

IYENGAR YOGA CERTIFICATION

“Iyengar yoga” is used to describe the method of teaching and practicing yoga that has been developed by B.K.S. Iyengar and his family. To ensure the ongoing integrity of this teaching throughout the world, B.K.S. Iyengar has authorized various national and regional entities to certify teachers under his direction and that of his daughter and son, Geeta and Prashant Iyengar.

Whereby Iyengar Yoga Association of US (IYNAUS) is responsible for the administrative aspects of assessment and certification in the United States, the Certification Committee is responsible for administering the assessments that certify teachers, under the guidance of the Iyengar family.

Teachers certified by IYNAUS are educated and experienced in the methods of yoga set forth by B.K.S. Iyengar. They have passed a rigorous standardized assessment and maintain ongoing training, practice, and commitment to the Iyengar method. Teachers passing assessment must meet standards in three categories: a demonstrated practice of poses, a written exam, and demonstrated teaching skills in order to be granted a certification credential. Only teachers who have passed an introductory level or higher assessment, and who maintain good standing, may use the term “Iyengar certified teacher” and are allowed to use the official Iyengar Certification Mark.

IYNAUS does not, itself, administer teacher-training programs. Teacher-training programs for prospective teachers of Iyengar yoga are offered by a number of senior teachers and Iyengar yoga centers. IYNAUS maintains a list of such programs that meet the requirements for teacher training specified by B.K.S. Iyengar.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

The Board of Directors of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States (IYNAUS) has provided these ethical guidelines for all Iyengar yoga teachers. All teachers who are members of IYNAUS must read and be familiar with the guidelines, which are applicable to all yoga teachers who are members of IYNAUS. The guidelines correspond to the yamas and niyamas of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which are rules of conduct for all students of yoga. The yamas and niyamas and their English translation are included in parentheses where appropriate. The promulgation of these guidelines is intended to assist teachers, and does not create any liability on the part of IYNAUS.

1. Professional Ethics of Iyengar Yoga Teachers

1.1 Iyengar Yoga teachers dedicate themselves to studying, teaching, disseminating, and promoting the art, science and philosophy of yoga according to the teachings and philosophy of B.K.S. Iyengar, and to maintaining high standards of professional competence and integrity. (Tapas, ardor)

1.2 Iyengar Yoga teachers study and stay current with the teaching and practice of yoga as taught by B.K.S. Iyengar and the Iyengar family. This can be done directly by study with Mr. Iyengar and the Iyengar family or indirectly by participation in IYNAUS activities and study with certified Iyengar Yoga teachers of at least one higher level of certification. (Svadyaya, study of the self)

1.3 Iyengar Yoga teachers accurately represent their education, training, and experience. (Satya, truthfulness)

1.4 While teaching, Iyengar Yoga teachers do not mix the techniques of Iyengar Yoga with any other systems of yoga, or with any other discipline. (Aparigraha, non-coveting)

1.5 Iyengar Yoga teachers are not publicly critical of other Iyengar Yoga teachers’ character or of other systems of yoga. (Ahimsa, non-violence)

1.6 Iyengar Yoga teachers do not use any “figure and temple” service mark registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office in the name of B.K.S. Iyengar unless they have been approved to do so by, and have paid the required fee to, the service mark committee of IYNAUS. (Asteya, non-stealing)

2. Responsibility to Students and Community Iyengar Yoga teachers:

2.1 Are truthful. (Satya, truthfulness)

- 2.2** Welcome all students regardless of race, gender, religion, national origin, sexual preference, or physical disability (skill level of teacher permitting). (Ahimsa, nonviolence)
- 2.3** Neither speak nor act abusively toward others. (Ahimsa, non-violence)
- 2.4** Do not sexually harass students. (Ahimsa, non-violence, and Bramacharya, continence)
- 2.5** Avoid intimate relationships with their students. (Ahimsa, non-violence, and Aparigraha, non-coveting)
- 2.6** Recognize when the student-teacher relationship has been compromised by the existence of an intimate relationship and assist the student in finding another Iyengar Yoga teacher if possible. (Aparigraha, non-coveting)

3. Personal Responsibility Iyengar Yoga teachers:

- 3.1** Maintain a clean and well-groomed appearance. (Sauca, purity)
- 3.2** Dress in a modest manner while teaching yoga. (Sauca, purity, and Bramacharya, continence)
- 3.3** Avoid abuse of drugs and alcohol. (Sauca, purity)
- 3.4** Avoid use of foul language. (Sauca, purity)

4. Applicability of IYNAUS Guidelines

- 4.1** These guidelines are not exhaustive. Their failure to address any particular conduct does not mean that the conduct is necessarily ethical or unethical. Teachers are expected to adhere to and honor classical and legal codes of conduct, including the yogic discipline of yama and niyama.
- 4.2** Lack of familiarity with, or misinterpretation of, these ethical guidelines does not justify unethical conduct.
- 4.3** Failure to cooperate in an ethics investigation or proceeding by the IYNAUS ethics committee is a violation of these guidelines.
- 4.4** An Iyengar Yoga teacher who is uncertain of how these ethical guidelines are to be applied in a particular situation should contact the IYNAUS ethics committee for guidance before acting.

FURTHER ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the ethical guidelines given above, certain broader considerations which are essential to maintaining the integrity and vitality of the teaching of B.K.S. Iyengar are given here to serve as a guide to teachers.

First, it is most important that all teachers of Iyengar Yoga keep in mind that what unites us as a community is an allegiance to a magnificent body of knowledge. Within this community, B.K.S. Iyengar has a special and unique status as the originator and developer of this body of knowledge. He is called "Guruji" by his students as an acknowledgement of this status, which can be his alone within this community.

Second, B.K.S. Iyengar has freely shared his knowledge and understanding; the result is the system we know as "Iyengar Yoga." It is misappropriation for anyone to hoard or otherwise manipulate this knowledge in order to increase his or her status, personal power, or financial gain.

Third, it is in the nature of any teaching that students are receptive to the teacher. Automatically, a certain power is invested in the teacher. Moreover, it is an appropriate role of a teacher to seek to arouse enthusiasm for the subject in the students—to draw them in, as it were. In the case of a yoga teacher, because the subject is a highly personal one, the teacher may appear to have exceptional personal powers. In this situation, teachers can very easily become proud or confused, mistaking the powers vested in them by the teaching situation and by the subject of yoga for personal powers or personal merits. Teachers need to develop a fine discrimination in this regard.

Fourth, teachers must always bear in mind that their role is to transmit knowledge and understanding. It is the teacher's responsibility to refuse an inappropriate relationship with a student. The teacher's relationship to a student is analogous to that of a parent to a child. Finally, the ethical conduct of the teacher inside and outside the classroom is a model for the conduct of the students and that power must be used constructively. In addition, the conduct of any teacher of Iyengar Yoga, insofar as he or she is known as an Iyengar Yoga teacher, reflects on the whole community of Iyengar yoga teachers, on the discipline in which we

practice, and on B.K.S. Iyengar, Geeta Iyengar, and Prashant Iyengar themselves. Becoming a teacher of Iyengar Yoga thus involves a broad ethical responsibility. All of us have personal weaknesses. Hence, each national and regional association of teachers of Iyengar Yoga, as well as the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, has an ethics committee to uphold the standards of conduct set forth above