

Yoga

Written by Abeni Hill

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Yoga is an important part of healthy living.

According to the Mayo Clinic, yoga helps maintain heart functions and lowers blood pressure through controlled breathing exercises and movement.

"You respond to stress more calmly," said certified yoga instructor Jamie Minor.

Minor started practicing yoga about nine years ago.

"I belonged to a gym and had been doing weights. I did one (yoga) class at the gym and loved it right away," said the instructor.

Minor said she had preconceived notions about yoga. "I assumed that it would be easy especially because I was pretty strong in the weight room," said Minor. "It is physically challenging."

Yoga is also known to be a mind activity as well as a body activity.

"Yoga helps you to have more body awareness. It is important to pay attention to your body," said Minor. "The mind-body connection is extremely important. You retrain your brain and learn how to focus on one thing at a time."

Minor said she began to see the benefits of practicing yoga in all aspects of her life.

"You pay attention to what you put into your body as well," said Minor. "You learn how to breathe through the challenge. You retrain your brain to learn how to focus on one thing at a time."

Minor said people should not feel limited to one type of yoga. "With any type of exercise it is important to do different kinds," said Minor. "If I only lift weights, I will only be strong in lifting weights."

Minor feels people who haven't tried yoga may have misconceptions about it. She said some

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people perceive yoga as religious but that is not necessarily the case, and said there are a variety of types of yoga.

Minor is certified in teaching power yoga, also known as Vinyasa, and hot yoga, also known as Bikram. The difference between power yoga and hot yoga is that hot yoga is taught in a room that is heated to about 105 degrees. This type of yoga focuses on releasing toxins from the body through sweating.

"Hot yoga helps to cleanse my body and recover after lifting weights," said the instructor.

Minor currently teaches at CorePower yoga and said she plans to start teaching yoga at the gym that she and her husband own, The F.I.T. Lab, which is located in St. Paul.