

Mindful About _____

Yoga Style

with Michelle

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PROVIDED BY MICHELLE SUTHERLAND

Ask anyone who practices yoga in the Valdosta area what the longest-standing yoga studio is, and he or she will almost always answer: "Sutherland Yoga Studio."

Michelle Sutherland began practicing yoga in her native Toronto at the age of fifteen, and since then, she can't imagine a life without yoga. Even before opening her first studio in January 2012, Sutherland was teaching yoga at the Valdosta Country Club and wherever else she could. She explains, "I really wanted a consistent practice and a space to practice daily. The studio was born out of wanting a yoga community in Valdosta." Her studio gives her the ideal setting to combine her professional career as a board-certified pediatric

Michelle's busy life as a physical therapist, yoga instructor, mom, and wife, warrants outfit choices that can weather her vigorous schedule. Photo by Wes Sewell Photography.





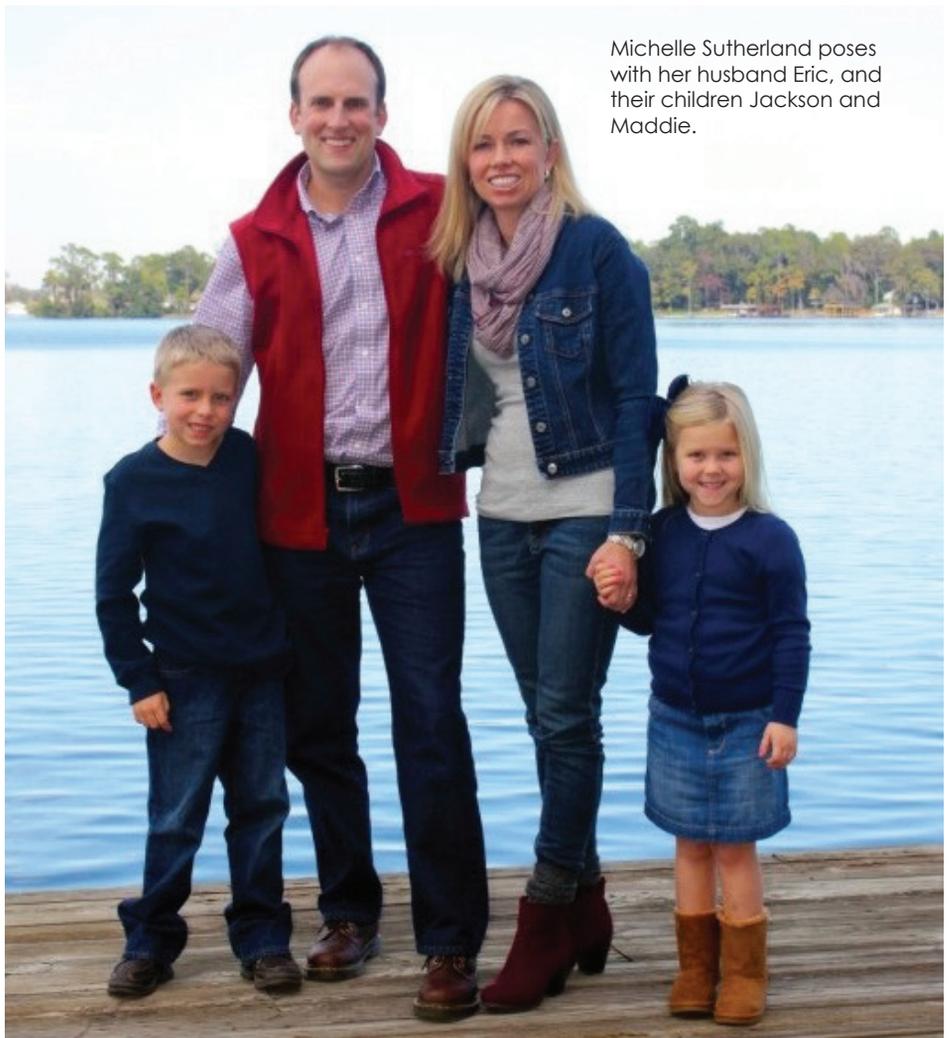
Michelle's sense of style, eagerness to learn, and her ability to successfully take on so many roles inspires awe in Valdosta's yogi community.

physical therapist with that of certified yoga instructor.

In addition to working with children's therapeutic needs, studying toward her doctorate in pediatric therapy, and teaching yoga, Michelle is a busy wife to Eric, who is also a physical therapist, and mother of their two children, Jackson and Maddie. She's active with various community campaigns to help the United Way and participates in benefits to help local schools and other civic organizations. A former marathon runner and triathlete, multitasking on the move is a way of life for Michelle.

Michelle's fashion sense reflects this fluid lifestyle. You often see her moving seamlessly between studio, therapy rooms, and her office. She observes: "My yoga wear has to transition from class to clinic. I treat kids, so I have to be able to move in whatever I am wearing. I am always on the floor when working, so my clothes have to stand up to a lot of wear and tear."

During a scheduled break, she's picking up her children at Sallas Mahone Elementary and then later taking them to their dancing or scouting activities in the evenings. To suit this hectic pace,



Michelle Sutherland poses with her husband Eric, and their children Jackson and Maddie.

Sutherland seems grateful that yoga wear has become so much more fashionable and can go from studio to errands. Often shopping online, she sports the latest trends in yoga wear. As Sutherland says, "It is not just for lounging at home anymore! There are so many cool new companies offering great styles. Athleisure wear is now a category!" Gone are the days when a yogi or yogini wore dancing leotards as a matter of necessity. "I want what I wear to yoga to be fashionable enough to go anywhere else, and I definitely don't want to feel frumpy in old sweats and stained tees," she insists.

Although no one is competitive about his or her yoga practice, and students are welcome in sweats and T-shirts, yogis enjoy admiring each other's emerging styles. As their bodies become stronger and more flexible, their fashion evolves too. Sutherland notes that students who have been coming for a while begin to comment on how they "now don't mind wearing tank tops or trying on bathing suits." Because she dresses once and wears the outfit for the day, Michelle says "I like Lululemon for its durability. I have Lulu pants that are ten years old and still look good. Onzie and K-Deer have great designs, and Spiritual Gangster has inspirational t-shirts. So many cool choices! I also love to see how our participants' yoga fashion evolves."

Michelle is still actually a yoga student, having just completed Level One Journey Into Power with Barron Baptiste in upstate New York. Regarding her "teacher life as a student," she notes: "It was a week of complete immersion into asana practice, meditation and self-inquiry. It was the hardest thing I have ever done! The schedule was physically and mentally demanding, but it was life changing. I learned the Baptiste methodology for teaching and learned so much about myself in the process."

Always learning and always on-trend, Michelle inspires her students to dress well for class. "What works for yoga works for life. It's all about what you feel good wearing."

Michelle Sutherland, of Sutherland Yoga Studio, is a yoga instructor and student who is always in pursuit of learning more. Photo by Wes Sewell Photography.



Life as a wife, mother, physical therapist, yoga instructor, and more requires flexibility and creativity on Michelle's part - almost as much flexibility and creativity as yoga on a surfboard!