



September 2014

Welcome to this month's magazine. It is a bumper issue this month with lots of cool information.

Good News: More Classes and a Spring into Summer Special

The "good news" is two-fold: first, **we will be holding additional weekend classes from 1 December**. Tell us when you want to practice and we will analyse your preferences and schedule classes to meet the wishes of the greatest number of you. Do please tell us your preferences. If you do not speak up we cannot serve you.

Second, **we are running a special on our two most popular types of pass, the 10-class pass and the monthly unlimited**. This offer will not be on TreatMe or GrabOne so tell your friends, colleagues and everyone else you know to spread the word.

The deals are:

All 10-class passes purchased from 1 October to 30 November 2014 will be \$100 (no student or senior rates for these).

All monthly unlimited passes bought from 1 October to 30 November 2014 will be \$100 (again, no further discounts available).

The conditions attaching to these passes are:

1. The passes must be purchased in the period 1 October 2014 to 30 November 2014.
2. You may purchase one (either 10-class pass or unlimited month) for you and one (either 10-class pass or unlimited month) for a friend.
3. The classes must be used by 28 February 2015. Any un-used classes or any portion of a monthly unlimited pass not used by that time will expire.

Make this summer a time to advance your yoga practice, and get your body into top shape for swimsuit season. Snatch up this deal while you have the chance.

Interview with Richard Greer from Complete Performance:

Richard Greer runs Complete Performance, a business that helps train participants of all levels of age and ability in endurance events whether they be multi-sport events such as the Coast to Coast, cycling events such as Le Race, running events like marathons and other ultra-distance challenges.

Richard has a B.Sc. in Human Physiology and a B.P.E. He also has a strong personal interest in participation in multi-sport events. A desire to participate in the Coast to Coast as a young man saw him expand skills in mountain biking to include road cycling, running and kayaking. He has continued to challenge himself and has more recently gone to a weakness in his talents, swimming, and has improved his skills so as to be able to compete in the Motutapu Xterra Tri Race – 2km swim in Lake Wanaka, 47km mountain bike ride and 15km mountain run.

Richard also runs the Southern Institute of Technology's personal trainers course from a base at Pioneer Stadium.

Richard regards technique as being an important aspect of getting the most out of an athlete's performance at any level of competition. New people to Complete Performance are often referred to a physiotherapist for a muscle balance movement analysis to help individuals dial in to their bodies, imbalances they may have, postural misalignments that may be present in their bodies and weaknesses they may have in critical parts of their bodies. Working from these assessments Richard and his team can then help their athletes realign their bodies, build strength in critical areas and move efficiently.

Yoga has a role to play at the foundational level of building an overall strength and postural correctness says Richard. Having practised power vinyasa yoga at Apollo Power Yoga, Richard has a respect for the strengthening qualities of the practice – developing core stability and toning muscles in the legs, buttocks, back, shoulders, arms and chest – as well as mobilising the hips. The hips are important to Richard as movement should be initiated from there. There is a strong focus on hips in power vinyasa yoga practice whether in a powerful standing hip-opener like Warrior 2 or Triangle, or in a deep but less dynamic opener such as Frog or Dragon.



We give strong attention to setting up poses with a correctly aligned pelvis. Doing so ensures that gluteal muscles are properly engaging and abdominal muscles are working to prevent the front of the pelvis dropping forward. Once the pelvis is in a strong, neutral position the spine can be well-aligned, leg action can be maximised and the whole body can move with power from the axis outwards to the periphery.

Like Apollo Power Yoga, Richard sees many people who have succumbed to the posturally incorrect influences of seated positions. Tight quadriceps and hip flexors, concentrically stressed pectorals, eccentrically stressed rhomboids and trapezius muscles, strained lumbar spines and tight hamstrings are all common issues confronting many people. Richard's work with technique for running, cycling, kayaking and so on looks to correct some of these postural misalignments. It is a fundamental element of power vinyasa yoga as taught at Apollo Power Yoga that we bring our students into an anatomical "Yes": upright, balanced with whole body long, lean functional strength.

Yoga as a means of recovery from hard training or exercise can play a role from Richard's

perspective. If someone is unused to yoga then any practice may simply further stress muscles and impede the recovery process. However, if a regular yoga practice is maintained then using a slower form of practice with fewer demands upon strength and longer holds of poses designed to stretch the psoas, ilio-tibial bands, hamstrings, quadriceps and adductors, the practice can work well as part of a recovery plan. The Power Restore classes at Apollo Power Yoga fit into this category. The practices are not easy but they have a focus on postural balance and deep tissue stretching. Richard describes a wave-like progression of training stress (with variables including intensity, duration and types of activity) coupled with recovery to produce improved performance. Recovery does not equate with inactivity. Rather, actions involving mobility and increasing blood flow are valuable in the recovery phase. Yoga has a role to play here from an athlete's perspective.

On the question of whether yoga practices can have a re-aligning quality to muscle fibres damaged from hard exercise such that they grow without gnarls or trigger points, Richard is non-committal. "I don't know" he says and then ventures that science may not even know for sure. Richard is not convinced of the change to the quality of the muscle, with regard to its anatomy and fibres, by stretching but believes it is important to think of muscles as a whole in regards to the connective tissues (tendons and fascia) that link our bodies. Therefore, he says that stretching following exercise or a training session is really important to tell our muscles how long we want them to be.

There are cross-overs for some of the mental elements of yoga and endurance sport. It is a principle of Baptiste power vinyasa yoga to relax with what is – to avoid reactivity and activation of the sympathetic nervous system and, instead, to bring calm composure to the asana. Richard encourages in his athletes what he calls "process goals". In an endurance race

when there are many kilometres still ahead there is no benefit in rushing or being mentally defeated by the idea of what lies ahead. Rather, one can focus on matters of the present: have I taken on energy or water? Am I carrying any unnecessary tension? Is my gait or cadence what it ought to be?

Deep relaxation is another feature of yoga that can have benefits for athletes. Endurance athletes trying to fit in training around already busy lives can feel pressured, particularly when there are multiple disciplines. Savasana is an integral element of each yoga practice. The practice has been brought to a peak and then energetically it is taken down and students are left to relax in their greatness. Richard runs spin classes for cyclists with Tour de France footage on a screen and the class simulates the ride to the stage finish. He has taken to giving his group time to stretch after the session and to lie down and relax – to take Savasana – and they have really enjoyed dropping everything.

Yoga, of course, is good for breath control (pranayama). Being present to one's breathing patterns and maintaining a rhythm of respiration that both properly feeds you the oxygen you need in any moment but also adequately cleanses your lungs of the by-products of respiration (e.g. carbon dioxide) is important in all forms of exercise. Yogic breathing disciplines can be used to good effect by athletes to improve their efficiency of performance. Breath control can be one of the "process goals" moderated and given attention throughout the course of a long event.

Breath control and rhythm is fundamental to swimmers. They regulate their stroke pattern to their breathing demands. They time tumble turns, if in a pool, so as to be exhaling as they tumble upside down through their turn. Swimmers must fully exhale or their lungs become full of used air with no room for fresh air in the short moment when the head is turned to draw breath.

As a strength and conditioning exercise, as a form of restoration and recovery and as means of building breathing and mental disciplines yoga is a useful adjunct to an athlete's other forms of training.



Yoga Outside the Studio:

Apollo Power Yoga congratulates the members of the St. Margaret's College Senior A netball team and their First XI hockey team on their wins in their respective competitions. Both teams have high expectations of success but were prepared to go to new methods to sustain their superiority over their rivals in 2014. This year they did stretch and release sessions with Hamish on Fridays at St. Margaret's College for much of terms two and three, recovering from their week's training and preparing for their weekend competition.

Hamish has also begun working with a group of soldiers at Burnham Military Camp taking them for a challenging 75 minute power vinyasa yoga session as part of their physical training programme.

The soldiers' ability to follow instruction and learn drills is excellent, and their mental focus to stay in a position of challenge makes them good yoga students.

If you have a sports team and want to help them with strength and conditioning or rest and recovery, a work group on retreat or participating in team building activities,



or just a group of friends you want to introduce to practice, talk to Hamish or Margo about a group booking at the site of your choice and we will help you share the power of yoga.

Workshops:

BodyMind and Yoga on 14 September was a great workshop led by Janine Gaddie. In it the modern scientific connections with the ancient knowledge of the chakra system were identified and the relationship between mind and body were explored at the seven levels of the chakras.

We practised twice, once to begin the workshop with a bare, mechanical dialogue and once at the end with a dialogue that spoke to the chakras, the emotional body and the notions of mind-body connection that had been explored through the workshop.

In between times there was discussion of the different influences different chakras have upon us and we investigated these practically with simple exercise and inquiries relating to feet, legs, hips, shoulders and so on.

A very well-received workshop by a great group of people who attended.

Breath of Life will be held on **Sunday 12 October, 12 – 3:30pm**. Margo led this breath-enhancing workshop earlier in the year, and the participants' feedback was glowing. The workshop encompasses a full power vinyasa practice, with breaks between the sections of the practice to incorporate a range of breathing exercises and activities drawn from Donna Farhi's *The Breathing Book*. Embrace your breath as the essence of your life.

Venue: Apollo Power Yoga 107 Hereford Street.

Cost: \$55.00 (incl GST) – annual members half price.

Bookings are essential. Contact Hamish (021 055 1884, hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz), Margo (margo@apollopoweryoga.co.nz, 027 227 2026,) or drop in at the studio.

Asana Spotlight: Camel Pose (*Ustrasana*) is a fantastic counter to sitting. Most people lack the ability to sit well for any length of time and gradually their back, neck and shoulders are collapsed out of alignment. Camel, along with other back bends can counter these tendencies. Camel opens the hip flexors, psoas and some rotator muscles in the shoulders. The entire front of the torso is opened, lengthwise and breadthwise.

Many people, however, find camel quite unpleasant. If you experience either light-headedness or nausea in this pose you are not alone. Much reading and research on the matter as a result of receiving questions such as, "Why do I feel sick in camel?" has not yielded a precise scientific answer. Open your minds to the possibility that opening your heart and throat in camel releases emotional scars or fears. If we want to protect ourselves we curl up in a ball. Camel asks for us to uncurl and open up in the opposite direction. Perhaps the

sick feeling you get in camel comes from emotional distress at coming out of your protective curled up ball and laying yourself open.

- Begin kneeling with your knees and feet hip width apart. You may have your toes tucked under or you may plantar flex your feet, point your toes and rest on the tops of your feet.
- Place your hands either side of your spine, just above your buttocks and wrap your elbows towards one another behind you.
- **Reach your tailbone down towards the floor and lift the front of your pelvis upwards. This is very important,** especially for people with a sway back (hyper-lordotic), to avoid excessive compression in the joints of your low back.
- Create stability in your lower body and mid-body. Root your feet and shins down to the floor, engage your quadriceps and *uddiyana bandha* (your abdominal lock).
- Press your hips forward bringing your thighs into a vertical alignment over your knees.
- With your hips moving forward and your hands in your lower back, feel your shoulder blades come together at your back and your sternum lift at the centre of your chest.
- **Keep lifting your chest up** and drawing your shoulder blades down your back. Deepen your back bend into your lower back if you can do so. Do not simply collapse into your low back. Lift up and out of your low back.
- The last portion of your spine to bend back is your neck. Only lift your chin and slowly

allow your head to hang back if it feels alright for you to do so.

- You may reach back one hand at a time to catch hold of your heels. This is more advanced. If you are just working towards this begin with your toes tucked under. Doing so lifts your heels higher and makes catching your heels with your hands easier.
- There are more advanced variations still where the hands bind the ankles or calves or where the hands reach all the way back to the floor and the crown of the head comes back down to the floor.
- If reaching for your heels, keep your hips moving forwards over your knees. Avoid collapsing backwards into the support of your hands. The correct alignment is demonstrated by Hamish in the pictures.
- Maintain a calm flow of breath and a steady *dristhi* gaze.



Your body is magnificent and performs millions of functions a day without your conscious thought. In Camel, trust the brilliance of your body. Instead of telling it what to do or how deep to bend backwards, let your body tell you. Learn to trust yourself.

Bhagavad Gita:

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most well-known of yoga texts. It is very ancient but precisely when it was composed is not known. It is generally thought to have been composed sometime between 500 and 200 BCE. It is also generally ascribed to Ved Vyasa, a sage credited with the Mahabharata, an epic poem of which the Gita forms a part.

The Gita takes the form of an allegory. It has 18 chapters through which the principles of yogic philosophy are traversed. This month we begin a series discussing the Gita.

The background to the Gita, covered elsewhere in the Mahabharata, is that there were two brothers who ruled a kingdom, one who had 100 sons with his many wives, the other who had five sons. The latter king was cursed and had not been able to have children with any of his wives, but the Gods looked kindly upon him and gave him his five sons through God's representatives.

The first king lived long with his 100 sons and they were known as the Kauravas. The other king did not live long and his five sons, the Pandavas, went to live in the palace with their cousins. There were terrible jealousies between the cousins as the Kauravas were vain and idle and Pandavas were brave, industrious and good.

Due to these disputes the Pandavas chose to live separately from their cousins. The kingdom was split and the two sets of brothers lived and ruled separately. The qualities of the Pandavas meant their kingdom was prosperous and great. The Kauravas' kingdom did not thrive in the same way and was held back by their flaws.

The eldest of the Kaurava sons invited the eldest Pandava to a game of dice and, by cheating, won everything – the whole Pandava kingdom, its wealth and people. The Pandava

brothers were banished to the forest for twelve years. If they remained away the whole twelve years and stayed incognito for that time they were to be allowed to return and would be restored to their kingdom and wealth.

The Pandavas complied with the conditions and upon their return sought the reinstatement of their kingdom and wealth. This was, of course, refused by the Kauravas. So the two sets of brothers resolved to go to war.



Arjuna, a Pandava, and one of the Kaurava brothers both went to seek the aid of Krishna, the God incarnate. Krishna said he would help both sets of brothers. One could have his entire army. The other could have just Lord Krishna himself but he would not fight. The Kaurava wanted the army thinking weight of numbers would carry the day.

Arjuna wanted the guidance of Lord Krishna and asked that he be Arjuna's charioteer. So, the rival armies massed before one another and on the very eve of battle, Arjuna had great doubts. The Gita is a dialogue between Arjuna and Lord Krishna.

Krishna represents the inner self of conscience and wisdom. The good and bad tendencies

within are controlled by this conscience. Arjuna's chariot is the body and its five horses are the senses. As charioteer, Krishna represents conscience guiding the senses for good purposes.

Next month we will discuss Chapter One of the Gita, the Despondency of Arjuna, and Chapter Two, the Yoga of Wisdom.

*And now for something **really** important....*

Lululemon Underwear –Giveaway Competition:

You're probably so mesmerised, when you go into the **lululemon** shop, by all the fantastic tops, pants, jackets and mats, that you may not have noticed – lululemon makes and sells wonderful **underwear**, too.

For women, the **Light as Air** underwear are great to wear for a hot power yoga class. They stay in place under your close-fitting yoga pants or shorts, and don't make panty lines. The fabric is very light and breathable, and stands up well to repeated sweat-throughs and washings. For outside of the yoga room, **Mula Bandhaweare** is another option. This style works better under baggier pants or a skirt, and is made from a soft, cottony-feeling fabric.

As most of lululemon's men's shorts have built-in briefs, going commando is a cool and comfortable option. But the next best thing, when underwear is required, is the **No Boxer Boxer**. Very comfy, but also great looking – if the All Blacks had been strutting their stuff in these underpants during Fashion Week recently, they would have looked even better than they did.

We have a pair of **Light as Air** women's underwear and a pair of men's **No Boxer Boxers** to give away. To enter, you just need to like **Apollo Power Yoga** on Facebook – if you've already done that, you'll go in the draw as well. The draw closes on 30 September 2014.

Yogis in Business for Themselves:

Jenny Jones is one of our regulars at Apollo Power Yoga. But she doesn't just take Warrior in the yoga room. She also wages war on weeds and untidiness in the garden.

Jenny can:

- give you expert advice about what to plant in your garden, and then plant it for you, or help you plant it.
- help you tidy up those parts of your garden that are out of control, and keep them tidy.

Jenny brings her own equipment such as a chainsaw, hedge trimmer and sprayer.

Jenny Jones Landscape and Gardening Services – ph. 027 4375949

Press Yoga Series

Kudos to the Press for running a series of yoga articles in the Good Living section of the paper. This is helping to raise awareness of the benefits which anyone can gain from a yoga practice. And, because the articles feature Hamish, they are helping to break down the myth that yoga is a women-only activity.

If you would like to see the series continue and/or be included in the online version of the Press, let the Good Living editor know: ewan.sargent@press.co.nz

More Great Things about the Central City:

C1 Espresso was one of the first central city businesses to get back up and going again after the earthquakes. They're in the building at the corner of Tuam and High Streets, along with **Alice in Videoland**, which has an amazing range

of DVD and Blu-Ray selections. **C1 Espresso** makes great drinks and food, including their wonderful **raw truffle pops**. Made with dates, apricots, prunes, cocoa, almonds, walnuts, and coconut, these healthy treats are vegan, raw, gluten free, and dairy free. Try them for a terrific healthy snack, before or after your power yoga practice.

And we are so pleased to hear that one of our regular yogis, **Richard Sinke**, and his wife Lisa, will be will be creating 4 bars, cafes and a functions room in the Poplar Lane complex where the Twisted Hop used to be located. We're sure these establishments will be a fantastic addition to the growing buzz of the central city.

Press Items on Yoga Poses:

Many of you will have seen the pieces we have had running in The Press showcasing yoga poses. Our 6-week run is almost at an end. If you liked seeing these items in the Good Living section of The Press and would like them or another yoga-themed series to continue, please let the editor of that section, Ewan Sargent, know: ewan.sargent@fairfaxmedia.co.nz.

Namaste

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