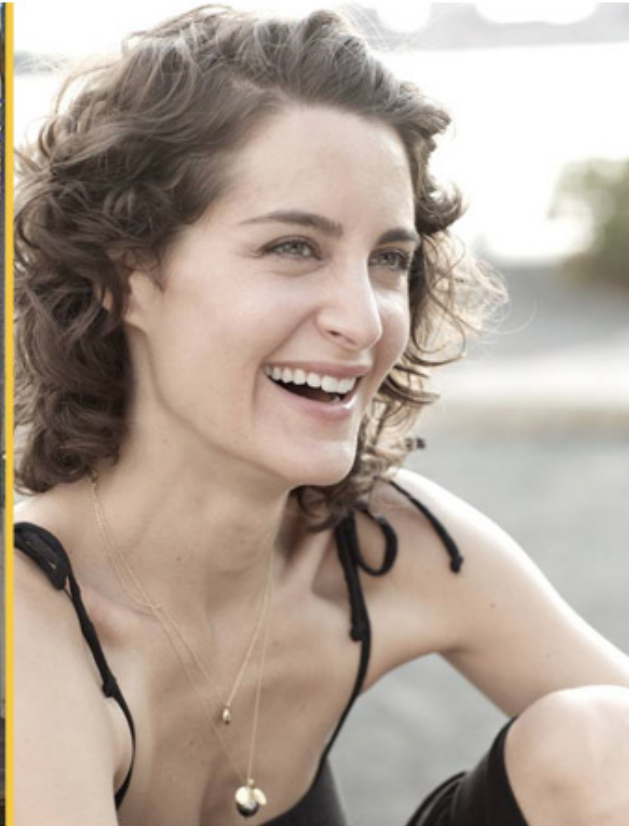


active athlete profile

# ELENA BROWER



ACTIVE > ATHLETE PROFILE - ELENA BROWER

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Elena Brower is a force of nature in the yoga community. For close to 15 years she has shifted the minds and bodies of yoga devotees around the world. Through the practice of Anusara® yoga, Brower has amassed a global following, teaching at both large scale yoga events as well as in the more intimate environment of her New York studio **Virayoga**, which she co-founded in 2001.

Her most recent large-scale classes at, **Yoga in Central Park on the Great Lawn**, **Wanderlust** and the Eiffel Tower in Paris, attracted thousands of yogis. Brower has been featured in *Fit Yoga*, *The New York Times* and on the June 2011 cover of *Yoga Journal*, alongside supermodel Christy Turlington.

Brower has an acute vantage point from which to identify her students' needs, especially regarding yoga apparel and what is currently trending. In 2010, as a global yoga ambassador for adidas, Brower taught events for the brand gaining greater understanding of what her students wear.

Through the past year, Stylesight has watched Brower teach yoga around the United States. We had the chance to catch up with the yoga master again recently and find out about her latest happenings, which include writing a book and becoming the voice of Deepak Chopra's new interactive video game, **Leela™**.



# INTERVIEW WITH ELENA BROWER

## When did you start practicing yoga?

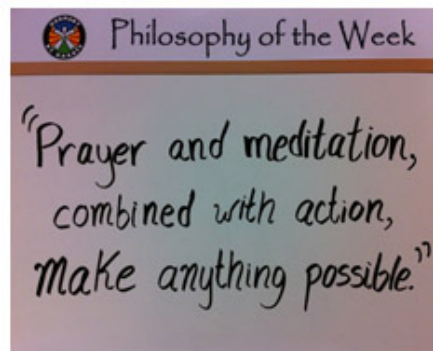
I was taken to a class when I was 23. I never looked back.

## How did you become a teacher?

In 1998, after a career in textile design, then clothing design and PR, then art education for children, I met Cyndi Lee at a class she was teaching at Crunch gym, who was about to open OM Yoga. I took her teacher training and taught for her for a year or two, then moved to the Movement Salon in Gramercy, then opened Virayoga.

## You are one of the founders of Virayoga in New York City. Can you please tell us about the creation of the studio?

I was teaching big classes at the Movement Salon in the Gramercy area, and one of my students, who turned out to be at Cornell University when I was there, promptly asked me out and within months, encouraged me to open my own studio – as a way to have more space and serve the students who wanted to study more with me. He wrote the business plan, found the space, helped me get a loan from a client, and was an incredible transformative force for me. He's still a dear friend.



# INTERVIEW WITH ELENA BROWER

**You travel all over the world teaching classes. What's it like to participate in these massive events on a regular basis?**

It's completely empowering; my mission is to get as many people practicing together as possible and to reach all of those people with a highly relevant way for them to go home and be remarkable in their families.

**You were an adidas global ambassador. What was the experience like and how did you help the brand?**

I thoroughly enjoyed the traveling and the time spent with instructors and consumers in cities across Asia and Europe. I was proud to offer the brilliance of Anusara yoga clearly and with integrity.



# INTERVIEW WITH ELENA BROWER

## What are your thoughts on technical fabrics in yoga apparel as opposed to natural?

I'm currently in the biggest quandary about this. Having studied textiles at school I know about the efficacy of technical fabrics and have of course felt the fit and comfort, but now I'm learning about the consequences of wearing petrochemically-based fabrics while we're sweating, and I'm in a bit of a spin about it. The jury is out at this moment.

My favorite technically fabricated line is Lululemon for sure – the fit is insanely gorgeous and I feel perfect in the clothes. I have two favorite natural and organic lines: Hyde Yoga and Prancing Leopard. Both are functional for yoga, and super chic with the right amount of sexy.

## What apparel is currently trending with your students?

I have noticed more of my favorites lately in my classes. Everyone seems to be caring more about what they're wearing and taking time choosing and getting dressed for their practice, which is definitely fun to see, and brings a quality of sacredness to the practice.



## INTERVIEW WITH ELENA BROWER

### How can new apparel designs help students practice yoga?

So many times a shirt rides up, pants roll down; the practice is interrupted subconsciously. If a garment for yoga is well designed – comfortable and breathable – we're free to just have the experience of our inner bodies.

### You're the voice in Deepak Chopra's upcoming video game, Leela™, which is set to come out in November and you also have an oil scent called GIVE. What's it like to be involved in these activities outside of teaching?

To be a part of the development of Leela™ was a great privilege. Dr. Chopra is seeking to create a context for all of us to connect more with our capacity for quiet – for ultimate mediation – and this is a unique chance to combine game play with that level of contemplation, for subtle body awareness.

The scent was created to connect women to other women across the world. A portion of the proceeds from GIVE, which is an incredibly summery, sexy scent inspired by my time living in Italy, will be given to Women For Women International, which helps women in war-torn regions of the world rebuild their lives through training and education.



# INTERVIEW WITH ELENA BROWER

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**You're about to release a book. Tell us about what's to come?**

Actually, two books. One is practice-oriented, the other is more oriented around explanations of our humanity and useful, inspirational action plans for daily living. Both are under the aegis of Art of Attention, with different subtitles. And both are the sort of book that we can open to any page and be completely overhauled in our minds and hearts.



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