

About Joni update Aug 2010

Joni's Mission is to empower and inspire you to Trust your Inner Wisdom, to find the way home to your Self; to discover and fully express your Life Purpose so you can live in Abundance with Joy, Fulfillment, Generosity, and great Spiritual Adventures.

Joni Wellness ([www.joniwellness.com](http://www.joniwellness.com)) is now in her 40<sup>th</sup> year of yoga practice and has been in the field of Wellness for over three decades. Based in Manhattan for over 20 years, Joni taught classes and Teacher Trainings at the top NYC yoga studios, including four years at [Jivamukti Yoga Center](#) with David Life and Sharon Gannon, where she served as a bridge between the [Iyengar](#) and other styles of Hatha Yoga, and gleaned a broad exposure to many aspects and branches of yoga. Prior to over two decades of Iyengar Yoga, she studied Integral, Astanga with Patabhi Jois, took class with Dharma Mitra. In NYC she also taught yoga at Crunch, Equinox, YogaZone, Urban Yoga, outdoors in Central, East River and Tompkins Square Parks, and served as Teacher Training Consultant. She conducted many Yoga Teacher Trainings in Manhattan, nationally and internationally. In recent years she has taught classes and special workshops in Manhattan at Yoga Union and Back Care Center for Scoliosis, Om, and East/West. Joni is considered a teachers' teacher, and invites yoga teachers of all styles to attend her classes. Many well known yoga teachers (like Cyndi Lee of Om) have studied with her and since opened their own yoga studios.

She has healed her own injuries, is a leading authority on yoga, a Health Coach and Drum Circle Facilitator, and loves passing on the practical shortcuts and efficient techniques of her field(s). Her specialties include Back Care, Pre-Natal Yoga, therapeutics (especially knees, necks, high blood pressure, etc.) Her Wellness CD Volume I has meditations for inquiry and healing, guided relaxations and savasanas, and a laughing meditation track.

In celebration of her 50th year on the planet this Lifetime (2007) she performed 108 backbends (Urdhva Dhanurasana, pushing up from the floor with controlled descent). She is a Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher at the Junior I level, with countless (thousands) hours of training and continues her advanced studies with its most senior teachers. She is ready to offer her expertise at Shakti, with sensitive and awesome teaching during weekly classes and workshops like Dreams and Self-Massage, in addition to special yoga topics.

Joni began practicing and teaching yoga when, at age 13, while considering topics for a school report, yoga chose her. Researching through reading, attending yoga classes, and experience, she began and continued a personal practice. With the yoga and genuine Consciousness Raising of the early 70s Women's Movement, her personal and spiritual journey began. She endured

many hardships and learned through many struggles about balancing all aspects of Living for greater happiness. From the science of Yoga to Health Coaching and Nutrition, to living our Life Purpose, Joni trains others with shortcuts about how to form a great Spiritual and practical toolbox. She shares how to tap into ones Inner Guidance for the best possible mentoring.

She attended [Rutgers University](#) (New Brunswick) in the mid 1970's, passionate about Political Science and especially Women's Studies. Joni has had the unique privilege of having several precious apprenticeships: in the 70s with her main massage teacher and mentor, Gael Parks; with [Master Shiatsu teacher Wataru Ohashi](#); and a 7- year intensive apprenticeship with Indian Yoga Master Aadil Palkhivala.

Inspired by her favorite [Alvin Ailey](#) dance teacher, Mother Thelma Hill, enrollment in the Dance Dept of New York City College brought her to return to University life. She spent several years (1983 and 1988-91) as the company masseuse to the [Joffrey Ballet](#) in LA, NY and on tour. In between, she performed, choreographed, and taught authentic American Jazz Dance from Lower Manhattan to Queens to the South Bronx, bicycling everywhere since the transit strike of 1980. She brought this American art form to Italy (1983-6), where, she also performed, taught yoga and aerobics, learned Italian, skiing, snorkeling, diving for sea urchins, how to appreciate really fresh food, and to let go of some stressful American ways. To learn from one her best friends and teachers, take a vacation in [Tuscany](#). She was rated one of the best massage therapists in the country by Self Magazine and Allure Magazine. She has been massage therapist to the stars as well as to the dancers of Madonna's *Girlie Tour* at Madison Square Garden, to all the swing dancers and stars on the set of Spike Lee's *Malcolm X*, and to the stars of *Forever Tango* in Seattle, and to elite athletes, Cyclists and Marathoners, as well as the world's best performers from the worlds of Yoga, Broadway, Ballet, Argentine Tango, Swing Dance and Mambo.



After accumulating numerous injuries, she left the theatrical dance world, and was introduced to the precise [Iyengar](#) style of Hatha Yoga, which therapeutically addressed her injuries. Not able to leave dancing behind completely, she eventually took up social dancing with east coast swing, salsa, and at last, the Argentine Tango, traveling to B.A. in 95 with Rebecca Shulman and [Daniel Trenner](#). She taught yoga for dancers at his annual [Colorado Dance Camp](#).

Along with the accurate physical precision of the [Iyengar Yoga](#) approach, Joni went through and became a mentor and program leader of [Phoenix Rising Yoga](#)

[Therapy](#). She also discovered the teachings of [Eckankar](#), which enriched and made sense of the spiritual aspects of her evolution, and helped her understand her rich dream life. All of these influences, along with her inevitable study of nutrition and Sunrider herbs, promoted an integration of healing and evolvment on many levels.

In the mid-90s she began to apprentice with longtime student of BKS Iyengar, the brilliant and insightful [Aadil Palkhivala](#). Eventually relocating from her beloved East Village (the easiest place to get healthy eats) in Manhattan, Joni traded in her motorcycle for a car, and continued her advanced yoga studies with Aadil at [Yoga Centers](#) in Bellevue, Washington. She continues her advanced studies of Iyengar Yoga with its senior most teachers. She attended the Iyengar Conventions in Canada with Geeta Iyengar (2001), St Paul in 2003, Estes Park in 2005 when then 87-year old Mr. Iyengar was teaching and on his book tour, Las Vegas (May 2007) with the unique privilege of working directly with daughter Geeta Iyengar, and most recently, in May 2010 in Portland, again, Joni had a blessed hands on session with Geeta at Iyengar Yoga Teachers' first ever Therapeutics Convention.

While in the Seattle area, in addition to her privileged apprenticeship with Aadil and teaching at his [Yoga Centers](#), she ran several popular and expanding yoga programs, including Yoga Teacher Training, through the [Redmond Parks Dept](#), in [Bothell](#), and at [Evergreen Hospital](#). While in Washington, she seized the opportunity to study with today's leaders in Childbirth Education, pursuing a lifelong passion to attend births, and became a Childbirth Educator and [Doula](#) and a member of [PALS](#). She has learned the teachings of [Michel Odent](#), studied with midwife [Debra O'Conner](#), author [Penny Simkin](#), and courses at the [Seattle Midwifery School](#). She may be teaching Pre-Natal or Post Partum Yoga here at Shakti!

Joni is also a graduate of the 2002 class of the [Eastside Leadership Institute](#), and has a [Marketing-Prosperty company](#).

Also in Seattle, she became involved with the Rhythm and Drumming Communities there (see drumming page), studied with Arthur Hull and menteed with Seattle's best Drum Circle Facilitators. She founded the Hoboken Drum Circle in 2004, which merged into the Hudson Community and Drum Circle, and now facilitates DCs around NJ, NY and Pa. Watch for new Community Drum Circles at Shakti!!