

Yoga ~ A Wide Angle View

Yoga is not a static, dogmatic practice - it is a living, evolving art that has room to welcome all types of teachers and practitioners. This is one of the reasons why the Yoga Club Teacher Training program prepares us in such a comprehensive way - to give students a wide angle on the various ways yoga can be taught, to best be able to serve their community of students. For instance, the styles of Ashtanga, and Iyengar ~ two very different yoga practices, actually originated from the same teacher - Krishnamacharya. Krishnamacharya met Patthabi Jois when Patthabi was 13 years old. Given his age and level of energy, Krishnamacharya gave Patthabi Jois a vigorous practice, possibly to tire him out enough to be able to meditate! Thus the creation of the traditional Ashtanga practice generally considered a very vigorous and challenging style of yoga. The same teacher, Krishnamacharya, met B.K.S. Iyengar when Iyengar was in rather poor health. As such, Krishnamacharya created for him a slow, mindful practice with a great focus on alignment, in addition to many props and bolsters. For Iyengar, Krishnamacharya had to offer him peace of body (given his ailments) in order to offer him peace of mind. This is one of many examples of the ways in which yoga is a flexible system of therapy, unique in its application, focusing on the needs of each student at a particular time in their life. It takes an intuitive, well-trained, and dedicated teacher to really use their yoga skills to get the best out of each student ~ rather than apply a system by rote or routine. Through Yoga Club's Teacher Training, we hope to offer a wide and open angle to the art and soul of yoga.

Founding Yoga Practices

Ashtanga Yoga

Ashtanga Yoga is a Vinyasa style practice that follows a set series of poses. The first or primary series, called Yoga Chikitsa, is described in Yoga Mala. Yoga Chikitsa, which means yoga therapy, realigns the spine, detoxifies the body, and builds strength, flexibility and stamina. The series of about 75 poses takes an hour and a half to two hours to complete, beginning with sun salutations (surya namaskara A and surya namaskara B) and moving on to standing poses, seated poses, inversions and backbends before relaxation. The intermediate or second series is called Nadi Shodana, meaning nervous system purification. It cleanses and strengthens the nervous system and the subtle energy channels throughout the body. This series is only introduced when the primary series is strong. It follows the same progression (sun salutations, standing, sitting etc.) as the primary series, but introduces new poses and variations. The four advanced series are called Sthira Bhaga, which means divine stability. Pattabhi Jois originally outlined two intensive advanced series, but later subdivided them into four series to make them accessible to more people. These series emphasize difficult arm balances and are only appropriate for extremely advanced students.

Iyengar® Yoga

Iyengar-style class, poses are typically held much longer than in other schools of yoga so that practitioners can pay close attention to the precise muscular and skeletal alignment this system demands. As such this class is great for people to become more comfortable with yoga and the various postures. Iyengar also uses props including belts, chairs, blocks, and blankets to help accommodate any special needs such as injuries

or structural imbalances. Teachers trained in this tradition are skilled at adapting the poses for students with physical limitations and are known for making hands on adjustments. This is not a flow-style class with Sun Salutations. It's a mentally challenging approach to a wide range of asanas. Many refer to this practice as the "learning-person's yoga" because students truly "learn" how to do each pose and what they should be working when in the pose, rather than simply following a prescribed set of poses or following what the teacher's doing.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga technically describes any of the physical practices of yoga. When you do Iyengar, this is hatha yoga; when you do Ashtanga, this is hatha yoga too. "Hatha yoga" can be used interchangeably with "yoga." However, typically when classes are listed as "Hatha" classes, the classes tend to be slower flowing with much more focus on breathing, relaxation, proper alignment in each position with the use of props, and utilize longer holds of each position. Hatha classes can provide a great introduction to yoga for beginners.

Vinyasa Yoga

Vinyasa yoga uses a sequence of breath-synchronized movements to transition between sustained postures. The name Vinyasa has a specific meaning, Nyasa denotes "to place" and vi denotes "in a special way." This is a wonderful class style focused on flowing movements in conjunction with deep breathing to purify your body. Many styles of yoga many be considered vinyasa classes as they link breath to movement. This many include a class listed as hatha, in addition to ashtanga yoga, many power yoga classes, and more.

Modern Yoga Practices

Power Yoga

Power yoga is a general term used in the West to describe a vigorous, fitness-based approach to vinyasa-style yoga. Most power yoga is closely modeled on the Ashtanga style of practice. The term "power yoga" came into common usage in the mid 1990s, when several yoga teachers were looking for a way to make Ashtanga yoga more accessible to western students. Unlike Ashtanga, power yoga does not follow a set series of poses. Therefore, any power yoga class can vary widely from the next. What they have in common is an emphasis on strength and flexibility. The advent of power yoga heralded yoga's current popularity, as people began to see yoga as a way to work out. Power yoga brought yoga into the gyms of America.

Two American yoga teachers are most often credited with the near simultaneous invention of power yoga: Beryl Bender Birch, based in New York, and Bryan Kest, based in Los Angeles. Not coincidentally, both these teachers had studied with Ashtanga master Sri K. Pattabhi Jois. Using the term power yoga differentiated the intense, flowing style of yoga they were teaching from the gentle stretching and meditation that many Americans associated with yoga. Another name often associated with power yoga is Baron Baptiste. Baptiste has his own method, which is only taught by teachers he certifies.

Bikrim[®] Yoga

Bikram Yoga is a system of yoga that Bikram Choudhury synthesized from traditional yoga techniques and popularized beginning in the early 1970s. Bikram's classes run exactly 90 minutes and consist of a set series of 26 postures and 2 breathing exercises. Bikram Yoga is ideally practiced in a room heated to 105°F with a humidity of 40%, and is a very popular form of hot yoga in many areas of the country. Bikram Yoga's goal is toward general healthiness and Bikram Choudhury claims the heated studio facilitates deeper stretching and injury prevention, while reducing stress and tension. Bikram claims that his system

stimulates and restores health to every muscle, joint, and organ of the body. Bikram's Yoga claims to increase circulation to all organs in the body, and claims this helps in the prevention of heart disease and organ failure. According to Choudhury, many people only use up to 50 percent of their lung capacity and thus the lungs must be stretched in order to withstand holding more oxygen. In a 2007 interview, Choudhury stated that when one is practicing pranayama she or he will eventually be able to enhance oxygen conversion and absorption, as well as improve blood circulation, as in many other forms of cardiovascular activity. Bikram Yoga has been the subject of much debate as to whether or not performing strenuous exercise in a room over 100 F is safe. It is common for Bikram practitioners to experience dizziness and nausea, especially in the earlier stages of their practice. Bikrim was one of the first styles of yoga or yoga sequences to be trademarked and this trademark is aggressively protected, which has caused much controversy within the yoga community. For more about this controversy read <http://archives.citypaper.net/articles/2004-03-11/cb3.shtml> An outline of the 26 postures included in Bikrim Yoga can be found at http://www.yoga-108.net/bikram_postures.htm

Barkan Method

Jimmy Barkan began his yoga career under the guidance and wisdom of Bikram Choudhury in 1982. Barkan was known as Bikram's Most Senior Teacher, an accomplishment very few have since obtained. Barkan moved from LA to Florida in 1983 opening his own studio. In 2002, Bikram and Barkan parted ways. Jimmy was featured in the film Yoga, Inc. a documentary about the Bikram copyright lawsuit. Jimmy Barkan then created his own style of yoga known as The Barkan Method. The Barkan Method is a style of Hatha Yoga that originated from a lineage in Calcutta, India. The Barkan Method finds its roots from this lineage in Calcutta, but also integrates postures from other styles of Yoga to create variations and even greater range of motion. The yoga classes are practiced in a heated room to stretch and strengthen various areas of the body. The practice brings vital balance and restores all systems to optimal health. Consistency is believed to create a physical, mental and spiritual harmony that will be felt in all areas of the practitioner's life. For more information visit www.barkanmethod.com

Anusara Yoga

Founded by John Friend in 1997, Anusara yoga is a school of hatha yoga, which unifies a life-affirming Shiva-Shakti Tantric philosophy of intrinsic goodness with Universal Principles of Alignment identified by John Friend. Anusara yoga has become one of the most highly respected schools of hatha yoga with over 1,000 licensed yoga teachers, thousands of teachers in training, and hundreds of thousands of students worldwide. Anusara yoga has a presence on every continent throughout the world, excluding Antarctica, and is in 70 countries, thus attracting media attention worldwide. Anusara Yoga classes are lighthearted, positive and fun. They include an element of vinyasa flow and a strong focus on proper alignment. The emphasis on props, however, makes this class accessible to students of many differing abilities. Anusara appeals to those who want to work both their physical and spiritual well-being. <http://www.anusara.com/>

Universal® Yoga

Universal Yoga is a scientific system that uses the essential laws represented in all systems of yoga, to create conscious, individual practices that satisfy one's personal karma. It is a system rooted in the mayakoshas (shells/sheaths) that help to create control, balance and freedom on each layer (mayakoshas), between the layers themselves, and between the individual and surrounding space, for the purpose of complete integration, balance, control, stability and liberation of the individual practitioner. We can change sequences and practices to suit individual needs but there are three things that never change:

1. One must be free
2. One must be conscious
3. One must be creative

Universal Yoga was created by Andrey Lappa in the late nineties. Andrey began practicing yoga in 1977 and teaching yoga in 1987. He first visited India in 1994 after the Ambassador of India in the Ukraine rewarded him with an opportunity to study at the Yoga Institute with the B.K.S.Iyengar. Andrey then travelled, studied and lived in India, Nepal, Tibet, and China as he continued to develop his own unique yoga practice. Andrey studied with K. Pattabhi Jois (Mysore Ashtanga), Desikachar the son of Krishnamacharia's (Hatha and Viniyoga), Yogacharia Rudra at the Sivananda ashram in the Himalayan foothills, with several martial arts masters, in addition to various types of meditation. He was formally educated at the Vishnudevanda Yoga School in Dehli. Andrey also personally visited the Dalai Lama at his Dharamsala residence. Throughout his life, Andrey traveled extensively through East and Central Asia. Along the way he studied not only with well known yogis, but also with lesser known, although, sometimes more authorial and irreproachable teachers, from the more remote regions of these countries. Andrey believes that his broad and diverse base of study, including the study of many rare yogi's techniques, expanded and extended his knowledge of the practice and spirituality of the Yoga Tradition. Through his studies of many different schools of yoga Andrey has created the Universal Yoga System. For more information visit <http://www.universal-yoga.com>

Slow Flow

Slow Flow, while not a defined style, tends to be a practice that moves students through postures that activate every area of the body in a slow, methodical and gentle manner. However, most slow flow classes introduce many very intense postures which are held for longer periods of time allowing the student to work deeper into the postures or advanced modification of those postures. Much focus is placed on the ability to transition from posture to posture slowly with grace and control. As such, a student may leave a slow flow class with as intense a physical work out as with a power class but without the intensity of pace of flow.

Gentle Yoga

Gentle Yoga is a form of classical Hatha Yoga. As the name implies, Gentle Yoga classes tend to be more gentle and slower paced practices, which make this form of yoga more accessible to people of all ages, sizes, and fitness levels. Gentle yoga focuses on slow stretches, flexibility, and deep breathing. This is a great class for beginners as it tends to eliminate the fear and challenges associated with many other yoga classes, while still aiding with stress reduction, flexibility, and weight management.

Yin Yoga

Most styles of yoga (Vinyasa Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Power Yoga) are yang in nature, they focus on improving the flexibility as well as strength of muscle tissues. The Yin practice concentrates on keeping joints mobile while increasing flexibility. The practice is quiet and passive and has a quality of stillness. Muscle tissue is Yang in nature and very elastic made up of around 70% fluid. When muscle tissue is worked the fluid raises to ~90%. Tissues that would be described as Yin include the deep connective tissues of the body, ligaments fascia and the bones themselves, these do not have the same fluid content and are therefore less mobile and less elastic. Connective tissues surround our joints preventing injury and protecting the joints. In Yin practices yoga students are still and passive and therefore able to actually stretch the joints and the connective tissues surrounding them in addition to the muscle. Yin practices help joints to stay moist and supple as we age rather than drying out and leading to stiffness and immobility. The safe way to exercise (stress) these tissues is to apply a tolerable pressure for a long period of time (ie: traction) therefore each stretching posture is held for up to 5 minutes. In a yin practice, time is the critical factor resulting in long, slow and deep postures. <http://www.yinyoga.com/>

Pre-Natal Yoga

The idea of Pre-Natal Yoga was likely born when Baba Hari Pass, born in 1923, mentored a pregnant student through pre-natal yoga despite traditional male yogic prescriptions against it. The greatest benefit of pre and post-natal yoga is energy. After spending an hour in movement focusing on breath and meditation, most women feel a combination of calm and vigor. For those with child, connecting with your baby through conscious breath work is extremely powerful. By learning to control breathing, expectant mothers can control their birth experience, while mothers with young children can better handle stress, patience and the ability to return to a calm state of mind.

Yoga Blends

Chi Yoga ~ Yoga & Tai Chi

Chi Yoga is a blend of yoga, tai chi and chi quong, consisting of slow, controlled, and meditative movement of the body. Through these movements you express yourself while building both physical and mental strength through this ancient holistic approach.

Budokon® ~ Yoga & Martial Arts

Budokon® translates directly in Japanese as (Bu) Warrior (Do) Way (Kon) Spirit, or Way of the Spiritual Warrior. Budokon is a unique combination of of yoga and martial arts which draws upon ancient and modern yogic and martial arts styles. The foundation of the Budokon physical practice is precision, alignment and Zen mind. All Budokon techniques are designed to explore the body's full range of motion. The practice dances between agility, control, speed, power, balance and flow. The physical practice is divided into two themes: The Yogic Series, and the Budo Series. Both themes constantly draw from and depend on each other. The Budokon Yogic Series was heavily influenced by Iyengar and Ashtanga yogic techniques and alignment. The focus is on control, calm, power and precision. These techniques are uniquely different from traditional Hatha Yoga in the sense that they not only work to improve range of motion and strength, but they also explore the body's ability to sustain another person's body weight. The Budokon Budo Series is a combination of standing and ground techniques drawn primarily from Okinawan Karate-Do, Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, and Olympic Style Tae Kwon Do. The objective of this series is to teach agility, power, focus and flow in the body and mind. <http://www.budokon.com/>

Acro® Yoga ~ Yoga & Acrobatics

Acro Styled Partner Yoga blends the wisdom of the traditional yoga practice, with the tender touch of Thai massage, and the dynamic power of acrobatics and gymnastics. These three areas form the foundation of this unique practice that cultivates trust, connection with others and a return to our youthful playfulness. The goal of acro styled partner yoga is to bring individuals into a state of union with themselves and with each other. <http://www.acroyoga.org>

Yogalates ~ Yoga & Pilates

Yogilates was created in 1997 by certified Pilates instructor and personal trainer Jonathan Urla. Jonathan Urla documented the training system in his book, Yogilates - Integrating Yoga and Pilates for Complete Fitness, Strength, and Flexibility, published in 2002. It is designed to integrate the Pilates methodology into the practice of hatha yoga for a more complete system of exercise. It is also a registered trademark, though no royalties are demanded from instructors who become certified in the method. Later, Louise Solomon published her own version, called Yogalates. Pilates was created by German-born Joseph Pilates nearly a century ago. Pilates focuses on building strength in the deep muscles of the abdominal region, the

body's core. Both yoga and pilates practices involve attaining specific postures. Both emphasize correct breathing. Both emphasize meditative mindfulness.