

TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF YOGA

What Yoga Is, What It Is Not,
and What It Can Do for You



Compiled by the Staff at [Yogabody Reviewed.com](http://YogabodyReviewed.com)

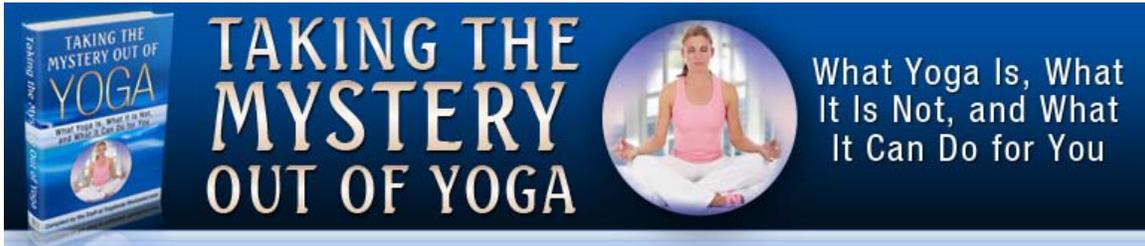
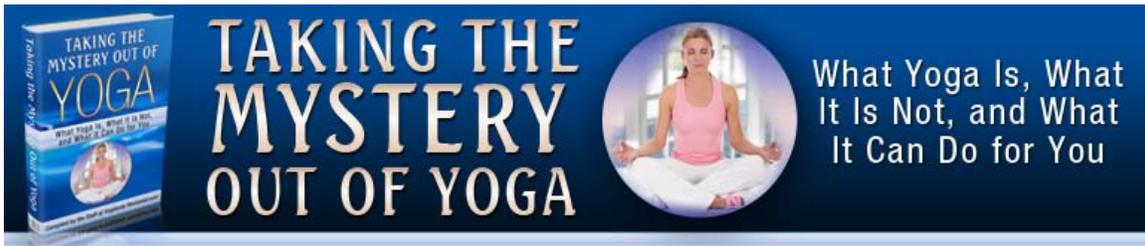


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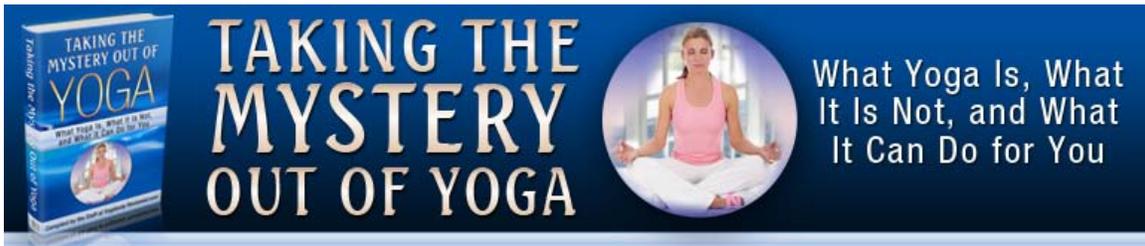
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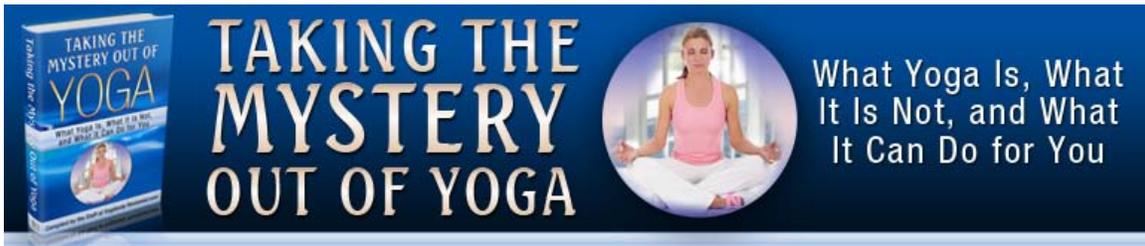
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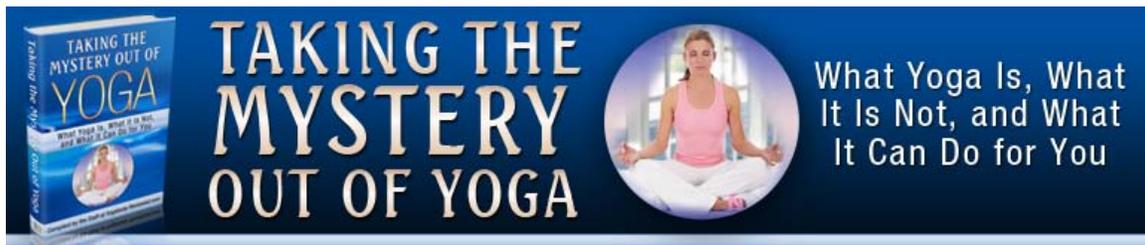
Introduction

As we head into this shiny new millennium, we're repeatedly reminded of the coming together of East and West. That fusion no doubt has something to do with the satellite television programming that now beams in shows from diverse cultures, with the increased availability of books and music from faraway places that merely a generation or two ago were not within reach, and, of course, with the way we now connect with people across time and space through the Internet and other telecommunications improvements.



In short, the world has become a much, much smaller place. Indeed, when Marshall McLuhan, the celebrated Canadian educator, philosopher and scholar, coined the term *Global Village*, even he probably didn't envision so much happening, so quickly, so soon.

Although the wave of information that now crisscrosses our tiny planet is something that has its roots in ancient history, it is now experiencing a burgeoning in the West that continues to gain momentum with each passing year.



And yoga has not escaped this worldwide phenomenon. Whether it's at a local YMCA or a lush spiritual retreat in the Everglades, yoga is establishing itself as a mainstay in Western culture, indeed, in global culture.

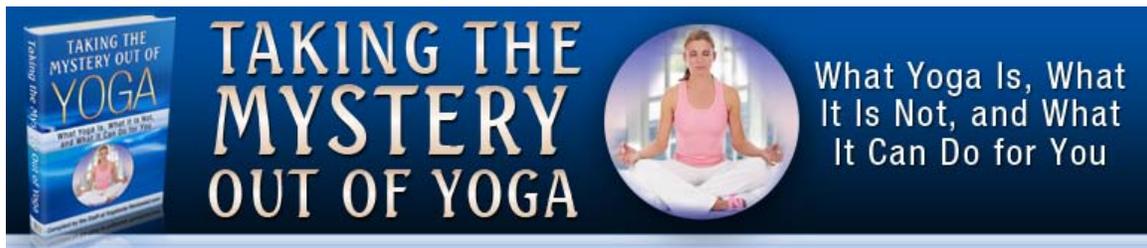
And yet, many people are reluctant to experience the physical, emotional, and psychological health benefits of yoga, and there is really only one major reason for this: misinformation.

Although many people might truly enjoy yoga and find it to be the side-effect-free answer to a lot of their emotional and physical ailments, they just don't know enough about the subject to take that first step.

Moreover, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, the notion seems to persist that yoga is a religious following, and that to experience its many health benefits somehow obliges one to renounce their faith or, worse, run away to some commune and eat tofu in between chanting sessions.

Although, yes, if you'd like to go to a retreat and enjoy tofu and chanting, that's probably possible. (Almost anything is possible, as long as it's legal and people want to do it, right?)

Yet that vision of yoga – people with shaved heads handing out flowers to strangers at the airport – is by no means the



overall picture. Yoga is really a very simple, accessible, and, in many countries around the world, ordinary thing to do.

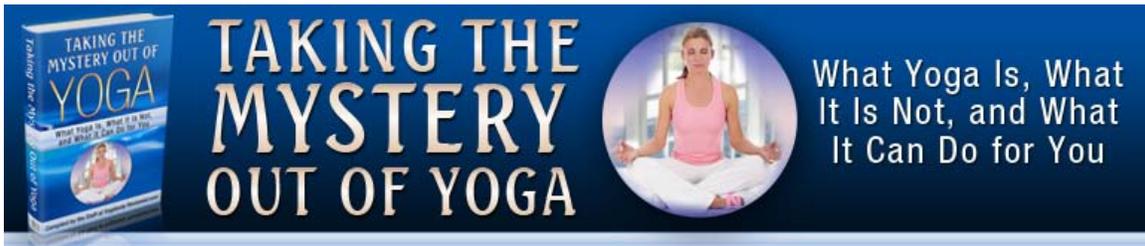
In that light, this book was created with one goal in mind: to demystify yoga for you, and provide you with a clear, simple, and enjoyable introduction to this form of exercise.

If you've never been exposed to any kind of yoga (except for what you might have seen on television), this book will be especially beneficial for you.

But even if you have tried some kinds of yoga (maybe a friend dragged you to a class at the local recreation center all those years ago), this book might reawaken your interest in the subject and reattach you back to a system of body movement and mind focus that has been used in ancient lands for a millennium.

This book is divided into four sections:

- ☑ **What is Yoga?**
- ☑ **Why is Yoga Beneficial?**
- ☑ **Different Kinds of Yoga**
- ☑ **Yoga Equipment & Accessories**

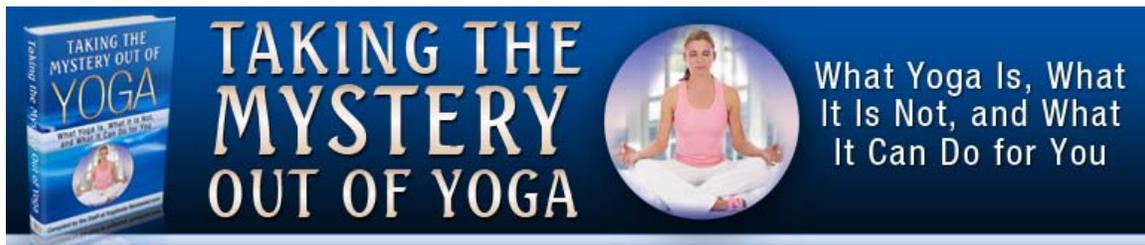


As you read through these sections, please bear in mind that there is absolutely **no** attempt here, directly or indirectly (or in any other way possible) to endorse or promote

any religious view. This is because the view of this book is same view that is held by the world's foremost authorities on yoga: that it is **not** a religion. It does not have a dogma.

Although there many different schools and streams of yoga, they have all managed to coexist peacefully because, for the most part, yoga is not evangelical, which means it does not seek to spread itself as part of its mission.

Please note that the statement above in no way criticizes or comments on evangelical orders, such as Evangelical Christianity. The point here is simply that the overwhelming majority of yoga movements do not consider *spreading yoga* to be a tenet of its identity.

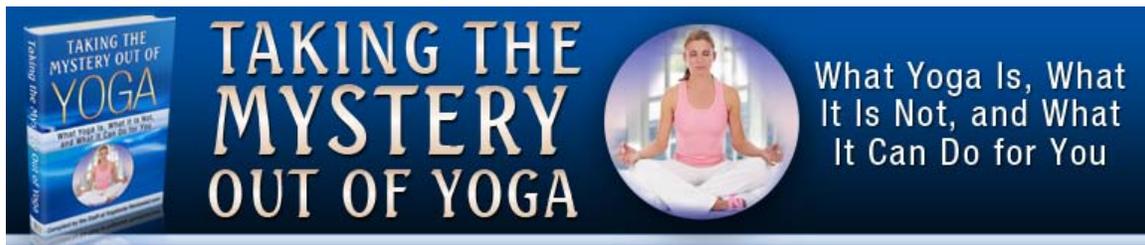


Yet, while the yoga that is described in this book (and experienced in most of the world) is *not* a religion, it *does* fit seamlessly into many people's existing religious framework.

In other words, if you are a Catholic, a Protestant, a Muslim, a Jew, a Sikh, or anything else and identify yourself as being a part of *any* faith at all, yoga doesn't ask you to replace that faith with someone else, or offer you a competing or contradictory view of what you already believe.

So please remember: yoga, as it is discussed and promoted in this book (and in virtually every yoga book worth reading) is *not* a religion.

As we'll begin to understand in the next section of this book, yoga is really nothing more, and nothing less, than harnessing the power of human attention and using it to benefit the body and mind. It is an approach to life, here and now.



What is Yoga?

What was I looking for that night in Bombay? The same thing I had been looking for as long as I can remember. The same thing all of us seek in one way or another. The "answer" to life, whatever that might mean. The "truth." The reason for living, dying, or being "here" at all.

- Beryl Bender Birch

Yoga can seem like a complicated concept, or, at the very least, a dizzying array of physical manipulations that turn seemingly happy-looking human beings into happy-looking human *pretzels*.

Or even more disconcerting, as we have alluded to in the Introduction, a stereotype does exist in places where the term yoga is synonymous with *cult*, or some kind of archaic spiritual belief that compels one to quit their job, sell their house, and go live in the middle of nowhere.

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