



How yoga got this CEO through hotel quarantine

Campbell Macpherson is founder of the business advisory firm Change & Strategy International. He splits his time between Britain and Australia.

How did you get into yoga and how long have you been practising it?
My wife, Jane Macpherson, is a simply brilliant yoga teacher and yoga therapist. She coaxed me along to one of her classes 15 years ago. I found muscles I did not know existed and had the best night's sleep of my life.

What kind of yoga do you do?
Part Iyengar, part Vinyasa, part whatever I feel like at the time. I don't do hot yoga and my "Instagram yoga" days are well behind me. Yoga isn't just for the young and bendy. It's for everyone.

Do you go to a class or do it at home? And how often do you practise?Two or three times a week at home – alone or with Jane in person or via one of her [online classes](#). And three times a year at Jane's retreats in India and Europe.

Have you made these trips during COVID-19?
No. Jane's last retreat was in Kerala in January last year. The retreats in Bali and Europe had to be cancelled. The next one will be in Bath, England, in June, hopefully.

How has the pandemic affected your yoga practice and plans?
It has restricted it to sessions at home and on Zoom. Yoga via Zoom is good, but not the same. However, you can turn your camera off, which has its advantages at times.

Do you have a guru or favourite teacher?
I live with the most incredible, versatile and empathetic yoga teacher and therapist, who always keeps her teaching relevant and interesting. Jane makes a real difference to so many people.

Do you feel different now compared with when you started?Undoubtedly. I especially notice it when I go for a few weeks without doing any. It's hard to describe, but yoga makes you feel like a better version of you – physically and mentally.

Why yoga?
It makes me calmer, more content and better able to do my job – which is helping leaders to lead change and employees to embrace change. It was invaluable during our two weeks of hotel quarantine. Being [confined to an airless hotel room for a fortnight](#) creates all sorts of anxieties. Yoga helped us calm our anxiety about the absence of fresh air and everything that was out of our control.

Tell us about your most memorable yoga experience.
It was in a wall-less yoga shala in Kerala in a tropical rainstorm. The sun had just set and the pre-monsoon deluge that was thundering down onto the tin roof was so loud that none of us could hear Jane speak. So, we all set our mats in a circle around her and followed her every movement for an hour of silent yoga. It was magical.

Where is the oddest place you've done yoga?
On a stand-up paddle board while on an engagement in Abu Dhabi. I completely lost it during a very wobbly side-plank and toppled into the yogi next to me, which set off a domino effect and capsized the entire class. I was asked to leave.



What tips can you offer to become a better yogi?
Listen to your body – listen to understand, not to reply, observe without judgment – be kind to yourself, and to others; realise that negative thoughts and emotions are a) normal and b) don't define you; build contentment in the present and confidence in the future based on the strengths and talents that lie within.

Any injuries or other frustrations?
No frustrations when it comes to yoga. That's sort of the point of it. I have a recurring issue with plantar fasciitis, which yoga helps as long as I work with it, not against it.

Is there anything about yoga you don't like?
There is nothing not to like about yoga. Once I realised that it has nothing to do with what I look like, and that it is all about what I *can* do rather than what I can't do, then it became life-affirming – life-changing even.

Who would you most like to do yoga with?
Barack Obama, Robert Downey jnr, Woody Harrelson, Matthew McConaughey and Jon Bon Jovi – yogis one and all. Not only for the yoga – just imagine the conversation in the pub afterwards.

Any thoughts from the mat?
Just one. It's my favourite quote from BKS Iyengar: "Change is not something that we should fear. Rather, it is something that we should welcome. For without change, nothing in this world would ever grow or blossom, and no one in this world would ever move forward to become the person they're meant to be."