Practioner swap: Yoga with Emma Klein from Yoga Flo-ga

At our last meeting at the beginning of January we thought it would be a great idea to do practioner swaps and experience and enjoy our peers’ practices. Emma and I paired up for a swap: a sports massage for some yoga time! I’ve always enjoyed practicing yoga but often neglect it so this was perfect for me...

Tuesday mornings at West Norwood Therapies and it’s class time with Emma. A beginner class, the flow is quiet slow and allows time for correction and continuous reflection on your practice. I’m quite familiar with yoga however I haven’t practiced in a long time so this class was a perfect reintroduction for me. With a mix of complete beginners and experienced returners, Emma handled the class with consideration for both. Every position was explained and demonstrated with and without blocks or modifications and Emma also offered reasons for why each position helped certain joints and muscles.

Emma talks frequently about the importance of Yin and Yang – Yin being the slower more stable postures that increase flexibility and relax our bodies and Yang being the active, strength building aspect of yoga practice. The two opposites complement each other in working towards a strong and flexible body. I am constantly recommending my sports massage clients to take yoga classes as building strength protects our ligaments and tendons, and increasing flexibility enables our muscles to stretch more freely helping to prevent strains and tears. Emma’s class was a perfect combination of both and working on the two aspects side by side leads to a more lean and lithe musculature.

Perhaps one of the most important things Emma’s class inspires is judgement-free practice. One of her mottos is “All who breathe, can practice yoga”. There is no expectation or criteria that you need to conform to – as yoga has become more popular it sometimes seems to come with a certain archetype. People that can’t bend themselves in half or don’t have the latest designer leggings may feel uneasy and afraid to take class. Yoga practice is what you make it. Everyone’s practice will be different and will differ day to day; it’s a process and takes time. There is never an end goal, which is why it’s called practice. In Emma’s class you are encouraged to listen to your body. As it was a morning class I was personally feeling a bit stiffer than usual and I took that on board with my practice, I didn’t force anything.

Fast forward to Sunday and it was time to detox. Emma lead a detox yoga workshop for 2 ½ hours and at first I was apprehensive as to the length – that seemed like a lot of yoga! I needn’t have worried and even felt like I could go for longer at the end; the workshop was structured perfectly.

For the first hour and a half we practised a fairly fast flow with time to explore new poses and depth once we were warm. We then talked about Ayurveda: an ancient Indian system of medicine that supports and guides a whole holistic approach. Many people turn to its philosophies and basic constructs when considering detoxing their body. It was a lovely open and inviting space to share our thoughts, ask questions and gain insight into how we might incorporate some Ayurveda practices into our own lives and their individual needs. For the last 20 minutes we snuggled into some blankets and Emma guided us through some Yoga Nidra practice. Yoga Nidra is a form of guided sleep meditation that focuses on finding that window between waking and sleeping for ultimate relaxation. If you are interested in finding out more about Yoga Nidra, contact Emma and come along to her weekly Sunday evening Nidra classes at WNT!

Emma left us with a complete print out information pack of everything we had covered in the workshop - the poses, Ayurveda and even a detox recipe: Kitchari. I always find in workshops that there is so much information to take in that we frequently get home and forget everything, so a print out was such a great addition. As adults we often don’t get the chance to study and learn new knowledge and I relish this! I will definitely be reading up on the things we covered and practicing at home. I highly recommend Emma’s workshops – the next one is on 24th March and this will be a restorative yoga workshop focusing on de-stressing.

Thanks Emma, I thoroughly enjoyed our practitioner swap! Look out for more practitioner swap blog posts throughout this year as we all take it in turns to experience each other’s practices.