

Volume 6 Advanced Gentle Yoga Teacher Training Manual

Senior and Chair Yoga, Gentle Yoga Therapy, Gentle Soma-Kinetics™, Gentle Somatic Yoga™ and other Gentle Yoga

With Sherry Zak Morris, E-RYT; Justine Shelton, E-RYT500; Paula Montalvo, RYT; Erhard Rohrmüller, E-RYT500; James Knight, E-RYT and other Inspiring Teachers



With Special
Presentations by
Stephani Sutherland,
PhD; Marjorie Old; Olga
Danilevich and Pinush
Chauhan

Empowering Yoga Teachers with Knowledge,
Skills and Confidence

GENTLE, SENIOR AND CHAIR YOGA TRAINING MANUAL - VOLUME 6

Chair and Senior Yoga, Gentle Yoga Therapy and Somatic Yoga Along with “Expand your Yoga Teaching” 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; Erhard
Rohrmuller, Soma-Kinetics Expert and Physiologist and more...*

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

CHAPTERS:

- **Gentle Yoga Therapy for Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis with Justine Shelton**
Learn the causes, potential dangers, and structural anatomy and physiology related to these conditions. Modifications, contraindications, and use of props and sequencing to help you lead a safe and effective class for your students with OA or osteoporosis.
The Neuroscience of Pain: What our Students are Feeling with Stephani Sutherland, PhD - Is pain the inevitable destination of the aging process? If pain starts in the brain, can it be re-wired? Why do some people experience more pain than others? Yoga and modern neuroscience are two systems with a common goal: to understand the human mind.
- **Chair Yoga and the Anatomy of Aging with Sherry Zak Morris** - Comprehensive review the most pertinent health issues facing the Senior population, the Yogic prescriptions for wellness and the necessary contraindications for Senior Yoga practice. You will be given all the tools necessary to plan and teach an effective and inspired chair yoga class.
- **Aging is Better with Yoga with Paula Montalvo** - 83-yr old Chair Yoga Teacher discusses aging-specific topics including: memory, coordination, response time, balance, changing physical processes, poses to avoid and include, and many more.
- **Somatic Yoga Intensive with James Knight and Erhard Rohrmuller** - James shares new Somatic Movement Flows™ and cover such topics as: Sensory Motor Amnesia, The three neuromuscular reflexes to stress: Red, Green, and Trauma Reflex, Self Pandiculation, Modifications for chair yoga, Tips/props for other specialty audiences, and guidelines for a successful teaching experience. Erhard shares multi-directional movements and explain how the concepts of Fascia, Tensegrity, and Epigenetics help us to stay healthy at any age.
- **Expand your Yoga Teaching Sessions:** Cues to Keep Your Students Safe and Why We Use Them with Marjorie Old and Justine Shelton; Yoga Mudras: Weaving them into your Yoga with Pinush Chauhan and Chair Yoga Dance with Olga Danilevich



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

Osteoarthritis in the Knees

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 carefully—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 or tendon is probably having undue strain put on it. Motto for Yoga - No pain, no pain!

The following are 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.



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

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

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

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



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 para-meters 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.

Cactus Arms – Prone and Supine

The prone pose, moving only the arms, will strengthen the rhomboids (isolate them by keeping the arms at 90 degree angles). The supine pose allows for a long hold opening the pectoralis muscles and fascia. The combination of weak, overstretched rhomboids and tight pecs adds to dysfunctional alignment of the shoulder girdle and cervical spine.



Taking this pose face down gets gravity into the mix, increasing the load on the rhomboids.

Here is the set up - right angles. Almost everyone will allow the shoulder joints to adduct, which defeats the purpose.

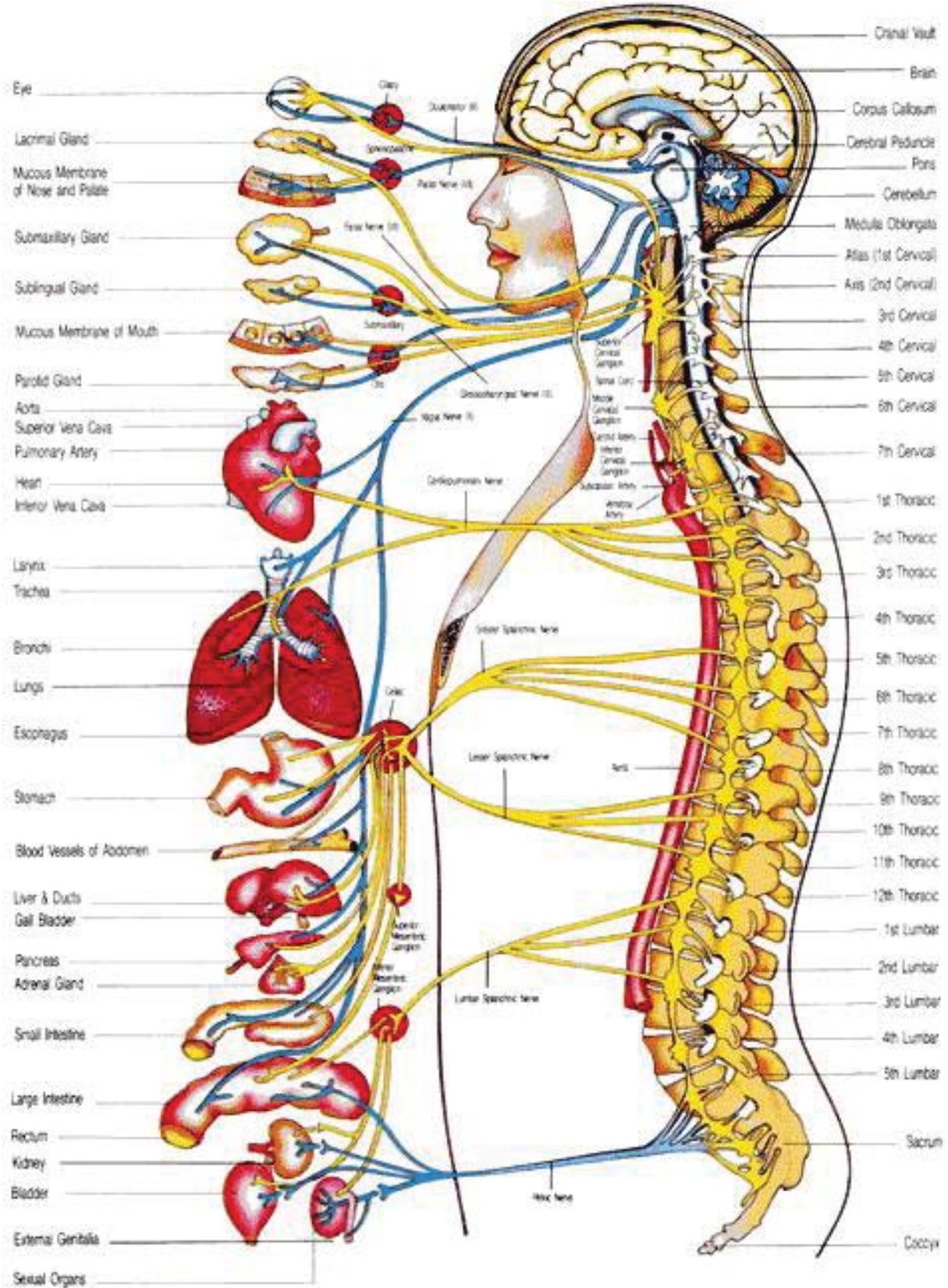
Linda has a very hard time with this because of her structure. That is me giving her guidelines to help stay in alignment.



With the previous cactus arms we were strengthening the rhomboids in the back. Here will do passive stretching to open the pecs in the front. In this picture you can see Linda's limitations in the external rotation of her shoulder joints.

If a body part is not supported, proprioception continues and the muscles cannot truly relax and soften. I placed blankets to support Linda so she had something to release into. Holding the stretch longer allows the fascia to stretch - muscles open easily, it is the fascia that takes several minutes to release, which is why stay is important.

Here is a better view of the prop placement. Notice that I folded the blanket to support Linda's hands so that the wrists stay in alignment rather than going into extension.



Cautionary Movements

Bending – avoid over-rounding in thoracic spine for Osteoporosis



Offer “Progressive” Options



Cue for Postural Alignment



Cautionary Movements

Twisting - Avoid twisting and bending for Osteoporosis



Avoid Leveraged Twists



Offer “Progressive” Options



SCM STRETCH

As we know, everything in our bodies is inter-related. In order to loosen up and find freedom in our necks, we also need to address the muscles that attach to the shoulder girdle. The first one we can visibly see and affect us is the sternocleidomastoid (SCM). This muscle can get tight and contracted, so offering up a counter stretch, especially to deskworkers, will be welcomed!

Anatomy Point: Sternocleidomastoid (SCM)

Along with the levator scapula on the back of the neck, there is often tension in the front of the neck in the SCM muscle. This muscle gets strained and shortened when the head is pushed forward, as in looking at something closely on a computer screen.

All three of the following movements stretch the SCM and Levators.



Place one hand on the medial collar bone to anchor the SCM connection. Then place the other palm on top.



Start by looking diagonally down toward the hands on the exhale.



Then inhale and lift the chin up diagonally. In this position you are stretching and lengthening the SCM.



While the chin is lifted, move the head to the other side.

Multi-Tasking

If you were to ask most Senior Citizens who have had a fall, "how did it happen?" Often they would say that they were doing something while walking or stepping. Thus, practicing doing two things while walking keeps the mind and body focused on balance, and helps train the body to respond automatically should balance be upset.



Walk at a normal pace while touching your hand to your opposite hip, then to the same side shoulder. Continue walking using the other hand for the movements.

2.

2nd Set: Left knee lifts (remain in the same sitting position as the 1st Set)

- **Before** you begin the re-patterning, check your range of motion with the left leg. Lift your knee up and down a few times and notice how far you can raise it, and how easily (or not) you can do this movement.
- Place your left hand on top of the left knee.
- Lift the left knee and apply gentle pressure (about 1 or 2 pounds of pressure) with your left hand.
- As you press gently down on your knee with your left hand, resist the push with your left leg, but slowly “give in” as the knee comes down to the floor.
- Once the knee touches the floor, then relax everything.
- Repeat this movement three more times and rest between each repetition.
- When you are finished, push your left knee into the floor for a couple of seconds to “lock it in”.
- *After* you have completed the instructions for this second set, check your range of motion. Without your left hand on your left knee, raise your knee off the floor. Can you lift it higher now? Is it easier and smoother? If so, congratulations! You just increased your range of motion with the inner muscles of your leg!

3.

- **3rd Set: Left ankle lifts**



- **Before** you begin the re-patterning the muscles surrounding your knee, check your range of motion. Balance on your left big toe and lift your heel up and down a few times. Notice how far you can raise it, and how easily (or not) you can do this movement.
- Place your left hand on top of your left heel.
- Lift the heel by pressing the left big toe into the ground. While you are lifting the heel, apply light pressure (about ½ to 1 pound of pressure) with your left hand.
- Resist the top hand pushing down as you slightly lower the left heel to the floor.
- When the heel touches the floor, relax everything.

DA VINCI INSPIRED SOMATIC MOVEMENTS

Leonardo Da Vinci, the 15th century genius, conveyed a very effective code of movement to strengthen and maximize the physical potential of the human body. With the vitruvian scale of the human body in mind, Leonardo suggested drawing geometric designs with your limbs, in particular the point, line, circle, and figure eight. Every movement starts with the point of departure, continues in a line, turning into any of the 360 degrees of the circle. You can compare, employ or create new movement patterns with this code. It resonates with Yoga, Pilates, Tai-Chi, Qi-Gong, Somatics, Dance, and Sports. Leonardo's code of movement is present in all of them. This author would like to dedicate the following presentation to Leonardo Da Vinci.

LATERAL QUAD AND ARM STRETCH

Knees up, feet flat on your mat, walk your feet to the outside of your mat and lower your right knee to the inside of the mat and stretch your right arm over your head. Lift right knee, then gently lower your left knee to the inside of the mat and stretch the left arm over your head. Gently swaying from side to side. Repeat 5 - 10 times.



You will notice that this movement will articulate your quads, IT band, adductors, abductors, latissimus dorsi, obliques, and several of minor muscle groups.

Precaution: If you have knee injuries be very gentle on the medial rotation.

HIP OPENER

With knees up, feet flat on the mat, right knee floats to the right acting like a tri-pod, bring the left knee up to your chest, gently kick the leg to the left side, coming to a complete circle. Repeat 5 - 10 times. Reverse the circle and repeat the same movements on the other side.

For added challenge touch the floor with your heel somewhere on the dial.



Say it

Adho Mukha Svanasana

Hands shoulder width apart, wrist crease parallel to the front of your mat, fingers spread wide. Externally rotate the shoulders to broaden the shoulder girdle, draw lower shoulder blades together and pull shoulders away from ears...

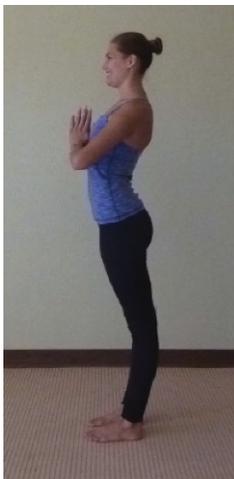
Muscular Integrity

Issues with muscular integrity tend to happen when students are tired, especially towards the end of their practice. Students are best served to remember to listen to their body throughout their practice, but it also requires us, as teachers to cue them when we see them continuing to hold a pose when they can no longer keep the integrity of the pose. Help your students understand the signs that they are no longer holding their pose in a safe way:

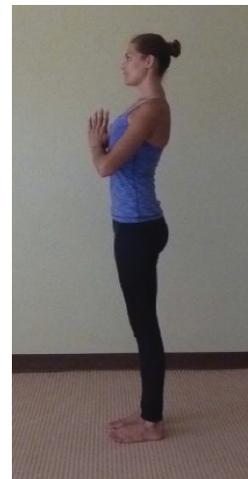
- Not breathing
- Shaking muscles
- Body is “shlumping”

12. Don't Give in to the Release Valve

When muscles are tired or the student is not fully engaged in the physical practice, their body is likely to take the path of least resistance and slip into bad habits. Our asana practice should be used to work with the biomechanics of movement to improve our tracking patterns and our structural alignment. Examples of release valves include forward head carriage, hyperextending the knees, and leaning forward in lateral bends like Triangle.



In this photo she is allowing her body to sink into her release valves of a hypermobile body and overly lordotic spine. The abdominal muscles are long and the lower back is contracted, which increases her lordotic curve. The knees are hyperextended and locked which adds to the misalignment.



Here she is engaging her muscles and axial extension of the spine to bring her body into optimal alignment for her structure. Can you see the difference?

INTRODUCTION

“To dance is to pray, to meditate, to enter into a communion with the larger dance, which is the Universe.” —Jean Houston

This work is a creative exploration of what Yoga, dance and music can bring to the aging population. It is inspired by my wonderful teacher, Megha Battenheim, the founder of *Let Your Yoga Dance*, who taught me how to bring Yoga Dance to special populations—the elderly, and people with special needs who are hindered due to illness or pain.

In the past few years, I started to bring my own vision into this wonderful modality, which I am happy to share with you.



Warrior 1 in Chair (V-arms)

- Opens the chest
- Improves respiration and heart function
- Stretches and strengthens the spinal column and back muscles
- Strengthens arm muscles
- Helps to relieve depression

Gentle Spine Twist with Straight leg (Side Step)

- Improves flexibility of the spine
- Increases range of motion in the shoulders
- Stretches the hamstrings in the straight leg and strengthens the ankle
- Strengthens thigh and knee in bent leg
- Improves focus and coordination