



Class Outline

Hatha/Iyengar Yoga

Sun City West Yoga Club

Class Introduction:

Iyengar yoga is named for BKS Iyengar, an Indian guru (1918 – 2014) who brought yoga to the United States in 1975.

Iyengar yoga is Hatha (or, Royal) yoga---or, what the yoga club calla ‘mat’ yoga, chair yoga, flow, etc. The yoga poses (asanas) were first mentioned/developed in the Hatha Yoga Pratipika (15 th century). Then, in 1966 BKS Iyengar published the seminal “Light on Yoga” with over 200 pictures of yoga poses with some 600 extra photos showing variations and how to get into these poses. This is part of the clarity and beauty of Iyengar yoga –teaching a slower, step-by-step manner of getting into poses so students can work on good alignment of their body for optimal extension.

Other Hatha yoga classes do a lot of moving, sweating, stretching, and flowing in and out of poses. So, Iyengar looks different in this regard. We spend time in one pose. We examine body awareness, muscle extension, and bone placement within the pose. We may repeat the same pose multiple times. We use ‘props’: a yoga belt, a block, a chair, or the wall to help the body achieve clarity of movement within a pose.

You may hear several instructions for something that looks very simple.

To someone new, it can seem slow, technical or even complicated, but this is where the method begins to reveal itself. The purpose is not simply to make the pose look correct and feel correct, but rather to understand what the body is doing in the pose. Where is the weight? What is moving? What should remain stable? Can the action become clearer, more balanced, and more intelligent?

The difficulty is that these changes are subtle. They do not make dramatic videos. They are not always obvious in a photograph. And they take time to appreciate.

Targeted Level:

- a. All levels

Student Prerequisites:



- a. These classes are appropriate for any student who wants to learn yoga and explore hatha yoga concepts as it relates to one's body and mind
- b. Anyone who is excited about incorporating a yoga practice into their lifestyle.
- c. This class is appropriate for people recovering from surgery (e.g., knee, hip, shoulder surgery); this teacher is trained in yoga therapeutics

Topics Covered in this Class:

This class will discuss the history of yoga, its development and practice. Some discussion will be around the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the 8 limbs of yoga (the original concept of yoga) as well as Iyengar yoga. The use of “aum” with some chanting will be done in class to help activate the para-sympathetic nerve (Vagus nerve) and help create a calming environment for learning. The anatomy of the body will be reviewed and discussed as it relates to the yoga poses. Emphasis will be on basic yoga alignment and how to use yoga to increase bone density (osteoporosis, osteopenia—causes & cures).

Classroom Methodology:

Yoga is practiced in bare feet to allow students to connect to the ground. Shoes are not worn during yoga practice as they restrict the foot movement and placement. Socks should also be removed before class starts as they also restrict foot placement and movement. If you need an exception to this practice, please discuss with the teacher before class.

Each class is a carefully sequenced set of poses (asanas) by a highly trained/certified yoga Iyengar teacher with over 25 years of experience. This tradition of poses is taught in a methodical and progressive fashion, emphasizing safety, alignment, and the development of self-awareness. Resting poses are incorporated into these sequences as well as options for modifications to poses for beginning students, injured students or those with physical limitations. For an optimal learning experience, this class is 90-minutes long thus allowing students to explore and discuss poses' application to their body and best approaches to each pose in the sequence.