

Restorative Practice

These practice notes are to be used as a guide when structuring a Restorative practice.

General guidelines

Restorative sequences are not approached from alignment and refinement but are more an act of *immersion* in the asana experience. In this way your mental state will change.

- Do not attempt to push deeper into the asana. Allow the body to open.
- Breathing should be light and even.
- A bandage can be used to wrap around the forehead and eyes.

When physical fatigue is present, asanas which support the body and give a physical opening to the chest and lungs and soothe the brain are indicated. For example – crossed bolsters, Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, chair Sarvangasana are all asanas that bring physical opening without physical effort.

At times of mental fatigue, when the mind is unable to focus and is sluggish and dull, asanas that lessen the chatter of the mind and bring stability are indicated as well. Examples of these asanas are Uttansana with head support, Adho Mukkha Svanasana in ropes with head support, Sirsasana independent or rope.

Mental agitation causes the body to remain in a state of readiness (tension) and so asanas which release the tension of the body can release the tension of the mind. Forward bends are used in these instances.

The use of timings helps to bring stability of mind as well as maximum release of the muscle tissue. For this reason most of the postures are held for between 5-10 minutes. Initially students commence with 3-5 minutes but with practice and in time the asanas can be sustained for longer periods. This allows for the deeper physiological changes to take place. Many of these changes take effect in the 7-10 minute period.

Depression is of a different nature. Depression is again an individual presentation and can not be generalised as it may be physiological or mental. However many of the asanas are invigorating and stimulating. They include chest opening asanas and back arches to alleviate the introspection. Long forward bend sequences are not normally indicated. I have included one sequence for depression as an example.

BKS Iyengar

The human being is made up of body, mind and soul. The body and mind cannot be separated. The body affects the mind and the mind affects the body. They are integrated and influence each other. The mind is very tricky and gets caught in emotions, afflictions and moods. Mind is in a fluid state while the body is a solid. Mind, being fluid, fluctuates. It is a natural phenomenon. But the purusa, the atma or the spirit in us has to be brought to the surface to keep the mind under control. There are many yoga postures which help to control the fluctuations of the mind. They work on us in such a manner that our body, mind, intellect and ego undergo change for the better and become pure so that they can meet the soul.¹

¹ *Stress and Fatigue*, BKS Iyengar, Yoga Rahasya, Vol 4 No 2; 1997.

The following are examples of restorative sequences

Restorative Practice Sample

Viparita Karani	10 mins
Supta Virasana	5 mins
Uttanasana head to block	5 mins
Crossed Bolsters	7- 10 mins
Supported Sarvangasana on chair	10 mins
Ardha Halasana on chair	10 mins
Paschimottanasana	5 mins
Janu Sirsasana	2 mins
Triangmukhaikapada Paschimottanasana	2 mins
Upavistha konasana	2 mins
Savasana	

Simple Fatigue. Geeta 1991

Cross bolsters	
Supta Virasana	
Adho Mukha Svanasana	on ropes
Viparita Dandasana	on chair
Rope Sirsasana	
Bharadvajasana	chair
Side twist	over bolster using table
Forward bends	supported
Sarvangasana	chair
Supta Baddha Konasana	bolster
Baddha Konasana in Setu Bandha Sarvangasana	
bench	
Viparita Karani	
Savasana	

To Quieten the Brain. BKS Iyengar 1993 USA

Wrap the head with a bandage for all poses	
Adho Mukha Virasana	1 min
Uttanasana, head supported on block	3-5 mins
Adho Mukha Svanasana, head supptd	2-3 mins
Adho Mukha Vrksasana	2 x 1 min
Sirsasana, ropes or wall with legs tied	5 mins
Viparita Dandasana supported over chair	5 mins
Kapotasana, preparation on chair	5 min
Setu Bandha, with block	5 mins
Sarvangasana, on chair	5 min
Sarvangasana with Baddha Konasana	legs 2 mins
Halasana, supported	5 mins
Viparita Karani	5 mins
Supta Virasana, supported	5 mins
Supta Baddha Konasana, supported	5 mins
Virasana	2 mins
Sitting ujjaya I, II and III	15 min
Sitting meditation	5 min
Savasana	5 min

BKS Iyengar. 1993 USA

Uttanasana, with block	5 min
Adho Mukha Svanasana rope	5 min
Adho Mukha Vriksasana	2x 1 min
Sirsasana	5 min
Viparita Dandasana-Chair	5 min

Kapotasana -Chair	5 min
Setu Bandha Sarvangasana	5 min
Sarvangasana -chair	5 min
Ardha Halasana - chair	5 min
Viparita Karani	5 min
Supta virasana	5 min
Supta Baddha Konasana	10 min

BKS Iyengar. 1993 USA

Prasarita Padottanasana	5 min
AMS rope	5 mins
Uttanasana	5 mins
Sirsasana	10 mins
Parsva Sirsasana	1 min
Parivrttaikapada Sirsasana	1 min
Parsva Sirsasana bent knees	1 min
Sarvangasana	10 mins
Halasana	5 mins
Paschimottanasana	5 minutes
Uttanasana	3 mins
Savasana	5 mins

Geeta Iyengar. 1996 USA

Supta Baddha Konasana	5 mins
Supta Virasana	5 mins
Matsyasana	5 mins
Baddha Konasana	3-5 mins
Upavistha Konasana	5 mins
Supta Padangusthasana I & II.	1 min
Adho Mukkha Virasana	1 min
Adho Mukkha Svanasana	1 min
Uttanasana	1 min
Sirsasana	6 mins
Adha Mukkha Vriksasana	1 min
Pinca Mayurasana	1 min
Viparita Dandasana chair	5 min
Bharadvajasana chair	
Sarvangasana	6 min
Ardha Halasana	6 min
Setu Bandha bench	5-10 min
Viparita Karani	5-10 min
Savasana	

Depression. (RIMYI) 1997

Supported dog pose (AMS) with head on block	
Rope Sirsasana with slant board, walk hands back, head back	
Sirsasana with the two weighted bars	
Rope I and II several times	
Backbend over drum	
Active Urdhva Dhanurasana	
Setu bandha off table, head on floor and arms to sides of table, inhalation retentions	
Supported Sarvangasana, extra height	
No Savasana	