

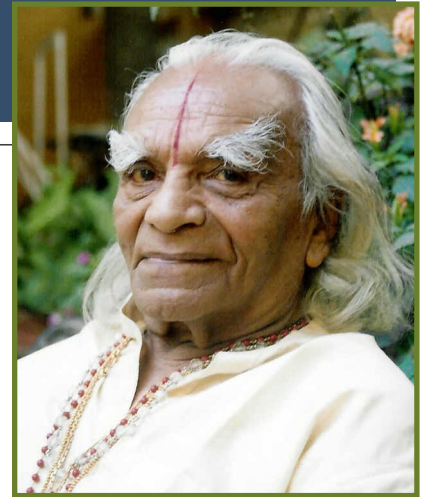


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**IN MEMORIAM**  
**B.K.S. Iyengar**  
December 14, 1918  
to August 20, 2014

*B.K.S. Iyengar's last rites and cremation took place Wednesday afternoon, August 20th, in Pune, India his hometown. Here are beautiful words from Geetaji, his eldest daughter:*

**“Only his body has ended. One person’s efforts from inside out, changed the acceptance of yoga throughout the world. Nothing was hidden, from the time he began to practice, to his illness and death. Even last night he was telling Abhijata, “I have shown you all these things, now realize them for yourself.” What he has given cannot be encompassed by words. If a disciple is more developed, then that person will understand. What can be said in words, is that he was precious to us.”**



**From the Director, Nancy Footner  
Certified Iyengar Yoga teacher**

**I** think it’s safe to say that most of us who started practicing Iyengar Yoga twenty or more years ago never would have predicted that Yoga would become as ubiquitous as it has come to be, not only in the U.S. but worldwide. Laurie Blakeney, senior Iyengar Yoga teacher, who was visiting Iowa last spring for our 16<sup>th</sup> annual Prairiewoods retreat, (and who has been traveling to India to study with the Iyengars for over 30 years), gives B.K.S. Iyengar full credit for the current yoga “craze”, and believe me he is well aware all the permutations of this ancient subject that exist out there. When I was visiting his Institute one year, I recall walking into the library where Mr. Iyengar spends his afternoons reading and writing, and there he was reading the latest copy of Yoga Journal! What a photo op that was!

Even though many practicing in gyms, hot yoga studios, and other settings probably have never heard of B.K.S. Iyengar, they probably wouldn’t be in a “yoga” class, if he hadn’t laid the groundwork. He and his daughter Geeta travelled extensively for over 25 years, training thousands of teachers and students worldwide. Three years ago at 92 he taught in Mainland China, and where he now has a huge following. At 95 he had become too frail to travel, but he was mentally sharp and continued to practice for hours daily. He also continued to write and teach; working very closely with his granddaughter, Abhijata (photo below), the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of Iyengars and the “one” to carry on this great family legacy. What follows are a few passages from a letter Guruji, as Mr. Iyengar is affectionately called by his most dedicated students, wrote on the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.



*My dear lovers of Yoga,*

Though I am completing 70 years of life and more than 5 decades in the field of yoga, I am yet a child of yoga. Yoga is a vast, as well as a life-absorbing subject, and to mature in it is a herculean task. The term yoga comes from the root “yujit” to join, to bind, to associate with, and so forth. Actually Yoga means union, the union of the individual soul with the universal spirit. Yoga is a discipline with removes all dualities and divisions. It integrates body with breath, breath with intelligence and intelligence with soul. Yoga makes one to penetrate from the outer skin towards the core of being as well as from the core of being to the periphery. Yoga is both an evolutionary path or an outward journey, and an involutionary path or an inward journey, in the quest of the soul; I have no right to brand my practices or teachings Iyengar Yoga.

The only thing I am doing is to bring out the in-depth, hidden qualities of yoga to the awareness of you all. This has made you, for convenience sake, call my way of practices and teachings Iyengar Yoga. What I do is pure authentic traditional yoga. It is wrong to differentiate traditional yoga as Iyengar Yoga, as it is also not fair to brand yoga a raja yoga, hatha yoga, laya yoga, mantra yoga, kundalini yoga, tantra yoga, and so forth.

Yoga, like God is one, but people call him different names. Mother Earth is one; though the earth’s natural surroundings do not differ, man divides Mother Earth into two spherical hemispheres, as east and west or north and south. All these man-made divisions of earth intermingle, interweave into various cultures and civilizations but, at the same time, show that the essence of life is the same throughout civilizations. What is that essence? That essence is self-progression, self realization, integration of one’s self to the divine. It is the same with all yogas.



# Old dog. New tricks.

By Nancy Elliot



My journey to the mat originated from an unexpected source....my sister.

I was almost an only child. My sis came along when I was 11. With that large of a gap in our ages and being the only two, we have enjoyed a unique bond as sisters. I am the serious, non-nonsense, black and white one. She is bubbly and outgoing with a kaleidoscope personality. When she announced that she had taken a free yoga class in Iowa City and was going to sign up for classes, the “older wiser” sister gene in me took over, and offered to accompany her on the 30 mile trek from Muscatine to Iowa City for a 10 week session of classes. I didn’t think she should be driving alone at night and figured it’s only 10 weeks. Right?

That was over a year ago. I cannot honestly say at this point in time which one of us derives the greatest benefit from our yoga experience, but every week we both look forward to sharing the drive, class, and dinner in Iowa City before the return trip.

For me, personally, it has been an awakening. It was scary at first to discover how stiff and inflexible my body had become from my 40+ hours of sitting behind a desk. Now looking back I realize how insidious bodily changes can be; my body had taken a physical toll of which I was unaware. I believe Mr. Iyengar calls it “dull”. I have grown stronger, more flexible, and more confident and can proudly say (after 12 months of trying) that I can now hang upside down on the wall like a bat in rope sirasana, with the best of them!

In all seriousness, I have reaped many subtle benefits from my Monday nights on the mat. I no longer need a monthly chiropractic adjustment to take that “kink” out of my lower back, and I feel like I handle the stresses of life and middle age with increased grace. My sense of an inner, calmer self has emerged. I am happier more days now than not; and (the big one for me) I can crawl around on the floor with my 14 month old granddaughter like the fool that she makes me without paying for it the next day.

Turns out that favor I thought I was doing for my Sis.... was actually one she did for me.

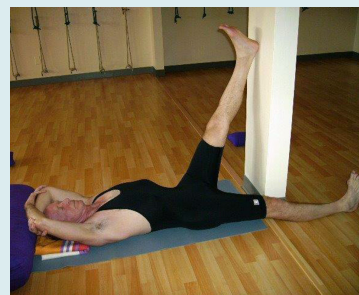
## Crocodiles and Alligators and Yoga...oh my!

To escape the winter blues (and all-white-all-the-time landscape) as well as the seemingly relentless cold, I went kayaking and birding in the Everglades and the Florida Keys for 2 weeks this year with 5 members of my paddling club. I got what I’d hoped for--colorful foliage, warm temperatures, abundant birds that are quite unlike those we see in Iowa, even in summer, and lots of other wildlife, from gentle, giant manatees to potentially not-so-gentle crocodiles and alligators and the occasional snake. The mosquitoes were fierce and drove us into our tents rather early each night, and the effort spent paddling during the day ensured that sleep came almost immediately.

What that meant for me was that every morning I was awake long before it was light, when not another soul was stirring. When this happens at home, I unroll my yoga mat and get in a good session in peace and quiet, but on this trip I was in a 2-person tent (which means it has room for 1 1/2 slender people) around which buzzed an astounding number of hungry mosquitoes. Thus was born in-tent yoga, which makes up in sitting and reclining poses what it lacks in standing asanas. It turns out a Thermarest sleeping pad makes a good enough mat, and a bunched-up sleeping bag can be made to pass for a bolster or a foam block. I felt almost gleeful by the time others staggered out of their tents, stiff and sore. While I’m not ready to recommend restricting your practice to a space about the size of a refrigerator on its side, I can heartily endorse the idea of taking your practice on the road, regardless of the limitations that present themselves. I remained ache-free even on the days when we paddled for many hours and felt comfortably ready to make a quick getaway should a large reptile swim toward me.

Nikki Herbst attends the Wednesday morning Level 1 class

## Iyengar Yoga for Athletes



Friendship Yoga will be offering a new class in the Fall 14 schedule: Iyengar Yoga for Athletes. Cyclists and runners often have tight shoulders and hamstrings. Craig demonstrates how to let go of the stiffness with the support of the wall and a bolster.

# Suggestions for setting up a home practice

Nancy Footner, Certified  
Iyengar Yoga teacher

In the Iyengar yoga method, the expectation is that you come to class to learn how to practice; practice what you learned in class at home, and come back to the next class prepared to move on to the next lesson. Fall is a good time to establish or recharge your home practice. Start off the school year as you would if you were studying a musical instrument or any other creative pursuit. You wouldn't take piano lessons and not practice between lessons, right? In your yoga practice it's the body and mind that are your "instruments". Sometimes you have to just work on those scales but eventually, with practice and persistence you start to play some nice tunes.

When I was a beginner, I can remember being nervous that I wouldn't get it "right" if I practiced on my own. That may be your fear as well. Let go of the notion that there's only one right way, and take the plunge. I feel certain you will remember more from class than you think and it becomes self-reinforcing when you start practicing out of class. You will be a better listener in class and pay closer attention to the demonstrations; in other words, practicing at home will make you a better student in class.



Connie Roberts

**Slow down and turn off** your phone, TV, radio, iPod, and computer. Create a quiet, pleasing space, with minimal distractions. The good news is that your home studio doesn't have to be any bigger than a yoga mat. It would be ideal to have one clean wall which is at least as long as the mat, but the backside of a door will suffice.

## Cultivate a desire to practice.

If you generally feel better after coming to class then why not "feel better" more often. Moderation is the key to developing the desire to practice independently: 15 minutes would be a good beginning. Devise a schedule that integrates into your work/family life and *commit* for one month. At the end of that month, reflect on what effects the practice has had, and then commit to another month adding 5-10 minutes.

## Get smart. Seek to break the link between pain and dysfunction intelligently.

Mobilize/stretch and stabilize/strengthen in such a way that you go beyond gross sensation: seek the subtle. No matter what the subject, learning something new can be stressful. Collect the necessary props to provide the support you need to alleviate stress and uncertainty about poor balance, muscular weakness, and/or lack of flexibility.

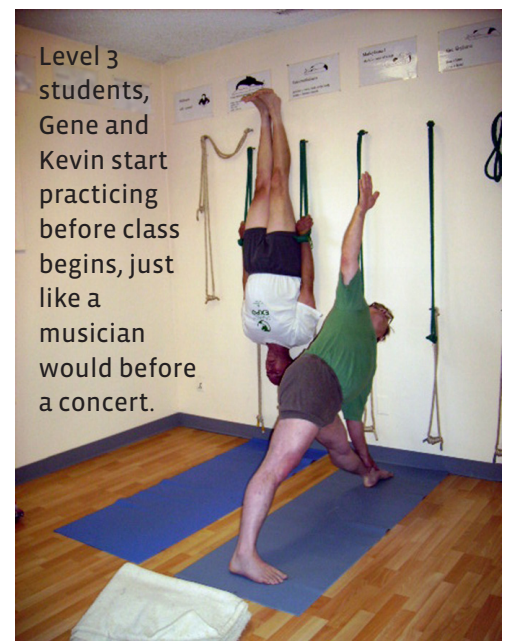
**Practice skillful effort.** This is one definition of asana (yoga posture). Start by practicing *Tadasana* every day and see *Tadasana* in everything you do throughout your day.

**Learn to balance effort with ease.** too much effort leads to agitation, shallow breathing, injury, exhaustion and frustration; too little effort is conducive to slackness, sluggishness, lack of focus, lack of commitment. Conclude your practice with *savasana* to feel quieter, calmer, and brighter (!) before resuming your day.

**Keep a notebook.** Write down what you can remember from your weekly class. Keep a record of what you are practicing at home. Seek advice from your teacher if you are confused or uncertain about what you are doing.

**Refuse to be routine** in your practice or you will find it will become stale. Use your class notes as a starting point as well as the study guides provided by the Iyengars (can be purchased at Friendship Yoga)

**Build community.** Invite a fellow student to practice with you once (or more) a week.



# New to Friendship Yoga?

If you have questions about what we do and how we do it, read on!

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**In Iyengar Yoga we emphasize “postural alignment,” where we balance the action of the muscles in every yoga pose to support the back, neck, knees, and other joint areas so as to encourage health and healing**

## What are Iyengar Yoga classes like?

In Iyengar Yoga, we don't follow a script, or practice the same poses in every class. Instead, every week a teacher designs a class plan, which consists of a sequence of poses that have a theme or an objective. In a course, which extends from 6–16 weeks, the teacher introduces new poses each week, and new ways to keep the practice of previously studied poses moving forward in a stimulating and inspiring way. Every class ends with a resting pose, so when you depart you will feel calmer and refreshed.

**Can I really do Yoga?? I am really stiff (weak, old, overweight, out of shape...) and can't even touch my toes!!!** Yes, you can do yoga even if you are not flexible! And, you will become more flexible if you practice yoga regularly. In the beginning classes we modify many of the classical yoga poses and use “props” like belts, blocks, blankets, chairs, and walls, etc., to help everybody, whether stiff or weak, (young or old, fat or thin, fit or out of shape) develop strength, flexibility, and mental quietude in a safe and supportive way.

## I have a bad back (neck, knees, shoulder and ....). Can Yoga help me?

Chronic skeletal pain is an epidemic in our modern world and is often caused by bad posture, poor body mechanics, and an imbalance in the muscles supporting the joints. In Iyengar Yoga we emphasize “postural alignment,” where we balance the action of the muscles in every yoga pose to support the back, neck, knees, and other joint areas so as to encourage health and healing. We also integrate conscious breathing into the yoga postures to help release deep, chronic stress and tension that can be an unidentified cause of chronic pain.

## I have done Yoga before at the gym and other places, but always seem to hurt myself!

Accidents can happen anywhere. However, our goal in an Iyengar Yoga class is to teach students how to practice in a safe and systematic way. It takes years of rigorous training and extensive testing before an Iyengar Yoga teacher is certified, so you will be studying with a knowledgeable and experienced teacher. Friendship Yoga is not a gym where you come to do a “yoga workout,” but more like a school with a curriculum; where you come to embark on a path of lifelong learning.

**I want to take yoga at Friendship Yoga but I can't commit to the same class time each week. Can I buy a punch card and drop into any class that fits my schedule?** We do require you to sign up for a specific class or classes so the teacher can get to know you and your individual needs and be able to help you progress week by week. But we also have a very flexible make-up policy. If you miss a class, you can do a make-up in any other class during the same 12 or 16 week session. If you are going to be gone for a week, you can make up before or after your absence and come 2 times in the same week.

## Can I just “drop-in” to a class and see if I like it?

If you are totally new to yoga or Iyengar Yoga, we recommend that you drop in to one of our first 2 weeks of classes. (Week 1 is free). After that we will have already covered enough course material that a new student will slow the progress of the other students.

## What are “free INTRO classes” and when are they offered?

The free classes are for people who with no previous yoga experience, Iyengar Yoga experience, or are new to Friendship Yoga. It's a great opportunity to come and try a class, meet our dedicated and enthusiastic teachers, and experience yoga in a professional studio. The free classes are offered 4 times a year—during the first week of the course—and you can choose from several times.

## Do I have to bring my own mat?

You are welcome to bring your own mat, but we also have mats and all the other “props” you'll need, free of charge.

## When will I know that it's time to move on to the next level of classes?

We usually recommend that you start at the INTRO level and then consult the teacher as to whether you are ready to progress to Level 1. Many repeat INTRO once. After moving on from INTRO, some people prefer to stay at the Level 1 for several years—which is totally okay—while others prefer to move on to the next level more quickly. The more you practice at home, the faster you will be able to progress to the next level. Please check our recommended prerequisites for each class level, (see [www.friendshipyoga.com](http://www.friendshipyoga.com)) and also check with your teacher to see if you are ready for the next level. There is no hurry . . . this is life- long learning.

**Remember to save this weekend: November 14-16, 2014 for the Friendship Yoga Annual Fall Workshop with Kristin Chirhart, co-director BKS Iyengar Center of Minneapolis.**