



# Peaceful Warrior

More than handstands and hippies, the art and practice of yoga is alive, open and ready to challenge your most vital asset: You.

By Kristen Nemoto

There's no denying the stereotypes that cloud one's perception of a yogi (aka: a person who practices yoga, not the cartoon bear). The terms "free-spirited," "hippies," "tree huggers" or even "aloof" are often bantered around loosely. But that doesn't bother Kate Lynn Jaremko too much. In fact, she's cool with it.

"I don't mind at all," says Jaremko, manager of CorePower Yoga's Kailua studio. "Because mostly, people whom I've seen do and grow from yoga have one common thing among them and that's the ability to respond rather than react. The beauty of the yoga practice is that it makes you responsible for yourself rather than things that you cannot control."

With that mindset, says Jaremko, comes peace of mind. Maybe not right away, or every time you do yoga, but the majority of times because it calls for reflection. Jaremko started her own yoga journey as a way to help her physically, as well as emotionally. After being diagnosed with gastroparesis — an extreme stomach condition brought on by stress — Jaremko found her yoga practice as a way to cope with her chronic stomach pain brought on by an intense academic schedule.



"For some, yoga becomes something to do with your friends," Jaremko points out. "Then it sometimes evolves into something that makes you feel really good; then ultimately to a new way of life. For me, yoga is something to use to deal with the world and sometimes letting go and living your most ultimate life in that time frame. Instead of reacting to things and getting all worked up and stressed out, it's learning how to respond and then choosing how to act. It really does become a way of life."

(Opposite page)  
A yogi catches the sunrise while practicing a pose. (Above)  
Yogis at O'ahu's Wanderlust Festival get ready for a yoga class.



(Below) An early morning yoga workout on the beach is a refreshing way to start the day. (Opposite page) Meditation is a key facet of yoga. Choose a quiet environment and practice your breathing techniques.

For yogis who live in Hawai'i, the practice of yoga naturally becomes a daily affirmation. With nearly 365 days a year of summer weather and a powdery beach shoreline within any 20-mile radius, Hawai'i becomes an ultimate playground for many yoga practitioners and followers.

According to the 2016 study by *Yoga Journal* and *Yoga Alliance*, 36.7 million of American adults are yoga practitioners compared to 20.4 million in 2012. And more than 20 percent of them (6.8 million) teach along the west coast of the United States, with the Mid-Atlantic in first place for most yoga practitioners and the South-Atlantic coming in second. The study also concluded that an additional 30 million Americans have practiced yoga at least once in their lives. That's nearly one out of every three people who've tried their hand at this ancient practice.

The allure for many to begin their yoga practice, either as a teaching career

or a way to control their weight and well-being, is yoga's dedication to one's community rather than against each other in a typical sport setting. Jennifer Collotta, who is the teacher training lead for CorePower Yoga Kailua's studio, says she has seen a transformation in many of her students by observing what's going on in each of their personal practices.

"They go through this journey together," Collotta says. "It's a connection that they have with each other in the class. So a person could be holding a pose and have difficulty in it, and they can know and understand that there may be others in the class who are going through the same thing as them."

Collotta was recently reminded of her reason for practicing yoga after a trip to a yoga retreat called Off the Mat, Into the World. What's striking, she says, is that no matter how "enlightened" or experienced every yogi may seem, the



number one challenge that's addressed in each scenario is not whether every yogi can help others, but what each can do to help themselves.

"That really resonated with me," Collotta asserts. "Because once we figure out who we are as individuals, we'll then have a much more compassionate and connective society. We have to look to our own selves and ask, 'What can I do to help myself first?' Everyone comes from a different experience, the trick is to see and ask yourself why you react negatively or positively to another person's experience. Yoga teaches us that — to connect on a deeper level."

Although Jaremko and Collotta agree that yoga can seem passive at times to an outsider — they're quick to refer to a stereotypical yogi who's meditating with their eyes closed and a smile on their face — the practice of yoga is also about acknowledging your feelings, no matter what arises. Even if it's not so happy.

"You can be in a pose for a while and feelings of frustration could come up because it's obviously uncomfortable," Jaremko says. "What yoga teaches though is to focus more on what we could do to help adjust other muscles to make it less uncomfortable or if our minds are trailing off and whether we can bring it back to our breath."

"It's a constant tug and pull of mind and body," Collotta concludes. "It's strengthening through a pose yet being gentle to yourself and kind if you cannot get through it yet. You can call us peaceful warriors. People who strive to live their own optimal life."

For a comprehensive list of Jaremko's and Collotta's classes at the CorePower Yoga Kailua studio, visit [www.corepoweryoga.com](http://www.corepoweryoga.com). \*



## FIND YOUR YOGA BLISS:

Here's a list of various special yoga events to participate in during January and February:

### Sunrise Yoga

CorePower Yoga's Jennifer Collotta teaches every first and third Sunday of the month at Kailua Beach Park (across from Buzz's Steakhouse) from 6 to 7 a.m.

### Vino & Vinyasa at Moana Surfrider Hotel

The Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa hosts an evening of free yoga instruction. To complete the evening, yogis are

welcome to enjoy a selection of organic wines from 7 to 8:30 p.m. For updated dates and times, call 808-923-2890.

### Wanderlust Festival

Imagine everything that is good about yoga and its philosophies and you get the annual Wanderlust Festival at Turtle Bay Resort. February 23 – 26. Tickets are now on sale at [www.wanderlust.com/festivals/oahu](http://www.wanderlust.com/festivals/oahu).