

THAT'S MY YOGA MAT

When it comes to yoga, there is something for everyone in Boulder, no matter what your discipline. Iyengar, Bikram, Ashtanga, Vinyasa – you'll find them all here. If you're interested in learning more about Kundalini, you probably want to head over to see one of the instructors at The Alchemy of Movement.

The studio, located on 30th Street, has been part of the Boulder community for more than ten years. Since current owners Mike Burke and his wife Susan Bowling took over a few years ago, the center has thrived and now offers a range of classes in various movement styles seven days a week.

Susan is a licensed physical therapist and a certified practitioner of Feldenkrais, a form of “somatic education” designed to help you use the body you have in order to move more gracefully and more efficiently. Although it is still relatively unknown as a form of holistic treatment, Alchemy of Movement owner Mike Burke says he and his wife aim to change that perception and the centre was proud to support the recent 2008 Annual Feldenkrais Conference which took place here in town.

Other classes at The Alchemy of Movement include Nia (Neuromuscular Integrative Action), a blend of yoga, dance and martial arts; Sacred Sol, a loose free dance and meditation combination; Capoeira, a Brazilian and Angolan martial arts dance; Zumba, a Latin dance influenced movement class; and Soul Sweat. The latter, created by Alchemy of Movement instructor Chantal Pierrat, and currently taught only in Boulder, is described as a “high-energy dance expression that enhances coordination, tones the body, develops stamina, and increases the

flow of chi throughout the body.” All of these classes are open to anyone and will complement any yoga practice or work well on their own.

For the yoga purist though, both Vinyasa and Kundalini classes are available, with Kundalini being the primary offering.

Mike is the first to admit that the studio “fell” into offering Kundalini.

“A few years ago we had some people move to town who were Kundalini instructors and there was basically no Kundalini in this town. There were a few people doing classes out of their homes but no studios and so we decided to give it a shot.”

That first attempt didn’t work out, a case of bad timing and other factors. Shortly afterwards though, several more instructors arrived in Boulder. Caroline Ashley (who teaches under the name Karuna) and Kulwant Kaur had both studied at the famous Golden Bridge Yoga Center in Los Angeles. Within a day of each other, they called Mike, eager to offer classes. Mike decided to give it another shot and what began as two classes a week has now evolved to a series of daily classes.

What is Kundalini yoga? Mike describes it as “a much more meditative form” than some of the disciplines that emphasize movement. Combining postures, breathing, sound and meditation, a deep state of relaxation is achieved and the energy based in the root of the spine is enlivened and drawn up through the entire body. The Alchemy of Movement has four regular Kundalini instructors, and a women only class is offered once a week. Interestingly, since Kundalini yoga has been offered at The Alchemy of Movement, owner Mike Burke has seen an increase in the number of male clients who come to the studio to study yoga: “It seems to be a style that many men prefer.”

So what should you do if you are new to Boulder and wondering what class to take? Like many other studios in town, The Alchemy of Movement offers a free week of classes to all newcomers. You can try everything from belly dancing to yoga to Feldenkrais, and meet the different instructors to get a feel for what does and does not work for you. It can be a great introduction to the community.

“We’ve had people move to town knowing no one and they’ve become an integral part of the community here simply because they’ve come in the door, they’ve tried classes, they met people and they decided they loved it.”

Clients range in age from high-school students to post-retirement. Mom and Baby yoga and Parent and Child Nia classes also ensure that even the youngest members of the family can share a healthy lifestyle.

One final question I asked Mike was what makes Boulder so special? His answer echoed that of others I’ve asked: the climate; the beauty of the natural surroundings, the availability of just about any type of physical activity you want to try, and the community-wide interest in taking care of one’s own body. So whether you’re new in town or just haven’t tried it yet, you’ll receive a very warm welcome at The Alchemy of Movement, not to mention a friendly introduction to a healthy new you.

For more information about The Alchemy of Movement, including class schedules, visit

www.alchemyofmovement.com or call (303) 449-4410.

- Fiona Young-Brown