

COMMUNITY

# Yoga in the workplace can reduce tension and pain

BY ERYN KIRKWOOD

Did you know that back pain is a leading cause of workplace absenteeism today?

Ergonomics specialists are getting busier as employers work to create an environment that supports healthy employees. I currently teach several corporate yoga classes at lunchtime to help employees release the tension that builds after hours of sitting at a desk. The benefit of 45 minutes of stretching is unmatched. Simple wrist stretches prevent carpal tunnel syndrome; delicious twists re-create length in the spine that is lost from sitting all morning; basic hip stretches in your chair release low back pain that makes concentration so difficult. After all, happy workers are a direct correlation to enhanced work performance. It's no great surprise that sitting for eight hours in front of a computer takes a toll on our poor neck, back, and hips. We arrive home after the workday and oftentimes feel too exhausted for a good stretch

or an hour class of yoga. Our bodies have been immobile for most of the day but the fatigue caused by a glaring computer screen is undeniable. This issue of Yoga off the Mat is dedicated to relieving some of that workplace tension that settles in around the hips and low back. The tips and exercises are simple; the trick is to do the work.

Quick tips for relieving workplace tension:

Don't eat at your desk, or if you do, turn off the phone, the computer, the BlackBerry. Turn off all distractions and enjoy your lunch. Your nervous system needs the break. Take it.

Use post-it notes or pop-up reminders to encourage you to stretch. Eventually it will become habitual, but until it does, make use of these witty reminders.

Stand up! Don't e-mail someone in the office next door. Get up and take a walk. Skip the elevator and use the stairs. If you're on the 10th floor, walk halfway up.

Drink water. Oftentimes headaches, fatigue, and constant hunger are actually signs that your body is



dehydrated. Skip the juice or pop and go for water. It's another excuse to stand up. Use it!

Try the stretches provided here. A little bit goes a

long way.

I'm Eryn, and that's your tip for practicing Yoga off the Mat.

Eryn Kirkwood is the

owner and facilitator of Barrhaven Yoga. She offers group, private, and corporate Yoga classes in the Barrhaven area. For more information, see

[www.BarrhavenYoga.com](http://www.BarrhavenYoga.com). To speak with Eryn directly, call 613-724-YOGA or e-mail [Eryn@BarrhavenYoga.com](mailto:Eryn@BarrhavenYoga.com)

## Local writers invited to take part in Canadian Authors Festival

Local authors will have a first class chance to showcase their work.

Baico Publishing will be hosting the first Canadian Authors Festival Fri.-Sun. Oct. 16-18 at the Canadian Aviation Museum.

While Baico represents a stable of about 350 authors from across Canada, including many in Nepean-Carleton, the festival is open to all Canadian authors.

"We are planning on having about 200 writers at the show this year with the hope of expanding to 400 next year," said Raymond Coderre, President of Baico Publishing. "Most major book fairs in Canada are organized by American companies. We felt that it was time to organize our

own to exclusively promote Canadian writers. The festival will showcase English and French authors in Canada. Our long term vision is to have a similar book fair in each province."

Coderre said that holding the book festival at the Canadian Aviation Museum is a good fit. Not only does it provide a good venue for the writers, but those attending the festival can do so free with their paid admission to the museum. The festival will feature guest speakers every half hour throughout the weekend.

"The Canadian Authors Festival will provide a great opportunity for local authors to showcase their work at a number of levels," said Coderre. "It is important

that we continue to promote and support Canadian writers."

Among the authors confirmed for the Canadian Authors Festival is Manotick Messenger editor and publisher Jeffrey Morris, who was the 2008 Ontario Community Newspaper Association Columnist of the Year and Reporter of the Year. His book, *From the Other Side: It's No Use Sacrificing a Chicken if You Can't Read the Entrails*, was published by Baico in 2008. Morris has also been a winner of the OCNA's Humour Columnist of the Year.

"I am looking forward to being a part of the Canadian Authors Festival," said Morris. "Although I have

been a writer for many years through journalism, I am still new at being an author. Not only will it be a great chance to showcase my book to a large audience, but

it will also give me a great chance to learn more about what it takes to be successful in this business."

Any writers or authors interested in taking part in

the Canadian Authors Festival are asked to contact Raymond Coderre or Stephanie Bertrand at Baico at (613) 829-5141 or e-mail [baico@bellnet.ca](mailto:baico@bellnet.ca).



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