



Health is something I'm deeply passionate about, but it wasn't always a part of my life I invested in. Two years ago, I'd all but given up on exercise and my body felt it. My muscles were tight, my joints were stiff, and I just didn't feel strong. There was a time when movement was an integral part of who I was; as a ballet dancer, I learned how to care for my body so that it performed optimally and remained in top shape. Losing that discipline didn't just impact my physical form—it impacted my wellbeing.



Luckily, a good friend came to my rescue. She'd just started practicing yoga and recommended I give it a try. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was willing to give it a try. I was so excited as I walked into class that day and before I knew it, I'd fallen in love with the practice.

That's not to say the poses (or asanas) came naturally—trust me, they didn't! My warriors were out of alignment and my downward dog was barely a puppy. But I kept coming back to the mat, and now, two years later, I'm really seeing and enjoying the mental and physical benefits of this ancient practice.

Since I began incorporating yoga into my daily exercise regime, I've noticed countless physical benefits including increased flexibility, muscle strength, and definition. But more importantly, I feel so much more alive and in my body. My energy level is higher than ever, and that has helped me tackle life's other demands with patience, compassion, and focus. Not to mention that feeling healthy makes me feel beautiful, and that's a feeling everyone deserves to have!

As my chaturanga becomes easier and my chair pose grows steadier, I'm inspired and encouraged to learn even more. Yoga is such a complex, beautiful combination of deep, intensive spiritual



work and challenging, strengthening physical endurance. The more I come to understand and appreciate, the deeper I want to delve into the technical skills behind the practice.

That's why I've started training with [Ella Cojocaru](#) three times a week (check her out on Instagram: [ellavateyoga](#)). Ella started out as a gymnast, training for the Romanian Olympic team as a child, before moving into yoga. I really connected with her as an instructor because she keeps her classes fresh and exciting by switching up the workouts in every session—I never get bored and I'm always pushing myself to new limits. In my opinion, those are two key elements of a sustainable, awesome workout plan.



While I've learned a lot in the last two years, there's so much left for me to discover. There are hundreds of asanas and sequences, and while some are soothing and restorative, others are incredibly difficult and require an immense amount of strength, flexibility, and stamina. I'm learning that the best part of the practice is facing (and occasionally failing at) new challenges. The most important lesson is to replace frustration with gratitude and to stay open to these difficult postures. With discipline and an open mind, you can absolutely improve and push yourself to new heights. I'm definitely still a novice, but I'm already seeing the positive gains from this attitude in my everyday life.

I'm so excited to share this part of my life with you that I've collaborated with Ella on a series of instructional videos, going through some of my favorite yoga poses. I hope you follow along and discover the same joy I've experienced through the practice. And remember, exercise is meant to challenge your body and mind, but it's also something that's meant to be enjoyed. So be kind to yourself and avoid the impulse to get frustrated and throw in the towel if things seem tough at first. Everyone starts a staircase with the same first step!

Stay beautiful and well,