



## Release The Stress & Fit into That Dress

On the 28th of March I was asked to take a yoga class at the C-club where there were two yoga instructors who came from New York to give a 6-day workshop. Mr. Bassam Al-Shamali had organized it with his friend Mr. Daniel Shamail as they both live in New York and are regular yogis (yoga term for “a practitioner of yoga”). I went there hoping to squeeze in a cardio workout; after all, since yoga in the movies looks very easy, simple and calming. Boy was I wrong. You can sure get a good workout by doing 75 minutes of yoga. I can honestly say that after just one class I’m obsessed! I’ve been googling about it all weekend. I can’t wait to take more classes and learn more about it. When I asked Daniel how yoga has affected his lifestyle, he mentioned that he is 61 years old but practicing yoga has made him feel younger. It also helped his physical and mental health tremendously since he takes 6 classes a week in New York! He stated, “Yoga just makes you a happier person”. Bassam is only 23 years old but his love for yoga is truly inspiring, he said that by his 3rd yoga class, he was hooked! Bassam wanted to introduce yoga in depth in Kuwait and give the people a wake-up call on how it would affect them positively. Now we fashionistas have to look good even when exercising. The group recommends the Lululemon brand as Bassam puts it “they are the Prada of yoga apparel.” Lululemon was happy to have one of their ambassadors Dana Slamp, as part of the workshop. They were excited about this workshop and have agreed to sell outfits to Bassam and Daniel to be distributed as gifts to the participants here in Kuwait. The workshop was very successful and the group are leaving Kuwait with the satisfaction that they did their job and raised awareness at the same time. I got the chance to talk to the amazing yoga trainers Lori Mcalister and Dana Slamp and found out how they see yoga in each of their perspectives.

**Styles:** *When did you first start practicing yoga?*

**Lori:** Well I started when I was 18, I studied dance at Emerson College in Boston and I had to take a few yoga classes as part of the curriculum. After that, I moved to New York to pursue my dance career, and that’s when my friends introduced me to yoga. Eventually I quit dance and pursued yoga as a career since I felt more strongly about it.

**Dana:** I was first introduced to yoga at the American Conservatory Theatre where I was completing my Masters of Fine Arts. I started 13 years ago at a Bikram studio.

**S:** *How has it impacted your lifestyle?*

**L:** It definitely made me more aware of how I treat my body. I follow a healthy diet with less junk food.

**D:** Well, I quit smoking, which helped my general health. I eventually cut back on meats. I try to eat healthy whole food as much as I can and less processed food.



**S:** *What are the significant advantages of yoga?*

**L:** Wow there are so many! I think mostly, it helps the promotion of circulation and it also calms down your central nervous system, which makes you less likely to eat more. It's also good for insomniacs as it helps you sleep better.

**D:** It keeps you very fit. A practitioner of yoga would feel happier with their body. You would look in the mirror less and listen more to how things feel than how they actually appear.

**S:** *What are the main types of yoga?*

**L:** There are many many types of yoga. What we did today was Vinyasa, which means to place in a special way and to progress toward a desired goal. Vinyasa falls under the umbrella of a larger category of yoga called Hatha- which links physical postures with the breath.

**D:** Focus on the Asana, which is the physical practice of yoga. Most of it is Hatha yoga. "Ha" means sun while "Tha" means moon. It's all about balance. Vinyasa is a section of Hatha yoga, which means to place in a special way. The instructor would usually put together a sequence and link it together with the breath.

**S:** *What's the potential of yoga in Kuwait?*

**L:** The sky's the limit! We have only gotten positive responses, everyone has been so friendly.

**D:** People in this region have so much so now they're asking how do I stay fit and not overdo it. Yoga helps with balance.

**S:** *Do you think yoga is more beneficial than regular cardio and strength training?*

**L:** There are many different types of yoga so there's something right for everybody. Yoga certainly targets all muscle groups but it is always good to cross-train. Yoga is a good supplement for other sports like cycling and jogging.

**D:** Absolutely! I was a gym rat in New York and after I got into yoga I eventually quit my gym membership.

**S:** *Has the workshop proven to be promising for future visits like these?*

**L:** Yes, definitely.

**D:** Absolutely, people are so welcoming. My favorite classes are the ladies only because after a long day you get to have a good talk and connect while doing yoga.

**S:** *What is in Lori's wake-up call smoothie?*

**L:** Kale, avocado, cucumber, almond butter, apple juice, banana and a supplement called Spirulina.

**S:** *WHAT! No coffee?*

**L:** No I do like coffee, one cup in the morning only though.

**D:** Phew! ■

