

## Yoga East Syllabus of Postures and Practices 2010 (Revised Feb 16, 2010)

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### WHAT ALL YOGA EAST STUDENTS MUST KNOW (and you must teach them!)

#### Before Class

- Enter the studio quietly in case another class is going on.
- Turn off cell phones. Students who are on call must put phones on vibrate.
- Place shoes on the shoe rack; do not leave shoes on the floor.
- Leave valuables at home; don't leave them on the shoe rack or in the dressing room.
- Show your class card at every class and sign in.
- Tell the teacher your restrictions or injuries.
- Be on the mat with your props, ready to begin at the start time.

#### During Class

- Gum, food, candy, drinks or *water bottles* are not allowed in the practice room. If students are thirsty they should drink water before class begins or after class is over. If they are coughing or have a medical condition, they should tell the teacher before class if they might leave to get a drink of water.
- No note taking or recording during class.
- Be attentive and don't chat with others.

#### After Class

- Correctly fold blankets and put props away neatly.
- Leave quickly and quietly so the next class can begin on time.

### HATHA YOGA CLASSES

Suggested resources for postures: *Yoga, The Iyengar Way*, Mira and Silva Mehta; *Relax and Renew*, Judith Lasater; *Back Care Basics*, Mary Pullig Schatz; *Runner's Yoga Book*, Jean M. Couch; *30 Essential Yoga Poses*, Judith Lasater; *The New Yoga for People Over 50*, Suza Francina; *Yoga for Healthy Aging*, Suza Francina; *How to Use Yoga*, Mira Mehta; *Yoga: the Path to Holistic Health*, B.K.S. Iyengar; *Yoga in Action: a Preliminary Course*, Geeta Iyengar; *Yoga: a Gem for Women*, Geeta Iyengar; *Light on Yoga*, B.K.S. Iyengar. Ashtanga Yoga books are listed in the Ashtanga section.

#### Use of props:

- Students are expected to use props or the wall if they need to modify a posture.
- Students who have tight hamstrings or who cannot tilt the pelvis forward or untuck should sit on a folded blanket for all seated postures.
- Students who cannot sit in Padmasana should sit on a folded blanket for all seated postures, particularly when practicing pranayama, meditation or when listening to preliminary instructions at the beginning of class. Teachers should instruct all new students in correct seated postures.

#### Gentle Level

These classes are intended to be for seniors, students in recovery from injury, illness or surgery, students who have not exercised recently, students who are obese, pregnant women with little yoga experience, students with MS or other chronic conditions which limit mobility, and students who have medical restrictions.

**Do not teach these poses in Gentle Level classes:**

Padmasana or Ardha Padmasana postures due to the risk of knee injuries;

Shirshasana or Sarvangasana due to the risks associated with osteoporosis;

Adho mukha svanasana, Urdhva mukha svanasana, Caturanga dandasana or any posture that puts strain on the wrists;

Vinyasas or jumpings;

Except for restorative postures, postures should be held for relatively short periods;

No pranayama should be taught other than Ujjayi breathing in a reclining position.

**Tips for Various Postures**

- Utthita Trikonasana, use chairs, wall, or blocks
- Utthita Parsvakonasana, use chairs, wall, or blocks
- Virabhadrasana A - hold for short periods, hands shoulder width apart
- Parsvottanasana, use Wall Push variation
- Uttanasana, do with chairs or Wall Push
- Vrikshasana, use wall support
- Garudasana, use wall support or seated in chair
- Paschimottanasana, sitting on a blanket, using a belt
- Janu shirasana A, sitting on a blanket, using a belt
- Maricyasana C, not clasping or can use a belt
- Virasana with as many props are required
- Sukhasana, seated on folded blanket(s) or bolster
- Bhujangasana - no pushing with arms
- Ardha-Dhanurasana - use belt if necessary
- Supta padangushtasana, use belt to catch foot
- Setu bandha sarvangasana, use block support under sacrum
- Viparita karani at wall
- Lying over bolsters are good supported backbends
- Supta baddha konasana with props is powerfully relaxing
- Mountain Brook (see *Relax and Renew*) is a good relaxation pose
- Setu bandhasana on bolsters helps depression
- Legs in chair for students with active back pain
- Savasana, holding for longer periods is better

**Level 1 - Beginning Yoga Students**

These classes are intended for students with little or no yoga experience. Students are expected to be in normal health with no limiting injuries. Students with medical conditions should attend Gentle classes.

**Tips for Various Postures:**

- Same suggestions as for Gentle Yoga. For most postures, modify as needed.
- Adho mukha vrkshasana can be done at a wall
- Hanumanasana/Anjaneyasana, simple lunge version
- Caturanga dandasana, modified or with belt around the upper arms
- Ardha Chandrasana with wall and/or chair
- Prasarita Paddottanasana with chairs or blocks

- Paschimottanasana, sitting on a blanket, using a belt
- Janu shirasana A, sitting on a blanket, using a belt
- Maricyasana A, with belt
- Maricyasana C, not clasping or using belt
- Bharadvaja I, or seated in chair, or at wall one foot on chair
- Ardha Matsyendrasana, modified
- Virasana with props
- Supta virasana with props
- Ekapada rajakapotasana prep, with props
- Paripurna navasana (at wall or with belt if necessary)
- Supta padangushtasana (with belt if needed)
- Jathara parivartasana, modified with knees bent (alligator twist)
- Salambha sarvangasana with blankets
- Halasana with feet supported
- Shirshasana - do Dolphin prep version, not going up into the pose
- Flow sequences using any of the postures in the syllabus are fine.

## **Level 2 Continuing Level**

Classes at this level are for students who have thoroughly practiced all the poses on the syllabus for Level I, are able to do a correct forward bend - bending at the hip crease, legs straight, back in extension. Students should have no limiting injuries or be competent enough to modify poses appropriately.

- Adho mukha vrkshasana, at wall
- Hanumanasana/Anajaneyasana, lunge position or fully extended position using blocks or other support
- Paripurna navasana (at wall or with belt if necessary)
- Ardha navasana (at wall if necessary)
- Salambha sarvangasana, chair variations
- Dwipada viparita dandasana with chair or unsupported

## **Level 3 - Intermediate**

Classes at this level are for students who have a regular home practice and have thoroughly practiced all the postures on the previous levels. In general, students should have 5-10 years of yoga class experience, be able to hold headstand away from a wall for at least 3 minutes, hold shoulderstand for at least 3 minutes, push up to a backbend from the floor, and perform Uttanasana correctly (straight legs, spine in extension).

## **Level 4 - Advanced is for accomplished students with no injuries**

Students should have 5-10 years of experience in classes at Yoga East or be well-known to the teacher. A Level 4 student should be able to do Ashtanga Yoga full Primary series without difficulty, have no limiting injuries, be able to do Padmasana, hold Shirshasana away from a wall for a minimum of 10 minutes, be able to drop back from standing to Urdhva Dhanurasana.

## Yoga East Adjustment Guidelines

Teachers should first attempt to make a correction with a verbal instruction. If that doesn't clarify it, give a demonstration. Make a manual adjustment as a last resort. Two finger adjustments are preferred. Forceful adjustments should never be given. Adjustments deprive students of their power to make their own corrections and to learn how to do it themselves.

## Yoga East Guidelines for Partner Poses

Yoga East allows partner work only if it's the best method to convey the point you are instructing. Students are paying for instruction from you, not other students. Under no circumstances are students to help each other with complicated poses such as backbends and handstands or to adjust each other. Unless students know each other well, do not pair up students of different genders.

## Yoga East Handstands Policy

Most students should practice handstands at the wall rather than out on the floor. Students who are strong, capable and experienced may practice handstands away from a wall on their own, with another student of their choice or with the teacher. The teacher is responsible for the safety of everyone in the room. Never allow handstands to be practiced in such a way that a student might fall to the floor. Do not allow inexperienced students to assist each other out in the floor or at the wall.

## Safety Guidelines for all Classes

- IMPORTANT! For the protection of all teachers and Yoga East, instruct all new students to READ AND SIGN our liability waiver and medical information. All students sign a new waiver every time they make a class purchase. The waiver is not a mere formality required by our insurance company. IT PROTECTS YOGA EAST AND YOU!
- On a regular basis, read your class the Yoga Instructions for Newcomers which is found below. It's great information and very helpful for students at all levels.
- Never have more students in class for which you have props and whom you can safely observe. ***You have management's permission and authority to limit the number of students in your class.***
- If you have doubts about your ability to teach a particular student, ***you have management's permission and authority to ask that student to go to a more appropriate class for the student's level.***
- Work slowly from simple postures to more complex ones.
- Do not teach intermediate postures to beginners. Stay with the syllabus.
- Watch students for signs of problems: exhaustion, lack of comprehension, puzzlement, wincing, etc. Pay attention to your gut feelings and act on them.
- Teach only what you have thoroughly practiced and know well.
- Poses are always optional. Never urge a student to try a pose he or she is not ready to do, or is fearful of doing. Once the student is ready for a pose, you won't be able to stop them.
- BE A YOGI - BE AWARE!

## ASHTANGA YOGA

### Traditional Method of KPJAYI

Yoga East teaches Ashtanga Yoga in the method of the K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute of Mysore, India (KPJAYI). Laura Spaulding is authorized to teach Primary Series and Intermediate Series up to Kapotasana by KPJAYI. In order to retain our affiliation with KPJAYI, we are required to follow the teaching guidelines set out by our teachers K. Pattabhi Jois and R. Sharath. Teachers who have studied Ashtanga Yoga at Yoga East with Laura for a minimum of 3 years can assist Laura in teaching classes. Ashtanga teacher training can only be obtained by study at KPJAYI in Mysore, India. All Yoga East teachers are expected to study regularly in Mysore. Pattabhi Jois says, "A good teacher has knowledge of the method and patience with the students."

### Mysore Style Classes are Preferred

These guidelines require us to teach daily Mysore-Style classes in which students are progressively taught the postures of Ashtanga yoga. Students who are ready to move on past the postures Laura is teaching should go to India to study at KPJAYI. Students who are not able to attend Mysore-style Ashtanga Yoga class on a **regular** basis should attend other yoga classes instead of attending Mysore on a hit-or-miss basis.

### No Modifications or Props

In general, Ashtanga Yoga does not permit modifications of poses, the use of props or skipping poses a student cannot yet do, but Laura is authorized to assign different poses or practice sequences where appropriate for individual students. Ashtanga Yoga students must attend Mysore-style (not led) classes a minimum of 3 days a week in order to be advanced in the series. Students who cannot safely and proficiently perform a posture will not be advanced beyond that posture. Occasionally a student might be **temporarily** allowed to use a prop or modify a posture.

### Adjustments

Adjustments are only used in Ashtanga Yoga classes at Yoga East.

- **Padmasana Poses:** Students who cannot clasp their foot in half-lotus poses like Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana and Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana should be instructed and adjusted in correct hip, knee and foot placement for half-lotus. In the past, students who have been allowed to go beyond Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana without achieving the correct knee position have almost always injured their knees. This is the stopping point for students who cannot correctly clasp their foot.
- Maricyanasana A-D: students can be adjusted to work toward the clasp.
- Supta Kurmasana: students can be adjusted to work toward the clasp.
- Backbends: assists can be given to all students who finish Primary Series and can do Urdhva Dhanurasana with straight arms.

### Cautions

- Do not push on students in any forward bends.
- Do not pull students' arms through in Garbha Pindasana.
- Do not stand on students in Baddha Konasana.
- Do not lie on students in Paschimottanasana after backbends.
- Do not give any forceful adjustments.

### **Stopping Points**

- Students who cannot go beyond standing postures should rest in Savasana.
- Students who cannot do Utthita Hasta Padangushtasana without assistance stop after standing poses.
- Students who cannot clasp in Maricyasana C should stop and rest in Savasana.
- Students who can clasp in C but not D can begin learning Finishing poses.
- Students who have been to KPJAYI should practice what they were given.

### **Gentle Level Ashtanga**

Ashtanga students who require a gentle form of yoga can attend Mysore classes with Laura's permission. Sun Salutations can be performed from kneeling or using a chair, skipping caturanga dandasana or placing knees on the floor. Blankets are kept at the studio to be used if needed. Students may use a towel as a prop or for clasping. The wall can also be used.

The most important aspect of Ashtanga is breathing. An excellent reference is Richard Freeman's Breathing and Relaxation video or David Swenson's Soft Forms cassettes and videos as well as the modifications shown in David's Ashtanga Yoga Practice Manual. Modifications and the use of props is intended to be temporary.

### **Half Primary Series**

The series up to Navasana is taught to beginning level students in led classes.

### **Led Classes vs. Mysore Style**

In the Ashtanga tradition, students are expected to practice in the presence of the teacher six days a week with Saturdays and Moon Days as rest days. In the tradition, classes are led using the traditional Sanskrit counting system on Sundays and Fridays. This enables students to learn the count. On Fridays all students return to Primary Series. Usually new poses are only given on Monday. Using led classes for practice on a regular basis is not correct practice.

# **INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWCOMERS**

Read these to your classes on a regular basis, especially at times of the year when new students are likely to be in classes.

## **Getting the Most from Your Classes**

As you begin your yoga program, especially if you have not been regularly exercising, you may experience some mild aches or muscle soreness. As yoga returns your body to a healthier postural alignment, muscles are being stretched in unaccustomed ways. Most aches disappear in a few days. Be patient with your body and be persistent with your practice. It is essential to keep practicing and to regularly attend class. You will notice improvement in strength, endurance, muscle tone, and overall fitness level, and a reduction of stress and tension. Take full advantage of your class card and you will love the results!

## **Yoga Instructions for Newcomers**

- Inform your teacher of any medical condition.
- Listen carefully to the teacher's instructions.
- Pay attention to your body and never force or strain in a pose!
- If you feel pain or discomfort in a pose, stop! Ask the teacher for help.
- Never hold a pose for so long that you cannot come out safely.
- In difficult poses, ask for the teacher's assistance and go slowly.
- Don't do any balancing pose if you think you might fall. Use the wall if necessary.
- Be responsible for your body and your practice.
- If you have a lower back condition, bend your knees in forward bends to keep strain off your back. Don't try to go deeply into forward bending poses.
- Yoga is not competitive. Don't compare yourself to others.
- Be patient. Work slowly and carefully to obtain the best results.
- Please be on time to class and tell the teacher if you need to leave early.