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# Turning up the heat on yoga

## Bikram yoga school works bodies in rooms set at 105 degrees

By Sandra Pedicini  
KRT CAMPUS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Skip Wolfram is about to give new meaning to the phrase "warming up."

Clad in black spandex shorts, he steps to the front of an exercise room that four glowing space heaters have heated to more than 100 degrees.

Fourteen students stand ready to sweat. For the new ones, there comes a warning:

"You may get dizzy," says Wolfram, the class instructor. "Don't panic. Don't freak out.... This is not a race. This is not a competition."

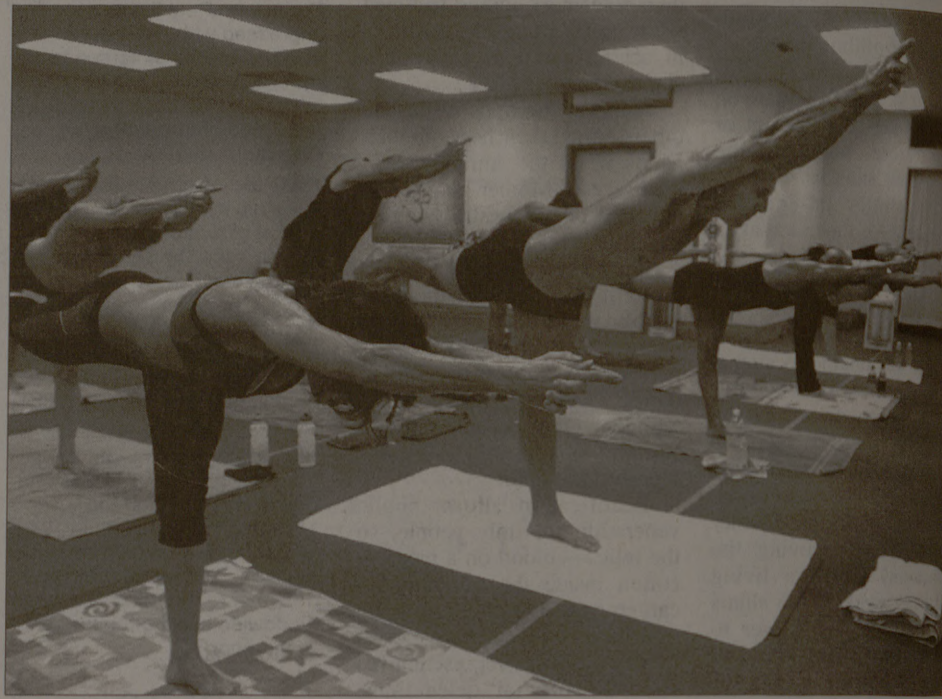
This is Bikram yoga, an exercise routine that's hot in more ways than one.

Flamboyant yogi Bikram Choudhury introduced his yoga style to the United States more than a quarter-century ago, but only in the past few years has its popularity exploded.

Students stretch, kick and balance themselves in rooms heated to temperatures as high as 105 degrees. Such intense heat, Choudhury says, allows muscles to stretch better.

Fans swear by it, but many yoga enthusiasts, such as James Greenberg, say they see no benefit from this extreme exercise. Greenberg, who has written for Yoga Journal, calls Bikram "some weird macho manifestation."

Leigh Crews, a Reebok master trainer and spokeswoman for the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Council on Exercise, sees no advantage from the extreme heat. And if exercisers are obese or don't replenish the fluids they lose, she said, they could experience symptoms from heart fluctuations to muscle cramps.



Instructor Stephen "Skip" Wolfram leads a yoga class at Bikram's Yoga College of India in Longwood, Fla. Extreme form of yoga is practiced in a room heated to 105 degrees.

Doctors also dispute some of Choudhury's medical claims about the benefits of Bikram yoga.

Still, as yoga has become more mainstream, so too has the Bikram brand.

Choudhury has established a chain of Bikram's Yoga College of India studios, offering a uniform product. Just as people know their cafe lattes will taste the same at any Starbucks, Choudhury says teachers at Bikram studios should repeat the same sequence of 26 poses, recite the same dialogue, have the same expertise.

Choudhury has threatened legal action against anyone who teaches his style of yoga without first paying him \$5,000 for training and certification.

"Bikram's done some great

stuff for yoga," said Jim Harrison, a Sacramento-based attorney representing smaller yoga studios fighting Choudhury's copyright registration, which he obtained last year. "He's a wonderful promoter, but he's doing things that aren't good for yoga in general."

Choudhury, 57, a native of Calcutta, began studying yoga when he was 4 and brought his style to the United States in 1971. He's now a wealthy celebrity, legendary for his collection of Rolls-Royces, his brash style and his Hollywood followers, including Raquel Welch.

Some love his intensity. Others, such as DeLand yoga instructor Buffy Williams, prefer a little less perspiration.

"For me, personally, I have seen so much more benefit in a gentler, kinder way of doing

yoga," she said.

But Wolfram, an avid athlete, said the intense yoga "really my personality as far as needing to work hard physically to get mental effect. I really enjoyed the way that it made me feel and consequently, the subsequent effect was that I felt more serene, peace or whatever you call it."

The 37-year-old was inspired that he spent nine weeks in Los Angeles, training for about 500 hours with Choudhury before opening his Longwood, Fla., studio in 2001.

Instructors recommend taking the classes three to four times a week. At the Longwood studio, students pay \$12 a session, with discounts available for multiple classes. A year's worth of classes costs \$875.

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Woman jailed for intercepting e-mail

DENVER (AP) — A judge has sentenced an Arizona woman for intercepting someone else's e-mail, saying the penalty is a warning to others who might be tempted to do the same.

On Friday, he sentenced Angel Lee to 60 days home detention for intercepting e-mail sent to her husband's ex-wife, Duongladde Ramsay. Matsch said the case was a vicious divorce dispute about children.

Lee, 28, pleaded guilty in March, and admitted accessing at least 215 e-mails sent to Ramsay last year. Officials said she fraudulently obtained confidential user name and password information for Ramsay's e-mail account.

#### Trial begins in childrens' deaths

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — The capital murder trial of a South Texas man accused of decapitating three children, two of them his own, is set to begin Monday with opening statements.

John Allen Rubio, 23, and his common-law wife Angela Camacho, 23, both of Brownsville, were arrested March 11 and charged with capital murder, after police were alerted to enter the couple's squalid downtown apartment.

The couple confessed to repeatedly stabbing and decapitating 3-year-old Julissa Quezada, 1-year-old John Esthefan Rubio and 2-month-old Mary Jane Rubio. Julissa was Camacho's child from a previous relationship.

## One twin off ventilator

DALLAS (AP) — Once conjoined Egyptian twin Mohamed Ibrahim was taken off a ventilator and was breathing on his own Sunday, a week after doctors successfully separated him from his brother Ahmed.

Dr. James Thomas, chief of critical care services at Children's Medical Center Dallas, said in an update released by the hospital that he is cautiously optimistic that doctors will not have to place Mohamed back on a ventilator.

Thomas said that if Ahmed continues to improve, he may be ready to come off the ventilator Monday.

"Once each twin is breathing on his own without respiratory distress, his condition may be upgraded from critical to guarded," Thomas said.

The hospital said the twins continue to make small gains, including motion in their arms and legs and improved response to verbal cues from the family and medical team. They are in critical, but stable condition in the pediatric intensive care unit.

"The neurosurgical and medical teams are very pleased with the twins' progress so far," Thomas said.

Thomas said Ahmed has not had any repeat of a seizure he suffered Friday night. A lumbar drain was removed Sunday after CT scans showed no accumulation of spinal fluid. Mohamed's lumbar drain remains in place.

The twins, joined at the top of their heads when they were born in Egypt on June 2, 2001, were separated Oct. 12 during a 10-hour operation.

The hospital said the boys continue to run a low-grade fever, but don't appear to have an infection.

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**Texas A&M University Pre-Law Society**



We are hosting a lawyer forum featuring **Becky Placke, Genevieve Stubbs, and Patrick Gendron** on Tuesday, October 21.

Please join us at 7 p.m. in Koldus 110 to hear these practicing attorneys provide us with some of their insights into the field of law.

The Pre-Law Society hopes to see you on Tuesday!