

Yin Yoga Theory

The 4 Tattvas of Yin Yoga

EDGE

Enter into the posture as relaxed as possible, beginning right at your edge.

Your EDGE is the deepest possible stretch, without causing injury.

Even though we go to our edge in Yin Yoga, we must adhere to Ahimsa. Remember, letting your limbs fall asleep and become tingly or numb is not Ahimsa - you are blocking blood flow.

STILLNESS

Once you land in your edge, the goal is to be still.

TIME

Postures in yoga are held for a minimum of 2 minutes - up to 25 minutes.

RELEASE

Due to the depth of the postures and length of time held, the release must happen extremely slowly.

The 7 Powerful Teaching Techniques

1. **CONNECT** - first to self, then to students, the regular eye contact etc. Here you can introduce the Tattvas of Yin Yoga, remind your students that Ahimsa is always first. You can maintain the connection throughout your yin class with your students by peppering in philosophy and also advising them of the hold times, and how much time is left. Try not to script this and do it the same every time.

2. **CALL / SEE / PAUSE** - call the pose, watch your students while you pause (be quiet).

3. **ALIGNMENT - CRITICAL FIRST** - only cue to keep them safe to start - once all the other TT's are executed, you can deepen. Remember with yin yoga, relaxation is key - so critical alignment will most likely look a little different from yang classes.

4. **SIMPLE WORDS WITH AUTHENTIC VOICE** - don't change your voice - ever.

5. **SILENCE + SPACE** - be quiet. If this is challenging count to 8 slowly when you want to say something.

6. **SIX BODIES** - you know these, pepper information in - this is where intellectual knowledge can be used, but only peppered and only if the above points have been met. This is for teachers who have been training in the 6 bodies method. If you have not, this is where you introduce knowledge to increase your students intellectual body: meridian information, organ information, and TCM information.

7. **BREATH** - this is last cause teachers always say breathe, breathe, breathe - students are breathing or they would be dead. cue them HOW to breathe and insert pranayama where it fits.

Props

There are varying options on the necessity of props for yoga. When doing yin yoga it is helpful to have props on hand. When we use props, we are able to hold some of the postures longer. As with the other styles of yoga, never let your joints hang. Whenever possible, prop up a dangling head, knee or shoulder joint.

Props we can use in yin yoga are:

Bolster

Yoga blanket

Foam and cork blocks Straps

Sandbags

Eye pillow

Essential oils

Meridian Verbiage

GENERAL

Always introduce YIN Yoga with the 4 Tattvas, and ahimsa at the beginning of your class.

Welcome to your ____ minute Yin Yoga class. My name is _____. Today you will start in <call presencing pose>. The 4 Tattvas of Yin Yoga are Remember, that Ahimsa always comes

first. Ahimsa means please let me know if something does not feel right in your body, or if you have any questions throughout class.

Here are some additional text that you may use (edit as you wish!).

Yin yoga is a process of accessing deeply held tensions and blockages for the purpose of receiving release and healing.

You can use the time spent in each yin yoga posture as a mini meditation.

Yin yoga gives us the gift of time and space to go on an inward adventure of exploration.

Let go of what no longer serves you.

Connect to your fullest expression of this posture.

Envision your most favourite self, and release whatever blocks stand in the way and this version of you.

The deep postures of Yin Yoga work with meridians to boost your overall health and wellbeing. Western science is now discovering how Yin yoga may be impacting individuals on physical and psychological levels. On a psychological level, Yin yoga activates your parasympathetic nervous system, also known as your rest and digest system, that promotes relaxation. The long holds of Yin yoga also help you unwind physically, by releasing the tension in deeper tissues in your body, including your fascia (connective tissue).

Body meridians are channels inside your body that transport energy from one part to another. There are no anatomical structures to these channels and can only be felt through our subtle senses and self-inquiry. Meridians have a deep impact on how you think and feel, and your overall health and wellbeing. These channels of energy are also popularly called, Qi, life force, prana and healing energy.

HEART

Your heart is the organ that is responsible to the expression of joy and love, when imbalanced it holds onto impatience, and even hate.

Imbalanced heart energy can result in sleep issues, anxiety, shortness of breath, excessive sweating.

The heart meridian reveals itself through the brightness in the eyes, rules the blood and directs circulation - it is the House of the Spirit.

The Heart Meridian is like the king or queen. It is the ruler of the kingdom and as such, holds

the space for the other officials to do their job. As with any government if it is weak the whole kingdom feels insecure and on shaky ground. For us this may feel like anxiety, as nothing feels safe or secure.

The yang organ of the heart is the small intestine; which sorts the pure from impure. Whether that is from food, sound around us or the nightly news; it sorts out what we need to take in.

One who has is strong in their fire element are: creative, generous, expressive, optimistic, confident, friendly, energetic, committed, loyal, considerate, intelligent, loving, charismatic, and the ability to fully appreciate and enjoy life.

Other ways to nourish your fire element other than yin yoga are to rest and take it easy regularly; protect your cardiovascular system with essential fatty acids in your daily diet; exercise moderately and frequently like walking, yoga or cycling; and ingest antioxidants like vitamin C, selenium and Coenzyme Q10.

The emotion associated with the fire element is joy and the ability to experience happiness and contentment in our lives.

Connect to your true joy; let joy be undisturbable contentment

LUNG

The lung meridian is part of the metal element. It's highest expression is reverence - deep respect. The positive expression of the lung meridian is courage, the negative is sadness, grief and even depression.

Release any stuck emotions that your lungs hold: grief and sadness; they are also the area that holds on to depression; breathe into your ribs as deeply as you can and feel them expand, imagine the intercostals, the little muscles between your ribs.

The lung meridian passes up the middle of throat the front of the shoulder, down the front of the arm along the outer border of the bicep muscle, to the base of the thumb, to finish at the corner of the thumbnail. The Lung Meridian is also exclusive to the front body.

The Lung Meridian is the receiver of pure Chi. It is our connection to the heavens and all that is spiritual. This meridian helps us to see and appreciate the quality in ourselves, others and the outside world - it is the source of true self esteem.

The Large Intestine; the lungs' yang organ is in charge of the waste system for the body, mind and emotional self. The Large Intestine makes sure we have space for the new by getting rid of the old. This meridian affects our ability to let go of what is no longer needed in all aspects of our life.

Strengths of the metal element are: realistic, hardworking, do well under pressure, strong, altruistic, loyal, systematic, determined, authoritative, responsible, fair, elegant, cultured, witty,

eloquent, intuitive, meticulous, sensitive, multi talented, good speakers, strong voice and excellent at getting their point across.

Weaknesses of the metal element are: stubborn, inflexible, judgmental, loner, over-competitive, enemy-makers, impulsive, image driven, proud, rough, show-off, vain, know-it-all, perfectionist, fickle, aloof, over-sensitive, weak digestion, allergies and chronic bronchial problems.

Other ways to nourish the metal element are: Regular skin care routines such as exfoliating or body brushing; Moderate exposure to direct sunlight; (around 30 minutes a day to at least half of the body), Boost immune function by taking antioxidants, probiotics and vitamins, washing your hands, eating healthy, getting plenty of rest, and exercising regularly; Dryness can be an issue for this group so be sure to drink plenty of fluids and moisturize your skin with natural oils such as coconut.

SPLEEN / STOMACH

Your spleen meridian lives in the earth element; responsible for empathy, openness and fairness. Blocks in this meridian stem from worry and anxiety.

Spleen meridian the Official of Transportation and Distribution; the spleen transforms food and drink, extracting Qi and essences which are then distributed to the other officials. It houses our "thought" - it influences our capacity for thinking, concentrating, memorizing and even worry.

The spleen meridian begins at the tip of the great toe. From there it runs along the medial aspect of the foot and continues up the inner leg, up across the groin, the stomach, through the diaphragm. It connects with the stomach and heart meridian. The spleen meridian is exclusive to the front body, it does not run through the back body.

When the spleen energy is blocked: one may experience digestive and stomach problems, worry, poor concentration, forgetfulness, addiction, attachment, obsession, gluttony, jealousy, self-pity, a strong concern about opinions of others, stubbornness, low self-esteem, poor self image.

The spleen meridian is part of the Earth Element; which is at the center of the elements. Earth element's main focus is on digestion and overall energy production.

Strengths show up was those who are: realistic, stable, persistent, wise, trustworthy, kind, understanding, open minded, friendly, supportive, capable, creative, productive, peaceful, maternal, intuitive, patient, and strong digestion.

The yang meridian for the spleen is the stomach meridian, which is responsible for our ability to take things in. This may be the pure Chi of food or our ability to absorb information or even to receive love. It also affects our ability to nurture ourselves, others and our ability to feel full and satisfied.

Some additional ways to nourish the spleen meridian is to consume a diet of well cooked foods including grains, root vegetables, and small amounts of meat. Get out and connect with the earth on a regular basis. (A walk in nature, gardening or other earthing techniques, like bare feet directly on the earth's natural surface.) There is emerging research that shows connecting to the planet with bare skin is a beneficial health practice that helps to strengthen the immune system and improves the function of red blood cells. And of course: let go of worry and doubt!

KIDNEY

The kidney meridian is said to be the root of life. It is connected to the water element, to flow. This part of us is like water; when roused nothing can get in our way, when quiet - it can still erode a mighty mountain. When the Kidney is out of balance - we may not have the will to do anything.

The urinary bladder is the kidney's yang organ, is where our vital energy is stored for times of need. This is our ability to hold on to ideas, to stay with things and to retain vital chi itself.

Fear is the emotion commonly associated with the water element and fear may be a common response to stress for water element people. The kidneys and urinary bladder are the representative organs for the water element; you can see why as they are chiefly responsible for water regulation in the body in both eastern and western medicine.

Strengths of the water element include being innovative, courageous, realistic, adaptable, intelligent, adventurous, sociable, visionary, precise planners, out of the box thinkers, great debaters, idea generators, strong knees and backs, and the ability to flow with any situation.

Weaknesses of the water element include being a drifter, easily unfocused, selfish, easily influenced, overly independent, moody, pessimistic, extremist, loner, easily unfocused, unpredictable, weak knees and back, and can be paralyzed by fear.

How to Nourish your Water Element: Water people can be elegant, graceful and easy going. When in good health they are great at facilitating the flow of energy and conversation between people. They make great negotiators because they are receptive as well as persistent and persuasive. Mountains are turned into sand by water. When out of balance water element people can be fearful. They might find themselves frozen or stuck in their life, paralyzed by fear.

Some additional to nourish your water element is to be sure you are consuming enough sea salt in your diet; protect your low back and knees; stay hydrated; detoxify your kidneys occasionally, and be mindful of your urogenital health. Become conscious of your fears, acknowledge and release them through talking, journaling, meditation or ceremony.

LIVER

The Liver Meridian is the meridian of planning and action. It is like the general of the army, it plans what needs to be done to move forward and does it ! If we have problems getting things done or procrastinate with our decisions this can come from the Liver meridian. The Gallbladder (the yang meridian) governs judgment and vision. It helps us to see the future, to have flexibility and hope. If we are having trouble with seeing things or if we are rigid in our attitudes this can come from the Gallbladder. With no vision for the future - there is no hope.

The Liver Meridian is responsible for filtering, detoxifying, nourishing, replenishing, and storing blood. It regulates the amount of blood circulating, withdrawing and storing it when resting or sleeping, and releasing it during exercise. An imbalance within the liver results in a lack of creativity, and feelings of anger, jealousy and rage.

The liver meridian is part of the wood element, which rules the ligaments and tendons, and the emotions of anger, resentment, jealousy, envy and frustration. Overindulgence is a problem for people of this element and they may tend to overdo things in many aspects of their life.

You can hear an excessive wood element person when you enter a crowded room as they are often the loudest ones.

Some additional ways to nourish your liver meridian is to decrease your intake of toxic chemicals, avoid alcohol and stimulants; do a liver cleanse once or twice a year.