

# SHONA CEKELIS

## COUNSELLING AND YOGA



The path to becoming a yoga teacher is a varied as the people who choose it. Vancouver's Shona Cekelis didn't originally set out to become a yoga teacher; rather, it was her mentor who noticed her dedication and guided her to teaching. "I was thrilled to be able to study and train so that I could share my passion for yoga with others," she says.

With a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and a diploma in professional counselling, Shona added teacher training certificates in hatha and yin yoga. She continues to upgrade her education and has trained in meditation, yoga safety, fitness theory, ergonomics, adult learning, coaching, and somatic therapy.

Shona has been practicing hatha yoga for the past 17 years and teaching since 1997, focusing on a deep understanding of the mind-body connection. In 2006 she branched out on her own in the Mount Pleasant Community Centre.

The studio has spacious rooms with a relaxing atmosphere and is equipped with plenty of mats, blocks, and bolsters. New students are asked about their experience and what they want to achieve in order to determine the best class for them. Classes begin with a discussion of yoga concepts that serves as an introduction to the different yoga paths and styles such as hatha, bhakti, karma, etc. Students may drop in or join sessions that run from six to eight weeks. Classes are 90 minutes long in either Beginner or Intermediate levels of Hatha Yoga.

The Beginner Classes are suitable for new or returning practitioners and are designed to be very accessible for novices, making sure that they can easily keep up. Beginner students start with basic postures and gradually prepare for more strenuous poses. Consideration is made for those with limited movement or chronic conditions, or who are pregnant or in rehabilitation. The focus is on helping the student manage stress while improving flexibility and increasing strength.

The Intermediate Classes are for those who want a quicker pace with more challenging poses. Students will practice poses together with pranayama (breath work) to develop abdominal support, better posture,

and balance while improving concentration, flexibility, and self-awareness.

Classes are intimate with an average of 12 people to allow plenty of individual attention. Students do a check-in at the start and end of each class to give feedback on how the class is affecting them and to hear from the other students. Session enrollees benefit from the cumulative effects of practice and can explore how their practice is evolving each week.

There are also monthly Partner Yoga Workshops suitable for all levels for those who want to practice in pairs with a friend, spouse, family member, or classmate. The practice enhances awareness and develops communication skills while helping to deepen the stretching, and can also be a lot of fun! No partner is required to sign up, and yoga experience is not essential.

In future, Shona plans to add Advanced Hatha Yoga for a deeper level of practice. She will also be offering private yoga sessions for clients who want a personal session tailored to their own needs.

Shona will also be expanding her counselling practice that incorporates somatic approaches along with traditional talk therapy. Counselling topics include stress management, depression, anxiety, trauma, and relationships. Her approach includes Client Centered, Cognitive-Behavioural, and Somatic (Body-centered) models. As she describes her practice, "I am passionate about helping people live more fulfilling lives through the heart-centered work of yoga and counselling."

Shona Cekelis Counseling and Yoga is on the web at [www.shonacekelis.com](http://www.shonacekelis.com). Contact Shona by phone at 778-713-3075, or by email at [shona@shonacekelis.com](mailto:shona@shonacekelis.com).

