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SOUTH KINGSTOWN - Jack did Downward Facing Dog. He did Cobra. But the pose the four-year-old mixed breed most preferred had no name. Call it Waiting for Belly Rub. Yesterday, Jack did yoga; half a dozen dogs did. That's doga, short for dog yoga. "I was a little skeptical," said Jennifer DeAngelis, a yoga instructor at the All That Matters studio in the village of Wakefield. "I didn't really think it would work. No one was more shocked than I was." Perhaps the shock's just settling in with you.

Go ahead. Roll over. Play dead. Bark disbelief if you like. But doga does exist. And it's now in Rhode Island. DeAngelis has taken the concept created six years ago in New York, and brought it here; fetched it, if you like. And a fair number do like it. Last month, the Wakefield doga class drew eight (human/dog) pairs of participants. Yesterday, for the second class, five pairs participated with DeAngelis and her assistant, Little Dog, a seven-year-old mixed breed.

Doga is yoga for people who love dogs. "It's two of my favorite things together," said Barb Tonzi, of Narragansett, who owns three dogs and has practiced yoga for decades. Yesterday, she brought Rocky, her 18-month-old miniature Pinscher, who at home has shown a high receptivity to yoga, just by watching her do it. "He gets the benefit of my meditation. He turns into a noodle." The idea of doga isn't simply dogs doing yoga, but people performing it with their dogs, and near their dogs. For some people that's an enticement. "I never had any interest in yoga," said Kate Fantoli, of Coventry, who took the doga class with her dog, Jack. "I thought my dog would make it more interesting for me. I thought yoga was too slow." Fantoli thought yoga would be beneficial, the breathing, stretching and relaxing. And she thought it would help her dog, too. "If he does some great poses, that's great. But it's about the experience of being with other dogs and having an experience with me."

The doga dogs walk together. They receive massages from their owners. And they watch their owners do yoga. Then the people put their dogs in yoga poses. "I don't think people will be surprised by doga," said Lisa Natanson, of South Kingstown, who brought her nine-year-old beagle Daisy. "I think people are so accustomed to fringe things people do with their dogs."

There are dog wardrobes and dog birthday parties, and all-day doggie events, one of which Natanson attended last summer in Auburn, Mass., for BONES (Beagles Of New England States). Natanson, who is friends with DeAngelis, had given her a gift, a book about doga. DeAngelis, who not only teaches yoga but works as a certified veterinary technician, was intrigued, then invited by Natanson to give a doga class at the annual BONES Beagle Bash. "I was really amazed how much these dogs settled down as soon as we started the breathing work." DeAngelis is no longer amazed. "We all know that animals can sense our moods. They can sense our anxiety, but they can also sense when we are relaxed, and they feed off that." The feeding can go the other way too, according to DeAngelis. People can learn from their dogs, which have a natural disposition for yoga. "No one lives in the moment more than your dog. There is no past or future. There is only this minute."

Doga is the creation of Suzi Teitelman, a yoga instructor who formerly lived in New York and now lives and works in Jacksonville, Fla. She developed doga in 2002 a few months after getting a dog, Coali, a cocker spaniel, who she noticed wanted to be close to her every time she did her yoga. So Teitelman started doing yoga with her dog, which came to be called doga, which she estimated is now offered in about 100 locations around the country, and in Europe, too. "People who did yoga were pretty accepting. People who didn't do yoga laughed a little bit and weren't sure why you would involve your dog in yoga." The simple answer is the dog doesn't know it's yoga. It's just attention and affection. "You're together with your posture and breathing. You have this deep connection because you're stretching together." The stretching involving the dog is limited, and dictated by the dog, whose body language the owners monitor. "I say, 'Go slow. Repeat, and ' DeAngelis said. "It's like teaching them to sit or stay. They go slower,' don't get it the first time." But dogs are eager to try many times, according to DeAngelis, as long as you're with them. "They think you're playing. I'd be laying out and getting ready to do a pose and get my face licked." A dog's life isn't always what it's cracked up to be, according to Karen D'Abrosca, of North Kingstown. So she brought Maggie, her eight-year-old golden retriever to the 90-minute doga class. "Normally, she stays home. She sleeps. She barks at people who go by the street. Dogs should do cool things, too." Naturally this raises the idea of allowing other pets the

opportunity to do cool things, too. "I think there are benefits of yoga, meditation and breath work no matter what species we're talking about," DeAngelis says. So, could there be coga? Cat yoga? "Cats are something all their own. They don't like to follow rules. I'm not saying it's impossible. But I'm saying it would be a challenge."

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