

Smashing Stereotypes: From Hot Potato to Hot Yogi —

My Journey with The Attic Studio

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I've always felt I had more in common with a potato than someone who might do hot yoga. People who do hot yoga are slim, almost naked, glistening Greek gods and goddesses who divine with crystals and live in Californian mansions, aren't they?

So, what was I — an overweight, unhealthy middle-aged woman living in Glossop — even thinking showing up to a class?

When I moved to Glossop in 2020, I was over twenty stone. The furthest I walked was to the bar, and I resented that. I had left behind my life, my marriage and decades of living in London. I had undergone somewhat of a life change then, using lockdown to walk, run, diet and do a few yoga videos. However, by 2024 I could feel all these positive changes slipping away. With recently diagnosed severe ADHD, anxiety and stress, the weight and negativity were beginning to return.

I ended up signed off from work and feeling lost — again. The Attic Yoga studio in Glossop was just a few minutes from home and so I booked onto a retreat day. It was a gentle and relaxing experience, a few yoga poses, some meditation, tea, sound baths, and lying under blankets. I felt better, and everyone I met was friendly. The Attic, as expected, was a small studio with wooden floors and beams and a soothing atmosphere.

I discovered the main purpose of the studio was hot yoga. Most classes involved performing sequences of yoga poses to music, with the heating turned up. I was persuaded to try it. Having lived in London a long time, I was always cold up North — what could go wrong...?

It's hard to think back to the nervousness I felt before that first class because it almost instantly dissipated. The studio owner and teacher, Rachael Vincent, immediately puts you at ease and the classes really are open to all. The great thing about any yoga class is that you can always just lie on the floor if it's too much, and that's fine. (Technically, it's referred to as child's pose — but let's be honest, lying face down on the floor can feel needed at *any* point in life).

In the past at exercise classes I was always worried — was I the worst? Was I keeping up? Was I being judged? The competitive urge melts away at the Attic. You always feel like you are all in this together.

What about the heat? It brings this incredible energy to the room, not only do you feel like you're actively detoxing physically, but your real-life worries disappear, and you are at one with the yoga. Yes, you might leave puddles of sweat (bring a towel), but honestly, no one cares. Another huge bonus? The heat actually improves your flexibility, so every class I feel like I have pushed my body further and accomplished something new.

The classes start and end with a relaxation meditation so you are really getting so much out of one hour – burning calories, improving strength and flexibility, and so much mental peace, even if that means just trying to remain present and focusing on yoga, for an hour.

As time went on, I met another Attic teacher — Kate — who happened to grow up two roads away from me in London! It was fate (or maybe I had divined it with the crystals), and her teachings helped my confidence and technique improve. Her classes never stop challenging me and *every single one* leaves me feeling renewed.

In April I went to Goa for a week-long yoga retreat, and it was phenomenal. I can only thank the whole team at The Attic for making me feel like I belonged at a yoga ashram — because yoga is not just for the athletic elite. I believed in spending time on my own wellbeing. Whenever my life feels hard, getting to a yoga class at the Attic makes me feel more like myself.

Maybe you are reading this and still thinking it's not for you. One of the best feelings in life is stepping out of your comfort zone and feeling that sense of achievement, even if it's just that you *can* stand the heat.

There is a range of classes from hot vinyasa flows which are dynamic and energetic, Dan's more gentle Saturday morning classes to ease you into the weekend, some strength and kettlebell classes which I hear rave reviews about (and are next on my agenda), some classes for little ones and a whole host of pop-up events — and even a clothing line!

The clientele is varied. The ages range from teens to the retirees, there are men and women, and every body type is celebrated. The more I learn about yoga, the more I learn that body type does not matter. Every body has limitations, and every body has poses which make your body and breath sing.

This is very much a no-judgment zone, and if you are like me, you will find you quickly let go of all the negative voices in your head and your ability develops.

I might not yet look like the hot yogis I once imagined — but I *am* a hot yogi on the inside.

So perhaps I'm more chip than potato.

But either way, the Attic Studio will retain a place in my heart and my journey no matter what challenges life throws my way, and I would love to invite you to join our community.