

WHAT IS IYENGAR YOGA?

The Iyengar method can be described as skillful action. Learning through skillful action, the student works along the spectrum of beginner to advanced postures/pranayama while gaining flexibility, strength and sensitivity in mind, body and spirit. B.K.S. Iyengar has said that yoga is available to everyone. His system (in addition to 14 books) reflects his desire to share his efforts with others that they may benefit from yoga.

B.K.S. Iyengar has:

Systematized over 200 classical yoga asanas (postures) and 14 different types of pranayamas (breath control).

Structured and categorized the asanas/pranayama to ensure steady and safe progression for the student.

Written 14 books – the most recent, Light on Life (2005) – as guides for students and practitioners of yoga.



Asana (postures)The Iyengar approach to asana focuses on three aspects of asana:

ALIGNMENT

Concise, systematic instruction allows the student to perform each pose in an anatomically intelligent way to avoid injury or pain.

The use of props, as developed by Shri B.K.S. Iyengar, helps correctly position the body in the asanas. Props include wooden blocks, chairs, blankets and belts.

SEQUENCING

Classes are conducted with attention to the sequence of postures since they can have a different effect on the mind and body (relaxation, stimulation, etc.) based on the order in which they are performed.

Mental and emotional effects of the practice can be intensified according to the order of asanas to produce a shift in which the student becomes more aware of the eight limbs of yoga (see fact sheet: What is Astanga Yoga?), which promotes the student's spiritual evolution.

TIMING

Refers to the length of time spent in postures or breath awareness.

Time varies to intensify the depth and stability of the posture and so extract its benefit.