

# THREE SEASONS AYURVEDA



**BKS Iyengar**

*“Yoga is union, it is derived from the Sanskrit root Yuj which means to bind, attach, join, commune, to direct and concentrate one’s attention on, yoga is the true spiritual” union of our will with the will of our god” BKS Iyengar*

Iyengar yoga is named after, developed, and refined by BKS Iyengar over his life. Iyengar Yoga is a system of approximately 200 hatha yoga postures (asana) and 14 different types of breathing techniques (Pranayama) for people of all ages, abilities, and walks of life.

The Iyengar method emphasizes precise movements and actions, focusing on correct alignment in all postures. Props are utilized, which enhance and enable the poses' action, making them more assessable to any type of body, flexible or stiff, healthy or ill. The precise sequencing of poses allows the teacher and/or practitioner to respond to particular physical, physiological, or psychological needs.

The timing and pacing during each class can be carefully altered, varied, and adjusted according to individual needs. The Iyengar yoga practice develops strength, mobility, stability, and an inner awareness of body, mind, and spirit.

Iyengar yoga is sometimes referred to as therapeutic Yoga because of the precise attention to alignment and precision, and rejuvenation. Mr. Iyengar has targeted many ailments, diseases, and disorders and has developed sequences for these conditions.

Mr. Iyengar was born in Bellur, India, in 1918. His mother gave birth to him during an influenza epidemic, leaving him sickly and weak. During his younger years, he had many serious illnesses, including malaria, tuberculosis, and typhoid. At the age of nine, his father died, and he went to live with his brother in Bangalore.

At the age of 15, Mr. Iyengar moved to Mysore, India, to live with his sister and husband, the scholar and yogi Sri T. Krishnamacharya. Krishnamacharya ran a yoga school in the Mysore Palace. He received basic instruction in asana practice to help him improve his health.

In 1937 Iyengar was asked by his Guru to go to Pune to teach Yoga. Life was difficult as he was a stranger with weak language skills, speaking only a little English and the local language Marathi. He struggled to live in Yoga but dedicated many hours to his practice surviving for days on only water and some bread or rice. In time the number of his students also began to increase, though financially, times were still tough as Yoga was not greatly respected or understood, even in India.

In 1943, his brothers arranged his marriage to Ramamani. Mr. Iyengar had avoided marriage for some time as he felt he could not support a family, but on meeting her, consented. Initially, life continued to be very hard for them, but bit-by-bit they worked their way out of poverty.

Iyengar's recognition as a yoga teacher grew gradually, but it was a meeting with the violinist Yehudi Menuhin in 1952 that brought changes. Mr. Menuhin became this student, and this new relationship led to more international recognition and exposure, and Mr. Iyengar started to teach abroad.

Events continued to develop leading up to the publication of Light on Yoga in 1966. This book turned out to be an international bestseller and succeeded in making Yoga genuinely universal. This was later followed by titles covering Pranayama and various aspects of Yoga philosophy.

In 1975 Iyengar opened the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, in memory of his recently departed wife, where he still resides and teaches. In 1984 Iyengar officially retired from teaching, handing the reins over to his daughter, Geeta, and son Prashant to oversee the institute. Mr. Iyengar continued practicing and working with medical students until his passing in August of 2014.



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