

10

REASONS YOU SHOULD TRY IYENGAR

You're in safe hands with a qualified Iyengar Yoga teacher, says *Camilla Balshaw*. Here she lists more reasons you need Iyengar in your life

1 All Iyengar Yoga teachers are trained to rigorously high standards. After training for a minimum of three consecutive years with a certified Iyengar teacher prospective students undertake a two-year teacher-training programme followed by an assessment. This takes five years. Once qualified, teachers at introductory level must continue training and complete professional development work each year. Such a long and arduous training system can be off-putting to some who prefer a quicker and easier route to yoga teaching. However, the Iyengar teacher training asks you: 'do you really want to teach yoga?' If the answer is 'yes' then the training sets you up completely for the journey ahead without any shortcuts.

2 Throughout his eight decades of teaching, BKS Iyengar firmly believed that yoga was for everyone. With this in mind, he developed and refined a complete array of yoga props, including ropes, belts, blocks, benches and chairs. These allow practitioners of all ages and fitness levels to achieve correct alignment, a deeper penetration into the posture as well as a longer stay, helping them to experience the state of meditation in action. Of course, belts, blocks, bricks and ropes are now a common feature of all classes. This doesn't mean a yoga prop is a tool to just 'cheat' in a pose. Far from it. Props need to be used intelligently to aid understanding. Most Iyengar classes use very few props other than for *sarvangasana* (shoulder stand). And, when a prop is used, it is used to bring a different feeling, understanding or particular teaching point.

Iyengar Yoga stimulates the brain. There's a mental sharpness one has to cultivate in an Iyengar Yoga class. It demands you to be present, creative, aware and observant. Longer holds in poses allow for this. This requires both mental and physical discipline. In a fast-paced 'have now' culture, the mental stimulation of Iyengar Yoga asks you to be totally present, to tune in completely to the language and communication of the teacher.

Alignment is a cornerstone of the practice of Iyengar Yoga. Through attention to proper alignment, it encourages weak parts to strengthen and stiff areas to release, thus awakening and realigning the whole body. As the body moves into better alignment, less muscular effort is used and a greater sense of 'being' in a pose is heightened. This can be a challenge to very flexible students, who tend to work from their flexible areas that hide stiffness in other areas of the body. Asking questions about your alignment is a challenge. In an Iyengar class you are asked the question do you want to meet the challenge? Can you take being corrected?

Camilla Balshaw is an intermediate level 3 Iyengar teacher based in Norfolk and is a director of The Weekend Yoga Place (theweekendyogaplace.com)

5 Building a solid foundation through progression. Starting any yoga class is a real baptism of fire. I remember stumbling on my first yoga class in Tokyo in the mid 1990's. It was Iyengar Yoga. It wasn't an immediate love affair. I found it challenging mentally; humbling; it asked me questions about myself. For some reason, I kept going back. I still didn't 'get it' but each week there I was in class and each week it felt like I was being lead through something quite extraordinary. Each class was built upon. Standing poses were emphasised each week (even though I was desperate for a sit down!). Through this week-by-week progression strength was built, ease of movement, co-ordination, balance and the foundation was set to learn and eventually introduce the next stage of progression. I felt ready. Through the progression of slowly building, I learnt yoga.

6 Timing and sequencing. No two classes are ever exactly the same. The level, the condition of the student, time of day and many other factors influence the variation of sequencing of Iyengar classes. In one week you might be flowing through standing poses and *surya namaskar* (sun salutations); in another, the focus might be on a particular action of the body; in another, finding the subtleties of *pranayama*. It's this variety that makes Iyengar Yoga so stimulating.

7 Teaching for learning. In an Iyengar class the emphasis is on learning and doing. There's a sense of coming out of a class having learnt something. There's a verbal sense of clarity in how to fully engage in a pose. Instruction, demonstration, adjustment, to instill a sense of being fully absorbed and present.

Therapeutic and restorative yoga. Attending the medical classes in Pune, India, with Geeta Iyengar (daughter of BKS Iyengar) is one of the highlights for many students who attend classes at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMI). A whole array of injuries, illnesses, often chronic conditions, are all here in a therapeutic yoga class and one can truly see the healing benefits of Iyengar Yoga in action. Some teachers will know how to work for a particular condition and offer specific remedial or therapeutic classes; how a particular pose may be useful for a shoulder injury or gynecological condition. This aspect of yoga is a gift and enables everyone in all stages of health to experience.

9 Iyengar Yoga is the most practiced form of yoga. Iyengar Yoga Institutes or Centres are spread around the world from Beijing to Rio. For many years, I attended an annual Iyengar Yoga intensive in France and I was amazed at the differing nationalities. Each corner of the globe was represented with the common unity of practicing Iyengar Yoga.

Continuing the legacy of BKS Iyengar. This is one of the main reasons Iyengar Yoga is so profound. It's quite remarkable how one man, through sheer will, desire and determination, brought yoga to all of us no matter what style we may practice. His scientific, artistic and practical legacy shines through in all Iyengar Yoga teachers. He has left us numerous books, articles, research, thoughts and reflections about yoga. And he is supporting you in your yoga. The journey continues.

10

IYENGAR YOGA IN GREECE

ON THE BEAUTIFUL ISLAND OF ZAKYNTHOS

with Sam Xenofou, certified Iyengar yoga teacher member of the IYAUK



- **All our yoga equipment** including mats, props and our chosen yoga space. Villa Nobelos provides an inside studio where Villa Meltemi allows practice outside underneath a vine pergola both with amazing views over the Ionian Sea. All our equipment is locally made.

OUR HOLIDAY PACKAGE DOESNT INCLUDE:

- **Flights** are not included in our package but with your booking we can assist you with finding cheap flights.

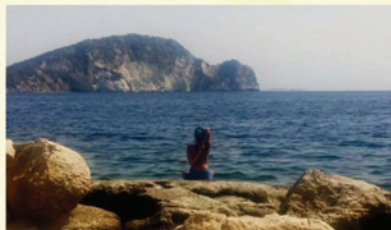
- **Insurance**, please make sure you make your own arrangements for travel insurance - this is a requirement for taking part on our holiday.

OUR HOLIDAY PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- **Accommodation** sharing a twin or double bedded room (subject to availability) with en suite facilities. Please visit our website for details on the beautiful locations.

- **Yoga classes** 6 mornings in the week of 2 hrs yoga and 1½ hours yoga class (often relaxation/pranayama) 5 late afternoons in the week.

- **Breakfast (brunch) & dinner** - all vegetarian locally sourced with a variety of food from a strictly Greek style buffet.



2015 EVENTS

- **MAY 10th - MAY 17th**
@
VILLA NOBELOS
- **JUNE 05th - JUNE 12th**
@
VILLA MELTEMI
- **OCT 04th - OCT 11th**
@
VILLA NOBELOS

Visit us:

www.xenoyoga.com

Like us:

www.facebook.com/xenoyoga

Email us:

hello@xenoyoga.com

Xenoyoga