



Yoga Rhythm, flowing mat-based routines choreographed to music, synchronised with the breath. For real people with real bodies, aimed at breaking our pressured daily routines, relaxing the mind and energising the body. A modern yoga form which focuses on core strength, flexibility, stamina and toning.

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Rhythm But No Blues

With a DVD out on the market, a teacher training program in the pipeline, Yoga Rhythm retreat breaks all over the world and a full UK class schedule, Charli Sales is the high-energy character behind this new yoga ethos.

Words: Gareth Hughes

I arrived a little ahead of schedule and was enjoying my green tea, staring out at the rain on the Boccabar window in Northampton, England, when Charli entered the room. Along with her the clouds parted and a beam of sunshine seemed to break through not only the mundane weather, but also the serene tranquil environment I had been sipping my tea in, the room simultaneously noted her entrance as she greeted what seemed to be, well, everyone! She knew everyone!

Was the break in the clouds just a coincidence or was I in the presence of a local legend ready to go global? At 27 years old, beaming a smile, attired in her very contemporary designed Yoga Rhythm clothing, and straight off the back of a class at a local gym. I was to have Charli's attention for the next couple of hours and I somehow felt that just wasn't going to be long enough as her local popularity was apparent.

I began by asking Charli a little about her background, and in a very self-effacing way she listed quite a history of excellence and achievements in both London dance academies (from age 2) and acrobatics (from age 5) to national level. This explains her passion for

music but where did her love of yoga come from? Where did she conceive the idea of choreographing mat based routines to music incorporating acrobatics and dance with yoga postures?

Charli's yoga journey began when she was 17. Recommended by a friend, she went along to a Sivananda course and there was "no looking back from that point to present day".

Charli's Yoga Rhythm was conceptualised during a period living on Vancouver Island, Canada, in a small town called Tofino in the Pacific Rim: "I had been teaching various forms of dance and acrobatics and I practised yoga on the beach every morning. I started to incorporate the dance aspect of music, postures from acrobatics and yoga, and found a blend that had the most amazing spiritual and physical effect on me, I'd found my calling!" Yoga Rhythm was born.

When Charli began advertising the new Yoga Rhythm in Tofino, she was staggered by the positive response she received, "I was living my dream of choosing a career that I loved, yoga is old and fantastic, especially in the sense that it is able to embrace all kinds of new concepts."

Listening to Charli speak and watching her body language I sensed something exuding from her, something much stronger than her modesty or beauty, it was confidence, an honest love for what was clearly her ultimate passion, yoga.

Upon her return to the UK, Charli and her partner settled in Northampton and Yoga Rhythm went full speed ahead. Her classes were such a success that she decided to make her own yoga DVD: "I found people wanted to progress and practise Yoga Rhythm outside of my classes. I wanted to use the people who come to my classes in the making of the DVD, real people with real bodies."

Charli tells of her goal to show those who meet her, that Yoga Rhythm really is for everyone: "For each balance, posture and transition throughout the routines, there is a modification to suit your ability and intensity level required, this is all outlined on the DVD."

Last November's Yoga Show provided the platform from which Charli would launch her *Stretching Your Boundaries* DVD. It was a milestone in the progression of this pioneering concept and proved a

huge hit with yogis and teachers alike: "I held taster classes which were fully booked and some yogis were even participating in the aisles around the open class area, it created a real buzz. I'd like to thank those people for their support. Even Elle McPherson visited our stand and said it was the coolest one there!"

Yoga? Cool? What makes Yoga Rhythm cool?

"I want Yoga Rhythm to have the image it's cool, fun and a great way to motivate people to be active and inspired to live a positive life."

Midway through one of my questions Charli checked her watch and started to rummage in her bag – was I really that boring? "The best way I can explain Yoga Rhythm to you, is for you to try it for yourself!" she said whilst offering, well thrusting me a gent's Yoga Rhythm vest top! At this moment I felt the confidence of Charli and her sweet yet very persuasive nature leaving me no choice other than to take the top and follow her to the studio!

On the way to the studio, Charli spoke of the many people she

encounters who do not stretch at all, mostly because they find it difficult but “these are the people who need Yoga Rhythm the most,” she says. She went on to explain that the class in which I was to unknowingly participate would help even me, a fitness fanatic who rarely stretches.

“The youngest group I teach is a group of 11-year-olds, the eldest Yoga Rhythm yogi is 77. The Yoga Rhythm concept is for people who want to feel relaxed, but also have a physical workout and build their confidence. If you can cross new physical boundaries when practicing Yoga Rhythm, then you can apply this new found confidence in your everyday life.”

I was hoping for an entry-level introduction to this mix of music, dance and postures which has become so popular, but upon arrival I met some of Charli’s most dedicated and loyal yogis ready to start. If Yoga Rhythm truly is for everyone, then this was the acid test. Could I survive in a class of dedicated yogis?

The class started very progressively: each routine has its very own specifically composed music track, produced by a composer who regularly takes part in Charli’s classes.

I was impressed with the amount of balances and postures I could perform with the aid of Charli’s detailed guidance, and I rapidly found that I was smiling. As the routines progressed to more intense levels and more difficult postures, I was offered beginner modification poses to compensate for the advanced poses the experienced yogis were managing. At this moment I understood how Charli really is on to something, the music was consuming and I was feeling very much as though I belonged in this class.

Once the routines are completed, Charli spares time to close the class with a visualization journey (also on the DVD) to relax the mind and body. She tells you a story, everyone lying on their backs, eyes closed. I was taken on a voyage through a rainforest and waterfalls for about five minutes, paying particular attention to the trees and wildlife and other details surrounding me. Charli says: “The importance of a visualization journey is to allow daily pressures to drift away. To leave the class feeling in control of their lives, instilling a positive frame of mind.” When I came to, I felt energized and relaxed and a quiet moment of triumph rushed over me. I’d done it and really enjoyed it!

So what’s next for this risk taking yogic ball of innovation and her Yoga Rhythm, besides the front cover of *YOGA Magazine*, that is?

“There are 2 quotes that I live by; ‘think global, act local’ and the other is ‘you are bound by nothing’. Watch this space!”

I spoke with some of the yogis from the class who have experienced the retreats and some who attend classes weekly:

“I felt a real connection with the group at the beginning and right through” – Janet Stiles, CA

“This is the only time of the week I feel I can truly relax without my mind wandering” – Jo Morgan, UK

“I love that every routine is different, different pace, different music, different goals keeping me constantly challenged” – Warren Eustace, UK

“My anxiety and stress levels have improved, in that respect it has been life-changing” – Jenna Sutton, UK

“In 3 months I have lost weight, gained muscle power, sleep better, have more confidence and I see life more clearly” – Mr Salmon, Mexico.

“I love the music, it creates such a relaxed atmosphere” – Daryl Seager, Sp

“I really enjoy the way the routines flow with the music” – Dominique Edmonds, UK

“Charli has helped me achieve postures I could never before even attempt in other yoga forms, she’s passionate about yoga and an inspiration” – Angela Dawes

“The DVD’s great, the step by step instructions are clear, concise and easy to follow” – Hayley Sherlock

“Yoga is evolving all the time but you have to keep some traditional things. Charli has captured this in her groundbreaking mind and movement creation Yoga Rhythm. I have been blessed with many wonderful teachers and Charli’s teaching has inspired me with her creativity, mastery of asanas and vibrating energy she gives out for her love of teaching and yoga.” – Helen Jaeger, Hatha Yoga teacher.



Forthcoming 2008 Yoga Rhythm Events with Charli Sales		
11th-14th Sept.	Retreat	Tofino, Vancouver Island, Canada
20th Sept.	Workshop	Vancouver, Canada
21st Sept.	Workshop	Victoria, Canada
27th Sept.	Workshop	San Francisco, USA
28th Sept.	Workshop	LA, California

Yoga Rhythm DVD
Available To Buy Online!
www.yogarhythm.org

