

Yoly Sytiap Chua

27, I.T. Manager, Accenture

Yoga style: Iyengar yoga, founded by B.K.S. Iyengar—"the grandmaster of all yoga teachers," Yoly says proudly.

Why did you get into it? "I took advantage of the free yoga classes provided by Accenture since 2005," she says. The very detailed, mindful style clicked with the fastidious Yoly, who used to be a gym rat as well as a varsity fencer in college. "This type of yoga practice puts special emphasis on precision and alignment. It also makes use of props like bolsters, wooden blocks, blankets, and belts, which help you in the practice of the various *asanas*. I enjoyed the first class, because it gave me a good workout without having to worry about hand, eye, and foot coordination—unlike in an aerobics or dance class! After more consistent practice, I began experiencing the physical benefits of yoga, which led me to a more serious practice."

How often do you practice? Yoly attends classes at the Iyengar Yoga Center Manila three times a week. "We normally practice in a weekly sequence, starting off with standing poses, followed by forward bends, then backbends and inversions. I also practice a little on my own, befriending the *asanas* that I've always found challenging to do."

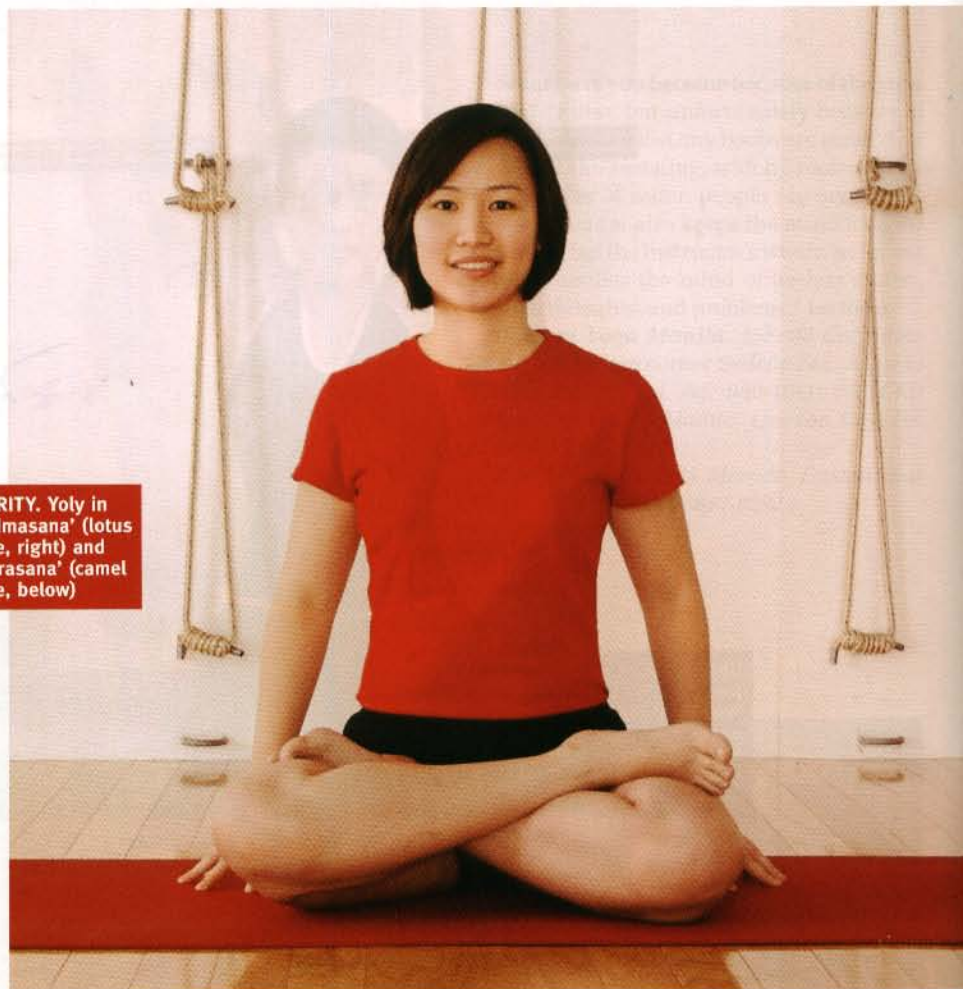
Favorite poses: "In general, my favorite *asanas* are those involving backbends. Yoga is very literal. Backbends open the sternum, thus opening the heart and ridding the body of negative emotions."

Most challenging poses: "My least favorite *asanas* include forward bends and *Marichyasana 3* (spiral twist). Blame it on the tight groins. I'm still working on how to fully let go during forward bends, and it may take some time before I can really be friends with these poses."

What have you become because of the yoga you do? Yoly says the biggest changes happened on the inside. "I've become a kinder person to my own body. Through my practice, I learned to listen to what my body says, and eventually became more at peace with who I am, despite the limitations and excesses. My practice gives me mental clarity, which allows me to live more in the present moment, not distracted by worries of the past and doubts of what the future holds."

There are physical benefits, though, of course. "My practice gave me better posture—and more awareness of people who don't have it! I gained strength and flexibility, the combination of which enables me to touch my toes and hold more complex poses like *Sirsasana* (headstand) for a minute longer." **Alya B. Honasan**

Iyengar Yoga Center Manila, 21/F, LKG Tower, 6801 Ayala Avenue, Makati, tel. nos. 753-4495 and (0917) 535-9711



CLARITY. Yoly in 'Padmasana' (lotus pose, right) and 'Ustrasana' (camel pose, below)

