



Becoming one with yourself again

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Baby steps

After you have given birth it may take some time before you are ready to plunge back into the world of fitness. Needless to say it is recommended to get the go ahead from your doctor during your post-natal checkup (usually around six weeks after birth).

It is important to realise that your body has changed in a big way (no pun intended). Many people say nine months on, nine months off... But it may even take longer than that.

The very first step begins the day after birth. Yes, you can get going immediately as [gentle exercises](#) focused on breathing and repairing your pelvic floor will speed up healing, improve circulation and will revitalise you. Ask your midwife in the hospital if she can show you how to do them correctly or even better, ask her if it's possible to have a visit from an in-hospital [kinesiotherapist](#) to get you on track immediately.

At your post-natal checkup, your gynecologist may or may not suggest that you do the pelvic floor re-education. However, please bring it up if he/she doesn't and request that you would like a prescription to do it and a recommendation of where to go. It is crucial before you start any other form of exercise that you restore your pelvic floor to its former self even if you haven't given birth vaginally. Your pelvic floor has experienced immense pressure for nine months. It sure needs some special attention now. Plus, these treatments are sponsored by the government medical aid so there really is no need to not have them. They are provided by kinesiologists that are specifically trained to do so and most of them are quite flexible in allowing you to bring your baby along. It can take up to ten short sessions.

When your perineum has gotten it's groove back you may feel ready for something more. Just remember it's not a race. Whichever form of exercise you choose, take it slow and [listen to your body](#).

Yoga is a great way to start this journey as it is soothing on so many levels. Physically and emotionally you have gone through a lot and a good yoga class will help you feel grounded again.



Let's breathe...

We went to explore a class offered by [Axinja Granier](#) from [Yoga Shanti](#).

Armed with our yoga mats me and J set off to test the waters. J had her baby six months ago, had the all clear from her postnatal checkup at six weeks and also did the peri-natal re-education. This was her first real form of exercise after haven given birth. Both of us have done yoga before, but none of us are pro's. My youngest baby is 18 months and I do a lot of walking, running from meeting to meeting and a combination of light cardio and resistance training workouts three to four times a week. I love a good *Zumba* class as well.



Axinja's classes consist of [Vinyasa Flow](#) and [Prana Flow](#) on Mondays. She regularly offers Yin & Yang Yoga workshops on Saturdays.

Her classes alternate between the ISL in Merl and Altrimenti at the Hotel Parc Belle-Vue in the City centre. The class schedule and price list can be viewed [here](#).



Her group classes are taught in English, but she speaks German, French and Russian as well. Welcome to Luxembourg!

While there are other yoga classes where you can take your baby with you (more in a future post), there is nothing like taking some time off for yourself where you can relax and only focus on YOU! If mama is happy, baby is happy. True story.

Another alternative also, is to have Axinja completely to yourself or to get a group together for private classes, in which case she doesn't mind if your bambino is around. You can check out her private rates [here](#).

Prana – here we go!

She recommended us to attend the Prana Flow class which is softer and slower than the Vinyasa Flow and open to all levels. She also accepts post-natal mamas in her Vinyasa Flow class if their baby is at least four months old, they have had no issues with the delivery, their potential episiotomy/tear has healed, their potential split abdominals have closed back up and they are physically healthy and fit. If they have had a caesarian, she suggests to rather wait until their baby is six months old.

Pregnant fairies are welcome to attend the Prana Flow classes and she will adjust where necessary while in the Vinyasa Flow class, she allows mamas-to-be if they are physically fit and have no issues with their pregnancy.

In both cases she would need to know in advance if you are pregnant so she can ask a few questions and meet you 15-20 minutes in advance of the class.

The Prana Flow class takes place from 8pm – 9:15pm in Altrimenti at the Hotel Parc Belle-Vue in the city center and the room (*Salle Maria Rheinsheim*) is spacious yet cozy at the same time.

When we entered the room, we immediately felt the calming energy as the previous Vinyasa Flow class finished off with the humming of their mantra. There is a comfortable waiting area where we were met with friendly faces.



We took our own yoga mats but Axinja brings some extras to her class if you don't have one.

Gentle, soothing music sets the tone for what's to come and immediately helps to melt away your day's stress.

The class starts off with soft Pranayama breathing techniques, followed by a series of slow paced Vinyasa Flow, which in essence is synchronized movement along with breathing. I immediately embraced these rhythmical movements and felt like I could go on and on...

Axinja gladly helps to correct posture where needed. In the case of J, having been out of the game since entering her life changing role of mama, Axinja gently provided alternative options and suggestions to improve her experience and ensure maximum safety.

The class ended with deep relaxation and meditation.

Axinja describes the class as focusing on freeing the flow of energy in the body, along the meridians (energy channels) and chakras (energy centers), leading to balance, peace, cleansing of the body & mind and strength to face challenges.

We sure felt that. Come on world, we are ready for you!

More about Axinja

She is from Germany, completed her studies in the U.S., worked in a bank for 5 years and then quit to become a full time yoga teacher in 2008. She started teaching yoga in 2009 and in 2011 she and her husband moved back to Europe.

She is a certified yoga teacher, accredited by the [Yoga Alliance](#) which is a non-profit association representing the yoga community and setting specific standards for yoga training and teaching. She did her pre & postnatal studies with *Birthlight*, a UK based non-profit organization focusing on the health of women and their families from conception through the third year.

We asked her a couple of questions:

Luxmama: What led you to your path with yoga?

Axinja: I remember “reading” a yoga book of my mum’s when I was little, and was curious about the poses. But it wasn’t until I graduated from college that I “accidentally” stumbled upon a yoga video, and fell in love with it!

Luxmama: Can you please give us a few interesting facts about yourself?

Axinja: Tough question....it is so open!! My daughter’s name is Shanti, which means “Peace” in Sanskrit (and yes, she’s peaceful – most of the time). I love to do Pranayama (yogic breathing), of course yoga, laughing, lazy weekends with my little family, dancing and traveling... I’ve toyed with the idea of building an [earth ship](#) with my husband (an eco-friendly home built out of recycled materials, 100% self-sufficient in terms of power and food)...but I think this project will have to wait!



Luxmama: Wow, that's ambitious yet an incredible idea! I hope you pull it off one day. We know you have a baby girl aged two, could you please tell us a bit more about your birth story?

Axinja: I was absolutely terrified of the birth process, completely and utterly terrified. Doing the prenatal and postnatal training (I fell pregnant in between the two parts of the training) was a huge help to calm my fear. Thanks to the training (and lots of research on my part) I decided to do a natural birth, without epidural. It was very difficult, because I'm afraid of pain, but my husband helped me through every single contraction with massage or acupressure points. I also used my breathing and **mantras** (chanting in Sanskrit) and after a long labour Shanti was born. It's funny, because I was most afraid of the "crowning" when the baby's head comes out, but I barely felt that, and the contractions hurt more. And when she came out I had such a flood of endorphins that I was floating somewhere else, my baby, myself, my husband...it was indescribable. I am very grateful to the hospital (Esch sur Alzette) and my Doctor, Dr. Michel Clees for having been patient with me and not pressuring me to either induce me or take an epidural. The staff were wonderful...they just left me in peace, checking up on me once in a while.



Luxmama: Amazing story! And so good to hear that you were supported in your decisions. How would you say did the experience of being pregnant, having a baby and being a parent change/impact you?

Axinja: It turned my world upside down! Pregnancy and birth gave me a huge appreciation for a woman's body, it's incredible capacity, beauty and strength...having my baby, holding her in my arms was and is still a miracle. I try to learn from my daughter...she is always present, in the moment, holds no thoughts of the past or future, just enjoying the now. She forgets any upsets, or hurts, and after crying and whatever was bothering her, she will be laughing the next minute. We should all be more like that. Of course it is challenging, and requires a lot of organization, patience and willingness to learn. But it is worth it!