



how ‘off,’ Burns affirms. “It’s amazing what either a headstand or counting the breath can do to make a difference in my state of mind!”

For many, yoga is so helpful because its tools can be used almost anywhere and anytime. For those with desk jobs, yoga can be a quick, easy and healthy way to clear the mind and recharge in the middle of a busy workday. For example, a wonderfully stress-busting pranayama can be as simple as closing the eyes and counting the length of each inhalation and exhalation. As the body relaxes, the nervous system calms, the heart rate slows, and inhalations and exhalations naturally get longer. A mental chant, or mantra, may be added to each breath, to help further focus the mind. Mantras may be Sanskrit words, like the commonly used “om” or any word or phrase upon

“Yoga is especially useful to us in the Northwest when we can’t be outside [because] the days are short and other forms of exercise aren’t as easy to do indoors.”

which you choose to focus, such as “peace” or “love.” One might begin to see how putting together all of these

tools would enable the mind to leave behind distraction and become internally focused. The ability to do yoga just about anywhere at anytime, combined with its capacity to engage the body, senses and mind, make it a flexible, portable way to

maintain a healthy mind.

Writer Andrea Blair Cirignano is a local yoga instructor with a journalism background. She believes yoga is for everyone and that each member of the community could benefit from the practice in some way, shape or form. Her articles highlight the unique pairing of this ancient practice with a modern Pacific Northwest lifestyle. Find out more about Andrea at yogatone.net.

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