



Newsletter April 2023

Amenia Yoga – a Place for Wellness

The cozy little studio with a big heart

THE VAGUS NERVE IS PRETTY AMAZING

The word *vagus* is Latin and means wanderer. It's the longest cranial nerve in the body and starts in the brain. Living up to its name, it wanders down our neck and vocal cords, passes our heart and lungs, wanders down to innervate many abdominal organs—making sure our brain networks with them, and it plays a key role in the continuous chatter between our gut and brain.



The nerve is associated with the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) that controls rest and involuntary responses like digestion, heart rate, and our immune system. The main job is to bring information from our organs to the brain to let it know if we're safe and can relax or if we must flee. So it's clear what happens in *vagus* doesn't stay there.

How well our *vagus* nerve functions and transmits signals is known as *vagal tone*. A higher tone means we can easily return to a calm, relaxed state after a stressful experience. A healthy *vagal tone* is also associated with good physical, mental, and emotional health, lower blood pressure, fewer gastrointestinal issues, better mood, reduced panic and anxiety, and reduced risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease. During a stressful experience, our sympathetic nervous system's (SNS) survival mechanism kicks in and releases cortisol to help us fight or flee, negotiate contracts, climb corporate ladders, break glass ceilings, pay bills, and worry. If we keep this up after a while, we're on our way to burnout, which affects the health of our entire body, physically and mentally.

In an ideal body, our life is in balance, in homeostasis, as these two systems (SNS, PNS) work together. When we need to be in survival mode and get things done, the sympathetic nervous system does the job, and when the job is finished, the parasympathetic nervous comes in to bring us back to rest.



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This is ideal until it isn't, and we can't shift back with ease to the PNS. When our brain doesn't receive the message that we're safe, we stay in *sympathetic overdrive*. How do we get out?

Learning how to shift is a gift we can give our bodies, and we can help it by stimulating the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve has much to do with the mind-body connection we talk about in yoga, and if we look at the nerve through a yogic lens, we truly sense its awesomeness. We can improve our vagal tone to help us cope with challenges and then return to rest.

There are ways to improve vagal tone that don't involve yoga, like implanted electrical impulses, but we want a natural route with things we can do at home. Cold showers aren't for me, but they stimulate the PNS. Exercising in any way that moves your body is great! Laughter, positive vibes, and anything that makes you feel safe works. Massage and reflexology also stimulate the vagus nerve.

Regarding yoga, the breathing practices are readily available anytime we need them!

Humming and chanting work well. The Ujjayi breath (ocean breath) in yoga stimulates the vagus nerve near the vocal cords.

Meditation and slow, conscious breathing increase vagal tone by slowing things down, shifting into the PNS. When the vagus nerve tells the brain that there is no longer a need to fight or flee we can relax.

We don't have to let our nervous system run our life; we can control it through the vagus nerve and restore peace and tranquility to our body and mind. Yoga helps! Join us for classes in the studio almost every day or on ZOOM Monday and Wednesday at 7 am for Rise& Shine!

YOGA & THE VAGUS NERVE



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A new yoga class is scheduled for Fridays at 5:30 starting April 21. TGIF (thankful, grow, insight, focus) Yoga is suitable for everyone; the only requirement is to let go and be open to self-love.

Audra Salazar is your guide; she'll help you deepen your practice with her creative and playful sequencing and inspiration. She received her certification in Los Angeles and has been teaching for several years. Through yoga, Audra had the opportunity to improve her quality of life and wants to share it with others. She hopes people can learn to use their power within to shape their minds.



You'll feel refreshed and balanced when you step off the mat, ready for your weekend. So, let's welcome Audra with our attendance! Please sign up for her first class on Friday, April 21, at 5: 30 pm!

Gong Vibes, coming to Amenia Yoga on Earth Day, April 22, from 4 to 6 pm!

Our body has a vibrational frequency for optimum health, but our lifestyle, stress, or illness gets us out of tune. Gong vibrations help tune them up and bring them back in balance to promote healing. It's called a gong bath because you "bathe" and soak up the healing vibrations that immerse you to reach your body on a cellular level bringing you into the PNS to restore and rejuvenate body, mind, and soul.

Scientific studies back up all the claims of the benefits of sound healing. In particular, the gong reduces stress, anxiety, pain, and mood swings and promotes relaxation, improved concentration, sleep, and a healthy immune system. During the session, the brain reaches deep relaxation, similar to the states we're in during deep sleep, which helps reduce stress and promote creativity.

Bring yourself, dress comfortably, bring a mat if you have one, and a pillow if you want one. Then, be ready to open yourself to this sound experience. **Positive vibes only!**

Registration is open until April 18, 2023!