

Diamond Dallas Page: Don't Call It Yoga, Brother

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Former Professional Wrestler [Diamond Dallas Page](#) returns to Big Think to share how yoga rescued his career in 1999 after a debilitating back injury nearly killed it. The three-time World Champ also dishes about his experience on the TV show [Shark Tank](#), offers a demonstration of [DDP Yoga](#), and shows off his best Hulk Hogan impersonation, all in the clip below from his [recent Big Think interview](#):

Diamond Dallas Page was something of a late bloomer in the wrestling scene. He didn't debut until he was 35-year-old; he wasn't a huge star until he was 40. That was in 1996 when rival factions WCW and WWF battled in what's known as the [Monday Night Wars](#), often lauded as one of the great eras of professional wrestling. And for four years, DDP was one of the brightest stars WCW had to offer. He had gravitas in the ring, talent on the mic, and a devastating finisher: the [Diamond Cutter](#). Most importantly, he was "over" with the fans. They couldn't get enough of DDP.

Then, in 1999, he blew out his back so bad that three different doctors told him it was time to hang 'em up. When he tried to rehab, he found that regular exercise was too difficult considering the severity of the injury. When the idea of trying yoga was first float, Page wasn't buying it:

"My wife at the time was like, why don't you try doing yoga to heal your body. I was like, yoga. I wouldn't be caught dead doing yoga. That was the way I felt about it. And long story short, it's all I really could do."

Page gave yoga a shot and began feeling positive results after only a few weeks. He then decided to try and mix

things up a little bit. He wanted the aerobic benefits of yoga coupled with a cardiovascular workout that could strengthen his core:

"I started to mix them with the rehabilitation moves and then I was like wow, this sort of flows pretty good. And then over a period of time, next couple of weeks I threw in old school calisthenics, you know, pushups, squats, crunches done with a slow burn movement. And what I figured out – like if you're lifting weights you're just jacking weight, you get your heart rate jacked up. But if you lift weights slow and control the weight you're going to utilize more muscles. And every time you flex or engage a muscle like when you're doing a slow burn push-up, your heart's got to beat faster to get the blood to the muscle."

And like that, DDP Yoga was born. He got the flexibility. He strengthened his core. And he did it all with minimal joint impact. After three months he was back in the ring. Within a year he was anointed World Heavyweight Champion.

Since then, DDP Yoga has become its own successful workout phenomenon. When Page went on Shark Tank to try and secure a capital investment for a smartphone app, he explained why DDP Yoga resonated with so many people:

"They were like 'the big question is how have you succeeded in a world that is so competitive? How have you succeeded and made all this money in this business? How did you do that?' Me and my business partner, Steve Yu, we just looked at them and said 'we inspire people.' No, but really, how did you get the people to be brought in? I go 'We inspire people.'"

Where most yogis are "namaste," says Page, DDP yoga is more T&A -- tone and attitude. It's a serious workout, but it's also fun. He then demonstrates (about 5 minutes into the video above) an example of how DDP Yoga works, using his famous Diamond Cutter hand gesture from wrestling as the centerpiece. What makes DDP Yoga its own animal, he says, is dynamic resistance. With one concentrated and precise movement, he utilizes pressure and aerobic motion to work on multiple muscles. He finishes it off when a terrific Hulk Hogan impersonation shouldn't be missed.

Finally, DDP speaks a little bit about his life philosophy regarding hierarchies of ability. It explains, he says just what makes DDP Yoga so special:

"So whatever you're trying to do, you need to remember that there will always be better than, less than and different than. That means whoever's the best - in professional wrestling you might say Hulk Hogan. Everybody under him: less than. Except for the person or company that's different than. That's what DDP yoga is. That's what Diamond Dallas Page the wrestler was. And that's why I never even let anybody call DDP yoga, yoga."

Page likes to have fun with that last part. When fans meet him and share how much they love his yoga, he throws on the old wrestling heel persona and barks "what did you call it?" He calls it a funny bit, something only a wrestler could get away with. Sure, his t-shirt reads "DDP **Yoga**," but would you want to risk offending a guy who could bust out a Diamond Cutter at any time?

Didn't think so, brother.

