

# YOUR HEALTH



Northern Virginia 2006

## A Youthful Yoga Facial

By Alice Sevivas  
M.Y. Bodyoga

Put your best face forward. Who would ever imagine that yoga can refresh your look?

Everyone can benefit from yoga physically and mentally from a gentle to advanced class.

The use of props, such as blocks, straps, body supports, and chairs can offer any student the opportunity to experience the joy of yoga. Yoga may fight against the natural breakdown of skin elasticity due to aging and the central gravity forces which have allowed a pull on the body. Tissue may be sagging, muscles and posture weakened.

That gravitational pull on the body can be counteracted with inverted poses, simply allowing the heart to move waist level and below. Common poses such as downward facing dog, dolphin, triangle, forward fold and advanced poses such as head and shoulder stand can be done to the full extent of the pose or modifications can be addressed to instruct a student into a simpler variation of the pose. The natural flow into inverted poses quickly feeds facial tissues and skin the nutrients and oxygen carried in the blood.

A consistent yoga practice gives you the strength building factor, flexibility, coordination, cardiovascular workout (depending on the level/style of yoga), and body awareness to get a complete fitness and facial workout. Toxins in the body can be released with movement and breathing techniques. Toxins can build up in our

body's tissues over time with pollutants from the air, preservatives in food, and over worked bodies, and hardly worked bodies.

The nervous system becomes stimulated through poses and breathing techniques, such as the "lion's breath". Take a deep breath and let go with a forceful exhale while opening your mouth wide, sticking the tip of your tongue down towards your chin. With eyes wide open, a natural aghhhhhhhh sound will complete your first cycle of three and onto the next breath. The benefit of this breathing technique is that it allows toxins in the exhale to exit quickly from the full extension of the breath. It also relieves tension in the throat and face, stimulates the eyes and improves overall facial circulation. Be sure to take caution in any breathing exercise and stop if feeling dizzy or uneasy.

Muscles, organs, and especially the skin become nourished through increased circulation and the endocrine system begins to find that state of homeostasis (balance in the body's functioning) during movement followed by relaxation time.

Did you know that the skin is the largest organ system of the body? It consists of three layers: the epidermis (outer layer), the dermis (connective tissue), and the subcutis (fat layer) all needing blood, nutrients, oxygen, and water to stay healthy. So, keep your skin healthy. A yoga facial is not invasive and can be done at home or at your desk at work. Simple poses and breathing exercises can be used to rejuvenate your energy level and brighten those tired eyes.