



WELL + GOOD

Bodywork.

It's not too late to join the yoga craze as yet another new form hits town

WORDS ABHISHEK MEHROTRA

Practised by everyone from loincloth-garbed ascetics to spandex-wearing professionals, yoga has come a long way. Along this journey it has morphed into various forms, of which hot yoga is one of the most popular. But now, there's a new stretchy kid on the block — AcroYoga, which has recently found its way to Singapore.

Conceived during a meeting between two yoga enthusiasts in San Francisco in 2003, AcroYoga is described on its website, acroyoga.org, as a practice that "blends the spiritual wisdom of yoga, the loving kindness of Thai massage, and the dynamic power of acrobatics. These three ancient lineages form this practice that cultivates trust, connection and playfulness."

Marc Bauchet, an AcroYoga instructor, explains a typical class. "In a class or workshop we do partner yoga flows, in contact with each other or not, and sometimes in a circle or facing each other. We integrate and build on partner acrobatic elements, we play games, we fly each other and we relax and ground ourselves with creative therapeutic Thai/yoga massage."

Bauchet began practising yoga in 2001 and converted to AcroYoga soon after it came into existence. To him, the practice is "the most delicious cocktail of yogic wisdom, acrobatic fire

and the healing sweetness of therapeutic massage."

Based on its description, AcroYoga seems to be the naughtier and slightly irreverent cousin of the more mainstream hot yoga. For the uninitiated, the latter is a series of yoga poses and breathing exercises conducted in a room heated to 37°C. While the very thought of exercising in such conditions might make you feel faint, the practice is supposed to release toxins through sweat while loosening the muscles.

Moharkumar Rajaraman, a hot yoga instructor at True Yoga, says "the heat in a hot yoga class makes the muscles more flexible and pliable", which allows practitioners to execute otherwise difficult yoga postures more easily. "Some members come solely for hot yoga because the profuse sweating helps them to lose weight faster than a normal yoga session," he adds.

Rajaraman reveals hot yoga classes at True Yoga in Singapore have seen 100% attendance during peak hours ever since they were introduced back in 2005 — a testament to their immense popularity. "Hot yoga is definitely going to be a mainstay for the future and will enjoy continued popularity."

However, for those like Bauchet who swear by AcroYoga, the fun lies in

adding a dash of what might be called impishness to this relatively sombre form. "In general, modern forms of yoga can be quite serious and self-absorbing, which is not a bad thing, but AcroYoga adds a dimension of openness and fun," he says. In contrast, "AcroYoga uses the synergy and connection between two individuals to grow. Often people strengthen and develop their solo yoga practices thanks to practising AcroYoga with others."

As with any art that branches out into different forms, the various styles of yoga have their diehard proponents. However one thing is for sure — in their quest to attain physical perfection and spiritual nirvana (assuming those two are not a contradiction in terms), people have never been more spoilt for choice. ★

Take Me There

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● **ACROYOGA**

acroyoga.org

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