

# Structural Yoga Therapy to restructure your life

by RoseMarie and Robert R. Roth

The new year brings a fresh look at life for many of us. Often we seek ways to improve our health, our habits, and our emotions, and perhaps even the way we look at our personal world and the world at large. Therapeutic yoga offers a way to address all of these goals.

## WHAT WE DO

We, Bob and RoseMarie Roth, are certified Structural Yoga Therapists (SYT), who in our calm and pleasant home-studio will dialogue with you regarding your goals and needs. We adapt the practices of Yoga to the needs of people with specific or persistent discomforts and health problems. Our first Structural Yoga Therapy session begins with helping you to develop new awareness to your body your breath, and your emotions.

After an initial assessment of your body using methods similar to a physical therapy assessment, we can define its strengths and weaknesses, balances and imbalances. From there we develop a flexible plan (no pun intended) in which you begin a process for body and mind lifestyle changes.

Here are comments from two of our ongoing clients:

“Wow, my body feels so open!”

“A delightful experience! Exquisite care is given to your particular needs. A wonderful peace pervades.”

Stress reduction and relaxation are valued and essential objectives for most clients and are part of almost every SYT session. “If stress is reduced, health can improve,” states Martin Rossman, MD and a specialist in neuropsychology.

Frequently, people cannot attend group Yoga classes and need one-on-one attention on several levels. Yoga Therapy can serve as a transition to a personal home practice or to group classes because our clients will understand which movements and other Yogic practices are beneficial to them and which practices may exacerbate existing problems or conditions.

Many of us don't live in our body, but rather a few miles away, a few decades behind, a few years ahead, or perhaps just in yesterday or tomorrow. So first we teach how to become more fully present in your body, to feel it and accept it as it is right now, and from there to understand what our body is really trying to tell us. Once body awareness develops we then begin using a methodology similar to physical therapy. In SYT no pain is involved (nor is it expected or accepted in our practice). In the event of discomfort the movement is modified or another is substituted. (In a Yoga practice where there is pain there is NO gain). Using Yoga practices, we work specific parts of your body that either need to be stretched, strengthened or both. As a result you will build physical stamina and a greater sense of emotional well-being.

For example, lower back pain or aching joints happen in three ways: Lack of appropriate movement, excessive inappropriate movement practices, or structural body imbalances. As SYT practitioners we assess your patterns and show you ways to improve comfort.

However, if you suffer from

acute joint pain, or medical issues such as rheumatoid arthritis, gout, stenosis of the spine, etc., your health care provider must be your first defense. In some cases medical care will be followed physical therapy. Structural Yoga Therapy is third in the triage of re-gaining or maintaining health.

## BREATHING

The breath is an extremely important component of health. Many of us breathe only in the upper chest. In Structural Yoga Therapy we learn to gently deepen, expand, and slow the breath through the practice of Pranayama. Each session we will practice breathing patterns that address your particular needs.

Breathing is also a major factor for quieting and slowing down an over-active mind. It can be a very important resource in managing and reducing overly-reactive emotional responses to the challenges that life keeps tossing our way. On a personal level, when RoseMarie was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, she learned to effectively and safely use a breathing technique to “reset” her heart back



to its natural rhythm. All that was required was an acceptance of “what is right now,” relaxed her mind and body through a specific Pranyamama practice.

## MEDITATION

Meditation is another highly effective modality for stress reduction. Meditation practices vary and some are as easy as learning to follow and stay focused on your breath or your body sensations. Just ten minutes of meditation a day has been shown through medical studies to decrease stress, change the brain, and increase well-being. Many physicians now recognize that chronic stress is the underlying cause in most diseases.

There is a science behind how the body works most safely and in how the body heals. When it is aligned and balanced your goals for health and well-being are more attainable. The body becomes imbalanced when used consistently out of its natural alignment. Many of these imbalances occur with aging and can be effectively managed with SYT practices. It just takes a few minutes a day of your time to implement the changes you desire.

Many of us in this era of “fast is good, faster is better” are feeling increasingly hard-pressed to meet the challenges in our lives, even those who are retired. As our minds speed up to keep us “on track,” our bodies tense and contract in response as adrenaline surges and cortisol rises creating the flight or fight response in the sympathetic nervous system. We are left in a chronic state of stress. The therapeutic yoga practices that you will explore with us can help you manage your body's natural response to stressful pressures and demands. We invite you to address the needs of your mind, body, emotions, and spirit as a way to restructure and balance your life.

*RoseMarie Roth is Certified Structural Yoga Therapist RYT, Certified in Cardiac Yoga, Certified in Yoga for Seniors Certified in PreNatal Yoga*

*Robert R. Roth, PhD is Certified Structural Yoga Therapist RYT, Somatic Yoga Practitioner.*



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