ON THE HORIZON NEWSLETTER

Thermal Horizons Yoga and Wellness Center

Newsletter – October 2026

A Foundation That Carries Us Forward

September was an incredibly meaningful month at Thermal Horizons.

As Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month comes to a close, I keep thinking about my mom and how special it felt to share a little more of her story with this community. Her love was part of the foundation that eventually became Thermal Horizons, and having all of you help us honor her memory—not simply by remembering her, but by celebrating women's health and encouraging women to care for themselves—meant more to me than I can express.



That spirit extended beyond our studio, too.

I had the opportunity to participate in Bras for a Cause, and I was absolutely thrilled when the Thermal Horizons basket auctioned for $3,000 to help women receive mammograms. Knowing that something our community contributed could directly help another woman access potentially lifesaving care was an incredible feeling.



September became a month of women supporting women, prioritizing our health, and remembering that taking care of ourselves matters. I could not be prouder of the way our community showed up.

And speaking of taking care of ourselves, Molly and I have been having entirely too much fun with our Good News/Bad News, so here's our October edition:

Good news: It's October! Sweater weather, cozy mornings, changing leaves, pumpkin everything...

Bad news: Apparently Santa Clarita has declined to participate. **It's 100 degrees.**

More good news: Thermal Horizons has cold plunges and a Recovery Room.



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So go ahead and order the pumpkin latte. We'll handle the climate control.

All joking aside, the idea of balance has been on my mind quite a bit.

For the past three months, we've explored the idea of foundation through Lauren, Elizabeth, and now Olga. We've learned that a strong foundation isn't simply about mastering yoga poses. It's understanding your practice, learning your body, slowing down enough to listen, and developing the self-awareness to recognize what you need.

This month, Olga beautifully brings those ideas together by reminding us that our physical practice can become a doorway to something deeper.

And soon, some members of our community will be taking that exploration all the way to Mexico for our annual fall retreat. We'll step away from schedules and routines, practice together, connect with nature and one another, and spend a little more time reconnecting with our own foundations.

Maybe that's the lesson these past three months have offered us.

Our foundation isn't something we build once.

We strengthen it every time we show up—for our health, for one another, and for ourselves.

With love and gratitude,



Jaime

Beyond the Pose



In the final chapter of our Foundational Yoga series, Olga Atkinson invites us to explore the practice beneath the poses, and discover how the body can become a doorway back to ourselves.

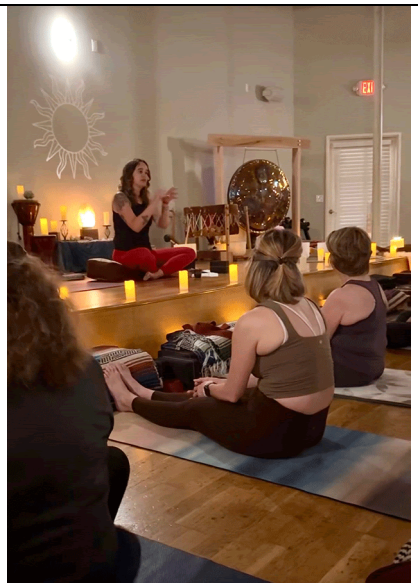
For three months, we've been asking Thermal Horizons Foundational Yoga instructors a deceptively simple question:

What does Foundational Yoga mean to you?

Ask Olga Atkinson, and the answer quickly expands beyond where to place your feet or how to align your hips.

She'll talk about ancient yogic tradition. Sanskrit. Energy. Meditation. Poetry. Music. Nature. The changing seasons. She might ask you to notice what happens when you use your voice—or what comes up when you're asked to be still.

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Because for Olga, the physical practice is essential, but it is only the doorway.

"Yoga is not a workout," she says. "It's always been a work-in. You're really using your physical body as a tool, a vessel, to gain access to your inner world."

And that, she says, is where the magic begins.

Going Back to the Beginning

Olga's interpretation of Foundational Yoga begins with the foundation of yoga itself: the Eight-Limbed Path of Yoga.

Asana—the physical postures most Western students recognize as yoga—is only one of those limbs. The others invite practitioners into meditation, concentration, self-study, discipline, and awareness of how we treat ourselves and others.

"There are a lot of different parts to a foundational yoga practice," Olga explains.

That's why students in her classes hear Sanskrit names alongside their English counterparts. For Olga, who was born in the Netherlands and also works as a linguist and translator, language has always mattered. But using Sanskrit is about more than her fascination with words.

It's a way of honoring where the practice came from.

"We're borrowing it, more or less, here in the Western world," she says. "We didn't invent it."

Her use of Sanskrit, yoga philosophy and traditional elements becomes an acknowledgment and honoring of yoga's Indian roots and a reminder that the practice existed long before any of us arrived on our mats.



Yet none of that makes Olga's Foundational class inaccessible to a beginner.

In fact, she believes it's an ideal place to begin.

The slower pace gives students something precious: time.

Time to figure out how to step a foot forward. Time to understand a cue. Time to feel where weight is distributed through the foot. Time to stay in a shape and notice what's happening instead of racing toward the next one.

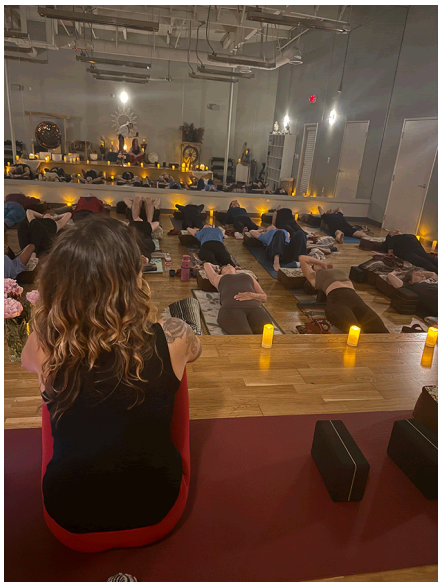
"It's really not about nailing any of the poses," Olga says. "It's really just to get a better awareness of the poses and then feel the poses while you're in them without rushing through them."

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A Class Designed to Be Experienced



Olga never walks into class without preparation.

She may begin with a part of the body, an energetic idea, a yoga sutra, a season, a life event or something that has recently inspired her. But preparation doesn't mean rigidity.

She looks at who's actually in the room.

If she sees beginners, she adds more cues and options. If someone is working with an injury or limitation, she looks for another path into the shape. More experienced students may need less direction and more room to explore.

From there, the class becomes something Olga thinks of almost as a journey.

"I don't want to just teach a yoga class," she says. "I want it to be an experience."

Music is part of that. So is poetry. So are the grounding rituals at the beginning and the moments of reflection at the end.

Olga describes the opening of class almost as the birth of an idea. Students arrive, settle and begin to move together. Over the course of the practice, perhaps the body opens. Perhaps the mind becomes quieter. Perhaps something unexpected reveals itself.

Then comes Savasana. A reading. Music.

And often, the bell.

Olga's affection for bells traces partly to a yoga retreat in Nepal, where she stayed at a retreat center in the Himalayas. Each morning, someone walked through the center ringing a bell to wake the guests.

No phone. No alarm clock.

Just the vibration of the bell and the sound of birds.

Years later, the bell in Olga's classes serves as its own kind of awakening. After Savasana and an inward journey, its vibration invites students gently back into the world.

But even here, Olga leaves room for individuality.

She loved that morning bell in Nepal. Someone else at the retreat found it annoying.

The same thing happens in yoga.

"You'll ask 20 people in the room and 20 people will give you a different answer about their experience in class," she says.

Everyone arrives carrying something different—their history, joy, pain, distractions, worries and circumstances. The same sound, pose or moment of stillness can therefore mean something completely different to each person.

The Practice of Knowing Yourself



Olga's classes often invite students to notice those reactions rather than judge them.

Even something as traditional as joining the class in Om can become an exercise in self-study.

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Olga remembers resisting it herself. At first, she would simply listen while everyone else participated. Gradually, she began joining in.

Why did using her voice feel uncomfortable? Why did that change?

That curiosity, she believes, is part of yoga.

"We're just getting to know ourselves without judgment," she says. "We're here just to look at ourselves, and then you go from there."

A posture can become physical practice and personal inquiry at the same time.

Why am I frustrated?

Why am I comparing?

Why does stillness make me uncomfortable?

Why do I have trouble letting myself be heard?

There doesn't always need to be an immediate answer. Sometimes the practice is simply becoming curious enough to ask the question.

Going Beneath the Surface

Olga's interest in that inner landscape has continued to shape her own education.

She completed both 200- and 300-hour yoga teacher trainings, but her exploration didn't stop there. She's also a Reiki master and incorporates an awareness of energy into the way she thinks about movement and the body.

Her study of Yin Yoga became another turning point.

During the pandemic, Olga found herself doing increasingly difficult flow classes—pushing harder at a time when the world itself already felt overwhelming.

Then she tried an online Yin class.

Her nervous system settled.

The experience made her realize that perhaps what she needed wasn't more effort. She needed balance.

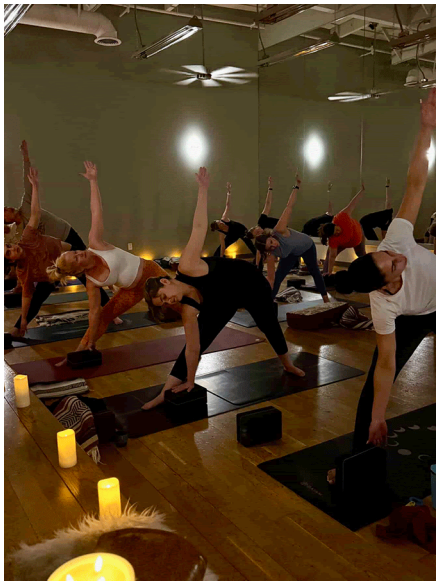
That discovery led her deeper into Yin, energy pathways and eventually elements of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Five Element Theory, which she has continued exploring through teachers, books, podcasts and her own study.

That curiosity appears throughout her teaching.

"I want you to think about you and your experience," Olga says.

She wants students to leave room for the possibility that something beyond the physical may emerge.

What Fall Is Asking of Us



That philosophy feels particularly appropriate in October.

Olga frequently takes inspiration from the natural world, believing the changing seasons offer clues about what our own bodies may need.

Summer is expansive. We travel. Gather. Stay out later. Fill the calendar.

Then fall arrives and nature begins doing something very different.

It slows.

Days shorten. Nights lengthen. The natural world begins turning inward.

"We are asked to slow down," Olga says.

Human life, of course, doesn't always cooperate. School begins. Activities resume. Holidays approach. Calendars fill. We may continue operating at summer speed while wondering why we feel exhausted or overwhelmed.

Olga sees another invitation there: notice.

Perhaps going to bed earlier makes sense. Perhaps the body wants a quieter practice today. Perhaps a

moment of groundedness isn't indulgent but necessary.

Those small moments of quiet, Olga says, can nurture us enough to better handle the noisier ones.

Three Teachers. Three Doorways. One Foundation.

Over the past three months, Lauren, Elizabeth and Olga have shown us that Foundational Yoga at Thermal Horizons isn't one teacher delivering one prescribed version of the basics.

It's something richer.

Lauren helps us understand. As an educator in and outside the studio, she brings curiosity to the practice—breaking things down, explaining the traditions behind yoga and helping students build the knowledge and confidence to understand what they're doing.

Elizabeth helps us feel. She asks us to slow down enough to understand our anatomy: where the foot belongs, which muscles are working, when a prop can support us and how a pose should feel in the body we're actually living in.

Olga helps us explore within. The physical practice becomes an entry point into tradition, energy, nature, meditation and self-study. Her classes ask not only What is my body doing? but What is this experience showing me about myself?

Mind. Body. Inner world.

Three different teaching styles—and three different ways to enter the same practice.

That variety is part of the foundation Thermal Horizons offers its community.

A brand-new student can learn slowly without needing to keep up. An experienced yogi can return to the basics and discover something they have overlooked. Someone seeking more movement can use Foundations as a stepping stone toward Flow. Someone craving something quieter can remain right there, continuing to explore.

Because Foundational Yoga isn't simply a beginner class.

And foundation isn't something we master and leave behind.

Olga describes the physical body as "a doorway to everything else."

After three months of exploring what foundation means at Thermal Horizons, perhaps that's where all three teachers ultimately meet.

Lauren teaches us to understand the doorway.

Elizabeth teaches us to inhabit it.

Olga reminds us that we can walk through it.

And on the other side isn't a perfect pose or a more advanced class.

It's a deeper relationship with our breath, our bodies, our community—and ourselves.

Maybe that's what a foundation was meant to hold all along.