

Advanced Gentle Yoga Teacher Training Manual

Chair and Senior Yoga, Gentle Yoga Therapy and Somatics

With Sherry Zak Morris, E-RYT; Paula Montalvo, RYT;
Justine Shelton, E-RYT500 and Certified Viniyoga Therapist
and James Knight, Integrative Therapist and Somatics Educator

Special Presentations from Dannette Rusnak, RYT, Marjorie Old, RYT
and Carin Seebold, RYT



Empowering Yoga Teachers with Knowledge,
Skills and Confidence

GENTLE, SENIOR AND CHAIR YOGA TRAINING MANUAL - VOLUME 5

Chair and Senior Yoga, Gentle Yoga Therapy and Somatic Yoga

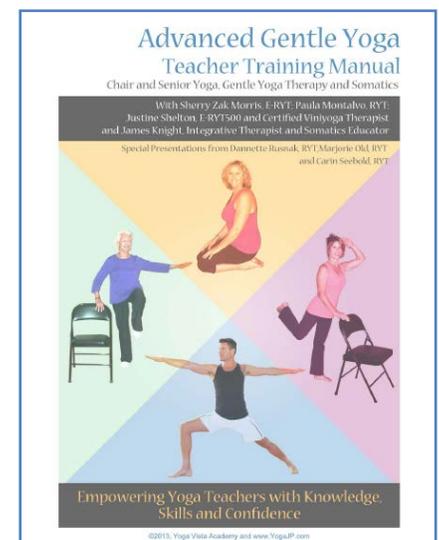
Along with “Yoga Business” Guest Presenters

*With Sherry Zak Morris, E-RYT; Paula Montalvo, RYT;
Justine Shelton, E-RYT500 and Certified Viniyoga Therapist
and James Knight, Integrative Therapist and Certified Hanna Somatics Educator*

Educational Resource for Yoga Teacher and Practitioners. Over 500+ yoga poses and sequences, fully illustrated with contraindications and modifications.

CHAPTERS:

- **Gentle Yoga through Somatic Exploration with James Knight**
Deep Dive into the methodology of Hanna Somatic Education. Learn the difference between reeducating the mind/body (Soma) to reset the length of a muscle as opposed to stretching a muscle. Utilize these gentle and easy Hanna Somatic exercises in combination with traditional Hatha yoga sequences. Somatics will help you and your students unlock old patterns of pain and stiffness so they can get more out of their practice.
- **Senior Health Issues: Balance and Posture with Paula Montalvo**
Indepth focus on Postural issues for seniors: causes, physical imbalances, balance challenges and structural anatomy specific to 65+ populations. Through the practice of specifically-designed seated and standing chair yoga vignettes, learn how you can incorporate these essential movements into your Chair Yoga for Seniors classes.
- **Chair Yoga for Everyone: An Anatomical Focus with Sherry Zak Morris**
Comprehensive series of modules focused on modifying traditional yoga poses and sequences to meet the needs of seniors, people with physical limitations, as well as the *growing market of chair yoga for workplace wellness programs*. An anatomical approach to a large selection of pose variations and sequencing options will be presented, along with focused discussions on Senior health issues.
- **Gentle Yoga Therapy for Joint Health with Justine Shelton**
Based on yoga therapy concepts, the focus will be on osteoarthritis, proper joint alignment and strengthening strategies, identifying and correcting structural imbalances, improving range of motion, warding off and/or delaying joint replacement surgery, and pre and post-surgery yoga practices and contraindications.
- **You and Your Yoga Business Topics and Discussions with Sherry Zak Morris, Marjorie Old and Carin Seebold**



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Gentle Yoga Teacher Resources, Trainings, Workshops and teacher discounts, visit www.YogaVistaAcademy.com

9.

- When you are finished and your head is back to center bring your arms back down to your sides and extend your legs.
- Gently, but firmly, press the back of your head against the floor for a couple of seconds and then relax. In Hanna Somatic Education we call this action a “lock in”.
- Roll your head on the floor slowly side to side. Is it easier now? Turn your head to the left and check if you increased your range of motion. In other words, can you turn your head further now? Now check the right side.

Finishing Position: Lying on your back with your arms and legs extended on the floor. Palms are facing up and ankles are flopped open to the sides. Eyes are closed. Take a few conscious breaths and notice how you feel.

SOMATIC NECK RELEASE

Time: 3 – 4 minutes

Description and purpose: This movement is another pain eraser for the neck and upper shoulder area. It can be performed alone if you need something for quick relief, or it can be done before or after another Somatic Exploration exercise.



Experiential Observations including anatomical focus:

Starting position: Lying on your belly. Head is turned to the left side and resting on the floor. Place your hands palms facing down on either side of your head and slightly wider than your shoulders. Toenails are face down on the floor.

1.

- Start with the head turned to the right and resting on the floor.
- Using your hands to stabilize your upper body, use the muscles of your upper back to lift your head off the floor.
- *Slowly and smoothly* turn the head to the left. As you do this, tuck your chin towards your chest to elongate your neck.
- Lower your head back to the floor (left ear will be touching now).
- Make sure to relax your head, neck, and shoulders *completely* before doing another repetition. Your arms will still be bent, but let everything else relax.

- Repeat to the other side.
- Continue for 3 repetitions each side.

Finishing position: Lying on your belly, with your arms by your side, and resting on one of your cheeks. Breathe and let yourself melt into the floor. After a minute or so, turn your head and rest on the other cheek.

LOOKING OVER YOUR SHOULDER

Time: 3 – 4 minutes

Description and purpose: This is a great exercise to teach the muscles of your neck, shoulders, and upper back to relax. As with all Somatic Exploration movements, you are guided to isolate specific muscles and learn how to control them. In this exercise you are using your own body weight and gravity to unwind and release old patterns.



Experiential Observations including anatomical focus:

Starting position: Lying on your belly. Head is turned to the right side and resting on the floor. Place your hands palms facing down on either side of your head and slightly wider than your shoulders. Toenails are face down on the floor.

1.

- Your hands are stabilizing this movement (use your triceps minimally). However, lead with your left shoulder and use your back muscles to lift the left side of your upper body. Hold intention to keep the right shoulder, arm, and side body relaxed.
- Keep lifting the left side until your ribs are slightly lifted and your spine is twisting. Notice where you feel the contraction of the muscles and then slowly lower yourself down.
- When you reach the floor let all your muscles *relax completely* and breathe.
- Repeat this several times. Experiment by rising up at different angles. You can change the degree of twisting with your torso. You can also squeeze and point your shoulder blade back towards the spine in different directions.
- Make sure you rest in-between each repetition. It is important that your brain registers the contrast between the contraction and release of the

KNEE INJURIES

We'll cover some common knee issues that you have probably had in your classes. The main thing to remember when working with an injury is that circulation is what heals. Movements to increase circulation—while watching the tracking patterns—in addition to creating space and stabilizing and strengthening the muscles around the joint are the intention. In synovial joints, movement and/or isometric strengthening is what increases the synovial fluid, almost like WD-40 for the joint. An important thing to remember with the knee joint is that there are no muscles in the joint itself—so if there is pain in the knee joint a ligament is probably having undue strain put on it. Motto for Yoga - No pain, no pain!

Great poses for increasing circulation and working with the tracking patterns as well as strengthening around the joint:

KNEE CIRCULATION

Extending and flexing the knee and hip to increase circulation and work with the biomechanics of movement.



1) The starting position is apanasana, with the hands interlaced around one knee to hold that knee into the chest.

2) On inhale extend the leg straight out, about an inch off of the floor, belly button drawn to spine to protect low back.

3) On exhale raise leg up, heel toward ceiling, toes toward face to increase the stretch to the back of the leg.

4) On inhale lower leg back down parallel to the floor, about an inch off (I am in mid-movement here.)



5) On exhale bring leg back to starting position.

Repeat 6-8 times before moving to the next side.

It is fine if the leg does not completely straighten, work within the parameters of the practitioner's flexibility.

Having the opposite foot on the floor is an option for people with low back pain, as this more strongly blocks the rotation of the pelvis than holding that knee at the chest.



Alignment and watching the tracking pattern of the joints of the leg is very important, to improve the biomechanics of movement as opposed to reinforcing negative movement patterns. Notice here that the leg is coming straight out of the socket and the knee and toes are facing the ceiling.



This is my normal release valve pattern, especially with my right hip which has a history of joint displacement.



This is awkward for my hip, however some people naturally rotate inwardly. Watch for these patterns, and also encourage your students to pay attention to their movement patterns, to move deliberately with an awareness of their alignment.



If getting on the floor is not possible, knee extensions can be done in the chair. On inhale, extend knee and draw toes toward face.



On exhale, bend knee and lift knee, to get the hip flexors involved as well. Still watch the tracking patterns! Repeat 6-8 times.

UPPER BODY TWIST

As we all know, twists are very beneficial for spinal health, but working with seniors requires limiting some twisting movements. Thus, offer twists where there is not a lot of torque (or leverage) in the twisting movement. The twist should come from the core with the spine straight and long.

One arm Twist

Here is a safe option to avoid over extending the twisting motion.

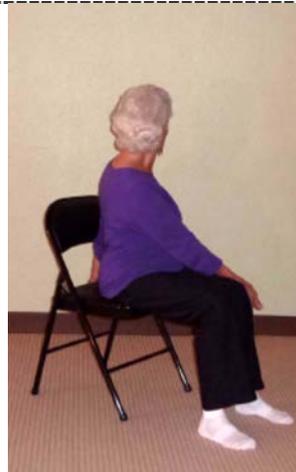


Start with your right arm straight in front, shoulder level. Twist your body to the right and turn your head to the right. Hold and breathe.

Repeat on the other side. You can add in a neck rotation variation to increase the benefit of upper body mobility.

Erect Twist

This twist starts with a long, tall spine and keeps the spine in that position during the twist.



Scoot forward on the chair so that the spine is straight, holding a strong posture.

Place one hand behind the seat of the chair, and the other hand across and to the outside of the opposite knee.

KEYBOARD SHOULDER PLUG-IN

There are perhaps a handful or two of poses that give you that ah-ha moment of either physical release or anatomical understanding. This is one of them. Thank you Kathleen Porter, author of *Natural Posture Pain-Free Living, the Practice of Mindful Alignment* for this ah-ha moment!

This movement sequence brings the whole shoulder joint back and down into its natural position for working on the computer, driving or doing anything with your hands and arms. It counteracts crunched up shoulders!



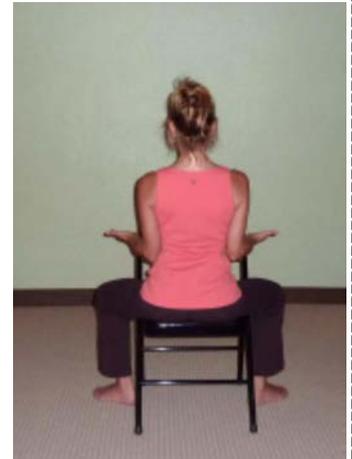
Start with arms in Cactus pose pushing the arms slightly back beyond the horizontal shoulder plane.



Begin to bring the arms down to your sides as low as you can go. Feel what is happening to your shoulder blades. They should feel like they are dropping down your back.



When you arms are down as far as you can go, ideally, you want to feel your elbows squeeze into the sides of your ribs.



Next, bring the arms in front of you without moving your shoulder position. The palms should be facing up.



Now, flip the palms down without moving your shoulder or arm position. You can feel your shoulder blades locked down and securely positioned a bit lower on your back than where they were when you started.



This is the ideal height for your keyboard, armrest or work space. You can even tilt your fingers down a bit to create more ease in the posture. Or place them on your lap and be still. Ah-ha! Ease!



MINDFUL NECK MOVEMENTS



Encourage the student to close their eyes as they slowly and gently move their neck in different angles and directions, exploring the sensations their body is sending to them.

Ask them to notice the difference on one side vs. the other. Where is there tightness or a blockage of energy? Hold and breathe into those tight spots for a few rounds of breath.

Avoid large movements in any direction, this is just a warm-up.

LATERAL NECK STRETCH

What I have noticed with the Seniors is that the lateral (side-to-side) range of motion is quite less than the extension/flexion (up and down) movement. I tell them this is because in our everyday lives we don't use this motion as often, and they agree. That is why I love to offer up this option, and all its great variations.

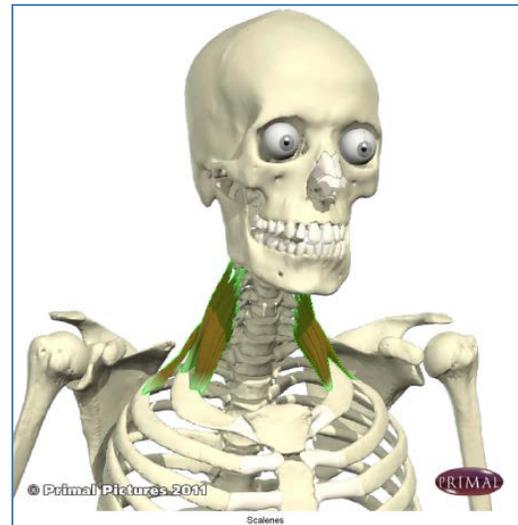
A lateral stretch is very beneficial for anyone who does concentrated, sedentary work – whether at a desk or even an art or craft, these activities (or rather inactivities) can cause tension and tightness in the neck. That tingling in the arm and fingers can be caused from tight scalene and here is why.

Anatomy Point: The Scalenes

The anterior and middle scalenes bend the head to the side, flex the neck forward, and lift the first rib. The posterior scalene does the same actions except it attaches to the second rib. All three divisions will help you breathe when you need them.

It is good to know how to stretch and loosen your scalenes because:

- The brachial plexus is a network of nerves that control your entire arm. The nerves originate from the spine and pass between the anterior and middle scalenes on their way down your arm.
- The subclavian artery is the blood vessel that brings blood to the entire arm. The subclavian artery also passes between the middle and anterior scalenes and can be restricted as well. Cold or loss of feeling in the fingers when the arm is raised overhead may mean your scalenes are cutting off the circulation to your arms.
- The scalenes can also become tight from stress. When we become stressed, we stop breathing from our bellies. Our chest tightens and our ribs stop moving down and out. The scalenes come to the rescue by helping lift our ribs to get more air in our lungs. By doing this chronically, our scalenes become tight and keep our chest lifted permanently leading to a tight, uncomfortable neck and chest.



Tight scalenes can restrict the movement or impulses down these nerves leading to numbness, tingling, and loss of motor control.

Source:
<http://performancesportswellness.wordpress.com>

Advanced Gentle Yoga Teacher Training

YOGAVISTA ACADEMY

Business 101

Product + Marketing + Sales = Business

- **Product**
 - What Product(s) do you offer?
- ▶ **Marketing**
 - ▶ Who will buy it? What Demographic?
 - ▶ What is the price?
 - ▶ How is it packaged?
- **Sales**
 - ▶ How do you find your customer?
 - ▶ How does your customer find you?

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graph LR; A[Right Yoga Style] --> B[Right Customer]; B --> C[Right Place]; C --> D[Right Time]; D --> E[Right Price]; E --> F[SUCCESS!]
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Business 101

Product Development

- **What is your Product?**
 - If you build it, will they come? Have the right product for your demographic or community
 - Specialty Class – Niche classes vs. Generic classes
 - A Senior Chair Yoga class is different than a Corporate Chair Yoga Class
 - A Healthy Back Class is different than a Gentle Yoga Class
 - Ex. "Gentle Yoga for Osteoarthritis"
 - Loyalty vs. Revolving Door
 - Privates, Workshops & Retreats – your expertise (Seniors, Therapeutic, Disabilities, etc)
- **Do's and Don'ts**
 - Find a niche, own it and grow it!
 - Don't be tempted to be everything to everyone
 - Yoga Studio owners love niches!
 - Develop an expertise or serve a specific demographic
 - Tap into your background, interests or passion

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Yoga for Seniors

- Where?
 - Private
 - 55+ Residential Communities
 - Assisted Living Centers
 - Churches, Gyms
 - Civic
 - Senior Community Centers
 - Libraries, Colleges, Govt Institutions
 - Medical/Healthcare
 - Hospitals
 - Rehabilitation Centers
- What's Important?
 - Provide Accessible and Adaptive Yoga
 - Chair vs. Mat
 - Meet them where they are
 - Build rapport and confidence as their teacher
 - Praise their efforts, determination and bravery
 - They are the most loyal student base you can have!
 - Be fun, creative and yes... entertaining (*Blast-off*)

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Case Study: Chair Yoga for Seniors

- Chair Yoga Library Class
 - One Pilot Class "Food for Thought" Program
 - We won a County Award and PR benefits
 - Grew to 15 other City & County Libraries
 - Senior, Chair, Gentle, Family, Kids, Toddlers, Teens
 - Negotiated Blanket Contract with all County Libraries
 - We are the preferred vendor
 - Established reputation and established pricing
- Assisted Living Wheelchair Class
 - One 30 min monthly class grew to classes in 8 different locations
 - Reputation and word spreads



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