



# ORIYI

Oxford and Region Iyengar Yoga Institute

Welcome to the Easter 2012 edition of our e-newsletter.

Dear Members,

Hopefully by now you will all have had a chance to look at our new website at <http://www.oriyi.org.uk> I think it is fantastic – many thanks to Ruth Jones for all the hours of work that have gone into its design. You can now see at a glance the answers to frequently asked questions, lists of teachers, membership details and much more. Under info are the home practice sheets I mentioned in a previous newsletter compiled by the teachers at the Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York, they really are a most useful resource.

During one of our web planning meetings we came across a sukhasana chair being marketed by a Canadian firm at a mere \$1,800 Canadian dollars!!!! Apart from the price it looks like quite a useful piece of furniture. Let us know if you come across any interesting pieces of yoga equipment.

Many of us enjoyed a brilliant Women's Workshop with Judi Sweeting in February – enclosed is an account of the day provided by Judi. You will see that there are a number of very useful illustrations of the poses covered - many thanks to Tig – the photographer. I didn't manage to take many photos on the actual day - too busy enjoying myself.

Also included is an interesting account of an event held at Sarva with Gulnaaz Dashti a visiting teacher from Pune, a short article from a student who feels passionately about the benefits of Iyengar Yoga and a couple of tasty recipes.

That's all for now- don't forget your membership subscription was due at the end of March, details on the web.

Best wishes

Mary  
ORIYI Chair and  
Membership Secretary

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## Report on the yoga event held this term.

### JUDI SWEETING'S WOMENS WORKSHOP - 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2012

First of all a bit of background about the workshop. Judi formulated a questionnaire for all the women who booked for the event, just to find out if their interest was in menstruation issues, pre-menopause, menopause or post menopause. The questionnaires were duly completed and the majority of women were interested in how Iyengar Yoga could help them with the menopause.

We worked on a general programme for beginners to Iyengar Yoga who are passing through the menopause. Judi gave everyone a handout showing what we would do, photos or drawings of the asana and the problem areas helped by the asana to aid memory. We were also able to make our own notes especially where a particular problem resonated with us, for example hot flushes!

Judi presented the findings from the questionnaires and talked about the Menopausal stages of a woman's life from a western and eastern perspective and then we worked through the practice.

Geeta Iyengar has given us so much information about Iyengar Yoga for Women over the years. Judi showed us the booklet - "The practice of women during the whole month" by Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar and strongly recommended it to teachers attending, for their students experiencing menstrual confusion!

I shall give just a taste of what was said and what we did –

#### **MENOPAUSE**

Defined as the time when periods do not occur for 9 months at a stretch. (Usually between 40 and 50 years of age.

Irregular periods and less abundant periods are a sign of its onset.

**Pre-menopause** is the time of life between having regular periods and the absence of periods (can last for 5 years).

**Menopause** "proper" is when a new hormonal balance sets in. Generally lasts 10 years (then old age has started).

*Science does not talk about the post-menopause, however women experience this and Iyengar Yoga acknowledges it!*

**Symptoms of the menopause are** – Fatigue (in the head and in the abdomen). Bleeding. Stiffness. Swelling and heaviness. Hot flushes. Nerve problems (anxiety, mood swings, insomnia). High Blood Pressure.

Once the menopause has been established the **advice given by Geeta Iyengar is**

<b>Do standing poses.</b>	<b>Do rope movements.</b>
<b>Do inverted asana.</b>	<b>Open the groins.</b>
<b>Elongate your bones.</b>	<b>Do forward bends</b>
<b>Lubricate your joints.</b>	<b>Be positive!</b>
<b>Remove the dorsal hump.</b>	<b>Be confident!</b>
<b>Do backbends.</b>	<b>Stay healthy in body and mind!</b>

Here are a few suggestions to help those who experience hot flushes.

UTTANASANA: head resting



PADANGUSTHASANA AND PADAHASTASANA head resting - adapt above prop, or a pile of foam blocks to support head.

**(Could practice supported standing asana here) with support of wall or trestler.**

PARSVOTTANASANA – supported.



PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA – supported.

ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA – supported.



*Please note – Sirsasana should be omitted, as it is known to cause hot flushes. So instead practice Ardha Halasana and Setubandhasana. Once hot flushes recede, the Sirsasana or Rope Sirsasana can be practiced.*

ARDHA HALASANA – Halasana with thighs resting on a bolster on a chair or table.



SETUBANDHASANA with cross bolsters



SAVASANA

If hot flushes should come whilst in a pose, you may have held that pose for too long? Come out!

Practice mindfully with less effort. There should be no irritation in the muscles. Use a bandage for the eyes and brain.

The groins get hot in the menopause, they get stiff, and this causes HBP. Open the pelvic rim and inner thighs, this is very important and reduces hot flushes.

Though not shown here, standing asana with the support of the trestler or a wall reduces abdominal pressure and therefore hot flushes. See VIRABHADRASANA 3 below



where the head is rested and brain quiet. This avoids irritating the muscles.

**Geeta Iyengar recommends staying in supported asana for 1 to 3 minutes to cool the brain.**

**Savasana finally puts the body and mind into a restful state.** One can do pranayama such as Ujjayi and Viloma in Savasana. These pranayamas help cool us down, restore energy, reduce bloating, swelling and avoid night sweats.



## Future Events

**Kirsten Agar Ward** – Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May at St. Bartholomew School Newbury

**Cost:** ORIYI Members - Morning Only £15 - 10:00am – 12.30pm  
(Non ORIYI Members £20)

ORIYI Members – Full Day £25 – 10:00am – 3:00pm  
(Non ORIYI Members £35)

For further information about this or future events ORIYI events, please email

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## **Killed with kindness**     By Ally Hill

Have you ever worked so hard that your body was screaming for release but were quite happy to do it because the teacher had such charisma that you'd have followed her off a cliff?!

That was the feeling for many when Gulnaaz Dashti was teaching the three days of classes, that she delivered, in early March.

Sarva IYI in High Wycombe was privileged to host Gulnaaz, for part of her first visit to the UK. Her teaching was pure Pune style. When you closed your eyes in the two pranayama sessions, it was just like being in the Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Institute, home to the Iyengar family, where she teaches. Her accent and quick-fire delivery, so evocative of classes in India, took me right back to my visits to Pune.

She started on Friday evening's class testing us out to see the standard of our practice. The holds were long, the repetitions many and the instructions thick and fast. Occasionally we'd hear the resonant thwack as a recalcitrant piece of body received directional encouragement. As with all teachers from India, Gulnaaz expected us to do, do more and keep on doing. When we came up with the occasional grunt or groan she'd smile and somehow that made it alright. We were taught how to fold the legs in svastikasana, with the feet under the thighs, not the knees and our hamstrings were given a very good workout.

Saturday started early, with an 8:30 pranayama class. For those less experienced students the opening of the chest became the focus, for others keeping the height in the spine or not letting the head come up. This was an excellent and much needed reminder of how the body must work, without effort, to maintain the posture so the breath can flow.

After an hour's break, where Sarva provided yogurt and fruit for breakfast, we resumed the class. This session focused on the standing asanas. With the toes and ball of the foot up the wall, we worked long and hard, lifting the muscles of the legs in order to lengthen the spine. For both inversions Gulnaaz put everyone on extra height. I found the tri-fold blanket for sirsasana unstable to start with, as I'm used to the firm grip of my hand around my head but I soon got the feel of it and the improvement to the lift in my shoulders was well worth any momentary disorientation. Sarvangasana likewise was done on double height, again very wobbly to start with but boy was I straight! This was the case for all that I spoke to and something I will be working with for my own practice in the future.

The afternoon brought forward bends. I had to miss this session but I'm assured it was equally as beneficial as all the others. My task was to find a suitable gift. Although I had seen Gulnaaz in Pune, I didn't know her and I need a bit more contact with someone in order to find the right gift. (We hope she enjoyed the chocolates based on traditional English puddings and is using the china mug with the classic design from the V&A museum.)

Sunday brought backbends after the early morning pranayama session – lots of repetition meant that we all went further and higher. We definitely needed the Savasana at the end of the class. But everyone left smiling after such a detailed workout.

At the end of the weekend, it being such a warm sunny day, well for early March in the UK it was! Sheila Haswell and I took Gulnaaz, Uday and his wife Sonali to a 900 year old pub where we sat in the garden and enjoyed fruit juices and delicious food - a perfect end to a wonderful weekend. I asked her to stay but she said it was a bit far from her family, so reluctantly we let her go. Hopefully we can entice her back soon.



## Gulnaaz at Sarva



### **Yoga keeps me sane – by Veronique Bennett**

A friend recommended yoga to me over six years ago. The teacher she recommended was looking for volunteers. At the same time I had three young children – I felt so “rusty” and stiff and had pain everywhere, probably brought about by a lot of hard work, three births then raising the children, as well as renovating my house.

I started classes thinking that I couldn’t do anything but slowly began to feel better and I began to understand the benefits of the class. My teacher has always been fantastically supportive, helping but not pushing and has become a good friend.

Now I always look forward to the next class. I feel I can’t do without yoga because it brings me so many benefits. After all this time I would have thought that I would have become bored doing the same poses but every time I do them I learn something new. I’m able to concentrate and have become suppler. I feel great, very quiet inside and relaxed.

When life is too busy or difficult between the weekly lessons, I practice by myself. Some of my favourite positions are:

Sirsasana (Head stand), Sarvangasana (shoulder stand), Viparita Karani (Legs up wall, on a bolster), Adho Mukha Svanasana (dog down), Supta Badha Konasana (chicken pose!)

Yoga has helped me so much through difficult times in my life – divorce being one of them. It saved my sanity and it kept me going. I was able to control myself and have some time out. I remember the time when I spent every minute of every day with three children and how the stress can be very bad for the health and body. Yoga has helped me solve problems in my knee and lower back. I think that without yoga I would be feeling like a really elderly grandma and I’m 46 now!

## Recipes

### Curried Cauliflower and Peas

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 head of cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 cup peas
- 2 tablespoons canola oil or other flavourless oil
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 teaspoon garam masala powder
- 1 teaspoon corriander powder
- Salt to taste



Sauté onions in a large pan until softened. Turn heat to high, and add the cauliflower florets. When pan is very hot, pour water to about 1/2 inch high. Immediately cover as water sizzles. Lower heat to medium and let cauliflower steam for about 2 minutes or until crisp-tender.

Remove lid, and add peas. Drizzle oil over vegetables, sprinkle in the spices and salt and mix everything very well. Add more water in small increments as necessary. Continue sautéing vegetables for another 3 to 4 minutes until most of the water has evaporated.

### Dhal – Neemah’s Recipe from Hands On Newsletter

- 9oz Split Red Lentils
- ½ teaspoon Turmeric
- 1 pint water or vegetable stock
- 1 green chilli chopped finely
- 1 can of tomatoes
- 1 onion, chopped finely
- Dried/fresh ginger to taste grated or crushed
- 2 cloves of garlic crushed
- 1 teaspoon of cumin seeds, crushed
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds, whole
- Seeds of 2 cardamom pods, crushed
- Salt and lots of pepper



Throw everything into a large saucepan and simmer for half an hour. You can add or subtract anything to taste.