

Bikram Yoga La Canada

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Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter

November 1st!

Regional Yoga Championship

We're hosting the 6th Annual Bishnu Ghosh Southern California Regionals again this year!

Whether you're a seasoned practitioner or still in your intro week, this is a truly inspirational event. You'll see some of your very own teachers and students competing against contestants from all over Southern California, perfecting the same postures we do every day with style, grace, perfection and purpose. (Plus you'll see competitors wow the judges--and be wowed yourself--with their two optional poses.) Judges from all over the Greater Los Angeles area and trained by a panel of expert judges from India evaluate the competitor's three-minute routines on the basis of poise, grace, precision and technique in three divisions: Men's, Women's and Youth 11-14 years of age. Our very own Jeff Rangel won last year in the Men's division, before winning the Nationals as well.

An after-party will follow back at the studio, with food and drink and a chance to thank our team of volunteers and congratulate the winners. Mark your calendars for Saturday November 1 from noon-4 pm at the Lanterman Auditorium, 4491 Cornishon Ave, La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011. The event is free, donations are accepted.

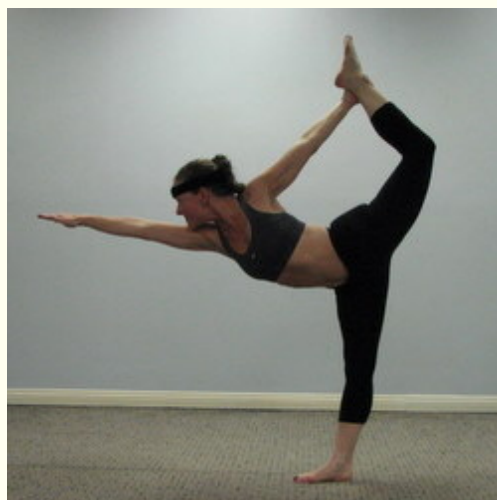
The National and International Bishnu Charan Ghosh Cup Championships will be held February 7th and 8th at the Westin LAX in Los Angeles. More information: www.bikramyoga.com.

Studio Announcements

Mid-Day classes

The 1pm classes have been well attended. Several requests have been made to move

Yogi Q&A: Gina Hoffman



Profession: Test Development Specialist
Been doing Bikram Yoga since: January 2005
How many times a week do you practice? Five

What inspired you to start Bikram Yoga?

I have led an active and healthy lifestyle for over 20 years. I am always looking for new ways to "change up" my activities. I saw an advertisement for the introductory offer in the newspaper and decided to check it out.

Why Bikram Yoga?

Honestly, no special reason.

Had you done other kinds of hatha yoga?

No, and I still have not.

What are your favorite things about Bikram Yoga La Canada?

There are not any surprises; I know exactly what we are going to do each and every time I attend class. The camaraderie; my yogi friends are my extended family. The flexibility that I have gained is immeasurable...

When you started what was the hardest thing about the yoga and how did you overcome it?

The heat was the hardest part for me to overcome. Now, I look forward to a hot and humid room; it truly makes all the difference in my practice. I think completing four 60-day challenges and practicing five days a week is how I eventually came to like the heat and humidity.

Posture Highlight: Standing Forehead-to-Knee-- Dandayamana Janusirasana

The Standing Forehead-to-Knee introduces us to the notion of the locked knee, a trademark of Bikram's hatha yoga and one that builds both strength and balance. Most of all, it builds determination.

As Bikram says in his book, "If you can't lock your knee, you can't do Bikram yoga." He's not being negative, he's just emphasizing the importance of the locked knee as a sign that the body is aligned for maximum benefits, to the knee, leg and most importantly the spine.

A way to look at forehead to knee is a continuation of the first three postures, all of which in their own way seek to lengthen and honor the spine by working from the core out to everything around the spine. Forehead-to-knee is really no different; you are essentially keeping your hips and shoulders as square as possible while making your spine as long and lifted as possible. Of course, first we have to deal with, as usual, everything around the spine.

A challenge is to think of locking the knee both as a localized effort--contracting the standing leg thigh, pushing your foot evenly into the floor, drawing up as best you can through the thigh--that effects the whole body.

Part 1

the 1pm classes to 12:30pm. Your feedback is requested. For those of you who come at 1pm, will you continue to come if we move class to 12:30pm? If you cannot come at 1pm, will you be able to come at 12:30pm? Please direct your feedback to Rose.

Dr. Bronner's Pure-Castile Soap

You may have noticed the new bottle hanging from the wall of the shower. In an effort to provide superior products for you and recycle, we have put this soap in reusable bottles. As it is highly concentrated, we have been figuring out the dilution rate, so that it lathers up when you squirt it on yourself... For more information about this product, please check the website: www.drbronner.com Available at Trader Joe's.

Loving Yoga Etiquette Reminders

Remember to Breathe!

As physically challenging as practicing hatha yoga in a hot room may be, it is nothing without the breath. We say this because sometimes we can all let our breath get away from us. However, loud breathing can be a distraction to those around you as well as a sign that you're pushing things too far. As much as Bikram is fond of saying things like "Just kill yourself," remember, it's only hatha yoga because you breathe, mindfully and purposely and most of all quietly. Otherwise you're doing calisthenics in a hot room.

Pranayama deep breathing is sometimes described as a "snore/ha" sound, which is a way of getting brand new students used to inhaling through their throats with their mouths closed. A more accurate description is to think of breathing straight into your lungs through your throat--you may even see your neck muscles widen. Point is, the breathing is not meant to be labored. Spend a class building each posture around your ability to keep the breath flowing quietly and hopefully a little more calmly, and you're finding a better yogic balance. We'll cover the breathing in next month's Posture of the Month.

What's your favorite pose why?

Standing Bow. I feel strong, long (and you know how short I am), and graceful when in the full expression of this pose.

What's your hardest pose and why?

Rabbit. After all this time, I do not feel that I am using the specific part of my back that I am supposed to be using.

What changes has doing this Yoga brought to your life?

Bikram Yoga is the perfect compliment to my day-to-day routine. When I complete a run, I do not take the time to stretch. When I work out at the gym, I always seem to run out of time to stretch. When I go to yoga, it is all about stretching, lengthening, and focus. Bikram Yoga has helped me to lead a more balanced life.

What keeps you motivated?

The instructors and how they care enough to take the time to make corrections so that my practice is continuously improving. It's also motivating when people tell me how great I look when they find out that I have a daughter turning 21 this month. Bikram Yoga helps to keep me looking and feeling many years younger!

Any recent breakthroughs you'd like to share?

I'm learning how to break the bad habit of bending my arms in Standing Separate Leg Head to Knee Pose. It's forced me to lessen how deep I go into the pose so that I can keep my arms straight. Thanks Rose!!!

Any words of wisdom to new students?

Listen, listen, and listen. Did I mention to listen? I know it's hard to NOT be on autopilot when you know what's coming next. Every instructor has their own way of guiding you by their analogies, their choice of words, and their own experiences.

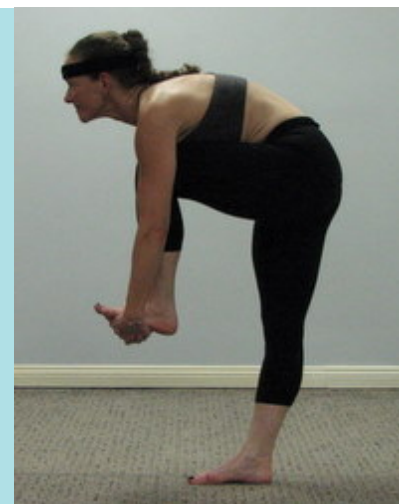
Spring Teacher Training

April 12-June 13

Even if you've never thought of being a Bikram Yoga teacher, the International Teacher training has blossomed into an experience that's as much a yoga retreat and boot camp as it is a chance to honor yourself and your practice two months immersed in yoga. Because now teacher training takes place at the Fairmont Acapulco Princess Hotel, a four-star, 480-acre property overlooks the Pacific Ocean on Revolcadero Beach. The facility maintains a 24-hour medical clinic, five swimming pools, lush tropical gardens, restaurants and shops, a world-class spa, full gym and two golf courses. And two Bikram Yoga classes a day, many taught by Bikram himself and his senior instructors.

Bikram and his wife hold afternoon and evening lectures, along with handpicked experts on everything from nutrition and anatomy to physics and yoga philosophy.

It's never too early to start planning and saving for two months that will change your practice and your life. Interested students can visit bikramyoga.com, or contact shelly@bikramyoga.com; any questions talk to Rose.



As you set up the posture, round forward (not down) to pick up your foot with your ten-finger stirrup grip, focus forward on the locked knee. If you think of yourself as lifting forward from the top of the thigh of the locked leg (the same way you 'charge forward' from the base of your spine in standing bow) you'll get a sense of how the locked knee is the base from which the rest of the body works.

It's very normal to need some time to let the lower back adjust the motion of rounding forward to grab the foot. Which is why, again, the sense of lift through the upper body away from the locked leg is so important. You don't want to sink into your lower back and the locked leg, rather, lift away from it.

Of course not everybody is ready to kick out right away, and, as always, the posture is not the object, the body is the object--namely the spine.

Part 2



When the leg is truly locked-out, kick forward, keep your hips square and continuously kick forward until both legs are locked. Pull your foot back so far that your toes are beyond perpendicular. Cramp the top of the kicking leg, stretch the back of the leg (hip through the heel) even the Achilles tendon stretches. Your hands and arms can only finish what your stomach and legs begin. Ideally, that has created room in the spine. You're not hunched, you're lifted.

Part 3



When both legs are locked--you look like, as Bikram puts it, "an upside down 'L' as in Linda"--you're ready to kick harder, suck in your stomach even more and bend your elbows. The idea is to round from the base of the spine--think rabbit--until the elbows are below the calf. The entire upper body comes down, not just the elbows

Part 4



Then balancing your continuous kick forward, the forehead to the knee becomes the icing on the cake because the body is already down. Don't forget your cake: both knees locked, cramping/stretching in the kicking leg, stomach sucked in, and squared hips.

It's not easy but it is simple: lock the knee, lock the knee, lock the knee.