

Make A Priority!

Ahhhh. We put our yoga mat back in the wardrobe, snuggle under the covers and breathe a deep sigh of release. "Two Tuesdays in a row!" we inwardly cheer, before drifting off into quite possibly the best night's sleep we've had in years.

Our feel-good factor doesn't fade by morning either. We wake refreshed and alert – somehow we've managed to acquire MORE energy from going to a fitness class. We could get used to this...

As we enter the kitchen, a huge smile forms on our face. There's no longer any need to grimace at the Post-it note glued to the fridge door, reminding us to go to yoga. We've got 10 minutes to spare until we need to leave for work and we'll burst with excitement if we wait until lunch to phone our yogini friend. "You'll never guess what!" we squeal. "I'm actually going to yoga and it's fantastic!" As predicted, she welcomes our early-morning joyfulness and skips on board our happy-wagon. "I always knew you'd love it," she smiles back.

We stay part of the yoga club for five more weeks. We bathe in the buzz, the quiet, the space, the strength, the wholeness and the freedom; we celebrate our new-found love of mornings, having shaken free our insomnia. Unable not to, we share our enthusiasm for life with just about everyone we meet, earning ourselves the title: "crazy happy gal". Only the high does not last that much longer.

Slowly but surely, we start to slip back into our past ways. One Tuesday evening, then another, is somehow taken over by paperwork, family duties, high stress levels and moments of shuteye in front of the television.

Before we know it that oh-too-common phrase turns up: Haven't Got The Time. We didn't ask it to show up, we were doing so well, but now it's got us with a firm hold. And it's time to break the news to our friend...

"I did really enjoy it... it just doesn't fit in... I'm snowed under at work right now... the kids have to come first... it'll have to be some other time."



Weeks then months fly by and we no longer relate to that post-yoga self; the "crazy happy gal" is an un-nurtured identity and our enthusiasm for life seems way out of reach. We are busy people and there seems no way of getting around that. A one-off class we can just about manage, a five-week course at a push, but all in all, time simply does not accommodate for a leisure activity. The very thought of committing to and sustaining a regular practice makes the hairs on our skin stick up.

Many of us can relate to this. But how can we get past this hit-and-miss stage? How is it possible to maintain a regular yoga practice?

The key here is to Make It A Priority. Unless we consider yoga an integral part of a healthy and happy life, we're never going to commit fully. We may as well come to terms with the fact that yoga will always be replaced by something further up on our list. When 6 o'clock comes and we see yoga in our diary, we need to take our intention seriously and show up. As we would for our son's football match, the boss' dinner party or our dentist appointment, there needs to be an uncompromisable element to this. Else, we'll see our mat accumulate more dust and our detachment from self will continue.

Sad, stressed, overwhelmed, fearful, detached, angry, happy, peaceful, excited, creative, expressive, daring. However we're feeling, let's switch the phone to silent, close the door and surrender to the moment.

We'll find that in doing that, yoga is not just a leisure activity, it can be a way of life. After practicing yoga, our evenings will open up and become calmer; our mornings will be clearer and more useful, our step will be lighter and our self-confidence will rise. Life really will shine brightly.

Rosanna Gordon is a trainee British Wheel of Yoga teacher. Her blog, Wake Up To Health, can be found at www.wakeuptohealth.co.uk