

Sleepy head

Did you bounce out of bed today or hit the snooze button again? Mother and yoga instructor **Cheryl Parsons** asks why are we so tired, and where does that leave our yoga practice?

My husband was recently away on business and what did I do? I watched repeats of 'Come Dine With Me' and went to bed with a good book at 8.30pm, praying that my toddler would sleep through the night. A little pathetic, some might say? It was brilliant! You see, lately I've been finding the hottest subject (besides the weather) is our level of tiredness. If I had a dollar for every time I told someone that I was T.I.R.E.D. then I'd be a pretty rich woman. (If you are nodding your head in agreement over your cappuccino, then please inbox me now.)

"Oh yes, you will always be tired," one of my students (a mother of four) quite gleefully told me after class one day. "Welcome to parenthood. You will just get more tired from here on in." Geez. I thought once I achieved the Holy Grail of Sleeping Through The Night, I just wouldn't be that tired anymore. I thought I would bounce out of bed and spring into Downward Dog without any newly instated crow's feet or dark circles in sight.

I'll admit that tiredness has also had an impact on my practice and lately I've been judging my yoga in a big way. While the rational mind tells me it's quite normal to feel fatigue, my ego reminds me that my forearm balance isn't quite what it used to be. The reality is that our lives can get pretty crazy. Whether you're a frazzled parent, a stressed-out employee or a high-powered boss, it's often hard to create any sense of space in our busy days. One day rolls into the next with little time to press



"Close your eyes, clear your heart, let it go."
—Unknown

pause, and before you know it, the alarm is ringing to signal the morning once again.

In the swirl of our everyday lives, it's easy to let our yoga practice take a back seat. For me, my mat has always been my source of inspiration as an instructor, and if I wasn't practising then I knew my teaching would take the hit. Part of this acceptance begins by easing the pressure on ourselves. Instead of slapping a guilty label on how or indeed, how long we should be on our mats, we should resolve to let our practice work for us and not against us.

So, lie over a bolster. Put your legs up the wall. Support yourself in a forward fold. Surrender, breathe... have a nap! Tell yourself it's OK to take a break and step away from the rat race, even if it's just for five minutes. Embrace where you are right here, right now in all its glory, and let go of your inner judgement. I guaranteed you won't regret that you did... and maybe, just maybe, you won't yawn quite as much when you are done! ❄



CHERYL TEACHES Vinyasa and Hatha Flow at Zen Yoga. Check out her website at www.thepeacefully.com, where she posts weekly videos and articles aimed at inspiring us to fit yoga into our everyday lives