

# Yoga, MEDICINE & HEALTH

# YOGA, MEDICINE & HEALTH

**A**n inner call of pain from traumas, physical issues, and stiffness brought me to yoga. I immersed myself in studies, searching for knowledge on how to heal myself. I created the Kaiut Yoga Method so that everyone could access this resource to rescue the potential of the human body.

The first step in integrating all I'd learned and forming an effective and more structured approach to yoga was deconstructing and fragmenting everything. This is what I did to classical yoga postures. I looked for their essence, their main function, which would benefit my students. Over the past three decades, I have come to understand the essential nature of yoga practice for today's bodies and minds.

With yoga, we help to recover the functionality of the body. Due to our modern lifestyle, our bodies are underutilized and subjected to specialized use and many unhealthy habits such as excessive sitting, all of which are the basis of ill health and pain we may experience. Through the process of yoga, we neurologically reconnect to areas of the body that have been neglected in various ways. We are brought to a state of presence that allows our whole system to reorganize and regenerate at every level, leading to improved health, well-being, optimal performance, and longevity.

I can say without hesitation that most of my students experience this transformation and reap positive results. As they engage in the practice—built on principles that include safety, sustainability, diversity, and consistency—their health improves. And when I say health, I am referring not only to physical health but to mental health, which becomes a strong characteristic of practitioners as they bring mind and body into harmony.



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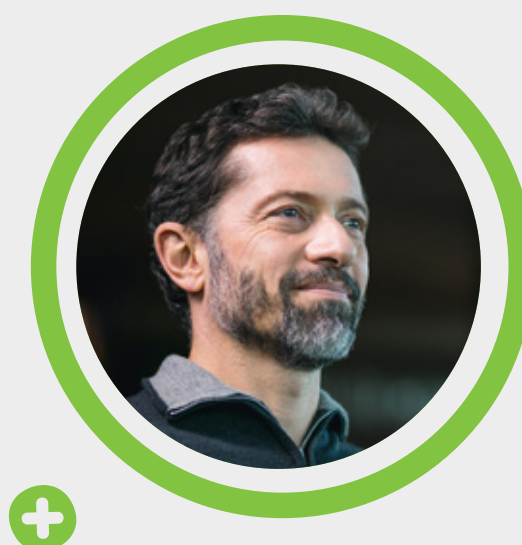
Like me, a physician friend and current Kaiut Yoga teacher needed to deconstruct almost everything she believed and lived for the first 40 years to heal her own body and have a fuller life. Before going through this profound change, an observer might think she was fulfilled and had everything that one could aspire to—a successful career, a family, and an 'ideal' body that you might find on the cover of a fitness magazine. However, this image did not correspond to what she saw and felt.

Aware that she needed to take better care of herself, she took a sabbatical from her work. During this time, she studied yoga and Ayurvedic medicine and walked the path toward the real concept of health for herself and others.

Below you will follow the inspiring story of this classically trained physician whose life purpose was to improve the health of her patients. Over the years, she rediscovered in yoga the true path to health. Her dive was so deep that today she is dedicated to helping students and patients heal their bodies through yoga and holistic medicine.

Enjoy reading!

Francisco Kaiut




# Health is not FITNESS

Around the age of 42, I started asking myself, "who am I?" It is a question I have kept asking myself since then. Being a mother, a wife, a doctor with a PhD, and having a comfortable life from an economic point of view was the natural way I presented myself, but it was a kind of character I had created. Today, I feel like someone who has gone through a process and acquired self-knowledge that enabled me to give meaning to my life.

I was born in Porto Alegre, the capital city of the most southern state in Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul. Around 18 years old, I entered medical school to acquire the knowledge and skills to care for and treat human beings. I graduated with a master's degree in endocrinology with a specialization in diabetes and a doctorate in endocrinology with a focus on Metabolic Syndrome. For 15 years, I worked in a federal hospital, which

included a decade dedicated to research on cutting-edge drugs for diabetes. I did 'disease medicine,' that is, modern medicine based on drug prescription.

Parallel to my academic and professional life, I maintained a disciplined fitness routine, having attended the gym since the age of 15. But I got caught in a vicious cycle—I would sit for hours and hours a day studying and working and then engage in intense physical workouts, religiously attending the gym and training to run marathons. When I was 23, despite being healthy, thin, and what many label as 'fit', I had my first lumbar crisis.



I went to the doctor, and the x-ray showed I had a lesion on my spine. In addition, though, my spine overall looked like it was that of an 80-year-old woman. Despite my medical training and working in a university hospital, I and others who saw the images denied the findings. I even said that my exams must have been switched, given the level of deterioration they showed. But this was the reality of my spine at 23 years old.

Following the x-rays, I went into a kind of blind mode. I chose to ignore what the images showed about the health of my body. I did this because I needed to focus on my master's degree and, later, my doctorate. Both enriched my resume, which I held as important and a priority in my life. Today, I believe it is okay to dedicate yourself to something with such intensity—as I did with studies, but not at the cost of connection to your reality, essence, and health, as I did.

**My workaholism and disciplined involvement in physical activity led me to become disconnected from both myself and others.**

I traveled all over the world to attend pharmaceutical industry events, and more and more I lived on autopilot and drifted away from myself. **I missed out on life events and moments with my daughters and my marriage ended.**

In seeking emotional relief, I became even more fitness-oriented and didn't limit myself to physical exercises. I started consuming 'health' products and supplements—in short, I became a fitness freak. My level of blindness became serious. Despite being an endocrinologist, I consumed all those products with little regard for my overall health. Instead, I aimed to acquire a body that met the aesthetic standards I thought were ideal. I also started weight training around this time, completely disregarding my highly compromised back.





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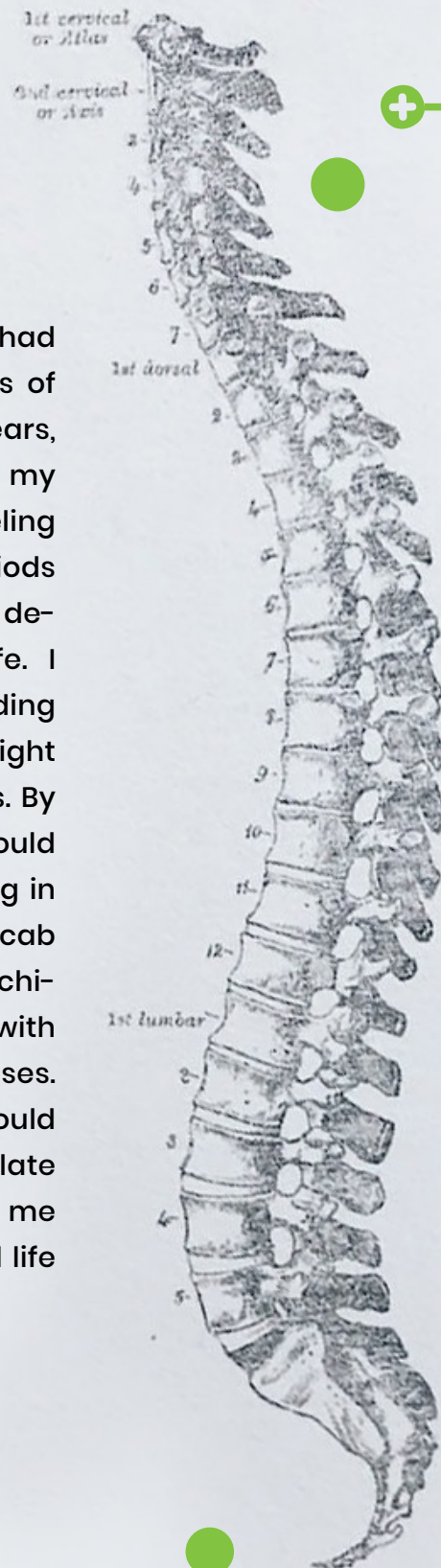


When I was 37 years old, I had one of the worst lumbar crises of my life. I was on the beach with my daughters, who were still small, and when I went to get the sunscreen from my bag, I simply froze. I struggled to get up and walk out of there that day—my body felt heavy and locked up in ways I had not felt before. The fitness woman with the aesthetically pleasing body and financial stability could not walk on her own. Yet, even this pain and immobility did not stir a different response from me—I once again ignored that I had a serious problem with my back.

I continued acting as before and entered a cycle of crises combined with visits to the chiropractor. Although the pains were not chronic, they had a pattern: they appeared whenever I experienced emotional stressors and turmoil. This was unavoidable given I was in the middle of a separation process and had many practical issues to deal with, such as taking care of the small children, working, and studying. So the crises kept coming and going.

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FIG. 22.—Lateral view of the spine.



My spine, which had been showing signs of weakness for 17 years, had to support my routine of traveling for work, long periods of sitting, and the demands of daily life. I was also overloading my spine with weight training and squats. By the age of 41, you could readily find me lying in the back seat of a cab on the way to the chiropractor to deal with the latest pain crises. The chiropractor would treat and manipulate my body and get me walking again—and life went on.

In 2010, besides the physical issues, the emotional overload led to burnout, or what some might call a 'spiritual emergency' or a 'great awakening'. I experienced an intense panic attack that led me to see a psychiatrist. Little did I know, but this painful experience was the beginning of my return to health.

My life fell apart, and even my work and the way I cared for my patients no longer made sense. So I decided to take a sabbatical from work to heal physically and emotionally. I knew I needed to take care of myself in a more holistic way.



# SEARCHING FOR A NEW PATH TOWARD HEALTH

Without the routine of work, I had the opportunity to deep-dive into books about yoga, Ayurveda, and authors such as Padma Samten, a Brazilian Buddhist Lama, and Roberto Crema, a leader in areas of anthropology and transpersonal psychology. At this time, I was also still seeing my psychiatrist. I tried to share all this new knowledge I was gaining with him, but he did not

take me seriously. And as I got to know more and more about the transpersonal and alternative paths to healing, I ended up abandoning the psychiatric consultations.

The new knowledge I encountered was an invitation to deconstruct everything I thought I knew, including my medical training. It took me about three years to integrate everything into a new way of life. During this period, by chance, I saw an article about yoga and decided that I wanted to practice. I called a friend and asked if she could recommend a school in Porto Alegre.







Surprised by my request, she took me to a school. It was a 7 am class. The door opened, and I saw the teacher, who seemed to float as they moved about the room. At that moment, something changed, and I started to practice. However, that approach proved unsuitable for me because, in the fifth class, I experienced another pain crisis.

*With my fitness physique and mentality, the teacher thought she could demand more from me, and I responded with an inflated ego, seeking to overcome limits. In one posture, I lifted my leg, contorted myself to the extreme, and injured my spine again.* Unsurprisingly, I gave up that style of yoga. However, the studio also ran Iyengar yoga classes, so I started attending those classes, which seemed more suitable for me.

In parallel to yoga practice, I continued to study everything I could find about health, continuing to look for new perspectives different from what I had learned in traditional medicine. At the end of 2010, I delved into Ayurvedic medicine and the teachings of Dr. José Ruguê Ribeiro Júnior, a doctor from Uberlândia, in the state of Minas Gerais. I did not want to return to the intense traveling routine, but I signed up for the course since I could take the classes remotely and go to the ashram only for the internships.

Dr. Ruguê is regarded as one of the most important teachers of Ayurvedic medicine and panchakarma—a treatment designed to cleanse our bodies of toxic elements from disease and poor nutrition from food and emotions. With a broad background in yoga and Ayurveda, Dr. Ruguê is currently president of the Sri Vájera Foundation and Kalayasa Ayurvedic Clinic, consulting and leading courses in Brazil, India, Italy, Portugal, and other parts of the world. I respected his perspective in part because he also had a medical degree, specializing in Intensive Care Medicine and working as a clinical director of a major hospital for some years, yet he advocated for these alternative approaches to health.

**The course made a lot of sense to me as I didn't want anything with an esoteric orientation due to my background as a scientist. I dedicated myself to four years of training with him and continued treating myself with Ayurveda with another doctor from Rio Grande do Sul. In 2015, I set up my own practice and started working with everything I had learned since the beginning of the sabbatical period.**





DESPITE PRACTICING YOGA, THAT PAIN DIDN'T GET BETTER. I WENT TO THE OSTEOPATH, STUDIED, AND DID SOMATIC EXPERIENCING SESSIONS—AN APPROACH TO PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR WORKING WITH TRAUMA DEVELOPED BY PSYCHOLOGIST AND BIOPHYSICIST PETER LEVINE, BUT IT PERSISTED. ALL I WAS LOOKING FOR AT THAT TIME WAS SOME THERAPIST OR THERAPY THAT WOULD UNITE NEUROSCIENCE, MEDITATION, AND SOMATIC WORK, BUT I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING.

While I did experience a great deal of change in that time, my body continued to have some issues. My lower back had improved a lot, but I experienced a lot of pain from a shoulder syndrome. This syndrome causes pain that varies from moderate to severe and can radiate to the arms and chest, making it impossible to raise your arm.





**Around 2016, in the middle of studying, I was reading Yoga Journal, and on the back cover was an article about the Kaiut Yoga Method.** One of Francisco's comments caught my attention. It was about him having fragmented the Iyengar yoga postures to arrive at the function of each aspect of the movement. I was curious and wanted to meet Francisco, but I postponed the meeting since his clinic was interstate, further up north.

That same year, my daughters went to the beach with their father, and I decided to go on a retreat in Canela, a city about 110 kilometers from Porto Alegre, which had yoga on the program. My main interest was not the practice but the opportunity to spend some time in the middle of nature. However, when I arrived, I learned that the classes were the Kaiut Yoga Method. In conversation with the teacher, I found out that she wanted to bring Francisco to Porto Alegre.







Somatic experiment is a method developed by American psychologist and biophysicist Dr. Peter A. Levine and it is structured on the understanding that trauma arises because the human body, mind and nervous system are unable to process stressful events. Therefore, it is not the event that causes the trauma, but this kind of integrated failure of our body.

The treatment, according to the US-based Somatic Experience Trauma Institute and responsible for coordinating the method worldwide, releases the shock or traumatic event. It does this based on an assessment by multidisciplinary specialists who identify the point where the individual is stuck and help him to resolve these physiological conditions.

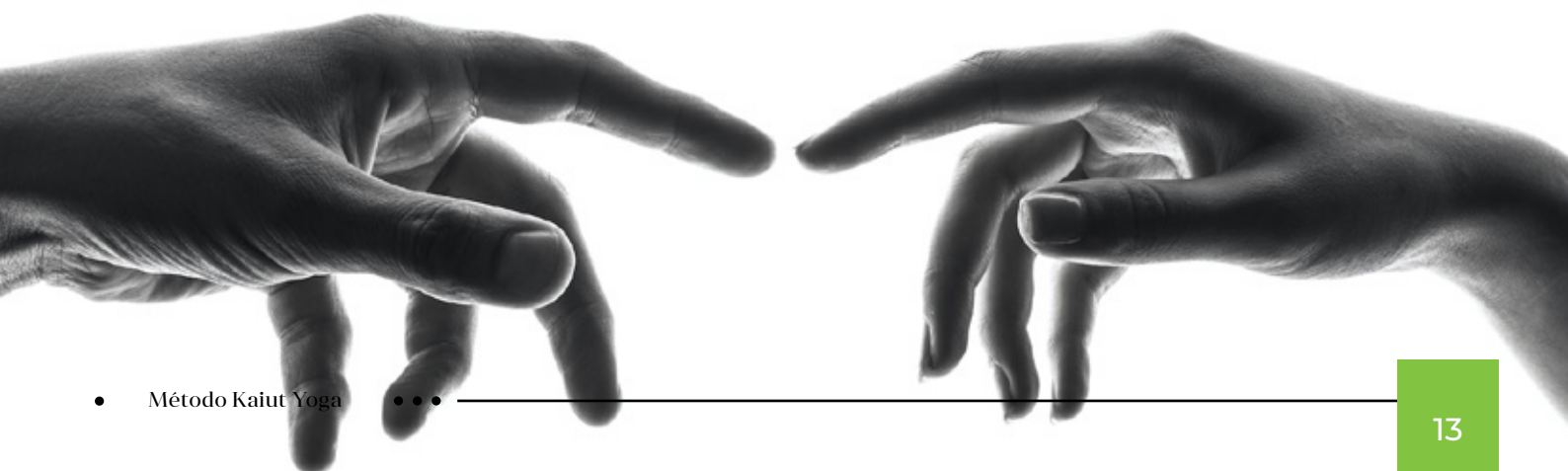
# Yoga as self-care AND RESTORATION

Six months following the retreat, Francisco came to Porto Alegre. I decided to meet him and attend his classes. In the first one, tears ran freely down my face. This was because we engaged with the hands—or, as he says, the human paws. **The work immediately made sense, connecting with everything I had studied in recent years and my hypotheses about what had happened to my left shoulder. I recognized the Method as something I had been seeking for so long. I knew it was the way back to health, not just my own but others, as I saw it as a resource and a way I could care for others.**

The two-hour class with Francisco was an incredible experience. In one of the postures where we had to open our hands and, sitting down, place the whole palm on the mat, I found that I could not support spread my hand well on the ground or support much weight due to pain, sensitivity, and rigidity. The posture revealed how the rigidity in my hand was connected to the tension and stiffness in my arm and the pain and rigidity I experienced in

my scapula and shoulder. I could see that with consistent and proper engagement with this posture, I could neurologically reconnect areas and work through the layers and layers of rigidity until I regained full movement in that whole region of my body.

At this point, I had been studying different approaches to health for seven years and knew that our body (and mind) is one—not separate. This contrasts with how traditional medicine often relates to the body, fragmenting the human body to treat it. In my area of medicine, endocrinology, and diabetes, the loss of functionality of an area, such as the foot, would often have patients on the operating table to receive a surgical intervention to restore and rescue what has been lost, with mixed outcomes. However, yoga has been a tool to rescue the body's functionality for a long time.







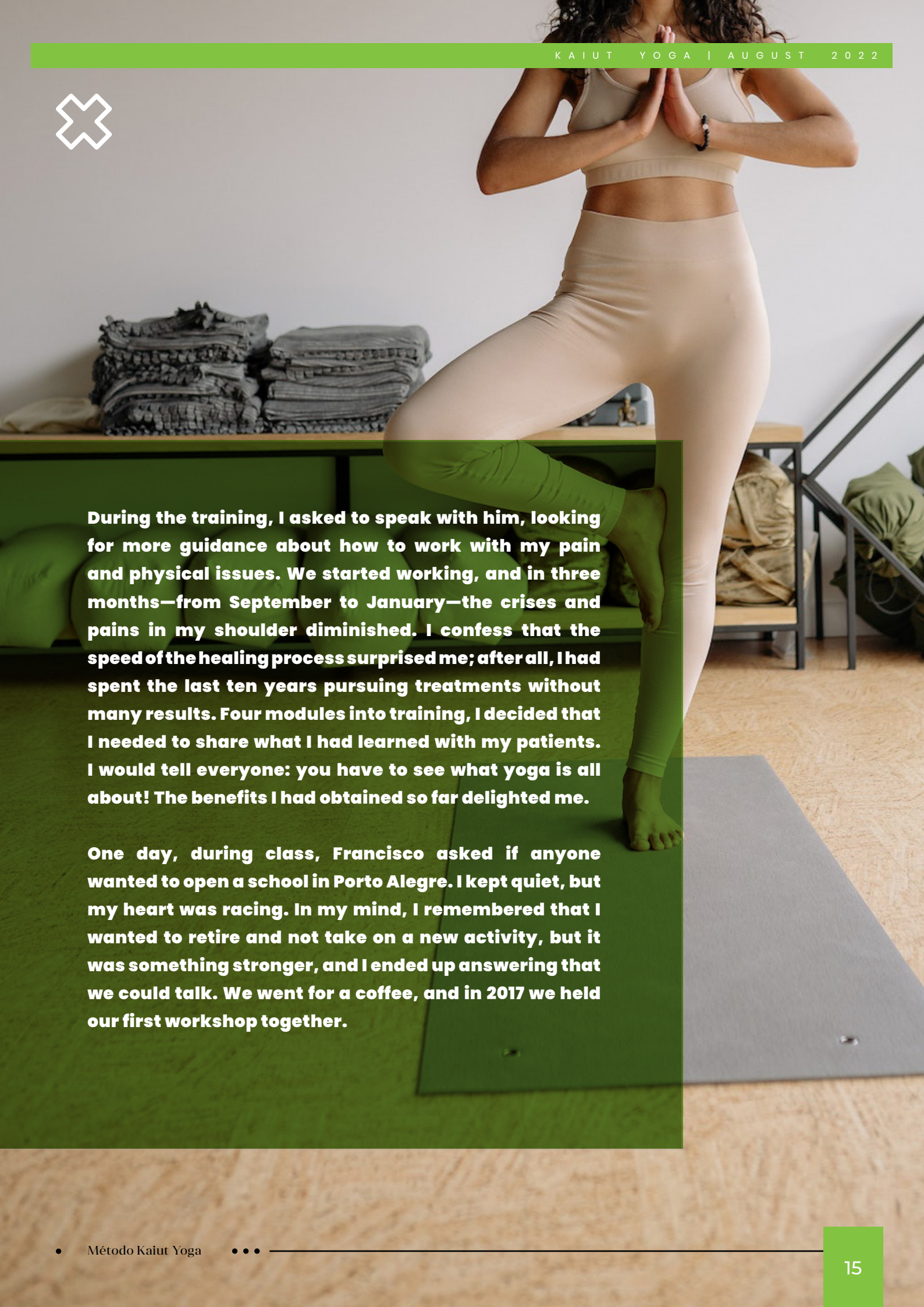
**" [...] I DECIDED TO DO THE TRAINING TO DEEPEN MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRACTICE FOR MY OWN USE; [...] I SAW IT AS A RETREAT, SOMETHING PLEASURABLE AND A KIND OF GIFT AND ACT OF SELF-CARE. "**

Over time it became clear that the postures were meant to nourish my whole body—the bones, soft tissue, organs, veins, and more. It does this by making up for what we don't do. Our ancestors of tens of thousands of years ago used their hands and arms intensely each day as they gathered, hunted, planted, or crawled on the ground. Comparatively, today, we modern humans use our hands and arms in more limited ways, raising our arms and using them above our heads much less and rarely flattening our hands entirely.

That first class I had in the Kaiut Yoga Method also brought me into a pre-meditative state. Although I had meditated before, I had not yet experienced the same feeling. It was such a state of comfort and well-being that I had no desire to talk to the other students after class for fear of ending that feeling.

In September 2017, I attended a teacher training Francisco held in Gramado. I decided to do the training to deepen my understanding of the practice for my own use; after all, there were no teachers of the Method in Porto Alegre. My daughters were older, which made it possible to take off one weekend a month. I saw it as a retreat, something pleasurable and a kind of gift and act of self-care.





**During the training, I asked to speak with him, looking for more guidance about how to work with my pain and physical issues. We started working, and in three months—from September to January—the crises and pains in my shoulder diminished. I confess that the speed of the healing process surprised me; after all, I had spent the last ten years pursuing treatments without many results. Four modules into training, I decided that I needed to share what I had learned with my patients. I would tell everyone: you have to see what yoga is all about! The benefits I had obtained so far delighted me.**

**One day, during class, Francisco asked if anyone wanted to open a school in Porto Alegre. I kept quiet, but my heart was racing. In my mind, I remembered that I wanted to retire and not take on a new activity, but it was something stronger, and I ended up answering that we could talk. We went for a coffee, and in 2017 we held our first workshop together.**





# CURE THROUGH CONSISTENCY

Before I started practicing Kaiut Yoga, I had weekly bouts of shoulder pain, so much so that I could barely lift my arms. As I progressed in the practice, the time between one crisis and another increased. First every fifteen days, then every month until I reached a point where I can't remember the last time I felt pain in my shoulder..

**Another evolution that I noticed is related to my arms. I couldn't lift them in the first class, and today I can, with ease. When I close my eyes during the arm postures, I can envision and feel the restrictions, but rather than viewing it as a problem that I want gone, as I did in the past, I view it as a compass, the direction, the path back to**

**health. The shoulder crises are gone, just the remnants, these restrictions remain.**

My diabetes patients follow a special diet to lower their blood sugar. I often tell them that they are free of disease only if they don't abandon what has kept them stable—the diet. If they don't follow it properly, the disease will come back. It is the same with yoga: you must maintain consistency to ensure your health and mobility.



A student asked me one day how often she should practice. At first, we guide ourselves to practice more consciously, ensuring we regularly attend as is appropriate for our bodies, with the guidance of a teacher. Over time we learn to listen and know the needs of our bodies and attend class accordingly. **At some point, with an accumulation of positive results, our needs become clear, practice becomes natural and organic, and simply a part of our day-to-day life.**

I can only say that the practice gets better and better. Through the Method, I found a deeper understanding and meaning for everything I studied over the years. The practice delivers physical health and well-being and creates a state of presence, calm, and peace, even with the world falling down outside. I encounter problems and have issues to resolve, as everyone does, but I live all this in an incredible state. I attribute this to the practice of Kaiut Yoga.





# THE HEALING POTENTIAL OF YOGA

Everything my friend learned when she decided to take a sabbatical to heal herself she now shares with her students and patients. Today, besides teaching the Kaiut Yoga method in Porto Alegre, she dedicates herself to integrative medicine. When her patients arrive at the clinic, they go through a consultation that includes Ayurveda and yoga, the latter as a resource to stimulate the development of the state of presence.

**Her involvement with yoga and Ayurveda goes beyond the limits of the clinic, she worked on the implementation of the first integrative health clinic at the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC) and is engaged in a post-doctorate in neuroscience to test the method.** Her new academic life focuses on proving the benefits of yoga. She knows the power of the practice for the body and mind in modern society but believes it is essential to prove it using numbers and statistics based on other success stories.

Just like me, she is committed to letting others know about the possibility of health through yoga. In addition to the Kaiut Yoga Method, she cares for health through natural means—food, oils, and massages—and does not need to take medicines for anything.

**To me, her example shows us that mistaking fitness for health is perhaps the biggest misconception in our society.** For years, I saw students come into my classes not understanding why their bodies had so many issues—stiffness, immobility, and pain on many levels. Through yoga, we can restore the body and rescue its potential from the damage caused by the underutilization and specialized use of the body and our habits of modern life. Once we are willing to acknowledge and address the issues we each hold in our bodies and minds, yoga is an efficient tool and the ultimate source of human health.







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