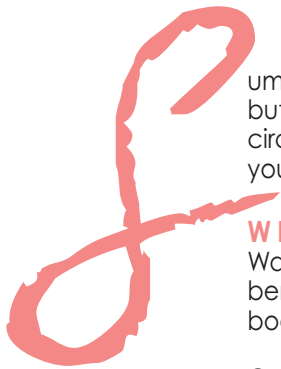


With more than 20 years in the fitness industry, Chrystal Rae Almeida is co-owner of Gaia Flow Yoga Studio in Addison Circle (Addison, TX)

turn up the *Heat*

F O R A H O T S U M M E R B O D Y

By Jordann Rawls



Summer is all about warm weather, relaxing by the pool and kicking up some sand, but how is anyone supposed to relax with the thought of tummy-bearing two-pieces circling their heads? Before the metroplex temperatures jump to their max, burn out your body's best potential with warm (not hot) yoga.

WHY WARM YOGA?

Warm room yoga, as practiced by Gaia Flow Yoga (GFY) students in Addison, TX, is beneficial in not only burning fat more effectively, but also helping to detoxify the body and promote purity of the skin.

Co-Studio owner Chrystal Rae Almeida explains the difference as "an excellent balance" between two extremes.

"Common sense, along with extensive scientific studies, reveal that excessive heat (hot yoga) can be potentially dangerous," Almeida says. "If the room is too cold, injuries may occur, and if the room is too hot, the body may overheat and create stress hormones."

As opposed to practicing in a no heat or excessive heat environment, Almeida and co-owner Andres Illera have found a comfortably warm environment, meaning a minimum temperature of 87 degrees and maximum of 94, to promote flexibility, detoxification and to supercharge the metabolism- which is key for burning through winter insulation just in time for pool-side rendezvous.

Perfect fix, right? Show up. Do Yoga. Burn Fat. Not that easy. If it was, you wouldn't be reading this article. And chances are this isn't your first "get fit" attempt. Why do we always find ourselves back at "square one"?

HEALTH

THE DIFFERENCE MAKER

Michele Segar, PhD, MPH, has spent the last 14 years studying exercise habits and is a researcher at the University of Michigan. According to her findings, most workout plans fail because they were started for the wrong reasons.

In a recent interview, Segar explained that most fitness goal-setters go wrong when they exercise for the two least motivating reasons: To lose weight or to protect their health. Sixty-one percent of surveyed responders who claimed one or both of these reasons as their top motivators did the least amount of exercise.

Segar claims the best motivation for sticking with a plan is to exercise beyond the goal of merely downsizing your hindquarters.

"Improve your state of well-being," Segar says. "Only 26 percent of the participants in my study said they exercised for mental health benefits, but those participants exercised 30 percent more often than those who exercised for the sole purpose of weight loss."

But the majority of us can't stop focusing on the desired end result. For those of us who only work out to work into our skinny jeans, Gaia Flow Yoga offers a break in the failure cycle by offering another path.

"Our objective at Gaia Flow Yoga is to create an environment that is healing, nurturing and empowering on all levels," Almeida says. "You will get in the best shape of your life. When the body, mind, emotions and spirit come into balance, health and vitality are a natural occurrence."

GFY offers three comprehensive and complimentary practices: Ocean, Mountain and Desert, all three offering a rigorous and empowering setting to a multi-level class.

I ask Almeida THE question: Does GFY help us lose weight? Can it get Dallasites into those teeny bikinis? "Getting hot for summer is not the objective of a Gaia Flow Yoga practice," says Almeida. "Once you walk through the door, you are a part of our family. You are not just a number. You are a

real person with real needs." I am still on the edge of my seat, waiting for an answer to my question.

Her smile says it all, but her answer confirms. "Yes, weight loss will occur on all levels," she says. "Yoga is a lifestyle. It is not dependent on seasons...From my perspective, although many people come to yoga in search of fitness, the real benefits of yoga reach far beyond looking good on the beach."

As her partner in crime, co-owner Illera agrees, "Do yoga and your body will thank you."

While no one yoga pose is said to be the cure-all, the combined benefits of Gaia Flow Yoga are focused on accentuating the positive growth available, instead of failure-focusing on losing weight or inches.

"How beneficial can it be to exercise in such a negative way?" asks Michele Segar. "Constantly thinking, I'm not good enough and I don't like my body. Who wants to keep that up?"

CHANGE SOMETHING

Christina Sweeney Frauchiger, a student at GFY, dared to go different. Practicing GFY since January, she is also enrolled in the GFY teacher training program. "It is such a place of love and peace," Sweeney Frauchiger says. "When I miss a practice for a couple of days, something seems to be missing."

When asked if this "something" had to do with weight loss, the answer is no. "It's something more," she explains. "It's more like inner peace. And once you get addicted to Chrystal's Mountain classes, a week without headstands and handstands just isn't the same."

A common phrase heard within the walls of the GFY studio is "if nothing changes, nothing changes." If for the last handful of summers, you've been focusing on the deficits of your body, aggressively yearning to get decked out in a mini-skirt that's actually a mini, try changing what motivates you to truly change your results.

Gaia Flow Yoga offers one week of unlimited yoga for \$15.00. For more information, visit www.gaiaflowyoga.com.

“OUR OBJECTIVE AT GAIA FLOW YOGA IS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS HEALING, NURTURING AND EMPOWERING ON ALL LEVELS.”

The style of yoga taught at GFY is a unique blend that offers an energetic conscious and love-based practice of Peace, Power and Flow that both empowers and enlivens.

