

## Yoga

Rolfing and yoga have much in common, especially their mutual emphasis on body alignment and graceful movement. Yoga means union, to yoke or to harness. The practice of yoga is a Hindu discipline for achieving union with the supreme spirit and the body through meditative concentration, prescribed postures, and controlled breathing. Its goal is to attain the integrity of oneness with ourselves and all that lies beyond us. Both Rolfing and yoga allow us to rediscover a sense of wholeness in the body and life so that we can experience the joys of inner peace and freedom.

Anusara – [an-u-sar-a] means “to be in the flow”, “flowing with Grace”, “The soul in the flow of the universe”, “following your heart”.

Anusara yoga was founded by John Friend in 1997, who had studied the Iyengar system for many years before developing his own style. I especially love the Anusara system because it has quite a bit in common with Rolfing, and its uplifting philosophy, which is epitomized by a “celebration of the heart,” which looks for the good in all people and all things. Anusara yoga also employs the Universal Principles of Alignment™ which are just that, universal. Bodies function much better when the joints are aligned. In Rolfing we work with the body, usually with hands on techniques to change patterns of tension that may cause pain or are preventing the person from finding proper alignment. The yoga student follows the precise verbal instructions of a good teacher to practice postures that employ specific alignments of the joints to find balance in the body.

Another principle of Rolfing is the concept of palintonicity, which means movement in two directions. Anusara calls this Balanced Action, or Unity in opposition. Balanced action is made up of two components: Muscular Energy, drawing from the outside in, and Organic Energy, moving from the inside out. Anusara yoga and Rolfing compliment each other perfectly. Both can provide an experience of strength, balance and freedom in the body as well as a long lasting tension-free sense of spiritual well-being.

I often work with martial arts and yoga practitioners who wish to deepen their practice or suffer old injuries or restrictions in the body. I practice and teach yoga at City Yoga, an Anusara Yoga studio in Columbia South Carolina.