

# KAYA YOGA

& THERAPEUTICS

Teaching Manual

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## Index

Introduction .....	p. 4
Principles of Teaching .....	p. 5
Chapter 1: Just Sitting .....	p. 8
Chapter 2: Kriyas and Vayus .....	p. 9
Chapter 3: Breath -Pranayama .....	p. 11
3.1: Benefits of Pranayama Practices .....	p. 12
Chapter 4: Yoga Asana .....	p. 16
<i>Standing Poses</i>	
<i>Arm Balances</i>	
<i>Forward Bends &amp; Twists</i>	
<i>Beginners Backbends</i>	
<i>Advanced Backbends</i>	
<i>Inversions</i>	
<i>Gentle Hip Openers</i>	
<i>Leg Stretching Series</i>	
Chapter 5: Therapeutic Applications .....	p. 35
Chapter 6: Yoga for Depression and anxiety.....	p. 40
Chapter 7: Foundations of Practice .....	p. 51
<i>Assessment Techniques</i> .....	P. 52
<i>Putting together a Yoga class</i> .....	P. 53
Chapter 8: Case Studies .....	p. 57
Chapter 9: Ethics of Yoga Teachers .....	p. 60
Chapter 10: Glossary of Yogic Terms .....	p. 62
Chapter 11: Anatomy and Pathology .....	p. 69
Chapter 12: History of Yoga .....	p. 94

## Introduction

The foundation of Yoga is practice. And consequently, no teacher can share something with his students, without firsthand experience.

My teacher taught me to practice, above all. Practicing under the guidance of an experienced teacher is very useful, as we learn from body to body, rather than a book or theoretical knowledge.

In the art of Yoga therapeutics, we want to be able to understand the body; not necessarily through standard anatomy (even though the basics are important), but by understanding it's abilities, it's energetic imbalances and the areas where it needs to improve. We want to know what good posture is, how one should plant the feet on the floor, and how one breathes properly.

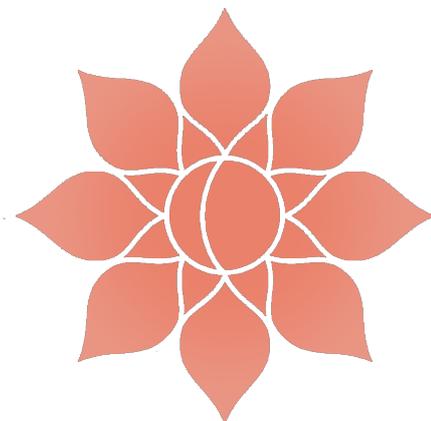
We also want to be able to see energy move through the body, and observe where energy gets stuck, either caused by alignment or breathing problems, or by emotional blockages.

Developing a strong intuition in these areas requires plenty of practice and plenty of teaching experience. Only then can you truly understand bodies, and look at them from a different perspective.

All Pranayama's, sitting practices and asanas in this manual are derived from the Classical Yoga scriptures, as well as the Vijnana Yoga practice manual, which was once so valuable in my own learning process.

Enjoy the journey!

The Kaya Yoga Team



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## Kaya Yoga guiding principles for teaching

### 1. Awareness

Is the mind focused on the practice? Bringing the mind into the present moment is crucial for a successful Yoga practice.

As teachers we want to make sure our clients are focused. Do you see them enjoying the pranayama practices, with dedication and focus, or do you see their minds drifting off?

How do we bring the mind into the present moment? By focusing on the breath, and by reminding ourselves that this practice is for our own benefit. Sink into the feet, breathe, and feel the body. Observe, be still and be present.

### 2. Breath

Where is the breath in your practice? Do you in- and exhale slowly and fully? Are you aware of your breath? When do you inhale and when do you exhale? Are you breathing superficially or deeply?

Remind your clients of the breath at all times. Inhale while expanding and widening, exhale while contracting and coming together.

Clients should be experienced in different pranayamas. The breath should be present in asana, smooth and deep. The exhalation should be deeper than the inhalation.

Teach your clients to ground through the breath, and to move deeper into poses through the breath. Teach your clients to use breath as their tool for practice.

### 3. Centering and lengthening

From inward movement, comes outward movement. Spiral inwards to the center of the body and remain aware of that center. Let the mind rest there. From there, expand and grow. One can't expand without first being firmly rooted and centered.

Make sure your clients are aware of "samana", *the center of the body, located 2 – 3 fingers below the navel*. Always remind them of being present there, and make sure the belly doesn't hang out, and the groins are folded nicely inwards. Observe the connection between belly and feet

#### **4. Alignment**

What would practice be without alignment, particularly in the spinal column? The spine is aligned through the practice of the vayus, full Yogic breathing, as well as a constant awareness of the spine itself. Spinal alignment is key in asana practice.

#### **5. Support**

Support in Yoga means comfort in the asanas. When your knees do not reach to the floor, use blocks for support. Can you not do poses fully? Feel free to support yourself with blankets, blocks, bolsters and belts.

When we see our clients struggling with certain positions, we offer them gentle support, by placing a pillow under their knees, by using a belt to connect the hands behind the back, and by using blocks when the arms don't reach the floor.

In addition, we offer emotional support, guidance and supervision, to make sure our clients improve, and become better versions of themselves through the practice of Yoga.

#### **6. Trust**

Without trusting the body, a lot of asanas would be impossible. A client needs to develop trust in his/her own body. This often is a subconscious process. The ability for the shoulders and hands to carry them into handstand. The strength in their legs and feet to keep them stable and grounded. The trust in their breath to guide them through the movement, and above all trust in you as a teacher to help them advance in their practice.

When a client can't go up into handstand against the wall, watch why this is? Is it because of physical inability, or because of fear? How much does this person trust the abilities of his/her own body?

#### **7. Strength versus flexibility**

Finding the ultimate balance between strength and flexibility is crucial. Strength is partly muscular, but also from the deep inner core of the body, the Bandhas and the breath. We want to be strong enough to lift up from the floor, yet flexible enough to fold forward without bending the legs.

There are essentially two types of bodies: Strong bodies and flexible bodies. Strong bodies tend to be tighter, and therefore need to work on flexibility,

opening, releasing and lengthening. Flexible bodies tend to be all over the place, and need to work on centering, compactness and togetherness.

Be mindful of the type of body your client fits and adjust the practice accordingly. This is true Yoga therapy.

## **8. Visualization / intent**

Imagination is the key to manifestation. Visualize the postures, which seem impossible, and make them possible. The power of the mind should not be underestimated in Yoga practice. Use the mind to see the ultimate pose projected behind the eyes, then practice it. Teach your clients to use visualization in practice. Make them close their eyes, and see what they intend to do.

## **9. Stillness**

Even in the most vigorous vinyasa practice, we always want to come back to a place of stillness. Stillness does not mean absence of movement. It means cultivation of inner silence and awareness, in all moments of practice.

## Chapter 1: Just Sitting – dhyana

The instruction is to sit every day, for a regular length of time, anywhere between 5 minutes to an hour. Rather than following complicated systems of meditation, we just sit to quiet the mind and become aware of physical sensations.

Choose a comfortable cross-legged position, either **Sukhasana, half lotus** or **full lotus pose**. Support yourself with a blanket under the hips if needed and make sure the spine is long and straight.

While sitting, we create a neutral space, in which we take distance from the responsibility to react to the world.

Thoughts, emotions and physical discomforts will arise, especially in the beginning; Please be aware that this is normal, and it's only a matter of mind and body distracting you from being truly silent.

Whatever occurs, in sitting we aim to let it be; by purely being present, we don't care whether what comes up is positive or negative. We simply stop judging for a short moment of time.

The very watching, patiently, of whatever comes up within us – that is the practice.

### **Meditation notes & cues**

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## **Chapter 2: Kriya and vayus**

Kriyas and vayus are generally practiced before pranayama and Asana.

### **The 10 Vayus**

Also described as the subtle winds in the body.

The outer Vayus are like natural elimination processes of the body. They help with clarity, grounding, cleansing and focus.

### **Outer Vayus**

1. Naga Vayu “*Eructates*” - Either sitting down or in Cat-Cow position
2. Kurma Vayu “*Opens the Eyes*” – Sitting or lying down
3. Krikara Vayu “*Induces hunger and thirst*” – Sitting or lying down
4. Devadatta Vayu “*Gaping or Yawning*”
5. Dhananjaya Vayu “*Hiccup/Stretching*”

The inner Vayus are most beneficial with helping students to understand the process of breathing and compartmentalizing the breath. They also help aligning the spine.

### **Inner Vayus**

1. Apana Vayu (pelvic floor, sphincter muscle)
2. Samana Vayu (navel)
3. Prana Vayu (diaphragm)
4. Udana Vayu (throat)
5. Viyana Vayu (skin)

**Please review page 1 – 25 from your Vayu’s Gate book**

