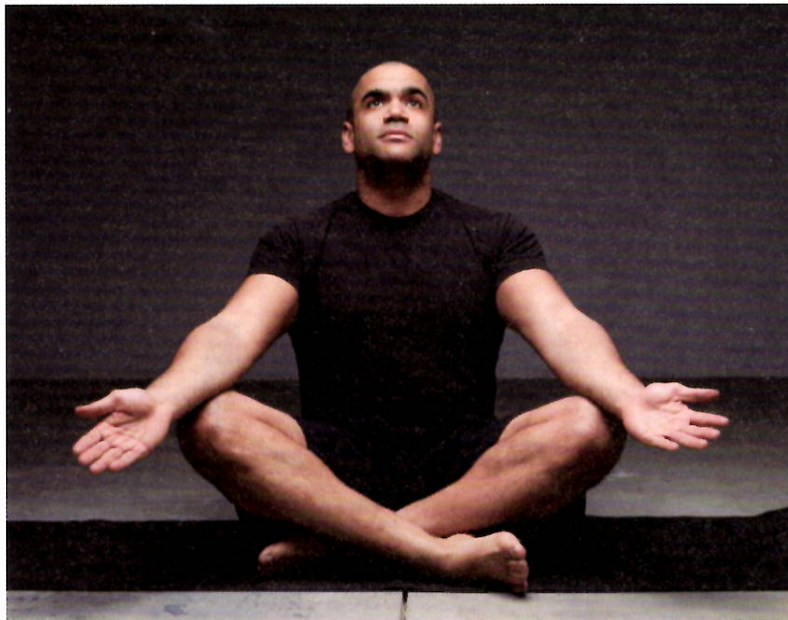


HEALTH



How I Find Balance

Joshua Jackson, 33, CPA, CA, administrator,
corporate financial recovery services, BDO Canada Ltd.

I FIRST TRIED BIKRAM [A TYPE OF HOT] YOGA when I was in university — I got dragged along by my girlfriend at the time. Even as someone who'd played football and rugby and done some mixed martial arts training, I found it extremely challenging — that's what hooked me on it initially. Then I began noticing the physical benefits — do it for a week and you can already feel the difference. When you've got a lot of scar tissue from sports injuries, you can really tell that yoga opens up this range of motion and improves balance. If you've torn a ligament in your knee, it's really hard to stabilize; there are a lot of yoga postures that you do on one leg, which help improve that.

Mentally, there's an element of meditation to yoga — it's very relaxing and de-stressing. It slows down the mind and forces you to focus; as a result, I've developed some soft skills in terms of concentration, patience and letting things go. Coping with the heat and strain (classes are typically at least 40 C with 40% humidity) physically and mentally teaches you how to handle stress. You get hot, it's hard to breathe, you're sweating, you're tired — and you can either focus on that or you can just breathe and understand that it's a temporary thing and you're going to get through it. Unfortunately, I haven't been to classes for the past few months; I've been so busy that it's hard to commit to two-plus hours (classes are 90 minutes, and you have to shower afterwards, because you're covered in sweat). I've just switched to a new role and my schedule has changed, so I'm hoping to find that balance of going to yoga maybe twice a week, to be reminded of the things it teaches you, [as well as having] a work-out regime of cardio and weights. It's tough to put a price on something that has such a positive effect, both mentally and physically. — *As told to Wendy Haaf*

STRESS- BUSTING TIP OF THE MONTH

Colour me happy

PARENTS HAVE LONG KNOWN the peace that a box of crayons and a colouring book can bring to a child, but the simple activity is now also catching on as a stress reliever for adults. New releases for grownups such as *Colour Therapy: An Anti-Stress Colouring Book* are capitalizing on multiple academic studies that suggest colouring in pre-drawn patterns — particularly complex geometric ones — can reduce adults' levels of anxiety by inducing a "meditative state." — *Tamar Satov*



Stress reduces ability to withstand pain

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS CAN MAKE physical pain worse, according to a recent study published in the journal *Pain*. Researchers at Tel Aviv University tested the pain responses of a group of 29 healthy men before and after subjecting them to a stressful task. They found that stress not only intensified the subjects' pain but the higher the perceived level of stress, the harder it was for subjects to regulate their pain. Interestingly, there was no clear effect of stress on the subjects' pain threshold or tolerance. — *TS*