

YOGA TEACHING STANDARDS

In this studio / teaching circumstance, the following principles are followed:

As students...

1. You will be respected. Through their own practice, teachers have developed attitudes of caring for students, embodied in tolerance, non-reactivity, patience, courtesy, and friendliness in all circumstances.
2. You will be treated as an equal. Your relationship with a teacher is always negotiable and non-hierarchical. Your teachers take responsibility for dismantling any ideas of hierarchy brought to the Yoga context from the cultural conditioning of wider society. The teacher is in no way a 'superior'.
3. There is a right Yoga for you, whatever your body type, age, health, and culture. If you can breathe, you can do Yoga.
4. You will not be interfered with. Teachers will not adjust or manipulate your body to fit external alignment ideals, as this denies you your own exploration of breath, *bandha* and energy. You will be carefully instructed using words, gestures, and occasional demonstration.
5. You will not be pushed or forced into any position through teacher or fellow student intervention, gravity, or paraphernalia. Please don't push or force yourself into any position.
6. You are encouraged to listen to your own internal guidance over any external instruction at all times. If you need to rest, lie down, adapt a posture, or leave, you're always welcome to do so.
7. Your 'correct' alignment in *asana* (postures) will be unique to you. Alignment is felt from the inside, and is created and guided by the breath movement and by your participation in the union of the inhalation with the exhalation as a whole-body integrated activity.
8. Alongside the breath-centric *asana*, you will be offered guidance on the intelligent co-operation of muscle groups known as *bandha*. Your engagement of *bandha* keeps your muscular and skeletal system safe and naturally well-aligned. *Bandha* are easefully applied and released within the practice of *asana*.
9. You do not need to buy any special clothing or equipment in order to fully practice Yoga.
10. When you're ready, you will be encouraged to begin a short daily home practice.

As teachers...

1. We practice Yoga ourselves on a daily basis in an actual, natural & non-obsessive way.
2. We are ourselves guided by a competent teacher and have given ourselves to the conditions of active and mutual relationship with our own teacher.
3. We take responsibility for making sure the teaching relationship is in all ways equal.
4. The mood of teaching is friendship, respect, equality and caring. Not necessarily personal friendship, but friendship as Life.
5. We share from our own experience and will help adapt Yoga to the student, not the student to the Yoga.
6. We teach breath participation as the central feature and purpose of *asana*. This is what makes it Yoga.
7. We teach strength in *asana* with an equal emphasis on receptivity. Participation in the inhalation & exhalation is the most essential empowerment and therapeutic means.
8. If we make any demonstrations of *asana* or *pranayama*, it is only to clarify technique, not as any kind of ideal that students need to attain or emulate.
9. If we include appropriate inversions in a sequence, these will be optional, well-prepared for, and include appropriate counter-poses.
10. We are committed to sharing the fundamental principles of Yoga. These are:
 - The body movement is the breath movement. The movement of the body is consciously linked to the movement of the breath, so that body, breath and mind are felt to be a unitary movement.
 - The breath envelops the movement. Breath starts slightly before and finishes slightly after the movement. The breath initiates the body movement.
 - The inhalation is from above as receptivity, the exhalation is from below as strength. The entire range of *asana*—forward bends, backbends, twists, lateral movements and inversions—all serve this breath process.
 - *Asana* creates *bandha* (the intelligent co-operation of muscle groups in the polarity of the breath ratio).
 - *Asana*, *pranayama*, meditation and life are a seamless process. *Asana* allows for *pranayama*, and *pranayama* allows for meditation. Meditation (clarity of mind and connection to life) occurs naturally as a result of *asana*, *pranayama* and intimate connection to all ordinary conditions.

