

The Best Things in Life Are Free

Think yoga classes are too expensive?
You're just not looking in the right places.

BY JESSICA RIDENOUR

What is the value of a quiet mind, inner awareness and toned body? While that feeling of bliss may be priceless, (philosophically speaking) many yoga studios have set the cost at right around \$16 a class. Yoga studios obviously have the right to earn a buck just like any other business, but some monetarily challenged folks who want to cultivate their inner spirits may not be able to afford the expense.

Whether you've talked yourself out of trying yoga because you think it's too pricey... or only for the most committed, hardcore yogis... or maybe you just treat yourself to a class a month to fit your budget... you should know that our fair city is full of free and donation-based yoga classes for the taking — you've just got to know where to look.

Donation-based classes often suggest an amount, but most studios and teachers simply expect you to pay what you can at the time. That means if you ever win the lotto, you might want to show your favorite studio some love, because yoga teachers have to pay the bills too.

Bring Your Mat, Leave Your Wallet at Home: Free Yoga Classes

Groove Yoga What could be better than executing an unflinching Warrior pose with the sun on your shoulders and the grass beneath your feet? Sisters and professional fire dancers Kamala Mathis and Hannah Mooney joined up with Steve Tartar to offer free outdoor classes in magnificent Runyon Canyon seven days a week from 10:30 to 11:45am. And did we mention it's *absolutely free*?

North Fuller Ave. at Hillside Ave. LA. fire-groove.com

Lululemon Athletica At the Santa Monica Lululemon Athletica, Sensei Corbell leads complementary Warrior Yoga classes every Monday from 7 to 8:30 pm. In addition to sleek and cozy yoga-ware, this location also offers a running group/yoga stretch on Thursdays and NIA (a yoga/martial arts/dance hybrid) on Sundays. At the Beverly Hills Lululemon, rotating instructors teach a free Sunday morning class at 9:30 am, as well as various community yoga events throughout the week. Contact other locations in Calabasas, Pasadena and Newport

Seva Buck Or Two

You may have heard of *seva* — the yogic concept of giving back to one's community through selfless service. The practice of *seva* includes work as a way to connect to the divine and contribute to humanity. Usually this work is done without any reward or personal benefit, but some yoga studios take *seva* one step further, allowing students to work at the studio in exchange for free classes. Studios need front desk help and you need affordable classes, so it's a win-win situation. Many studios are down with work exchange for classes — all you have to do is ask.

healthy living :: yoga

Beach for more complementary classes.

331 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica.
310.319.9900. lululemon.com

Sahaja Yoga Meditation Center Feeling stressed? Flat broke? Strengthen your inner energy flow (without spending a dime) with enlightening meditation classes at Sahaja Yoga's Sherman Oaks Meditation Center, or at special events in Pasadena or Orange County. The best part? The classes are free of charge, because "you should never have to pay for the experience of Divine Love."

4565 Sherman Oaks Ave., Sherman Oaks.
866.972.4252. sahajayoga.la

The Price is Right: Donation-based Yoga

Santa Monica Power Yoga Bryan Kest has a large and devoted following, and for good reason: adhering to the yogic philosophy of selfless service, he offers his popular power yoga classes for a suggested \$11 donation, making it accessible to almost anyone. "Our yoga practice is giving and hoping in that the universe will take care of us," says Kest. "If we're supposed to be here doing this, there will be enough money in the donation box."

Two locations: 1410 2nd St., 1st Floor, Santa Monica. 310.458.9510; 522 Santa Monica Blvd. (Upstairs), Santa Monica. poweryoga.com

Yoga 4 Change Clothing of the American Mind, best known for changing the world one T-shirt at a time, offers a donation-based yoga class (encompassing Iyengar, Anusara, Ashtanga, and more) every Tuesday from 10am to 11am, with instructor Mollie Johnson. Strength and inner peace aren't the only benefits of this class; all proceeds will be donated to the progressive cause of your choice.

1284 W. Sunset Blvd., LA. 213.481.2004. cotam.org

Yoga Circle Downtown Located in an historic downtown building, Yoga Circle Downtown offers an eclectic mix of teachers and styles. Although the suggested contribution is \$14, owner Knekoh Fruge acknowledges there might be times a yogi can't swing that amount. "Yoga should be for everyone, not just people with money," she says. She has faith in knowing that what goes around, comes around.

400 South Main St., LA. 213.620.1040. yogacircledowntown.com

Whitney Ellis Kennedy This former Yoga Works instructor knows how hard it is for new moms to make time for yoga class. That's why she's offering donation-based free-flow power yoga for mothers out of her Venice home four days a week. Can't find a babysitter? No problem. Bring the tyke along to downward dog with the rest of the class, or take advantage of \$3 childcare in an adjoining room. You can also volunteer to do childcare in return for classes. Call for location. 310.612.9483

Ryan Brewer As part of his teacher training, Ryan Brewer taught yoga classes for six weeks free of charge; any money he was given, he donated to charity. Several years later, with any obligation to teach without compensation behind him, he's still offering his donation-based (\$15 suggested) class at a private yoga and

Pilates studio in Beverly Hills. RSVP at ryan-brewer@mac.com to experience his intimate, candlelit class.

Yogi Dana Adhering to the yogic belief that "a student should never have to pay to be instructed, but the student should never ask to be instructed without first offering a gift," Yogi Dana offers a donation-based hatha flow class (\$10 suggested) every Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at Studio A Dance in Silver Lake. 2306 Hyperion Blvd., Silver Lake. yogidana.com

Christine Burke, co-owner of LA's Liberation Yoga, is just one of the lovely and talented Lululemon yoga ambassadors offering complementary classes at area stores.

