

Welcome to Yoga Mandir

Yoga Mandir is an **Iyengar** Yoga School. The name **Iyengar** is used to denote allegiance to key **methods** of teaching yoga that have been developed by Mr. BKS Iyengar, who lives in the city of Pune in India. Alan Goode is the Principal Teacher and was trained and assessed directly by BKS Iyengar himself. Polly Realf is a certified teacher under the BKS Iyengar Yoga Association of Australia. Demeter Davis and Jeanette Nolan are trained by Alan and are certified Introductory Level 1 teachers.

Our school is structured like any other learning institution – we work with syllabus and classes support different levels of study dependent upon interest and experience. Yoga Mandir is also an environment for the training of yoga teachers and for professional development of qualified teachers. This means that over time you will meet teachers in training and visiting teachers from all over the world.

There are many branches of yoga. Iyengar Yoga is generally classified as Traditional/Classical Yoga and Raja Yoga. Iyengar Yoga holds lineage with Patanjali who is the sage who scribed the Yoga Sutras. Iyengar Yoga is also known as Hatha yoga, as it uses the physical postures as a key aspect of study. One simple way of thinking about the classifications is to remember that people will take different paths according to their temperament and character. Some people are more comfortable or inclined to engage ‘the head’, ‘the heart’, or ‘the hand’. Hence some branches of yoga study intellectually, others have emphasis on devotional practices and still others focus on doing or action. It is believed that all paths will eventually lead to the same place, which is a sense of freedom or balance and harmony within ourselves. When a form of study embraces all of the paths it is said to be Royal Yoga (Raja Yoga). BKS Iyengar says that the yoga he practises is Royal Yoga even though the methods focus on doing and action. BKS Iyengar teaches a particular way of practising asana (the postures) that integrates the head, the heart and the hand.

Yoga is a set of practices to develop inner authority through self study and discipline. Yoga is not a religion. It does not require students or practitioners to ascribe to a set of beliefs.

In western society the practice of asana or postures has caught our attention. Because of this emphasis on ‘doing asana’, people tend to say “I do yoga”. The correct terminology is to say “I study yoga”, or “I practise yoga”. Yoga is a study of our selves, including the many layers of our experience; it leads us to discover the truth of who we are and helps us develop a sense of peace within ourselves. It is a long journey that includes the development of inner resources – clarity of perception, improved concentration and better health, but it is also a journey of discovery – recognizing fundamental aspects of our personality and tendencies of character, such as liking passive or active routines, have a busy or dull mind, liking challenge or being fearful of failure.

Teachers of Iyengar Yoga are distinctive for their directive and precise way of teaching asana. This is because they are not *just* teaching asana; they are teaching how to practice asana so that it is a “Self Study” that cultivates inner balance. Teachers instruct to bring students into themselves. Rather than a conversational type environment, that links people to each other and engages the personality in communication, the Iyengar class room is set up to hold student attention in the ‘here and now of their experience’.

Practicalities

General guidelines

- Do not eat 3 hrs before class – food in your stomach will make you feel heavy and lethargic. Later on when your asana work develops you will feel sick if you have eaten before practice.
- Do not drink water during class. The senses, which include the way the salivary glands function, become feedback information for us and we do not want to obscure the 'message' coming through the senses.
- Wear clothes that have elastic waist and wear pants that allow teachers to see knees and ankles. Bike shorts or tights work well. Please wear a modest shirt that is reasonably firm fit.

Class protocol

- Doors open 15 minutes before start of class time. The doors will not open early.
- Please remove your shoes before entering the Yoga Room
- Check your name off with the teacher as you come into class
- Come on time to class and do not leave early
- Turn phones off
- Use bathroom whenever you need
- Focus on yourself
- Attend regularly so that learning is systematic
- The school policy of 2 make-up classes **only** encourages discipline
- Make-up classes do not carry beyond the term
- It is best not to come to class if you have fever or a contagious illness

Instruction

- Teaching instruction is directive – not conversational.
- Sanskrit is the key language of yoga and poses are named in English and Sanskrit. In time it is expected that you will get to know the Sanskrit names.

Levels of classes – levels of student

- Beginner classes have an emphasis on *how to* perform the asana.
- Students usually spend 30 weeks in the beginner level (1 term in Beginner 1 and 2 terms in Beginner 2)
- Level 1 classes hold poses longer which facilitates deeper study and refinement of concentration. Students stay in Level 1 for 2 years or more and when people start to consistently practice at home students move to level 2.

Practice

- During the term practice notes are given out and a text book is recommended