mind – Thill says the secret to performing Yoga is, in fact, to empty your mind of thoughts. “In India we practice outdoors, in the mud in the rain,” she explains when I ask whether the relaxing music playing in the background is an essential part of the experience. “In the West, we have to create a nice atmosphere to attract students”. Thus the ambient lighting and music that create a soothing atmosphere. “In India, students have to ask the teachers if they can take courses with them.”

Before novices actually start practising Yoga poses, Thill will provide the new student with a little theory – “though not too much, because Yoga speaks for itself,” she explains. She stresses that students can develop their own pace – they should never force a posture – and that is another of Yoga’s attractions, that it can be practised by people of all fitness levels.

Thill practices and teaches Ashtanga Yoga, which, according to the people at the La Source Centre de Yoga in Walferdange is absolutely suitable for complete beginners “whose temperament is drawn toward this



Isabelle Thill – yoga can inspire new life choices

invigorating approach that develops self-assurance in all facets of life.” Sivananda Yoga, on the other hand, is “the balanced practice of many yogic disciplines that elevates one’s state of consciousness.” Both distinct disciplines are taught at the La Source centre by experienced teachers Denise Pesch and Fred Bender.

Yoga is a wonderful gift to oneself - it is the exploration of the self in the present moment,” says Sabine Meier, teacher at the Yoga-Studio on the Kirchberg. As at the La Source centre, the Yoga-Studio offers courses especially for pregnant women and also holds special classes aimed at students with back problems.