

Reminders

The Use of Touch:

Touch is a teaching tool. Through touch, we can become more acutely aware of our bodies and this can assist in self-teaching.

Touch is also about protecting those who might be at risk for injury.

Touch can be important for emotional reasons. It is a way to acknowledge Students and to make a connection. When touching a Student, be sensitive to their emotional boundaries.

Be aware of touch that feels like a caress. If you suspect that a Student doesn't want to be touched, do not touch them.

Mindful Touch is the physical form of presence and listening, to facilitate the flow in the body's internal energy channels. The level of touch should match the level of tension in the Student's body/mind.



Less IS More: Sometimes it's better not to give an assist, even when you see something you might "fix." You do not have to assist everybody, or in every class. Be aware of your intentions.

Beginners: Don't focus all of your attention on beginners. You are still forming a relationship and establishing trust with them. New students may get discouraged if they think that their asanas are always incorrect. Do adjust beginners if they're at risk of harming themselves or if you can help them find more ease in an asana.

Your Goal is Direction, Not Perfection: Every yoga asana is an expression of beauty and beauty is not just found in perfectly executed alignment. It is found in the courage, faith and perseverance shown by students as they struggle through class. When approaching a student, think less about *"what's wrong with this asana?"* and think more, *"how can I help this person experience this asana more fully?"*

Know Your Intent Before You Approach: As a new teacher, you may find yourself standing next to a student, hands on their body and all of a sudden, you are unsure of what the point of your assist was. You do not want to be in this situation! Think about the primary action of the asana and assist to reinforce that action (this thought should happen as you are approaching the student, so you are ready when you get to them). **If you are unsure, do not assist.**

Encourage Modifications: Students often don't know how to modify and think they are unskilled if they do use modifications. They also may feel like the Teacher or other Students will judge them if they don't do the most difficult variation of the Asana. If you see a Student struggling, show them how to lower a knee down or how to use a prop. Most will be grateful that you did.

Be Present: Assisting requires the same level of connection and presence as teaching. Be completely connected to what you are doing. Breathe, be firm in your foundation and watch your Student's reactions to your touch.

Stay Neutral: Things will arise for Students when you assist them and often you too will feel it, see it or hear it. Students sometimes will shove a block away that you offer, or say, "no thanks" when you approach to help. They'll grimace, groan or sigh. Try not to react. You are there to be helpful. Your

goal is to assist without getting caught up in any potential drama that may arise. Be respectful. Move on, without apology or excuse. Your goal is to offer, not to force.

Take Care of Yourself Before and After Class: This may be a new way of teaching for you; it can be more physically and mentally challenging. Make sure if you are assisting, you are well rested, hydrated and healthy before you go. Also consider what you need for self-care after a class.

Maintain Eye Contact: Make sure, as you are connecting to individual Students and their experience, to maintain awareness of the rest of your class. It's common for Teachers to get caught up in helping one student and end up leaving the rest of the class in a posture for too long. Try to avoid this.

Anticipate: Recognize that by helping a Student who is struggling, you may help the other Students in the room as well.

Welcome Beginners Enthusiastically and Walk Them into the Studio: Help beginners select a space and let them know you are there to assist them. It can be overwhelming to walk into a yoga studio for the first time. Show them where the props are and tell them what they need. You might choose to place their mat somewhere near yours, but to the side. This way, they can see you and you can offer them suggestions and modifications without leaving your mat. Avoid placing them in the centre of the class where they might feel like they are "on display".

Remember

Assisting Students begins the minute they walk through the door. Develop relationships with your Students; get to know them and support them in a way that allows them to gradually become their own best Teacher.

