

Being Met Through Ashtanga Yoga

By Donna Harber, MSW, CBT, and Nicole Aubrey, LMSW

If your shoulder and upper back are talking to you in pain, we would like to introduce you to the ancient (Hindu) practice of Ashtanga yoga, along with an opportunity to create change and to have an energetic understanding of your neck, shoulders, and upper back pain. Ashtanga Yoga practice dates back to earlier than 1000 BC, from ancient scripts found on palm leaves in India – still being practiced and taught in India today. Ashtanga Yoga was brought to the United States by a select few people who went to India (in the 1970s) to study it. One of the unique attributes of Ashtanga yoga practice is the moving together and back of the shoulder blades, which gives the person in the poses the experience of being met and supported into an open heart.

As we begin to explore the ancient wisdom of movement through the light of developmental understanding of Bio Self Emergence (a present-moment knowing), we can shed new information on chronic neck, shoulder, and upper back pain.

The Ashtanga practice of yoga focuses on many other developmental muscular structures; however, in this article we will only focus on the infraspinatus muscles, as well as the trapezoids, and rhomboids muscles. These three muscular structures facilitate the moving back and down of the shoulders. Which allows for the expansion of the breath in the back. With each breath we can experience being.

Nicole begins teaching the practice in child's pose, as we bend and meet the earth and the permission of being met begins. The beginning experience (from a structural basis) is realized as the arms straighten and the shoulders move back and down opening the heart. In this movement, the yoga student can begin to get a sense of how they were met during the Bio Self Emergence energetic stage from one month to eighteen months. In this stage, the three major muscular structures references above begin to develop and respond to the nurturing of the parents. The flexibility position and ease to which the yoga students is able to move into the back and down position of the shoulder blades is indirect correlation to what occurred between the child and the parent. For example, a child who is held often, by a warm, grounded, available, welcoming mother, will find moving into this posture second nature. A disruption or the absence of the energetic qualities of the mother will directly correspond to the lack of ease the yoga student has moving into the position of bringing the shoulder back and down, as well as bringing the shoulder blades together on the back. As we move deeper into the yoga practice, through the course of the class, the student will experience the continued focus of the postures moving the shoulders back and down, connecting to permission and flow of being, which allows us to experience being backed up in the body.

As yoga student moves into the downward dog position, hands pressing into the floor, fingers spread, hips and buttocks reaching up to the sky, and heels reaching toward the earth. In addition, the focus in this position, the shoulder blades are together on the back. This brings the strength to the upper back and the arms which strengthens and supports the yoga student structurally being able to maintain a back and down position of the shoulders. This allows for a comfortable, relaxed fluid bracing of the shoulder blades back and down, which gives a relaxed experience of being with a safe protected open

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heart to life. However, if the muscular structure is weak, when the shoulders are back and down, we will not experience the support of being met or the connection to self that that brings.

We invite you to come and experience this wonderful Ashtanga yoga practice and as you join us weekly we invite you to experience being met through a relaxed and powerful upper back. Live a life free from pain. Immerse yourself in a yoga class taught at a grounded facility by an energy psychologist and enjoy the power of permission to create flow in the body.

Ashtanga Yoga classes are held Wednesday nights at 6:00pm, at the Bio Self Emergence Institute. The price is \$15 per class. If you mention this article upon coming to your first class, you will receive five dollars off that class.

*Donna Harber, MSW, CBT, is a soul essence healer, a Certified Bioenergetics Analysis Therapist, a Spiritual Teacher, and the founder of the therapeutic development process of **Bio Self-Emergence**. Bring body and soul into balance at **The Bio Self-Emergence Institute**, the cell whisper of the soul. Contact Donna Harber in Southfield at (248) 320-1938.*

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