

## channeling her energy

Yoga helps a marathon swimmer stroke across the English channel and back.

**INDIA IS FULL** of tales about yogis surmounting impossible obstacles. Anne Cleveland, a 49-year-old yoga teacher in San Diego, is continuing that tradition. In July 2004, she swam the English Channel both ways without stopping, becoming the oldest person – and only one of 17 people on the planet – to have completed the frigid 44-mile swim. She says her yoga practice got her through it.

“It was my personal, final exam for my [yoga] teacher training, my ultimate test,” Cleveland says. “I knew nothing I did afterward would be that hard. It was a way to see if I could really manage my mind.”

Cleveland managed her mind and her body, thanks to rigorous training, daily yoga and meditation. All of that paid off, especially when, a few hours into her swim, she faced three-foot waves and 20 mph winds that lasted most of her 28½ hour journey. Not to mention the sting from a Portuguese man-o-war and fierce tides that swept her miles off her intended course. “I had tears in my goggles,” says Cleveland. “But giving up would have been more painful than completing the swim.”

Cleveland’s accomplishment is even more impressive considering she took up swimming at age 40 after dumping a 23-year smoking habit. Hooked on health, she also started yoga and has been practicing daily ever since. Now, she seems unstoppable: She already has a one-way channel swim scheduled for 2007, which will put her on par with her inspiration, Florence Chadwick, who swam the Channel four times and became the first woman to cross it in each direction.

While training, Cleveland also gives motivational speeches about yoga and overcoming obstacles – a topic she’s more than a little familiar with. (For a schedule, see [wishuponastarproductions.com](http://wishuponastarproductions.com).) J.Y.