

STRETCHING OUT THE STRESS

Veterans benefit from yoga therapy

Roger Mathews

roger.mathews@dailytimes.com

Post traumatic stress disorder, depression and physical pain are all things from which veterans suffer, and Rick Trzcinski, a local yoga instructor, says that yoga can relieve or at least lessen all of those.

In 2007, Trzcinski suffered from neurological issues from a case of chronic Lyme disease and a serious fall from a roof.

"My doctor said I needed to start doing some yoga to manage the pain, and I told him, 'You're crazy, I don't do yoga.' So, I went and took a beginner's class, and immediately, I started to notice the effects," Trzcinski said. "I went to Yoga Space for a couple of years, then I decided to get training so that I could become a teacher."

The Yoga Space, 804 Main St., Kerrville, is a yoga studio dedicated to advancing the art of yoga for anyone who might be interested. Trzcinski credits them with helping him to overcome his Lyme disease and injuries from his fall.

Trzcinski, who has

been a yoga instructor since 2009, teaches a free yoga class for veterans each Monday evening with the goal of reducing the issues veterans struggle with. As an experiment, he did a study with a group of veterans for a period of six weeks, using the same poses and breathing techniques each week. He found that their pain and stress levels were reduced by 2%, he said. As a result, he continued the classes and now focuses on helping veterans to overcome the pain and stress they sometimes experience.

A survey conducted by Dr. Timothy Avery, director of program evaluation for the Veterans Yoga Project, found that, out of 471 subjects, 65% experienced a reduction of pain by an average of 24%, and 77% said they experienced a reduction of stress by 36%.

Avery has a degree in psychology and holds certifications in yoga instruction.

Trzcinski's classes cover all levels of ability

See **YOGA**, page 10A



Rick Trzcinski teaches mindful resilience yoga to veterans with post traumatic stress disorder and other trauma as a way to heal from pain. (Times photo by Tom Holden/photo@dailytimes.com)

Yoga

Continued from page 1A

and experience, from chair and wheelchair yoga classes for those with mobility issues to beginner classes and advanced classes in Vinyasa Flow Yoga.

Students can register for classes on his website, www.ricksyogatherapy.com.

Forrest Landry is a Navy veteran, has mobility issues, has been in Trzcinski's yoga class for more than five years and is now a firm believer in yoga.

"I went into the first

sessions and thought, 'Hmm, this is OK.' By the third session, I was thinking to myself that this will work," Landry said. "It has changed my life. Yoga works for people who have problems focusing, and it works. Rick is a lifesaver; he has gone overboard to help veterans. I am a different person now."

Graduating from Yoga of Austin with a yoga therapy certificate in 2016, Trzcinski has taken multiple courses in yoga and related therapy over the years.

In 2010, he started teaching weekly chair and wheelchair classes for the Alzheimers and dementia

groups at the Kerrville Veterans Administration hospital. Those classes have been canceled for the last two years due to the pandemic. They have not been restarted yet.

His current studio space, 144 Fairway Drive, Suite A-1, is where his classes are currently held. Anyone who wishes to reduce their stress level or become more flexible physically can visit his website to see what sort of classes would fit them best.

"Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured and to endure what cannot be cured," said Trzcinski, quoting B.K.S. Lyengar, a yoga master.



Rick Trzcinski demonstrates the warrior pose used in yoga. He teaches mindful resilience yoga to veterans for stress relief. (Times photo by Tom Holden/ photo@dailytimes.com)