

Partner Yoga Guidelines for Yoga East
February 15, 2017

Problems with Partner Poses

- Students are paying for instruction from you, the teacher, not the person on the mat next to them.
- What if you have one man in the class, or one student everyone else shuns?
- Some students are not competent to partner with others, like a new or inexperienced student, or students who don't understand the pose or the instructions. Sometimes experienced students may think they know what they are doing, but don't really understand how to assist another student, particularly a fearful or hesitant student.
- What are the consequences if a student accuses another student of inappropriate touch or causing an injury? What if you saw it happen? What if you didn't see it happen? This creates serious problems for you, the studio, and both students.
- If a complaint is made for an injury or incident, the student can be liable. Students don't have professional liability insurance. You are responsible for the class.
- What if you have students in class who are traumatized or touch-sensitive? These students may not be comfortable disclosing this and may feel pressured to participate, even if you give students a chance to opt-out.

Before teaching a partner yoga pose, ask yourself these questions:

- Is partner yoga the most effective teaching method for what you want to teach?
- Is it appropriate for the students in your class?
- Are there alternative ways to teach the pose without using partner work?

Special Problems with Acro Yoga

Our liability coverage does not permit acro yoga to be taught at Yoga East. Look online and you will see that acro yoga injuries are often more serious (concussions, broken bones, and dislocations) and can require ER medical treatment.

Is it yoga, or is it acrobatics? Sometimes people try to justify it as yoga by pointing out that Krishnamacharya did it in the 1927 film (see You Tube), but he was playing with small children. He was not doing this with BKS Iyengar or the adult women in the film.

Special Problems with Ashtanga Yoga

Students can be hurt by being adjusted. At Yoga East in the Mysore class, we watch students before we give adjustments, and we talk with them before, during and after we adjust. We adjust only as needed to help students work toward getting the pose on their own. You don't have X-ray vision and cannot see students' internal pathologies, such as arthritis, fusions, stenosis, adhesions, herniations, and so on. Be conservative in adjusting.

Teaching Partner Poses for Couples

A couples class for Valentine's day can be a fun and safe way to teach partner poses for students who came to class for that kind of class. But don't spring it on unsuspecting students.