

Predictions for Yoga in 2008

By Megan McDonough

As we begin the New Year, it's time once again to follow in Nostradamus's footsteps and play the game we've been playing for centuries: predicting what the future will hold. This year I'm taking a stab at yoga predictions—forecasting what's going to happen in this field for 2008 and beyond.

My predictions don't come from staring into a crystal ball or reading organic tea leaves. I came to these conclusions after reading and researching industry data, interviewing industry experts—including Ila Sarley, president of Kripalu Center, and John Kepner, executive director of the International Association of Yoga Therapists—and observing from my viewpoint as both a yoga teacher and a consultant in the wellness industry.

As you read my forecasts, see if they ring true for you. If yes, consider if and how you are positioning your business in response to what the future may bring.

- 1. Yoga's cup will overflow as growth continues.** More teachers becoming certified and more venues offering yoga equals more competition between teachers and studios. In response to yoga's increasing availability and the wide variety of yoga options, consolidation and specialization will occur, with big players getting bigger and solo practitioners cultivating specialized niches.
- 2. You'll need to stand out to stay in.** The yoga professionals who differentiate themselves with an approach or style that stands out will have a distinct advantage. While ten years ago people asked, "What is yoga?," the question now is "How is this yoga different from all other yogas?"
- 3. Yoga will be on the move.** Yoga will continue to migrate into new territory beyond the standard studio or gym. Think yoga at your desk, for specific populations, or at out-of-the-box locations.
- 4. Yoga will step out of the waiting room and into the doctor's office.** Conventional healthcare providers will increasingly acknowledge the therapeutic benefits of yoga. As this migration occurs, more structure will be needed, including peer-reviewed research studies to measure the efficiency for standardized protocols of yoga care.
- 5. Yoga will take up permanent residence on Madison Avenue.** Companies looking to associate their products or services with a wellness lifestyle—even if it has nothing to do with wellness—will turn to yoga imagery. A sexy yogini sipping a glass of wine while sitting in lotus position on the hood of a car is not out of the question—if it helps sell the car.

6. Asia will be the next growth market for yoga. More teachers will answer the call to bring yoga to Hong Kong, and you'll see more Asians attending yoga conferences and teacher training programs in the United States.

7. You'll want to think lifestyle, not just asana. Yoga's growth is part of a bigger wellness trend. Those who want to capitalize on this broader trend will add more ancillary services—such as nutritional programs, exercise routines, spa services, and wellness consultations—to their yoga offerings.

8. Yoga meets YouTube. Convenience is always an advantage in our busy lives. That's why yoga is moving out of the studio (see prediction number three) and that's why Yoga is a growing presence in the online world. Expect more and more streaming videos of live classes, downloadable videos for your iPod, yoga pages on MySpace and Facebook, and more.

9. Next-level training services for yoga and wellness professionals will be on the rise. With the overall growth of the wellness industry, new training programs to support practitioners will be in demand, including advanced professional development and business training.

10. Yoga will continue to touch and transform your life and the lives of your students in 2008. Happy New Year!

For more information about Yoga's Evolution in America's Wellness Revolution, go to <http://www.mindfulmarketing.net/evolution.htm>

*Megan McDonough helps you get clear so you can get positive results. Along with teaching yoga, she's the award-winning author of *Infinity in a Box*, a marketing consultant for mind/body organizations including Kripalu Center, and a corporate trainer to companies such as the American Cancer Society.*

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