

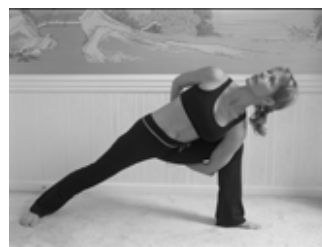
Practical Yoga for Personal Trainers

A Correspondence Course for Fitness Professionals

Course Excerpt

Introduction

In many fitness facilities the popularity of yoga has produced overcrowded classroom conditions in which the teacher can offer few, if any, individualized corrections. Instruction takes the form of generalized cueing and demonstration, and the teacher assumes the role of leader instead of educator. Even in the best of circumstances, fitness professionals that teach yoga classes are usually unable to provide individualized attention to every student in every pose.



There is a need for personal trainers to have an understanding of yoga. Working one-on-one, the PT can use yoga postures as tools of assessment or as a form of fitness training that allows the client to explore and understand his own body. The PT can help the client identify which yoga postures might be beneficial and which yoga posture might be counterproductive or risky, and he can offer individualized corrections or modifications to accommodate the client's physique, fitness level, age, and medical conditions.

QUESTION: I've only been to two yoga classes in my entire life! Though I enjoyed learning the poses and I recognize the value of flexibility training, I'm hardly an expert in the field of yoga. Don't I need to study yoga for many years to be qualified to teach it?

ANSWER: You don't have to be a dedicated yogi or professional yoga teacher to be able to teach basic yoga postures and simple breathing inquiries. I believe that any personal trainer can and should learn to teach some basic yoga. In fact, it would probably be a disservice to your clientele if you did not include yoga techniques in your personal training repertoire.

If you have not studied much yoga prior to this course, I want to assure you that there is not a mystical component that you need to master in order to teach yoga. It's O.K. if you yourself are not particularly proficient at performing all of the poses. And you certainly do not need to use the Sanskrit terminology. On the other hand, just because you've taken some yoga classes or completed this course, you should hardly assume that you know it all.

If you are not committed to a daily personal yoga practice, there is undoubtedly a depth of understanding that you will lack. However, this does not mean that you should avoid teaching yoga. If you are a novice when it comes to teaching yoga, my advice is to teach at a level that you are comfortable with. If you are comfortable using anatomical terms and focusing on proper placement of muscles and bones, then that's how you should teach yoga. If you are comfortable exploring the body's psychological counterparts and believe in the inherent wisdom derived from somatic awareness, then that's how you

should teach yoga. If you feel that nearly everyone is in need of rest and relaxation, then that's how you should teach yoga. Let's face it - you can only teach what you know, and you can only know what you yourself have actually experienced.

Now - read, study, learn, and practice, practice, practice what you plan to teach. Remember that yoga is, above all, an experiential (not intellectual) pursuit.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course the participant will be able to

- ✓ teach **21 classic yoga poses** using cues and demonstration (Chapter 4)
- ✓ identify the **basic kinesiology** for 21 common yoga poses
- ✓ identify the **4 categories of contraindicated yoga poses**
- ✓ understand why yoga qualifies as a **Somatic Science**
- ✓ explain the significance of **sensory awareness**, and how it relates to yoga asana
- ✓ teach 2 poses that **strengthen the multifidus muscle** and support core stabilization (the Easy Sunbird pose and the Modified Prone Boat pose)
- ✓ teach **2 breathing inquiries** (The Three Part Breath, Breathe through the Spine)
- ✓ teach **2 primary breathing techniques** (Extended exhale and Ujayi)
- ✓ teach **2 simple meditation techniques** (Observe the breath, word or phrase)
- ✓ utilize **visualization** (imagery) and **affirmation** (positive self-statement)
- ✓ understand how yoga techniques complement **Sport Psychology**
- ✓ **select, customize, and modify** (for safety) appropriate yoga postures to fit an individual client's needs, goals, preferences and comfort level
- ✓ **teach a general flexibility training program using 10 yoga postures** (This program is described on pp. 150-154, and pictured in the binder pocket supplement.)

Chapter 3: Releasing Tight Hips

QUESTION: Many of my clients don't like to do yoga because tightness in the hips sharply limits their ability to execute many of the poses. How can I convince them to keep working with the yoga postures?

ANSWER: It's true that tight hips make many yoga poses seem impossible or at least highly uncomfortable. But yoga offers a whole slew of poses that are lovingly referred to as 'hip openers' which are designed to address this problem. To make these poses more accessible for the average individual, you can introduce gentler modifications or teach only the simpler (supine and seated) poses. This will help make the learning process amenable and tolerable. You will probably find that the majority of people who experience back pain have tightness and/or weakness in the muscles that act on the hips.

Let's begin by taking a look at the average ROM for movements of the hip.

Assessment: In a hands and knees position, drop the head down. Then pull one knee in toward the chest. For average hip flexion ROM (135 degrees), the thigh will be about 2 inches from the ribs. Estimate the angle using inspection.



Hip flexion in yoga asana:

Insufficient hip flexion (tight gluteus maximus and tight hamstrings, and/or weak psoas, rectus femoris, and adductors) might be an issue in the following poses: Pyramid, Triangle, Supine knee to chest pose, Down dog, Seated Boat.

Down dog pose – In this pose, we want to see a hip flexion angle of about 90 degrees. If the angle is too large, it looks like the hands and feet are slipping and the body seems to be on the verge of falling flat. If the angle is too small, the body looks a bit like it is doing the Standing forward fold pose instead of Down dog.

Hip flexion angle too large



Hip flexion about 90 degrees



Hip flexion angle too small



If hip flexion is limited, the knee will point upward. For average hip flexion, the knee will point forward and the thigh will be low over the abdomen.



Supine knee to chest pose



Limited degree of hip flexion

Sunbird Pose

Assessment: Use the Sunbird pose to assess hip extension. For average hip extension ROM (30 degrees), the knee of the lifted leg (rear leg) will be slightly higher than the buttock. Be sure that there is no rotation involved. Estimate the angle using inspection.



Hip extension in yoga asana:

Insufficient hip extension (tight psoas and quadriceps and/or weak hamstrings and gluteus maximus) might be an issue in the following poses: Bridge, Warrior One, Camel, Prone Boat, Locust.

Hip abduction 45 degrees

Hip abduction in yoga asana:

Insufficient hip abduction (tight adductors and/or weak gluteus medius, gluteus minimus, and TFL) might be an issue in the following poses: Seated or standing straddle, Cobbler.



Cobblerpose with very good flexibility



averageCobbler pose