

YIN TEACHING TIPS

Here are some ideas for how we can teach Yin yoga. This is from my experience and the experience of other teachers.

- **Speak from our own practice** – like all forms of yoga, it is absolutely essential that we are practising what we are teaching. Students will hear that when we teach and respond better to it.
- **Teach Yin in a yin way** – calm, inclusive, patient, steady...though avoid becoming too personally yin in the Yin (so as an example, make sure that the demonstration of poses does not result in ourselves disappearing into the practice).
- **Explain the basics** – when there are new people in class, explain what the Yin practice is, how the edge might be felt, the ways of breathing, the balance between engagement and relaxation, that strong sensation is different to ‘pain’, that if it is too intense then they need to modify.
- **Timing of poses** – you could use a watch and remember; or a timer (like Insight Timer app - <https://insighttimer.com>).
 - *Symmetrical shapes*: staying exactly on time is not important.
 - *Asymmetrical shapes*: being 30 seconds longer or shorter between the sides is not the end of the world.
- **Sequence from what makes sense** – start slowly and softly and then build it up and then bring it back down. Try and keep a balance of forward and back bending. Of course, feel free to use the fifteen plus sequences in my Yin yoga manuals, *Brightening Our Inner Skies* and books on this practice by Bernie Clark, Sarah Powers and others. Develop confidence from already tried and tested structures.
- **Give plenty of options** – as an acknowledging of individuality and an encouraging of confidence amongst participants.
- **Theming of class** – this can cover a wide range of options: talk from a place that feels appropriate and genuine to you. Themes like: curiosity, gratitude, connecting, balance, opening, meridians, fascia, meditation – and remember that gaps and silence can be great.
- **The chat** – each pose talk at start and then in last 1-2 minutes could be silent; because we are asking people to drop inwards and if we are not leaving some silent spaces then they are being constantly drawn outward. And we can teach completely in silence.
- **To adjust or not** – making an appropriate choice though remember to adjust in a yin way (soft and gentle). My own way of adjusting is offering options and providing props. Other teachers may make more physical adjustments.
- **To prop or not** – this obviously depends upon circumstances. Sometimes we are teaching where there are no props and sometimes where there are lots of props. Sometimes we have students whose experience will significantly change by using props.

Personally I find that props can be helpful in making the practice more available and more accessible.

- **Go to Yin classes** – I learn a lot from attending Yin classes/workshops taught by other teachers: forever a student is a great mantra for all of us.
- **An embodying of yin** – as the teacher, being a presence that quietly holds the space.
- **Pause** – and release – and breathe – and open...and there can then be the magic of yin...

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June 2017

I teach intensives, retreats and workshops – details and dates here:
http://www.yogawithnorman.co.uk/workshops_with_norman.html

I have a monthly newsletter – if you would like to receive it, please email me at:
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Like so much, this piece has been substantially improved by comments and suggestions from others. Little is set in stone. Ideas once tightly clung to can dissipate like morning mists. Do feel free to contact me with your thoughts and proposals.