

Gentle Yoga: All The Gain Without The Pain

“No pain, no gain.” How many times have we heard this in our efforts to change our body? “NO PAIN, NO GAIN!” This catchy phrase has been repeated so often that it has evolved into a modern-day mantra. Recited as we strive to attain our fitness goals, it has become so embedded in our brains that we don’t stop to question the truth that lies behind it. With its promise to spur us on to even greater physical fitness, is “no pain, no gain” really the right approach? Or, can we really have all the gain without the pain?

For Khatun Woodham, who has taught the Gentle Yoga classes at BoCo since they first opened their doors, “‘no pain, no gain’ is a false friend that betrays us on many levels.” According to Khatun, when we bring a “no pain, no gain” mindset to our fitness practice, we end up developing and sustaining a relationship with pain which will ultimately yield very little gain. As a result, we resign ourselves to being in pain when we move rather than learning how to nurture a relationship where we move in comfort. Is it any wonder people give up exercising out of frustration and fear?

It is at this point, observes Khatun that the subtle power of Gentle Yoga really comes into its own. Rather than seeing Gentle Yoga as the poor relation to the more dynamic practices of Ashtanga, Bikram or Iyengar, Gentle Yoga will bring, gently and steadily, positive change and benefit to our mind and bodies. “And, where there is benefit,” says Khatun, “gain is inevitable.” Gentle Yoga focuses on the breath as the route into the body. The breath, combined with slow, mindful movements allows us to gradually access the strength and flexibility to work in the yoga postures with an ease of movement and an “effortless effort”. The slow, mindful movements of Gentle Yoga allow us to listen to our body and address any whisper of discomfort rather than waiting for it to shout in pain.

Gentle Yoga is ideal for those new to the practice of Yoga or recovering from a previous illness or injury because it is here where the journey to develop a relationship with our body begins. This has been highlighted by research carried out by the Emirates Arthritis Foundation. According to the report in the Daily Telegraph, the EAF research team studied 47 patients, 26 of whom were asked to practise gentle yoga, combining exercise and breathing techniques. After 12 sessions their disease activity score and health assessments were better than the control group. ([Click here for more details.](#))

Even Yoga's more seasoned practitioners, who have suffered the odd “twang” or “ouch” from a more intense, advanced practice, can experience the benefits that a slower approach can give.

For more information on BoCo Gentle Yoga classes, contact Khatun Woodham. For days and times of Gentle Yoga classes, please see our Timetable.