

Take it from an expert: Real men do practice yoga

By KAREN IZZI

Special to The Phoenix

PHOENIXVILLE — For Stephen Salvati of Schwenksville, it seemed difficult to be attending a yoga class instead of joining his friends at the bar after work. At The Yoga Lifestyle Institute in Phoenixville, beginner students like Salvati gather for 1 1/2-hour classes to stretch, relax, and breathe. Salvati admits how great he feels after just one class: "Never before have I considered yoga as a form of relaxation, especially stretching into positions called The Cobra Position."

Like others caught up in the corporate world, Salvati battles morning traffic jams, skipping breakfast, endless phone calls, and meeting important deadlines on a daily basis. He feels confident that he now has the power to control how he reacts to stress rather than become restless and angry with his surroundings.

In an effort to introduce more men to the practice of yoga, owner of The Yoga Lifestyle Institute Bob Butera explains to students that traditionally yoga was only practiced by men and that men who did practice yoga were real men. "You must be a warrior to be able to look around inside and face the true self," Butera said.

In our culture, most adults associate yoga with "feet behind the ears." However, these positions have many benefits both physically and mentally. Most men are pleasantly surprised at the amount of growth and development that they experience through their yoga practice. They sit quietly allowing themselves to focus on the "now," taking into consideration that they do not have control over their sometimes stressful environment. Relaxation improves our relationship with ourselves as

"You must be a warrior to be able to look around inside and face the true self."

Bob Butera
Owner,

Yoga Lifestyle Institute

well as others. Yoga gives one the chance to look around inside as it settles the mind, body, and spirit.

David Caperila, friend and co-worker of Salvati, walks his dog to fight stress. "We just walk and talk," he said. He would not consider yoga because he doesn't know enough about it, but would never discourage anyone else from trying it.

Salvati realizes that even his children feel stressed at times and plans to introduce them to his instructor, Patricia Cornelius, at The Yoga Lifestyle Institute during its monthly yoga class for families. Because both of his daughters are involved in dance programs, he admits that yoga will help them obtain greater flexibility, strength, and balance. "The Sunday morning yoga class will provide us with some real quality time together and I know the girls will love it," Salvati stated.

Although Steve has always had a fond appreciation for the outdoors and admiration of Mother Nature, never before has he been able to breathe as he does now. Breathing directly from the diaphragm allows him to reconnect and re-center. The woods are a fine place to practice this breathing and Steve admits that his hikes through the woods will never be the same.

Yoga classes for the family are held on the second Sunday of each month from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The cost is \$10 per family. For more information, call The Yoga Lifestyle Institute 610-933-3400.