

Intro to Yin Yoga

“Our goal in life is not to become perfect: our goal is to become whole.”

-Bernie Clark-

The Basics

- **Yoga;** Means “to yolk” or join the body, heart, and mind together. Most yoga practiced in the West come from Hatha yoga (Ashtanga, Iyengar, etc.) as offshoots of this main system. Yoga comes from an Eastern philosophy/mysticism and is entirely unique in how it is practiced in the U.S.¹.
- **Yang;** A term often used to describe more of a physical body-based practice, or what is tangible through postures and various poses.
- **Yin;** A term often used to describe a yoga practice geared towards focusing more on the formless or less tangible areas such as breath, energy, and state of the mind¹.

Yin and Yang may be familiar terms already - in this context reemphasizing patterns that exist in nature such as up and down, or hot and cold. Drawn from the ancient Chinese belief that “everything has yin or yang attributes” and therefore returning to a balance in the middle or center where yin and yang complement each other is termed Dao and is also observed by different names in other cultures¹.

Developed by Sarah Powers (found seated meditation practices/Buddhist mindfulness to be extremely difficult from a physical standpoint) and Paul Grilley (Daoist yoga practitioner), the two joined forces over time to bring life and recommended poses to the term “yin yoga”¹.

Practiced regularly in conjunction with physical based forms of exercise, yin yoga can bring more of a “whole” balance to health. Yin focuses on connective tissue, joints, fascia, ligaments, and bone (specifically large muscle groups) while noticing the fluctuations of the breath and thoughts¹. In other words, the quieter aspects of being or a more mindfulness-based yoga practice.

Poses and Resources

yinyoga.com - Bernie Clark’s website for yin yoga asanas (postures) and information and trainings.

The Complete Guide to Yin Yoga. The Philosophy & Practice of Yin Yoga. By Bernie Clark.

pranamaya.com - Paul Grilley resource for online courses in yin yoga. Sarah Powers is one of the instructors on this site.

paulgrilley.com - More information and resources on yin yoga from Paul and Suzee Grilley.

sarahpowersinsightyoga.com - Sarah Powers website about yin yoga and her foundation philosophy and teachings.

¹Clark, B. (2012). *The Complete Guide to Yin Yoga. The Philosophy & Practice of Yin Yoga.* Bernie Clark. White Cloud Press.