

Each Wednesday, Christine Stopford conducts a Yoga class for up to 25 participants, male and female, as part of the Bathurst University of the Third Age (U3A) program. We've all heard about Yoga, but what is it really?

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word Yui which is translated as yoke, union, joining. Yoga encompasses many human experiences for young and old, and dates back 5,000 years with its origins in India. There are many different branches of Yoga, and the ones most practised in Western cultures are Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga.

Hatha Yoga uses physical movement to discipline the body, while Raja Yoga uses meditation and breathing techniques to discipline the mind.

Christine teaches mainly Hatha Yoga. "This assists the over 50's to keep moving in their later years" she said. "Being a body therapist and massage therapist over many years, I know that Yoga has enabled me to not only keep myself moving but also to assist my clients in the same way. I have been practising Yoga for more than 50 years, so my experience is quite extensive" Christine added. Christine adapts the poses to suit the needs of the U3A age group, and allows for any injuries or physical problems within the class.

Participants in Christine's U3A class have reported improved muscle strength and balance, as well as greater flexibility and endurance. Some said that Yoga has assisted them with weight loss, and nearly all the class reported improvement in mood and ability to focus. Yoga is a great stress reliever and can assist in detoxification. The weight-bearing poses in particular increase core strength and greatly reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

As with all U3A courses, there is the added benefit of social interaction within the class, and many lasting friendships have resulted from attending U3A programs like Yoga. Bathurst U3A conducts over forty classes covering a wide range of subjects, all beneficial for the mind, body and spirit.

For more information about U3A, visit Bathurstu3a.com or contact the Secretary Sue Lasky on 6331 6968.