

# Get Wild: Healing through nature and yoga

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Savannah Golden  
Get Wild



Savannah Golden does a yoga pose Oct. 31 near the Royal Buffalo Trailhead.  
*Savannah Golden/Courtesy photo*

Depression and anxiety are now leading disabilities in America. So what does this have to do with yoga and nature? Well, everything.

Practicing yoga and getting out in nature are both proven to positively impact your mental health as well as a number of other things, such as cognitive function, muscular and skeletal stability, and circulatory and digestive regulation. Through my own self-study, I have found that the two healing modalities of yoga and nature, combined and on their own, contribute greatly to easing my anxiety and in turn my depression.

I am no stranger to anxiety or depression. Moving through a world struggling with a nature deficit disorder, and having been taught to suppress all emotions that arise, I have found it hard at times to find peace within myself. This has been the root cause of my depression and anxiety. I only became aware of this when I started spending more time out in nature and came to the practice of yoga.

Wilderness and yoga have given me what I would call a sacred place of non-judgment. Being in nature, I feel in tune; I am able to escape from my phone and feel a connection with far more than just an external setting. Allowing the sun to bring me energy as I breathe in fresh air and finding stillness may invoke me to sit alongside a tree and tune into my senses to feel fully present in the moment — a feeling that has become rare. The disconnect to our present moment results in many toxic patterns leading to mental instability and mental illness.

Yoga as an eastern ancient practice, expresses itself through eight limbs. Yama (moral restraints), niyama (observances), asana (postures), pranayama (breath control), pratyahara (turning inward), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (union). All practices guide you to find peace and harmony from within and without.

By spending time in nature practicing yoga, we tap into a connection in which the soul yearns, the mind learns and the body (subconsciously) decides what to do based on connection.

Growing up in the suburbs, I often felt trapped with nowhere to run besides a bedroom confined by walls that held grievances and disturbances I couldn't escape from. Once I moved to the mountains of North Carolina for college, I found solitude in being with the trees surrounded by Mother Nature.

Yoga had been integrated into my life at an earlier age, but it wasn't until my later years that I found my commitment to the practice. Learning the philosophies of masculine/feminine, yin/yang, the nidras and the kamasutras, the chakras and the vedas all gave me purpose and allowed me to find self-worth (something everyone with depression and anxiety struggles with).

I feel beyond privileged to live in Summit County, having the space in nature to practice any and all of the eight limbs of yoga. Even when I don't step outside, looking at the wilderness gives me a sense of peace. I feel grounded and more connected than ever when I am able to practice yoga in the wilderness.

The snow has started, but don't let that discourage you from practicing outside. Get into the wild and warm yourself up with some breathwork and standing sequences.



Savannah Golden

“Get Wild” publishes on Fridays in the Summit Daily News. Savannah Golden is a yoga teacher at Peak Yoga studio in Dillon.

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