

# YOGI WRITINGS: Sharon Peck

Photos by Kathy Prekoski

## A Yoga Devotee

Yoga, for me, began as a painting class. The College of Sequoias extension class catalog for 2002 had been delivered, and I asked my friend Becky to take a watercolor class with me. She agreed and asked me to also look for a yoga class that we could take together. The painting class was held during our work schedule. The yoga class, however, was held in the evening at the COS Child Care Lab, with Brenda as the instructor. We enjoyed it so much that when the six-week session ended, we joined Brenda for classes at her Visalia studio.

I did not realize all the positive far-reaching effects yoga had on me. My knees were not hurting, my hips were not slipping out of their sockets, and my lower back problems were non-existent. In 2008, when I was busy with the holidays, vacation, and travel, my lower back began to hurt. I received some physical therapy, which was surprisingly very similar or the same as yoga. Unfortunately, before I could straighten or strengthen my

back, I popped two discs. These bulging discs were pressing on my left sciatic nerve to the extent that I could not put my left foot down. Even on crutches, the pain was excruciating, and my body does not tolerate most pain medications. I was out of commission for 45 days, and used my yoga knowledge and poses to ease my pain and allow me some rest. Supported Child's pose and Legs-on-a-Chair alleviated the pain enough for me to sleep.

Until the pain subsided, the doctor would not allow physical therapy. He also would not allow yoga for a period of one year! That was not acceptable, and I asked him to prescribe physical activities and

positions that I should not do. With that list in hand, I booked a private session with Brenda, and learned modifications for many of the poses, which allowed me to go back to my regular yoga classes. Brenda also gave me a 30 minute routine specifically for stretching and strengthening my back. This routine can be done anywhere, and has helped me immensely.



I am now a yoga devotee. Yoga has increased my strength, flexibility and balance, which I consider a necessity as I grow older. Brenda, her teachers, and the variety of classes help me meet that need that need to keep my body strong and healthy. I am very grateful for the Valley Yoga studio and its dedicated teachers.