

STRETCHING

By Emily Banda
Photography Jenna Reeves

to Fitness:



Cyclone Marching Band Stays in Tune With Yoga



As the sun sets over an outline of auburn and golden trees, students flood into an open grassy area nestled between the backside of the armory and the Iowa State University Cemetery. Arriving on bikes or by foot, students gather in pods around the large white rectangular outline where ladders and number signs are carefully placed marking the practice field. Flags are twirling, a trumpet exclaims and people joke around until the shrill sound of a whistle signals 5 p.m. The Iowa State University Cyclone Marching Band practice has begun.

The group does a lap finishing in a block where they are lead in a brief yoga warm-up.

"Exhale and lean back... come up from second plank and exhale into downward facing dog..."

Sun salutations and downward dog are not quite the terms you'd think to hear when pecking in on a marching band practice. However, for the Iowa State University Cyclone Marching Band, it is just a typical warm-up routine led by senior piccolo player, Dillan Glock.

The marching band has recently added yoga into its warm-ups, along with the usual lap around the field and breathing exercises. Steven Smyth, the director of the band, says he wanted to find a routine that was more advantageous to students than the static stretches done in the past.

"I am constantly looking for ways we can stretch and have stretches that are beneficial to our students, and I'm just trying new things," Smyth said.

Glock was recommended to Smyth, by

one of the band's administrators, as a good leader for warm-up exercises. Glock has been practicing yoga since high school and says she was happy everyone in the marching band was really open to the new warm-ups.

As for Smyth, he has nothing but positive remarks for Glock's yoga contributions.

"[Glock] does excellent for us," he says. "She designed a custom routine that helps us stretch the things we need to stretch to be able

to accomplish what we accomplish. And the students love it, I thought they were going to hate me for it, but, you know, they enjoy their lap, [and] they enjoy their yoga every day."

Involved would be the word to describe the Cyclone Marching Band. It is not so easy to become one of the 350 members. Each musician must audition every year, performing a musical piece and step routine. There are long, nine-hour practice days under the blazing

August sun, where members will learn full shows for the upcoming football season.

"The thing that surprised me the most, was how much work you put into it," says sophomore clarinet player Jonny Schmidt. "You have to memorize all the new music and stuff, and you realize how close of a family it is. It's a really connected group."

Throughout the school year, the band practices Monday through Friday. Most practices consist of learning new formations and memorizing the music to be played at halftime shows. The Cyclone Marching Band will learn 56 tunes for the football season, as well as formations for the five full halftime shows.

"We always say, it's the only work out we need," Schmidt said. Smyth agrees, the band works hard, both musically and physically.

"What we do is as much athletic as it is musical," he said. "While, you know, a lot of the stereotypes of band people are very interesting, the realities of band people is usually quite different from the stereotype."

Though being in the band may seem strenuous, members say the memories made together make the hard work worth it. From singing "Happy Birthday" to members after practice to going around neighborhoods on Halloween night, the Cyclone Marching Band is full of traditions and new opportunities like yoga to keep members on their toes.

"You get out there with all your friends, and you're doing everything together as a group," Glock said. "And it's just loads of fun."

