



RESTORATIVE YOGA

Pink Lotus Yoga Teacher Training 2014

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE YOGA?

- ✘ Refer to restorative yoga as “active relaxation.”
By supporting the body with props, we alternately stimulate and relax the body to move toward balance – Judith Lasater
- ✘ Yoga for the relief (or reduction) of stress
- ✘ Hatha yoga
- ✘ Yoga that can be practiced when ill or recovering from illness or injury

WHY RESTORATIVE YOGA?

- ✘ Chronic stress can lead to health issues
 - + Disease
 - + Unhealthy eating
- ✘ The spine gets to move and rest in several different directions
- ✘ A balanced restorative practice (or class) includes at least one gentle inversion – which helps to reverse the effects of gravity
 - + Blood and lymph fluid accumulates in the lower extremities when we sit or stand during the day
- ✘ Stimulates and soothes the organs

SUPPORT CREATES RELEASE

- ✘ The theme of every class is...
 - + Relaxation
 - ✘ The release of stress
- ✘ The aim of each pose is...
 - + Relaxation
 - ✘ The release of stress
- ✘ Your job as a teacher is to...
 - + Help the practitioners reach relaxation and relieve stress
 - ✘ Become the role of caregiver and/or nurturer

WHY ENCOURAGE PROP USEAGE?

- ✗ Support the body
 - + This makes relaxing easier
- ✗ Helps to align the body
- ✗ Not all bodies are the same and props allow the practitioners to flirt with options to allow comfort... and relaxation to set it
- ✗ Differentiate between: “prop up” or “anchor” props



THE HEART OF RESTORATIVE YOGA

- ✘ Basic relaxation pose
 - + Variations are: Savasana (on back or stomach), mountain brook,
- ✘ Deliberate stillness
- ✘ The props are meant to relieve your muscles and bones of their role in support and action, the nervous system sends and receives fewer messages and becomes quieter
- ✘ Awareness of body becomes more apparent
- ✘ Neutrality

RESTORATIVE BREATHING

× Centering breath:

- + Never strain or force the breath
- + Success is not measured by how much breath you take in or let out
- + Practice:
 - × Gently inhale long slow breath
 - × Gently exhale long slow breath
 - × Progressively create longer gentle inhales and exhales
 - × Variation: counting on inhale and try to extend or double count on exhale (inhale 4 counts, exhale 5-8 counts)
 - × Inhale “relaxation” exhale “tension”

BALANCING A RESTORATIVE CLASS...

- ✘ Functional – making props available so that there is minimal transition between poses
- ✘ Guiding practitioners through breath awareness and centered breathing
- ✘ Backbend, forward bend, inversion, twist, final relaxation
 - + Hip openers, arm placement, multiple back bends/ forward bends – find counter poses that compliment each other
- ✘ Auto suggested relaxation and/or guided imagery
- ✘ Holding space

FUNCTIONALITY

- ✗ Sequence of poses related to prop use
 - + When sequencing try to place poses together that lend minimal movement from one pose to the next
 - ✗ With that being said, remember that it is important to balance a forward bend with a back bend and vice versa



RESTORATIVE SEQUENCING

- ✘ Balance backbends and forward bends
- ✘ 1-2 twists both sides
- ✘ Inversion is great right before final relaxation
- ✘ Poses that double as backbends and inversions
- ✘ When on stomach remind practitioners to turn head to other side half way through

MORE RESTORATIVE SEQUENCING

- ✘ Example sequence 1 hour class: basic relaxation pose (5 min), backbend (5-7 min), forward bend (5-7 min), hip opener (great place to add guided imagery) (5-10 min), twist (3-7 min each side), relax on abdomen or child's pose (3-5 min), inversion (5-10 min), final relaxation (10-20 min)
- ✘ Example sequence 1.5 hour class: basic relaxation pose (5 min), backbend (5-7 min), forward bend (5-7 min), hip opener (great place to add guided imagery) (5-10 min), twist (3-7 min each side), relax on abdomen (3-5 min), backbend (5-7 min), forward bend (5-7 min), inversion (5-10 min), final relaxation (10-20 min)

AUTO SUGGESTED RELAXATION AND/OR GUIDED IMAGERY

- ✘ Auto suggestion relaxation walks the practitioner through relaxing the body, beginning at the feet moving through the body all of the way up to the head
 - + Great for basic relaxation poses, supta badakonasana, legs up the wall and/or supported fish pose
- ✘ Guided imagery is a great way to keep the practitioner focused on relaxation – often diving into letting go of emotions that could be holding them back from relaxing
 - + Read slowly
 - + Pause frequently
 - + Explore writing your own – even for specific or certain restorative poses

COMMON ?'S ABOUT RESTORATIVE YOGA

- × How do I know I am doing it right?
- × I have difficulty getting up and down off of the floor what should I do; am I able to practice this form of yoga?
- × What should I do if I experience pain or discomfort in the position?
- × How should I breath?
- × Is relaxation even possible?
- × This is very similar to Yin Yoga...what are the main differences?