

MEET THE WORLD'S OLDEST YOGA INSTRUCTOR

We sit on our yoga mats, awestruck at the petite, white-haired dynamo who arches backwards into a Bridge pose. Dressed in a leotard, 96-year-old Ida Herbert—the world's oldest yoga instructor, according to The Guinness Book of World Records—leads our group into poses that are strenuous for those half her age.

This class, held at Toronto's Breathe Yoga studio, is meant to inspire all of us to age gracefully. Herbert is the guest instructor.

Born in England during World War I, the former secretary immigrated here in 1948, and began practicing yoga at 50. "I was envious of this young lady doing yoga at the gym where I happened to be riding an old stationary bicycle," she says.

When asked if her practice is compromised by the aches and pains of aging, Herbert says matter-of-factly, "I haven't got any."

Herbert, who lives near Orillia, Ont., does poses every morning, and regularly teaches yoga to a group of women age 60 and up who call themselves "Ida's Girls." Herbert isn't strict about her health regimen. "I've heard a glass of wine is not bad for



you and that suits me nicely," she laughs. A widow (she was married to her husband, Michael, for 61 years and has no children), Herbert attributes her longevity to a positive attitude and enjoying life. In addition to yoga, she gardens and knits blankets for kittens at the local animal shelter. "And I love to flirt," she says, breaking into a smile. —By Lisa Evans