

Dear Friends of the Yoga Place:

Some of the students at The Yoga Place wrote to me about the article entitled “How Yoga Can Wreck Your Body” that appeared in the January 5, 2012 issue of *The New York Times*. I noticed when I looked on the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States (IYNAUS) website that there have been over 700 comments about this article. I’m sure there have been hundreds more on other websites and I imagine that the NYT received many comments from readers.

Yoga doesn’t injure students but a faulty practice of yoga may. Alignment is the most important element in a successful yoga practice and a good teacher can make all the difference. Also, yoga is as much about the mind as the body so your attitude can help you prevent injury. You should not approach yoga aggressively. Being a consistent student who does not allow ego to go beyond awareness and wisdom is essential.

Though the article makes many incorrect statements and faulty assumptions, the author does make a few excellent points. It is true that “awareness is more important than rushing through a series of postures just to say you’d done them” and that . . .”if you do it (asana) with ego or obsession, you’ll end up causing problems”. It is also true that with the “exploding popularity” of yoga, “many teachers lack the deeper training necessary to recognize when students are headed toward injury.”

The teachers at The Yoga Place are all trained in the Iyengar tradition and have extensive knowledge that allows them to sequence poses to prepare students to progress without injury, and to adjust poses according to individual needs, abilities, and previous injuries. We also insist on students signing up for a session of yoga that is 8-16 weeks long and on taking a Level 1 class for at least a few months before progressing to a Level 2 class. In this way there is sequential instruction and a teacher gets to know the students and their needs better. And, when more advanced poses are introduced, either the students’ bodies are ready to approach them or the students have developed the awareness to know how to use props to adjust the poses.

My first inclination had been to go through the article paragraph by paragraph and comment on each one. However, I decided no one would want to read it because it would be too long! But, I did want to address the concerns of The Yoga Place students. Also, please read the response from Christopher Beach, president of IYNAUS, included on our website.

Sincerely,

Chris Saudek  
Director  
The Yoga Place, LLC