

What Modern Yoga Lost, Until Now...

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As a modern yoga teacher for thirty-five years, I have seen incredible change in the practices of yoga, from its origins in India to its widespread acceptance and popularity in the contemporary western world, that support the health and day-to-day lives of people from all walks of life. When I started practicing in the mid-70's, physical yoga as it was taught in the West, was practically unknown outside a few major cities in the US, and never would I have guessed the magnitude of its influence today, fifty years later.

Currently, there are over 36 million people in the US who regularly practice yoga, and what was once considered “fringe” during the 1960's is now “the most commonly used complementary health approach in our country”, according to [TheGoodBody.com](https://www.thegoodbody.com). And around the world, it's estimated 300 million yoga practitioners are rolling out their mats on a regular basis, seeking relief from physical ailments and mental stress, or as a form of athletic cross-training and injury prevention.

From its start 10-12,000 years ago to the present, the path of yoga is often traveled by those with a passionate desire to learn more about themselves and life. Usually, it begins with simple body exercises that create a new awareness, arising first on a physical level. Then, through consistent practice, the magic and mystery of yoga unfolds the potential to transform us on levels beyond the physical—into the psychological and, even further, into the energetic or spiritual realms of our being.

It is this unusual quality of yoga—its capacity to provide personal and spiritual transformation, that sets it apart from other forms of exercise. Our ancient yogic ancestors were “inner explorers”, seeking to understand the problems of our human existence and supporting our human evolution with a system of practices designed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life. They came to understand the inseparable nature of body and mind, and the realization that we are much more than just flesh and bone - that the human body is a collection of bio-energetic, bio-electrical processes that are intimately connected to a living earth, which “operates” with its own bio-energetic, bio-electrical system that we live within and are intrinsically a part of.

The basic physical exercises of yoga relied on creating conscious shapes and movements with our bodies while simultaneously increasing awareness of our breathing and the sensations generated during practice, mentally and physically. Those early practitioners also knew that direct contact with the earth while practicing offered us one of the simplest, incredibly powerful, and miraculous means to create balance, healing, and well-being - physically and psychologically.

Ancient yogis were able to recognize, long before science, that the correct relationship to and consistent coupling with earth's natural energetic forces held the keys we need for self-healing.

“Miracles... rest not so much upon faces or voices or healing power coming suddenly new to us from afar off, but upon perceptions being made finer, so that for the moment our eyes can see and our ears can hear what is there about us always.”

~ Willa Cather

The power of Earth’s forces in yoga

The practice of yoga in India has a long history of practicing directly on the earth, or on naturally conductive fiber mats placed directly on the ground. In 1972, that changed with the introduction of the first, commercially available yoga mat in the US that was created by an American yoga teacher from a 24” x 68” x 1/8” pad of plastic (PVC), cut from a role of standard carpet flooring underlayment. Initially, what this innovation provided to an eager western audience was the convenience of a surface offering “grip” and “cushion”, essentially a more comfortable “ride”, with a sense of stability and a clean surface to practice on. Though unknown at the time, what this invention sacrificed was one of the fundamental components that gave the ancient practice of yoga a far superior effect on the overall health of the practitioner.

With the feet of today’s plastic-yoga-mat-toting yogis now physically insulated from the earth’s natural energies by an electrically non-conductive material, an intrinsic bio-energetic element of yoga practice was lost for generations of modern yogis.

Components for connecting to ground

Traditionally, there were three essential means through which early yogis connected their bodies to the energies of the earth while practicing—physically, psychologically, and energetically. Each of these methods produce unique healing effects upon our human organism. As living beings, what ancient yogis understood well was this:

- We are much more than flesh and bone.
- Each of these components has a unique role to play.
- Our health and wellness require regular input from all three to survive and thrive.

Connecting physically

In 1687, Sir Isaac Newton’s discovery of gravity - an “invisible” universal force till then, was well-known by the originators of yoga as a primary catalyst for movement. Simply defined, gravity is the inherent natural force of attraction between two physical bodies - the bigger the bodies (mass), the stronger the force (attraction). The practical gift of gravity is that it keeps us connected to the big ball of dirt, rock, and water we inhabit as it spins and orbits around our sun star, while our solar system of planets and moons orbits around the Milky Way galaxy, and as our galactic system of stars rotates around the center of the universe. The miracle of gravity—revealed to Newton by his famous apple—is its ability to keep our feet on planet Earth while hurtling through space at a staggering speed of 850 kilometers per second (2,000,000 miles per hour).

A less well-known miracle of gravity found in Newton’s third of three universal laws of motion, is that for every physical action in the universe, there is an equal and opposite reaction, a basic principle applied in the practice of yoga to harness gravity’s opposite - levity.

“Gravity is the root of lightness; stillness, the ruler of movement.”
~ Lao Tzu

Connecting psychologically

Through the physical practices of yoga, ancient yogis discovered how the nature of our body and mind are inseparable, and that the practices of yoga we use for our physical bodies have a strong influence on our psychological bodies (states of being), and vice versa - our psychological bodies (states of being) have a strong influence on what our physical bodies are capable of.

Experiencing levity in the practice of yoga helps us bring these two states of our being together naturally. The standard definitions for the word levity are *lightness in weight (physical); lightness of mind, character, behavior, or lack of appropriate seriousness or earnestness - in other words lightness of heart and humor (psychological)*. These meanings so perfectly capture the dual sense of levity we can experience in yoga—one physical and one nonphysical—that are useful for safe and effective movement during the practice. Both help support us and assist with the release of unwanted, often subconscious, patterns of contraction in our bodies: physical, mental, and emotional, that often create stagnation and resistance in our body’s biological systems and subtle channels.

When practicing yoga, think of yourself as the small body in a permanent state of attraction to the big body, which is the Earth below. Understanding this and experiencing it fully can totally shift the relationship you have with the effort you expend in poses involving movement and stillness. As with all physical things in our universe, when you allow yourself to feel the effects of gravity fully through surrender, it can produce a physical experience of gravity’s opposite: levity. The key to experiencing physical lightness when practicing yoga lies in understanding how to respond intuitively when you feel the effects of release of effort - surrender of effort creates the sensation of softness; softness creates the sensation of abounding space within, and the space within that manifests through softness creates moments of joy (known as “ananda” in Sanskrit, which translates as bliss).

These types of feelings produced by gravity and being grounded both physically and physiologically are essential for our mental health, creating deep feelings of safety and calm in our central nervous system naturally. This state of being helps rekindle primitive emotions and the feelings of truly being “home” on our planet.

Connecting energetically

What recent scientific research has clearly shown now is that our bodies (and the bodies of all living things on earth) are electrical in nature. All cellular communications, every thought and muscle movement, are preceded with a bioelectrical pulse that builds into a symphony of electrical pulses that together synergistically and fundamentally allow us to walk, talk, dance, and ultimately receive the gifts the practice of yoga offers.

The fact is that we live on a planet alive with natural energies, something indigenous people have known since time immemorial. The surface of our earth teems with subtly vibrating frequencies, a phenomenon unknown to most people or forgotten. Who regards the sand, the grass, or the dirt beneath our feet as an energy field?

Put another way, our planet is a six-sextillion (that's six followed by twenty-one zeroes) metric ton battery that is continually being replenished by solar radiation, lightning, and radiant heat from its deep-down molten core. And just like a battery in a car that keeps the motor running and the wheels turning, so too, do the rhythmic pulsations of natural energy flowing through and emanating from the surface of the earth keep the biological machinery of global life running in rhythm and balance - for everything that lives on the land or in the sea.

Many of us, modern yogis included, are totally unaware of our bio-electrical nature. Few have the slightest notion of an electrical or energetic relationship between our body and the earth. We don't learn about it in school, and we have largely become disconnected and separated from this primordial relationship with our planet. In developed societies in particular, we have essentially lost our electrical "roots" - our bare feet. With their rich network of nerve receptors, the skin of our feet rarely touches bare earth since we wear synthetic, mostly plastic or rubber soled shoes, disconnecting and insulating us from the earth's surface as we go about our day. And at night, we sleep on elevated beds, often in multi-storied buildings, devoid of any of the energetic rhythms earthing provided to our ancient ground-sleeping relatives, and animals in the wild. The act of earthing offers an easy remedy for our disconnect.

What modern science reveals

For over twenty-five years, Clint Ober, an early pioneer in the cable TV industry who on his own uncovered real-life health benefits from grounding his body to the earth, has been on a mission to educate the world about this incredibly simple and effective healing protocol of being barefoot outside, or in bare-skin contact with various indoor earthing products he has devised. Personally, he invested in decades of scientific, peer-reviewed research to show that "earthing" works, and is possibly the most important health discovery ever. The new science behind this timeless practice and modern discovery consistently produces these and other common benefits:

- Rapid reduction of inflammation
- Rapid reduction or elimination of chronic pain and DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness)
- Dynamic blood flow improvement (reducing "viscosity") to better supply the cells and tissues of the body with vital oxygen and nutrition.
- Accelerated elimination of metabolic waste products from the cells
- Reduced stress.
- Increased energy.
- Improved sleep.
- Accelerated healing from injuries and surgery.
- Protection from electromagnetic fields (EMFs)

- Slows down the aging process.

“The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest their patients in the care of the human frame, in a proper diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.”

~ Thomas Edison

Re-introducing earthing to yoga

In early 2018, Clint and I met for the first time and realized as two leaders in their respective fields (earthing and yoga), that the time had come to join forces and re-introduce the “lost” and missing component of earthing back into the modern practice of yoga for healing, alongside the contributions of conscious movement, stillness, and breathing has made in the traditional practice yoga for thousands of years.

With our shared passion for healing and abounding energy for spreading our combined message as far and wide as our two lives permit, the collaboration we embarked on has been fueled with excitement over the last four years, testing numerous prototypes and overcoming production-related challenges. The good news is we are now in a place we have been dreaming about, and ready to announce to the yoga community that our new **EARTHING™** Yoga Mat is ready for launch. We both feel this mat will revolutionize the practice and industry of yoga once again, in ways well beyond what I experienced with Manduka, one of today’s leading companies of high-performance yoga products that I founded in 1997.

We look forward to you experiencing for yourself what we have learned with real-life applications of earthing for over twenty years - by restoring the body’s natural ground state, we sync to the natural rhythms of the earth.

We envision a future where everybody understands how essential it is for yoga and for life to be connected to the earth to restore and maintain our natural state of health, well-being and joy for living.

Get Connected | Stay Grounded

Peter Sterios BIO

Peter has been part of the global yoga community for over four decades as a teacher, author, designer, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. He is the founder of MANDUKA™, creator of LEVITYoGA™, taught yoga at the Obama White House for 3 years, and spoke as a wellness expert at the Pentagon for the US Marine Corps in 2018. His DVD “Gravity & Grace” made Yoga Journal’s “Top 15 yoga videos of all time”, and his first book “Gravity & Grace” is a 2019 Nautilus Book Awards Gold Medal winner. www.LEVITYoGA.com

Clinton Ober BIO

Clinton is CEO of EarthFX Inc., a research and development company located in Palm Springs CA. He first learned of the importance of grounding in early 1960s when installing Cable TV and related communication systems. A decade later, he founded Telecrafter Corporation which became the largest

provider of contract cable installation services in the US. In the 1980's, he partnered with McGraw-Hill to distribute live digital news services via cable to PCs, and the development of the first cable modem.

Following a health challenge in 1995, Clinton retired and embarked on a personal journey looking for a higher purpose in life. During his travels, he noticed people wearing plastic and rubber soled shoes that insulate the body from earth. He wondered if no longer being naturally grounded could affect our health. This question led to an experiment that suggested grounding reduced pain and improved sleep. He along with fellow researchers developed a working hypothesis: Grounding normalizes functioning of all living systems, allowing our bodies to utilize the earth's electrical potential to maintain its internal electrical stability for the normal functioning of all self-regulating and self-healing systems. For twenty-five years, he has supported a host of research studies that collectively demonstrate that grounding does just that, and much more. www.earthing.com

Peter's collaboration with Clinton and his company Earthing.com began in 2019 with the goal to design and develop a high-quality, high-performance ground-conductive yoga mat. With the release of the new EARTHING™ Yoga Mat in 2023, there is now an innovative yoga mat that is unlike any other – durable, non-toxic/non-odor, with amazing “grip” and “cushion”, AND earth-energy conducting, indoors and in nature – a mat that will completely revolutionize the practice of yoga, and return the healing power of earth's bio-energetic forces, lost from ancient times, to the practice yoga in the modern age. Here's how:

- Provides high-performance qualities experienced practitioners expect (comfort, grip, and sustainability) AND has the integrated grounding technology that returns the practice of physical yoga to its ancient roots (literally).
- Grounding while practicing yoga allows us to reconnect with the healing currents of the earth, something our ancient barefoot yogi ancestors understood practicing directly on the ground, or on natural (and conductive) fiber mats resting on the ground.
- All modern plastic/rubber yoga mats, shoes, and sandals that most of us live our lives with keep us disconnected and insulated from earth's natural healing energies. With the design of Earthing's new mat, we can restore our body's bio-electrical connection to earth, and receive the scientifically-proven healing benefits grounding offers.