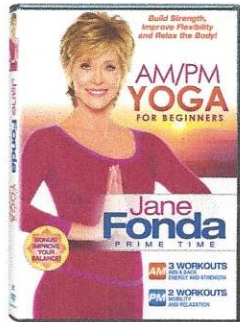


A new yoga DVD at 75? It's no stretch for Jane Fonda

Janice Lloyd, USA TODAY 6:19 p.m. EST December 2, 2012

Fitness guru makes the exercises easy but effective for beginners and older adults.



(Photo: Lionsgate)

Forget about having to do headstands or twists that could jam a disk in your neck or tear a ligament in your shoulder or hip.

Jane Fonda hopes to breathe new life into yoga, a form of exercise that has come under fire the past couple of years for injuries associated with torturous poses. Her new DVD, *Prime Time AM/PM Yoga for Beginners*, is out Tuesday. She is targeting people like herself, she says, who feel age creeping up on them, and also younger people who are out of shape. Meet a gentle Jane.

"I used to be all about going for the pain," says Fonda, who has produced more than 20 fitness videos. She started out doing hard-core aerobic workouts in the early 1980s.

"Not anymore. I'm not asking them to do anything too hard. I do them with older people in mind. I want it to be fun and easy for them, but effective."

There are five segments, the first three devoted to morning: abdominal and back muscles, light stretches and basic yoga poses, and strength training with light hand weights. For night, there are two sections: mobility and relaxation. None is longer than 20 minutes. Several of the exercises — planks, for instance — use a chair or other prop, making them easier to complete.

"These exercises are blended with some Pilates," she says. "They'll build strong muscles to protect your joints, build stronger bones and make you limber."

Fonda used to do more strenuous yoga "two hours a day. But those days are long gone. It got to be too hard."

She turns 75 on Dec. 21, "and I'm trying to own it," she says.

She says she has osteoarthritis, a disease that affects 27 million Americans and causes cartilage, the cushion between joints, to break down. She has had a knee and hip replacement. She also is recovering from back surgery in March.

Laughing, she says she'll probably have to have the other knee and hip replaced "if I live long enough. I'll have more titanium added to this body."

But she doesn't dwell on the downside. Yoga "makes me feel happy, alive and healthy."

Yoga can be about "undoing" damage, says Carol Krucoff, a yoga therapist at Duke Integrative Medicine at Duke University in Durham, N.C. Krucoff started doing yoga 30 years ago when she suffered from chronic neck pain.

Yoga poses help stretch tight muscles and strengthen weak ones, cultivating flexibility, stability and ease of movement, she says.

"People in their 70s and 80s might still have the misperception that they should stop moving to save their joints when they get arthritis," says Krucoff, author of *Healing Yoga for Neck and Shoulder Pain*.

Doing gentle yoga "is essential to saving joints," she says, "and it breaks the cycle of pain."

Fonda begins all five segments slowly, and her coaching throughout the video is marked by comments such as, "Be gentle" and "Go only as far as you can." In several sessions, one of the women practicing with Fonda stretches midway and holds the position to illustrate.

But don't get the idea that Fonda has gone soft. The form-fitting outfits she wears in the DVD reveal an incredibly well-toned, strong and capable body. "I'm well aware of how 75 can look," she says.

But she proves that it can look awesome. She has kept important muscle groups strong, especially the quadriceps.

"Every single time I go to get out of a car now, I say 'Thank you, Lord, I have strong quads,'" she says. "Because if I didn't have strong quads, I couldn't be independent. You have to keep your back and legs strong so you can remain free and independent."