

## Relaxation

The reason the true master  
can endure suffering is  
because they are not  
suffering.

Paraphrasing Neale Donald  
Walsch

Yoga is not about enduring agony. You do not have to achieve extreme postures by befriending your pain! You do not have to appear calm on the outside while overcoming sheer panic on the inside. If you are frustrated and tense, it is not because you are 'not getting it'. You just need more practice in breathing and relaxing.



The reason yogis *appear* so relaxed on the outside is because... they *are* relaxed. They do not appear to be suffering, because they *are not suffering*. They are not suffering, because *they won't do things that make them suffer*. This is the secret of being at one with your body. The secret is not to fight your body. Coax it, over time, by learning how to relax.

Remember

### **Relaxed Muscles Stretch Better**

So, the key to yoga is in learning how to deeply, deliberately relax.

- ☞ Relaxation and deep stretching go together.
- ☞ Breathing and relaxation are linked.

So, as you master your breathing, you begin to relax more and you achieve extreme positions you never imagined possible – *without suffering*.

So, if you think about it, the yoga journey is the opposite of mastering suffering. It is a pleasant journey of enjoying learning how to relax! What could be better than that?!

(Hurray! For my next feat, I will work chocolate into the program, too!)



**The First Step**  
is to notice that breathing and relaxation are  
connected.

That is what the Red Level of Serenity Yoga is all about.

**Your Body Relaxes When You Breathe Out**

**The Red Level Breathing Themes** help you notice this and help you start training that *Relaxation Response* to go very deep.

**Orange and Yellow Levels** are about mastering your breathing. You gain control over your breathing muscles, learn to be comfortable about when to breathe during your yoga poses and you begin to pace your breathing. This training gives you fine control over your breath. In turn, you can then take the *Relaxation Response* deeper. The result, your stretches go even deeper than before.

As you master your breathing, something else happens. You develop a sense of flow while you're doing your routines. That flow also develops inside. You feel calmer, more 'yourself', more centered.

By **Green Level** you are ready to apply your relaxation skills to full effect. You learn to be even more relaxed when you are in the poses, achieving deep states of relaxation in a single breath. You learn to relax the muscles that are stretching. They let go and your stretches increase dramatically.

**Blue Level** integrates your skills, allowing your abilities to flow as you practice. Your relaxation experiences develop a new quality. You notice a peaceful silence inside, a place from which your movements flow in calm peacefulness.

**Purple Level** applies your knowledge to more intangible experiences. Your relaxation skills help you notice not only your muscles, but your inner body as well – the organs, the connective tissues, even your energy centers. You begin to notice your energy field, how it flows, where it's blocked, how to unblock it. You begin to feel the special unity between poses and energy flow and states of mind.

**All of this begins with learning how to deliberately relax, step by step.**