



THE UNIQUE APPROACH: SILVER AGE YOGA

The reality of aging in America has both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, people are living longer than ever before in history. But simultaneously longer living of 76 million Baby Boomers also means a rapidly escalating – projected to be unsustainable – health care cost.

Senior health-related expenses (prescription drugs, hospitalization, emergency, surgeries, early institutionalization, assisted living etc.) must be drastically reduced since, regardless of where the funds are coming from, eventually it's society who ends up paying for it. The amount of that cost is staggering and unaffordable.

Our approach to apply yoga as a solution is unique in the sense that it is a specially designed yoga addressing senior health issues.

Yoga is an ancient science, practiced as a healing art for millenniums. Its components are: breathing, meditation and postures. Exactly what most seniors are sadly missing.

Usually their breathing is shallow, their mind is stressed (in many instances depressed and fear- loaded); their balance is reduced, their posture is collapsed.

Silver Age Yoga is a yoga based on principles of gerontology and developed with support from geriatric scientists of the San Diego medical community to address all above issues: breathing, calmness of the mind, balance, flexibility and physical strength.

Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach (SAYCO) is also unique in the sense that it developed not only a new science-based type of yoga but a delivery system to bring it to those needing it the most and can afford it the least: the low-income, underserved seniors.

We challenge anyone to cite any exercise program that results in even near the health benefits that our yoga delivers based on demonstrable evidence (reduction in blood pressure, cholesterol blood sugar, increase in bone mineral density, improved balance, slow and relaxed breathing, including diminishing Parkinson symptoms.)

We also challenge to hear of another Complimentary and Alternative Medicine methodology that delivers health benefits and reduces senior health cost anywhere near to what Silver Age Yoga does (reduced prescription, less emergency, less hospitalization less surgery – especially in the field of heart disease-related health issues and many others.) There are senior-related diseases now treated with expensive pharmaceutical or surgical methods that can be prevented and delayed with yoga practices.

Yoga creates awareness that helps to change lifestyle, eliminates bad habits, teaches students to stay in the state of wellness, regardless of age as they are beginning to understand and getting in touch with their own bodies.



HISTORY • ACCOMPLISHMENTS • AWARDS

In 2003 two yoga teachers—a husband and wife—realized the crying need for senior’s health improvement via exercise, in their case: yoga. But there was no senior yoga around, and there were no places to bring it to seniors. Frank—a political refugee of another era with a self- assumed obligation to repay a debt to society for his gift of freedom—was determined to change that; as the result, Silver Age Yoga was born. Today, eight years later, Silver Age Yoga is being taught from New Zealand to Thailand, from Sweden to Brazil and extensively in the San Diego area.

To date SAYCO is proud to list the following accomplishments:

- Specially trained and certified 250 plus yoga teachers
- Delivered over 9,000 free yoga classes
- Conducted a special research of weight reduction with successful results, which study was peer-reviewed and published
- In spite of the economic reversal and its devastating effects on non-profits, we sustained our program without any institutional or corporate support by reaching out to the community we serve and received heartwarming response and still continue to deliver the free service to hundreds of needy seniors.
- Delivered the federal government funded Matter of Balance program successfully for three years in partnership with AIS (Aging and Independence Services of San Diego County)
- Entered into partnership with UCSD Health Services Research Center to conduct research on the health benefits of seniors practicing Silver Age Yoga

The awards and commendations reflect the recognition and validation of our accomplishments; they are ranging from San Diego County Supervisors to the California State Senate to national and international awards as leading senior health champion. Numerous articles in mainstream media —print and electronic—as well as in several yoga publications, are attesting to the overall recognition of our mission.



The Benefits of Practicing Yoga

Studies have shown that the practice of yoga—including pranayama (breath work), asana (movement) and dhyana (meditation)—offers numerous physiological and psychological health benefits for all age groups. When it comes to older yoga students, the benefits can be particularly helpful in relieving the symptoms of arthritis, hypertension and osteoporosis.

Yoga practitioners can experience:

- decreased blood pressure
- increased respiratory efficiency,
- improved musculoskeletal flexibility and range of motion (ROM)
- improved posture
- increase in strength and resiliency
- improved immune function
- decrease in pain
- improved somatic and kinesthetic awareness
- increased steadiness
- improved depth perception
- improved balance
- improved integrated functioning of body parts

In addition, some of our students have reported increased bone density and loss of unwanted weight



ABBREVIATED BIO

Frank Iszak

Frank Iszak was born in Hungary June 22, 1931. He attended University of Chemical Engineering. In 1956 he was co-architect, along with George Polyak, of the first forceful takeover and re-direction of a commercial airliner in a desperate escape from Communist-controlled Hungary to freedom. After successfully landing in what was then West Germany on July 13, 1956, he worked for Western intelligence agencies, relating valuable information about the uranium mines he worked in Hungary before he escaped.

Iszak immigrated to the United States in 1957; became a U.S. citizen in 1962; and worked as a chemist in Berkeley, California. He later became a public speaker, delivering the message of freedom from the perspective of an escapee of the Communist tyranny. He owned and managed several small companies successfully. As owner of an advertising agency, he published several magazines, retired at age 50, only to return to work again as a private investigator, handling investigations of a variety of cases for 25 years.

Iszak practiced and taught martial arts, earning his black belts in shotokan and kung fu. In 1994 his yoga experience began, first as a practitioner then three years later as a teacher. His lineage is Indra Devi style. He is also a certified Pilates mat instructor, and teaches Pilates using the Reformer. He is an E-RYT500-registered teacher and director of a Yoga Alliance-approved teacher training school (RYS200) called Essential Yoga Training.

In 2003, along with his wife, Serpil, Iszak founded Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach to reciprocate for what he calls the gift of his true and real life, which started on his “second birthday” on July 13, 1956, when he was greeted by the Stars and Stripes on the runway of a NATO Air Force base and his life with true freedom was born.

The mission of Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach is to deliver the benefits of gerontology-based yoga practices—Silver Age Yoga—to needy seniors at no cost. Presently Iszak is Executive Director of this nonprofit organization. Iszak is a popular public speaker, lecturing on the application and benefits of yoga to senior health issues and Silver Age Yoga’s already powerful influence on senior health. The Iszaks recently completed Duke Integrative Medicine’s intensive *Yoga Therapy for Seniors* workshop at Duke University. They also conduct workshops to professional alternative health organizations, including Omega Institute, International Association of Yoga Therapists, and Inner Idea.



ABBREVIATED BIO

Serpil Gole-Iszak

Serpil was born in Turkey, 1956. She was educated in Istanbul and immigrated to the United States in 1984. In 1994 she met Frank in San Francisco; they married in the same year. She took up yoga practice along with Frank; they graduated together at Spiritual Yoga Training in Valley Center, California.

She has been teaching several classes a day for the last eight years, while extensively studying several disciplines including Classical Hatha, Anusara, Ashtanga and Iyengar. She is an E-RYT500 Yoga Alliance-registered instructor. As wife and teammate of Frank, she is partner and co-founder of Silver Age Yoga; she is a facilitator of various workshops they conduct together around the country. She is a certified Pilates mat and equipment instructor, director of *CoreEssentials LLC*, a Pilates mat-class teacher- training institute. She is Frank's partner in managing the Essential Yoga Training program an Yoga Alliance registered RYT200 yoga school.



OVERVIEW

SAYCO currently provides free yoga classes at 29 venues to over 500 seniors on a weekly basis. SAYCO has taught over 9000 yoga classes with a cumulative attendance of over 53,000 since its inception in 2004. It continues to receive many unsolicited testimonials from class participants of improved health and quality of life. Silver Age Yoga has received numerous leadership awards and commendations in the County of San Diego for its work with senior health.

The research partnership with University of California at San Diego's Health Services Research Center continues to conduct studies on the benefits of yoga to the health of seniors. SAYCO also continues to work with San Diego County's Aging and Independent Services to provide a program for improving senior balance. These partnerships have resulted in a total of 40 classes with over 500 participants in these specialized offerings during the last 3.5 years. SAYCO has been featured at senior health fairs such as San Diego County's Healthy Aging Summits and others around the county. SAYCO teachers have voluntarily given participatory demonstration classes at these events with as many as 500 seniors participating.

A taped series of five, half-hour, daily SAYCO classes continues to be broadcast on San Diego County Television Network (CTN) since 2008. Originally called "Yoga for Caregivers," this program has been given to countless seniors as well as caregivers who not only watch but participate in the safe postures.

Another not as obvious benefit are the encore careers begun by many yoga teachers, including two handicapped individuals, who have found much fulfillment teaching Silver Age Yoga.



COMMENTS FROM YOGA STUDENTS, pg. 2

Please accept the gratitude of my not-too-young 206 bones...for making me feel both physically and mentally great.

Helped me to turn my head easier, stand up with less pain in my legs.

I have been able to go off blood pressure medication and improve my balance.

I have learned techniques which have helped me when my vision becomes more blurred.

My stamina and strength have also increased.

Without yoga I would not be in a condition well enough to completely take care of myself.

Through the practice I have also gained a sense of peace and well-being.

I feel happier.

Fun and relaxing and relieves a lot of tension.

If it weren't for these classes I wouldn't get out of bed.

It has helped me with my neck and back pain and with my stress.

I learned how to breathe correctly.

It has helped me to become a more tranquil, calmer person.

The yoga has taught me how to relax, breathe and release the tension in my back.

I can sleep more profoundly and wake up feeling refreshed.

It has taught me how to relax my mind and body.

My recurring back problems have lessened in intensity.

I feel stronger and more energized.

I am a retired senior, living alone. I have found a light that shines every Friday morning

I used to get really bad headaches as a vertebra would get out of place in my spine...I don't get the headaches any more.

I can do so much bending now than I could before yoga.

I retired two years ago and this is the BEST exercise for me to take care of myself because I know that my body is a temple.

Thank you for giving me the best gift of all --- health!

I have improved balance and mentally, I am doing a lot better and feel more positive.

I suffer from osteoporosis in my back. Since taking the class I have not had pain in my back.

The yoga causes me to relax and let my troubles float away.

After each class I have a feeling of stress relief and a sense of purpose, knowing that I am doing something positive in my life.

We've noticed increased flexibility, decreased constipation, decreased joint aches, decreased stress, and increased relaxation and sleep.

The adaptable low-stress format combined with the multiple positive effects of yoga has regenerated my interest in looking after my general health.

The improvement I have seen in these first few classes are better posture, increased blood flow, improved flexibility, reduced pain, more restful sleep, and a more positive outlook for the future.

I have enough flexibility to reach my toes for grooming and to put my socks on without using a tool.

Driving is much easier because I can turn my head and body without pain...

My stress level is way down, thanks to the breathing techniques I've learned.

The most important thing about Silver Age Yoga is the friends I have made.

If it weren't for these classes I wouldn't get out of bed.

Yoga has made me more aware of my body, and less accepting of its "limitations."



I am 86 years old and have severe scoliosis and arthritis. I believe that I can walk unaided and dance entirely through attending the yoga classes.

Yoga makes my troubles float away.

It is a privilege to be a part of this growing community of older people who come together to breathe, stretch, strengthen, move and support each other as we meet the challenges of aging.

I feel young again, having celebrated my 80th birthday this week.

I am a student at the San Diego center for the blind. In addition to the help in the visual area the Yoga class that they provide has helped me a lot. I was born with mild Cerebral Palsy in my right arm and leg and the muscles have a tendency to tighten up, making it uncomfortable to walk for long distances at times.

After the first few weeks of doing the exercises in the yoga class, I started to notice the muscles loosening up and over all I felt more relaxed. I like the yoga exercises so much that I do them almost every day now.