

THE ART OF YOGA

The Roots of Vinyasa Yoga

Vinyasa yoga is by far the most popular style of yoga, practiced by millions of people around the world. We can trace the roots of vinyasa yoga back to one teacher — Tirumalai Krishnamacharya, who lived from 1888-1989.

In the early 20th century Krishnamacharya worked tirelessly to promote yoga as a holistic healing practice that should be accessible to anyone, not just ascetic yogis living in caves or on the banks of the Ganges.

In the 1960s and 70s his students brought his teachings from India and introduced them to the west, planting the seeds for what would eventually grow into the global phenomenon and billion dollar business that yoga has become.

There are two distinct branches of vinyasa yoga that emerged from Krishnamacharya's teachings. The most well-known is the athletic and gymnastic style of vinyasa flow or power yoga that grew from the Ashtanga vinyasa system that Krishnamacharya's early student Pattabhi Jois popularized. The other is a therapeutic style of vinyasa that Krishnamacharya's own son TKV Desikachar developed.

On one hand, we have an approach that focuses more on athletic, flowing movements that a lot of people really enjoy, but isn't always accessible to everyone, especially older folks and people with mobility issues.

On the other hand, we have a slower, more methodical approach that is focused on functional, therapeutic movements that is accessible but can often feel somewhat dry and clinical because it lacks the flowing sequences that makes the more popular styles of vinyasa so enjoyable.

The Art of Yoga blends both styles in an approach that is both therapeutic and enjoyable.

In this course, we'll take a step-by-step approach where you'll learn Krishnamacharya's principles of vinyasa and how to apply those principles to functional movements to create powerful and fun flow sequences that are tailor-made for you or your students.



Above: The modern source of vinyasa yoga, Tirumalai Krishnamacharya.

Krishnamacharya was not only a master teacher and healer, he was also a musician and poet, and he often spoke of yoga as an artform. Art is the artist's response to life, and yoga becomes an art when it's a response to your life — an expression of what you need physically, energetically and mentally to restore health, balance and clarity.

FURTHER READING:

The Heart of Yoga
by TKV Desikachar
Published by Inner Traditions, 1995

*Health, Healing, and Beyond:
Yoga and the Living Tradition of
T. Krishnamacharya*
by TKV Desikachar & R. H. Cravens
Published by North Point Press, 2011