

{ MY PRACTICE }

Off the Mat, Onto the Ice

Figure skater *Sasha Cohen* makes time for yoga despite her intense touring schedule. Sometimes, yoga finds its way into her programs.

Interview by ANNA DUBROVSKY

I love yoga. It's always challenging, especially when you get a great teacher. I started about two-and-a-half years ago. My mom and sister found a Yoga Works studio nearby, and they told me, "Hey, this is a great workout. You have to try it." It's great to find workouts that complement skating and allow you to do certain moves on the ice. With skating, you don't have a chance to develop your core and upper body. It's mainly legs

and lower body. Yoga makes me a much stronger athlete. It's a great way to get warmed up and tone all my muscles and keep my whole body strong.

When I wake up in the morning, my body isn't very happy with me. I need a bit of yoga to feel really good and start

my day. I get on my mat and warm up with some lunges, downward dog, upward dog. After that I go on a short walk to get some fresh air—get everything awake and moving—and then I drive down to the rink. When I'm home, I go to a yoga class once or twice a week.

I'm traveling a good eight, nine months of the year. It's very intense. I practice yoga almost every day when I'm

on tour. I do it in hotel rooms all the time. I do it at the arenas. I do it outside on the beach, in the park—wherever I am. It's very easy to find time and a place to do yoga, which is something I love about it.

In one of the programs I did on tour last year, I started on a platform in the middle of the ice without skates and did these forearm stands and arches that I kind of stole from yoga. Yoga really inspired me to go in that direction.

The benefits aren't just physical. Yoga really helps me get centered mentally, get focused and relaxed at the same time. I love *shavasana*. My mind goes a million miles a minute, so I have to train it to just stay in the moment. I put everything into my yoga practice, so at the end I'm really tired, and I love taking that time in *shavasana* to just relax and breathe. +

Sasha Cohen won a silver medal at the 2006 Winter Olympics and three World Championships medals. The *Smucker's Stars on Ice* headliner lives in Newport Beach, California. For the tour schedule, go to www.starsonice.com.

FIRE ON ICE *Sasha performing in the Ladies Short Program at the Trophée Eric Bompard competition in Paris, 2005.*

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+ To watch Sasha's yogic performance on ice, go to YogaPlus.org and click on "Sasha Cohen Video."