A life in yoga...

Let a bike-riding guru lead your chase to peace

A part from the traditional yoga forms, there's the New Age variety—like power yoga for the brat pack; artistic yoga for the flat pack; and Bikram yoga for the cool dudes. Many of these focus more on outer hotness rather than peace. But there are some that combine both. Isha yoga is one of them. Developed from the precepts of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, Isha yoga programs are equal parts pranayama (breathing techniques), mudras (hand gestures) and meditation.

The experience
Isha yoga seeks to provide a supportive atmosphere in which people can make the change to a healthier lifestyle. It's a scientifically structured programme that combines Shakti Chalana kriyas (a dynamic process of balancing energy movement), shoomya meditation (a potent process of conscious non-doing), and a candid approach. The teachers are all about calm, logic and encouragement. During an eight-day programme, the group breathes, shares, builds up confidence, does little group exercises to find out their strengths and weaknesses, learns yogic methods to improve bodily health and new meditating techniques and kriyas, and lots more.

There's even singing, dancing and playing dog-and-the-bone! And with the daily pranayama, the change in diet and the mental agility from the discussions, kilos of dead weight can be blasted.

The learning
There are other programmes, such as Inner Engineering (to find meaning in a fast-paced life), Bhava Spandana (to build their EQ) and Samyama (to seek further enlightenment). But the best place to do the course is at the Isha Foundation's beautiful, 150-acre property in the serene hills near Coimbatore. It seems yoga's in the air there.

Isha Yoga centres
Hyderabad: 9849433753, 9948098285; Bangalore: 880-2593012; Mumbai: 022-24304693, 9820336823; New Delhi: 011-26889311
Website: www.ishafoundation.org

Soul Stuff

Prayer mat

Prostrating yourself? Lay out a rug. Though a mat isn't mandatory, it's good to use as it keeps the worshipper comfortable when they lie down flat. The patterns and dyes of the mats depend upon the weaver. A typical prayer rug should be long enough to kneel and bend down, sit cross-legged and sturdy enough to be used for hours at end. Kneel or prostrate as you may, but fold up your mat after every prayer.