

# Stretch the body and the mind with yoga

By **LINDSAY HODGMAN**  
How To Editor

There are good athletes and there are great athletes. A good athlete may have superior hand-eye coordination, flexibility, or muscle girth, but a great athlete possesses something more.

A great athlete must combine physical prowess with discipline and awareness of self. A mind-body connection is necessary.

The word "yoga" means to unite. Developed over 5,000 years ago, yoga was and is practiced as a way to unite the mind and the body in order to allow for deeper meditations in which the individual is elevated from an earthly level to a transcendent level.

Sarah Tacy, a 2000 EHS graduate and a great athlete, has experienced first hand the benefits of yoga.



"I threw out my back after the first day of lacrosse pre-season senior year. I missed the entire season, all of the senior trips, and was unable to drive for a large majority of the time because of all of the pain killers, muscle relaxants, and anti-inflammatory medication I was put on," she said. "I couldn't sit, stand, walk, or even lay down for extended periods of time."

"I spent a good portion of time seeking out expert advice from sports doctors and surgeons and going to multiple physical therapists and although there was some improvement, nothing took away my continuous pain," Sarah said.

Sarah was recruited to play soccer and lacrosse at Connecticut College in New London, CT. Unfortunately, by the time soccer season rolled around her injury had not improved.

"I could hardly walk on the first day of pre-season," she said.

Sarah threw her back out a second time about a year after her first injury. She had planned to board a fourteen-hour flight to Hawaii in a matter of hours.

"I couldn't get off the ground, but as my father put it, 'You can either be in pain in the snowy January

weather of NH or you can be in pain on the beaches in Hawaii,'" Sarah said. She took her meds and embarked upon the trip that would change her life.

When Sarah touched down in Hawaii she was greeted by a friend and her friend's mother.

"When we arrived at her house on the top of a crater overlooking Maui, I found that there was a yoga studio outside of my room," Sarah said. "We took a book and attempted 'yoga' every morning, followed by a meal made from the garden and a long swim in the ocean."

"We took a trip in which I met two men who were both supposed to be paralyzed but overcame the odds by using visualization and yoga to heal themselves," she said.

After hours of body work, reflexology, rolfing, yoga, and visualization, Sarah was able to board the plane back home without any medication. The rest is history.

Sarah continued with yoga, and by her junior year in college, Sarah found a teacher who would push her limits and change her ways of thinking. For the first time, Sarah experienced an injury-free season and was able to free herself from self-criticism.

"I learned about staying present, about non-judgment, about working through hard moments with a smile on my face, and about realizing that life is constant change," Sarah said. "This all paid off in lacrosse. If I missed a goal, I'd take a breath and get back into the game instead of beating myself up with judgment. I relearned that lacrosse was about having fun and not about living up to a name or an expectation."

"It's funny," she said. "When you think less about how to be good and allow yourself to play from the heart, you naturally become great because you are in the Zone doing things you couldn't have planned on doing if you tried."

After college, Sarah earned her yoga certification at a school in Costa Rica. There she participated in a 28-day, 200-hour training program to become a certified instructor.

Sarah returned to the U.S. to spend about two and a half years doing research and development for a nationally acclaimed sports facility. There she trained lacrosse players from Duke and Cornell, a professional basketball player, and two college football players, among others. With them she used her injury prevention yoga program and practiced speed work.

In November, Sarah left that job in order to make yoga a more central focus of her work.

"I now own Ganesha Performance in which I aid athletes and people to overcome mental and physical obstacles," Sarah said. "My work ranges from traveling to various sites throughout the country and aiding Athletic Republic in training their trainers on John Frappier's speed enhancement system."

Sarah looks forward to her future work this summer with Institute 3E in Long Island and UNH football.

"For both of these institutes I will be working with high-level athletes

to regenerate muscles so they can train all out the following day," Sarah said. "I'll be looking at aspects that hold them back from speed, like range of motion, gain, or misalignment, and I will also be working on therapeutics and injury rehab."

Today, yoga is practiced as a form of physical therapy, athletic training, and relaxation.

"In yoga we start with the physical, build towards the mental, like sports psychology, and inevitably end up in the spiritual of life lessons on living an honest, happy life," said Sarah.

With any questions or inquiries, contact Sarah at [info@ganeshaperformance.com](mailto:info@ganeshaperformance.com). Namaste.



Photos by Diane Herth



## Sarah's ideal workout schedule

- Monday: Dynamic warm up, Interval-Incline sprint sequences (40 minutes), functional strength (physical balls, medballs, and free weights), 10 core
- Tuesday: Regenerative yoga that heats up towards the end
- Wednesday: Agility, plyometrics, box jumps, and 40 minute core
- Thursday: Regenerative yoga that heats up towards the end
- Friday: Interval incline sprints, functional strength
- Saturday: Yoga