

## Pink Lotus Featured Member - Yoga in Her Words

Name: Christine Nowmos

Age: 39

Years Practicing: 13

Why did you start Yoga?

I started Yoga initially because I felt I needed more physical activity but didn't enjoy cardio-type exercise like running or aerobics. In fact, I've had a negative outlook of my athleticism (or lack thereof) since I was a child - I have always been slow and felt uncoordinated. I hoped that yoga would be something that I might have success with, as it doesn't require the same type of endurance that cardio requires and would move at a slower, gentler pace. I had a wonderful experience in my very first yoga class with Michele Franey, an Iyengar-style teacher, and took classes with her until I moved to Woodstown about 10 years ago. I developed an excellent basic technique in the Iyengar classes which helped me learn the proper alignment for poses, a good place for me to start. I've tried several different teachers with varying styles since I moved to this area but have found the best fit with Pink Lotus Yoga. With Colleen and Rebekah, I've been able to build on my basic technique for greater strength, balance, and relaxation.

How has life changed as a result of your practice?

I've found that the philosophy of yoga - the process, not the result, is what's most important - has helped me to focus on what I am able to accomplish in the present and to take pride in the small improvements I make from day to day. This has helped me in other areas of my life. I juggle a lot of tasks as a mom and music teacher, and I have a tendency to become overwhelmed with my responsibilities or feel that I won't be able to meet standards I have set for myself. While I still struggle with these issues, doing yoga helps me to focus on one task at a time, helps me to quiet my mind when my thoughts become too busy or things worry me, and reminds me that I can still achieve quite a bit without being perfect all the time. Also, I feel better physically since I've been doing yoga regularly - I have become stronger and more flexible, have fewer aches and pains, and have lost weight. And because I really enjoy coming to classes as well as practicing at home, I've been motivated to dedicate myself to a regular practice. Even though I am busy, the time I take to do yoga is really worth it for the

benefits to my life overall. When I DON'T do yoga - if I miss more than a few days in a row - I really feel the difference!

Favorite Pose and why?

It really depends on how I'm feeling which pose I like best. On days when I have more energy and am feeling strong, I like doing balancing poses like Tree and Dancer because I like the challenge of the focus required. When my muscles are tighter or I'm tired, I like doing poses that help me to release tense areas and just allow me to relax into the pose, like Pigeon and Reclined Bound Angle. And sometimes a backbend, like Camel, just feels great and is what my body needs.

Why would you recommend Yoga to others?

I would recommend Yoga for many of the reasons I've already mentioned - it has helped me feel calmer, feel healthier physically, and feel better about myself. It is a great way to get exercise that's much easier on the body than cardio, while still very challenging in a different way, and everyone can benefit regardless of his/her level of fitness. I love the positive and encouraging yet low-key and relaxing atmosphere of most of the yoga classes I've been to - I've never been made to feel bad because I couldn't keep up with others or because I had trouble doing something new. And, it's an enjoyable way to give back a little bit of time to myself each week - something we all need so that we have the energy and strength to keep us going from day to day!