



everything Zen

Zen Ki yoga founder Janie Larmour shares her story

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BELINDA ROLLAND



SUPPLEMENTING MY ACTING CAREER

as a personal fitness trainer was my first step to becoming a yoga teacher. I became a very successful fitness trainer, with nine-to clients per day, a list of celebrity clients and some great success stories with weight loss, muscle gain and injury rehabilitation. But I always felt there was a missing link to what I was achieving. I also wanted to move back to New York City and needed another skill in my arsenal to give me an edge for my clients over there.

One day, a yoga teacher came to my friend's apartment and I did my first yoga class. That's when I decided yoga might be the answer I was looking for.

I found a teacher training in a Japanese form of yoga called Ki yoga. I had no idea what it was, but the training times and

location suited my schedule so I signed up. As a trainer, I was running too much with clients and every three months or so my lower back would spasm so badly due to an old injury from when I was a springboard diver. The pain would be so debilitating that I couldn't walk, sit, lie down – nothing would give it relief until continuous massage and acupuncture calmed it down.

Since learning this yoga, I haven't had back pain again and I've completely changed the shape of my body. I also suddenly had all of the answers to helping clients with so many more injuries and the toning of specific body parts, and I was able to use food to heal and shape.

I found my teacher's teacher and continued learning from him in the similar Ryoho yoga style. I then applied my own fitness knowledge and studied shiatsu and macrobiotics with various teachers and Zen Ki yoga was born. Zen Ki yoga is now all I teach. The fitness training, New York and anything and everything else fell away.

What is Zen Ki yoga?

With Zen Ki, we are accessing meridians, like an acupuncturist would, but with movement instead of needles. My obsession with anatomy led me to make every pose very specific, as I don't believe you access the meridians properly unless you have correct alignment. In Zen Ki yoga, we use repetitive movements, which can sometimes tempt people to lose their alignment, so classes are very detailed and full of instruction about the body, diet and benefits, which increases results.

Zen Ki yoga, like many other Japanese styles of yoga, works with the principles of Yin and Yang, the macrobiotic diet, the five-element theory and the seasons. The yoga changes every season to suit the



main meridians that are the most prominent at that time. Briefly: in winter we focus on your spine, nervous system and sex-drive (kidney and bladder meridians). In spring we focus on flexibility and detoxing blood (liver and gall bladder meridians). In summer, focus is on our circulation, communication and digestive fire (heart and small intestine meridians). In late summer and between seasons the focus is on digestion, cycles – menstrual, sleeping, eating etc – and immune system (spleen and stomach meridians). In autumn we focus on bowel function, the skin, respiratory system, the bum and thighs and cellulite (lung and large intestine meridians).

You can work very specifically on health issues for private clients and everyone benefits from group classes, which may or may not include partner work.

Results depend on how deeply students want to get into their practice. Some come once a week and feel better, others come to several classes and do detox intensives – which combine diet with yoga – and they move forward in leaps and bounds.

Why I love Zen Ki yoga

You can walk into a Zen Ki class feeling unhappy and unmotivated and walk out in a completely different and definitely more positive state. You really feel like you can conquer the world!

I love it because with it, I have helped others heal serious health issues such as serious back pain where no chiropractor, physiotherapist or osteopath has been able to. Women with crippling period pain are completely pain-free, serious kidney disease has disappeared, Crohn's disease has been kept at bay so that the person suffering can enjoy their life again. People have better orgasms, better sex in general,

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look better and feel better. Best of all, people experience a better overall sense of wellbeing, which improves lives and therefore improves the world!

One of the greatest things with Zen Ki is that you can target specific areas of your body for weight loss and toning. I learned from the fitness industry you can't do this, but when working so specifically with meridians and diet, you really can.

Of course, Zen Ki yoga also addresses the mind and spirit. Our main focus is to bring the energy and strength deep into the belly, below the navel. It's very focused on the core. Unfortunately most of us, due to computers, smart phones, Facebook, diet, etc, have most of our energy in our upper body. When our energy is in our upper bodies, we suffer headaches, dizziness, panic attacks, anxiety, neck and shoulder pain and heart problems. We over-think

and even become a little bit crazy. But when the energy is in our lower bodies, we are centred, calm and in touch with our inner power and spirituality. We have a strong sense of our needs and who we are, we have a balanced sex drive and our spine and sides of the body are able to relax. Which would you prefer? ●

To find out more about Zen Ki yoga, head to zenkiyoga.com.

