

Boots to books
Veterans taking steps
toward higher education

Heroes for hire
Joining forces in
the workplace

**Advancements
in prosthetics**
One step at a time

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THANKING OUR TROOPS

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INSPIRATION

YOGA SAVED MY LIFE

**The Give Back Yoga
Foundation helps
veterans find peace.**

After fighting a war abroad, veterans are returning home to face new and daunting frontiers within themselves. As is seen in the alarmingly high rate of military suicides, the pursuit of internal peace has become a national battle. Yet one of the most unlikely weapons in this battle is the ancient practice of yoga.

When Hugo Patocinio, a former marine who served three deployments in Iraq, heard the word 'yoga' in his PTSD group at Camp LeJeune, he was skeptical. But when he woke up at the end of his first yoga class, he realized that for the first time in a long time, he felt rested. "And that was a big turning point for my healing," Hugo says. "Just that one day I finally got some sleep." Hugo is now off all his medications, back in school, practicing yoga regularly and traveling around the country to share his story of recovery.



Because of stories like Hugo's, The Give Back Yoga Foundation (GBYF) is committed to offering free yoga and meditation resources to veterans nationwide. Their sponsors have helped create and distribute empirically-tested multi-media resources to over thirty VA hospital facilities, various Soldier and Family Assistance Centers, and wellness programs for wounded warriors. Their goal is to reach 10,000 veterans.

"When I was told I was going to do yoga, I thought of rolling around on the floor in a leotard," says Paul, a Vietnam veteran who struggled with PTSD for over 40 years before finally getting help through a residential rehabilitation program in Newington, CT which included mandatory yoga and meditation. Paul completed the program a year and a half ago and now refers to his yoga practice as "the most useful survival skill I know."

Paul's first yoga teacher, Suzanne Manafort, with the help of The Give Back Yoga Foundation and co-author Dr. Daniel Libby Ph.D., recently published the book *Mindful Yoga Therapy*



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Yoga is both a way for U.S. Army members to stay in shape and cope with stress.
PHOTO: VETERANS YOGA PROJECT

for *Veterans Coping with Trauma*, a practice guide that includes in depth breathing exercises, yoga postures and meditation.

And while GBYF aims to offer

free mindfulness resources like these to 10,000 veterans, it is the individuals like Paul who are the wind in the foundation's sails. At a fundraising event last spring, Paul

offered his medal to the program director Rob Schware, telling him, "Yoga saved my life."

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GIVE BACK YOGA FOUNDATION
www.giveback.org