



Sarah Brassey introduces

Baby Yoga

There are so many benefits to be gained from doing yoga at any point in life. Yoga has been a very important part of my life. It now also plays a valuable role in both my daughters' lives. I have included both of them from birth in my yoga practices at home using baby yoga exercises with them. As my older daughter has developed, so too has her enjoyment and love of her

yoga. A chatty toddler, she is always asking to do yoga, happily moving into various poses herself. Having experienced the benefits of yoga as a new mum and seen the enjoyment my daughters have gained from our practice, I am keen to share these benefits, very excited to be bringing classes to my local area.

The fun and hugely enjoyable baby yoga is based upon the same principles as yoga for adults, combining movement with breathing and relaxation to balance the body and mind. The exercises I do with babies are developed from classic Hatha yoga postures, incorporating movement, touch, talking, and singing, together with relaxation. Touch alone is vitally important for babies. Studies with various mammals have shown that it improves the function of all the bodily systems, contributes towards overall healthy development, helping to develop the brain and nervous system, which are not fully formed at birth.

Baby yoga involves lots of movement, in ways and directions that babies may not otherwise experience in their usual daily routines. In one session, a baby can have as much physical activity as if carried and held all day, enabling babies to sleep more deeply and settle their behaviour. Through this movement, the vestibular system (responsible for our balance and movement) is stimulated, which can contribute to healthy development of the brain and nervous system.

Relaxation is as important a part of any yoga class as the physical movements. In teaching babies deep relaxation as a state separate from waking and sleeping, the classes help them learn how to respond to tension, including physical tension and discomfort. This can help babies

suffering from digestive discomfort, caused by tension building up. Relaxation between babies and their mothers (or fathers) also deliberately creates an opportunity for undisturbed, close physical contact, something that many parents in our culture have few opportunities for in everyday life.

The experiences in baby yoga are designed to invigorate all the senses together. Babies experience this stimulation with love whilst safe in their parent's arms, thus enhancing their pleasure. Any form of warm, physical contact between parent and child can have a positive effect, and baby yoga uses the best possible ways of doing this; the human face, human voice, smell, touch, sight. By immersing ourselves in our baby's sensory world through yoga, learning about their responses, we develop our communication, both non-verbal and verbal.

Baby yoga is unique in that it involves both parent and baby equally. Physically, the gentle postures will help mums tone and stretch their own body, helping them to accept the changes that have come about through pregnancy and childbirth, regaining some confidence in their bodies. Yoga can also help balance the ongoing hormonal changes constantly present for new mums, as well as dispersing stress.

It's also a great opportunity to meet other parents and families with babies in the area.

Sarah Brassey is the only Birthlight™ qualified baby yoga teacher in East Fife. Her *Warm Hearts Yoga Babies* sessions offer parents and babies up to the age of 18 months a unique opportunity to experience yoga in the local area. Classes for toddlers and pre-schoolers will also be starting in spring.

Please see www.warmheartsyogababies.co.uk or contact Sarah, sarah@warmheartsyogababies.co.uk 07841 104 830.

(Photo courtesy Sarah Brassey)