

expressyourself

Meet the baby makers

FERTILITY YOGA
UMA DINSMORE-TULLI, 44, is a yoga teacher from Stroud, Gloucestershire. She lives with her husband Nirritpa and their three children Tejomaya, 11, Abhisheka, eight, and Prayaag, three

I FIRST did yoga in front of the TV with my mother when I was four. Ever since, practising yoga has made me feel good. I'm convinced my second and third children were yoga babies. I used yoga to heal my body after giving birth to my eldest son Tejomaya, now 11, which helped me get pregnant so quickly with my second son Abhisheka, eight. Then, following a miscarriage three years ago I got myself back to health with yoga. I became pregnant with my three-year-old daughter Prayaag two months later when I was 42.

I've helped nearly 150 women conceive but I didn't set out to specialise in pregnancy yoga. I was training teachers in yoga therapy, a specific form of yoga that helps heal the body, when I started to notice a number of women taking my "womb yoga" course became pregnant. Three years ago when eight of the 22 women conceived while taking the three-month course I could no longer put it down to coincidence.

Womb yoga is very flowing and feminine. Some of the moves look like belly dancing. It's also a very restful type of yoga and great for destressing.

As a general system for self-care, yoga is incomparable and the wonderful thing about it is that anyone from a beginner to an expert can feel the benefits after just one class.

However, it's not until recently that we've

Research has shown a link between stress and infertility. Two alternative therapists who have used relaxation techniques to help hundreds of women conceive reveal the secrets of their success

really begun to explore the link between certain types of yoga and improved fertility. The key is to find the right class. Avoid anything hot or fast such as ashtanga or power yoga if you are trying to conceive. Earlier this year a woman in her 30s came to see me with her husband. She'd miscarried the week before so I did a cleansing and healing session with them both. Then she came to see

'Womb yoga is very flowing and feminine'

me alone and we worked on restoring energy to her body. Her GP had told her she wasn't ovulating and would need to take Clomid to become pregnant but she didn't want to take drugs. She practised the pregnancy yoga moves at home every day for 10 minutes. Three months later she was pregnant.

It's a delightful feeling to have been a part of that. I see my yoga as helping women to help themselves to take time out of their busy lives to look after their wellbeing. They insist it's the yoga that helps get them

pregnant and it's hard to argue with so many successes. **One of Uma's clients Bodil Stenteberg Olesen, 40, says:** Doctors had told me I had only a 10 per cent chance of conceiving naturally. This was after the six fertility treatments I'd gone through to get pregnant with my first son Sixten, who was born in October 2005. I had four more treatments to have Vitus, who was born in November 2008. So you can imagine my shock and joy to find I was pregnant naturally after taking Uma's yoga course. I'm due any day now. This little one really is my miracle yoga baby.

● For more information visit stiram.org or call 07595 219 759. The British Wheel of Yoga can help you find yoga classes in your area. Visit buy.org.uk or call 01529 306 851.

ACUPUNCTURE
YVONNE DARNELL, 46, is an acupuncture fertility specialist in Burgess Hill, West Sussex

I HAD been practising general acupuncture for 18 months when a client came to me during



NATURAL CONCEPTION: Bodil, whose baby is due any day, with sons Vitus and Sixten



JOYFUL: Cindy, with 10-week-old Jenna

her eighth cycle of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment. The first seven cycles had ended in heartbreak and she'd been given a five per cent chance of conceiving. She was worn out. We did four, 45-minute sessions. When she came back to tell me she was pregnant I was ecstatic. I was inspired to find out everything I could about the issues affecting fertility so I could help more women.

It was the turning point in my career. To ease someone's back pain is wonderful, to play a part in helping someone conceive is overwhelming. That was four years ago and since then I've helped more than 90 couples conceive. It doesn't get any less amazing when you hear their good news.

So many clients come to me with unexplained infertility, when medical tests haven't identified a cause.

This was the case for Cindy, 30, who had been trying for three years to conceive a second child. Tests had shown no reason for the problem and she knew she had been able to get pregnant before. It was a classic case of stress preventing conception.

After several sessions with me she became pregnant and her daughter Jenna is now 10

'It was a classic case of stress preventing conception'

weeks old. With every client I take a detailed medical history, examining their tongue, skin tone, nails and the pulse. It's like reading a map of the body's general health. Acupuncture works with the body's energy or chi. The needles stimulate the body to release endorphins. The skill comes from choosing the best selection of points.

I might work directly above the pelvis or maybe on the wrists or feet. Sometimes I burn a herb on the needle to produce an instant, stimulating reaction in that area. Each session lasts 45 to 60 minutes and the needles are inserted for 20 minutes. It doesn't hurt but some clients experience shooting sensations in their body which is quite a weird feeling.

Generally, I see women twice a month for three months. I'm not a miracle worker. I can't unblock fallopian tubes, reverse the onset of menopause or change the number of eggs a woman has, although I can improve blood flow to the egg reserve and generally boost health in a way that increases fertility.

Most of my clients find me through word of mouth but I'm getting more referrals from GPs, which is wonderful. They are starting to see the benefits of acupuncture too.

One of Yvonne's clients Cindy Szalai, 30, says: I'd been trying for a year and was about to start my second course of the fertility drug Clomid when a friend told me about Yvonne. I'm the kind of person who doesn't even take a tablet when I have a headache so I hated putting all those drugs into my system. Something more natural seemed a much better idea. I saw Yvonne three times over a fortnight in August 2008 and between the second and third appointment I became pregnant.

● For more information visit unfertility.co.uk or call 01444 235 400.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPY:
Uma Dinsmore-Tulli, left, and Yvonne Darnell

Pictures: PETER CORNE, SHARA HENDERSON
 Hair and make-up: SONIA BECKFORD
 SOPHIE WHEATER Styling: MARIE McCAVER

Tried & tested UNDEREYE CONCEALERS

Disguise dark circles, fine lines and bags with these cover-ups

By Terry Touch Expert Advanced Concealer brush, £28 (020 8740 2085)
 From the original creator of YSL Touche Eclat, this product disguised dark circles and highlighted the brow bone area. 9/10

Anew Age-Transforming Concealer, £8.50 (aneshop.co.uk)
 Light but slightly chalky in texture, this covered dark circles but was not particularly light-reflective. 7/10

BEST LUXURY BUY YSL Touche Eclat, £24 (johnlewis.com)
 This classic concealer has stood the test of time. Effectively disguised dark circles and shadows and also minimised the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. 9/10

Vi Under Cover, £9.50 (viethome.com)
 The brush offered adequate coverage but the tone and colour of the fluid was a little orange and so I didn't blend well with make-up. 6/10

Clinique Airbrush Concealer, £15 (clinique.co.uk)
 This product gave good coverage but the finish was slightly powdery. Thicker texture meant it worked well to cover blemishes too. 8/10

BEST BARGAIN BUY L'Oréal Touche Maitique, £4.99 (0800 030 4032)
 The brush applicator made it easy to apply and the light colour helped to conceal eye bags. It also gave good coverage throughout the day. 8/10

Guerrlain Precious Light, £27.50 (01932 233 887)
 Incredibly reflective, light and luminous, this concealer covered bags with ease and brightened appearance. 9/10

Garnier Tinted Eye Roll-on, £9.99 (garnier.co.uk)
 The applicator felt cool to apply. The colour was darker than I'd have chosen but blended well and my eyes looked noticeably less puffy. 8/10

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