

Led Practice Program: Structure and Background

Purpose

Yoga Mandir holds a theme of **practice based learning**. This approach acknowledges BKS Iyengar's statements on the need for a balance between '**objective knowledge**' and '**subjective experience**'.

Knowledge has two facets. One is objective and the other subjective. Objective knowledge is based on speculation, thinking and analysis, whereas subjective knowledge is to verify the objective knowledge with experience. Subjective knowledge comes through practical experience and objective knowledge is earned through theoretical study. Yoga is both a practical as well as a theoretical subject, but it is neither blind practice nor a discursive one. Any practice needs some objective knowledge. One puts this objective knowledge or the acquired knowledge into practice, so that one experiences the reality of the objective knowledge.¹

Just as a musician must develop a discipline of practice to maintain the fluency and proficiency of the art so too a practitioner of Yoga must refine the instrument of practice through regular and persistent practice.

The Led practice programs of the Institute are provided for students to come into contact with a practice environment where Led practice leaders follow set sequences to cultivate an environment of concentration and application. Such an environment allows us to observe ourselves (svadhyaya). It is the subjective experience of our Yoga that is the meaningful place of learning. Practice is a place where we can experience directly the things identified in class.

Initially practice is difficult for a student as there is a significant difference between the classroom experience and one's own practice. The Led practice program provides a structured environment where students can overcome obstacles and distractions within themselves to begin to cultivate the disciplines and routines required to progress.

Our role as Led practice leaders is to be consistent and applied so that together we can gain the benefits in the body and the effects upon the mind through our practice commitment.

BKS Iyengar writes

'Yoga is effort. Only practice is important. The rest of knowledge is only theory'.²

As one of the learning pathways of our Practitioner program, the Institute offers practice support via an early morning Led Practice program. Practice programs are devised to support students move from a focus on instruction to an environment where they can integrate their observation and concentration in asana.

Additionally, Led Practice provides an opportunity for more experienced practitioners and trainee teachers to deliver sequences within the Institute environment to gain experience and confidence in presentation, voice, timing and sequence.

¹ BKS Iyengar, Astadala Yogamala Vol 1, Yoga: freedom through discipline, p 103

² Noelle Perez-Christiaens (Quoting BKS Iyengar), Sparks of Divinity, p57

The Practice programs exist across 3 levels to support student practice via access to the Institute's amenities (environment, room, props). The programs focus on sequence and timings so that participants can develop their application and svadhyaya (self study) of what has been learnt in class.

Consistent attendance is essential.

When

Level	Day	Time	Studio	Number	Period
Foundation	Wednesday	6.45-8.00am	2 or 3	20	Week 1- Week 10 each term
Developing	Monday	6.30-8.00am	1 or 2	20	Week 1- Week 10 each term
	Wednesday	6.30-8.00am	1 or 2	20	Week 1- Week 10 each term
Established-Maturing	Friday	6.30-8.00am	1 or 2	20	Week 1- Week 10 each term

Class description

In Led Practice sessions the asana names are called with the practice leader presenting the posture, and with alternatives given where needed. There is little or no instruction (some simple instruction is provided in the Foundation Led Practice in recognition of students' need to know). The Foundation and Developing practitioner Led Practice programs consolidate asanas learnt and studied within the term.

To enrol in the Led Practice program students must also be enrolled in a Practitioner program in the same term.

Sequences are devised and delivered by teachers or trainee teachers. The practice covers the broad repertoire of asanas in the relevant practitioner level and application of methods (technique, timings, sequence and repetition)³.

Cost of attendance

Students enrolled in two Practitioner Yogasana courses per term can enrol in the Practice program at their level without additional cost. For those attending one Practitioner Yogasana course the cost of a Led Practice enrolment is \$130 per term. If a student has attended the pre-term Introduction to Iyengar Yoga Methodology intensive, this counts as a second term booking. This does not apply to Pranayama or term break Intensives.

Leader Selection and Allocation

Leaders for Foundation and Developing Led Practice are drawn from the established and maturing student body of the Institute, via an Expression of Interest process.

Expressions of Interest are invited throughout the year on the website. Expressions of Interest are assessed by Alan Goode. Alan takes into account a range of factors including number of applications, Institute timetabling and applicant readiness. Applicants are usually notified of the outcome by the end

³ See the article by Alan Goode, "Understanding Iyengar Yoga through technique timings sequence and repetition" in the Resources section of www.yogamandir.com.au

of Week 7. Led Practice rosters and leader allocations for the following term are finalised by the end of Week 8 or 9.

Students who are accepted as potential future Led Practice leaders will be required to attend an agreed Led Practice session for at least one term prior to being considered for allocation to the Leader role. Eventual allocation to a leader's role is not guaranteed but remains at the discretion of Alan Goode.

In the Foundation and Developing practice programs at least two leaders are appointed to each level to work as 'buddies' on a rotational basis across one term.

The Established-Maturing practice on Fridays is usually led by trainee teachers of the school on a rotational basis.

Content Development via Yoga Vidya

For Foundation and Developing Led Practice a set of five (5) sequences is developed for each level and these are provided to practice leaders. An audio file of asana names and correct pronunciations is also supplied to Practice leaders.

The Established/Maturing Led Practice follows sequences developed by the Led Practice leader.

Practice leaders orientation program

Leaders of the Foundation and Developing practice programs attend a leader orientation session with the Institute administration in the week prior to commencing their leader role. They are also oriented to their role through attendance at Led Practice for at least one full term prior to leading a Led Practice session.

In the week prior to term 1 each year Alan conducts a skills session for leaders.

Responsibilities

Leaders are responsible for the security of the Institute. Windows and doors must be secure at the end of each session.

Entitlements

Those enrolled in the Leaders program are entitled to book Studio 3 for their own (self directed) practice by sending an email to office@yogamandir.com.au at least 24 hours prior to the proposed practice time.

Insurance

Allocation to Led Practice does not require a leader to carry insurance.