

# WHY PREGNANCY YOGA?

There is a pregnancy yoga craze sweeping the globe today.

We are seeing celebrity moms-to-be flock to yoga classes in hoards:

from Madonna, Jessica Alba to Victoria Secret model Gisele Bundchen, but why?

The benefits of yoga during pregnancy are simply immeasurable.

It has been hailed the best form of exercise for decades and for very good reason. The long list of common complaints during pregnancy such as headaches, swollen feet, backache, sluggish digestion, nausea, mood swings, sleeplessness, high blood pressure and low energy are all reported to improve with yoga. Having a gentle daily yoga practice calms the nervous system, eases anxieties and reduces stress, both physical and emotional.



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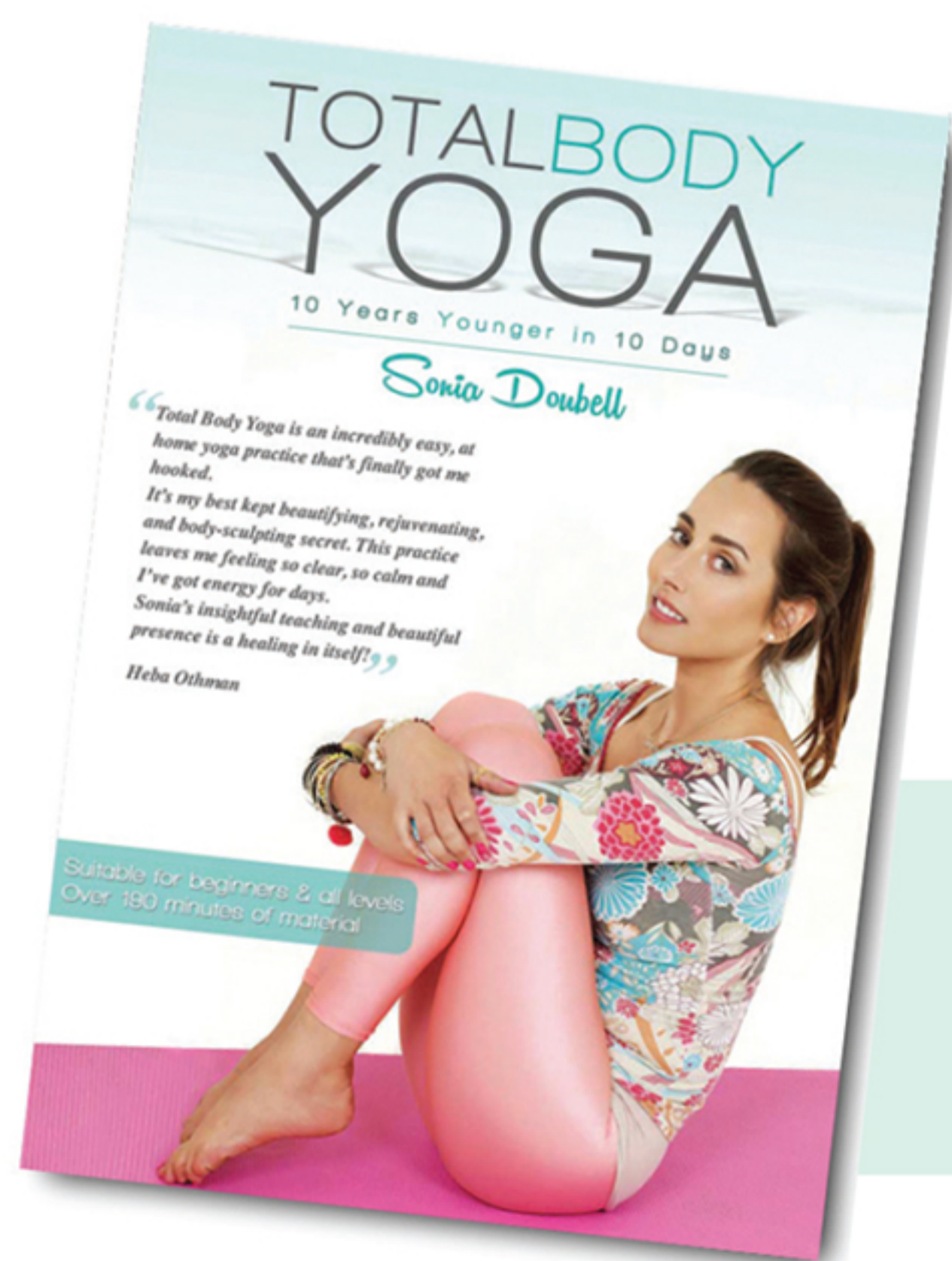
It was December 30th 2012, the day before New Year's eve and London seemed so quiet, the calm before the storm! We had planned a hospital water birth but wanted to stay home as long as possible. We were lucky to have an independent midwife in the family and she was the first person we called when my water broke. The sun was shining, it was a lazy Sunday morning as we bobbed around to our favourite tunes, chatting and sipping camomile tea. It was all very calm.

Our midwife suggested I sit on the sofa and try to sleep. I closed my eyes and drifted into my lovely hypnobirthing visualisations. I recall falling into a sort of awake-sleep as I allowed myself to relax deeper and deeper. When I started to feel gentle surges, it was so easy to remain calm and relaxed because I understood what was happening. I trusted my body to know what to do, I trusted nature and knew, that all I needed to do was 'allow'.

At 12pm, with my first big-ish surge, our midwife suggested it was time to head over to the hospital. When we arrived they gave me the obligatory beaker for a urine sample and I shuffled (with midwife) to the loo. The moment I sat down I felt an urge to push and told the midwife who quickly realised the baby was crowing. She flung the door open calling out to the duty midwives, "the baby is coming".

I couldn't believe I had gone through the first stage of labour without feeling anything worthy of even a single paracetamol. It was unbelievable. I arrived in the labour room and with 4 big surges our beautiful daughter Mika greeted the world.

There are simply no words to describe this moment. Loving energy filled the room, surrounding us all in the miracle of life. It was a birth from heaven, drug free, and pain free, no perineum tears all within 34 minutes of arriving at the hospital. Four years on, and I am teaching mothers KG Hypnobirthing and Birth-Prep Yoga in London and around the world because it really works!



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Yoga energises the internal circulatory systems needed to maintain optimum body function and of course, it is the best preparation for a gentle birth.

In a recent pregnancy yoga study, Professor John Aplin, who specialises in reproductive biomedicine, suggested yoga could help women cope with the pain of childbirth and reduce the number of emergency C-sections.

Traditionally, the practice of yoga centres on the mind-body connection, particularly vital during pregnancy. Connecting with your body and a growing baby enables mothers to begin the bonding process. It also offers moms-to-be time to learn, to feel and grow spiritually.

In our culture, birth has become overly medicalised and routine interventions are sadly too common. But, thankfully today, mothers have access to more research helping them make better-informed choices about how they would like to give birth. There is a wonderful course known as KG Hypnobirthing, that is becoming very popular, partly because the course includes a complete antenatal education, accredited by the Royal College of Midwives. There are now thousands of blissful hypnobirthing birth stories to be found including my very own. I would like to share a short version of my wonderful birth with you in the hope that it inspires you. Because if I could do it, I really believe anyone can!

## Mika's Yogi-Hypno Birth!

I have had an intense fear of childbirth my whole life. I passed out cold on two occasions when friends recounted their birth stories. In my defence, they sounded terrifying! When I found out I was pregnant my fear intensified to near phobia!

The first consultant my husband and I saw suggested that given the due date was around Christmas, a busy time with hospitals on skeleton staff, we ought to schedule a C-section. He went on to tell my husband with a wink "and save the fun bits." Apart from being inappropriate he was advising me, a perfectly healthy woman, to book a serious operation for no medical reason. Alarm bells were going off. I was scared, but I knew I needed to go nature's way.

This was how I discovered KG Hypnobirthing and began to reclaim the confidence that I had lost to media's translation of childbirth.

