



# **Yoga Teacher Training**

## **Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Yoga Students**

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# Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

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## **Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students**

### **Introduction**

Sharing the experience of practicing yoga postures with a friend or partner can deepen our understanding of yoga and our awareness of others. Just as regular yoga practice enriches your sense of physical well-being and mental and emotional health, partner yoga enhances your awareness and sensitivity to others and brings new depth to our relationships. Being present with your partner throughout the practice and being aware of yourself and each other are the keys to deepening your practice. When we work together in a lighthearted space, beliefs and feelings of separation are replaced with a sense of belonging. Being accepting of our self and each other and where we are at, and communicating openly with each other, helps release and overcome negative emotions.

Touch can help your partner, or the students you assist, to stay in a posture longer, and with more focus or dedication. Through partner yoga and assisting your students, not only do you deepen your yoga practice, you also develop your teaching skills, as well as your intuition and understanding of your students. Being in balance with a partner or with a student helps you to be more in balance with your entire class as you teach.

The keys to a successful partner yoga practice, or to successfully assisting a student, are sensitivity to your partner, as well as a sense of humor and clear communication. Some partner yoga postures are quite challenging, while others are simple. It's important to only do things that both you and your partner feel comfortable doing.

In the first part of this manual, we will learn some postures that you can do together with a partner or have your students do with a partner.

In the second part of this manual, we'll examine how you can assist and adjust your students while they are in a posture. This will help your students develop better alignment or go deeper into the posture.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Yoga Breathing

It's a good idea to begin any partner yoga practice by getting in touch with your breathing. Spend some time breathing in sync with each other before you begin any partner yoga postures.

### Back to Back Meditation



#### Benefits:

- Establishes a connection with your partner through breath and touch
- Strengthens and elongates the spine and spinal muscles
- Opens the chest and shoulders
- Develops even breathing
- Calms the mind and cleanses the body

#### Steps:

- Sit in a comfortable position back to back with your partner
- Your lower and upper back should meet
- Sit up straight, roll your shoulders back and down
- Drop your chin slightly and rest your hands on your knees
- Inhale and exhale deeply in unison with your partner – adjust your breathing until you are in unison
- Continue with about 20 full deep breaths together, really focusing on your partner's breath

#### Variation:

You can also try the following variation in addition to quiet meditation:

- After you finish breathing quietly with each other, bring the backs of your hands together
- Inhale, reach your arms out and overhead together
- Exhale, return your hands towards the floor together
- Continue moving in unison and moving with your breath for about 6-8 rounds
- Drop your hands back to the floor and turn to face each other.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Peaceful Reflections

#### Benefits:

- Calms the mind and the body
- Develops a sense of togetherness
- Strengthens and elongates the spine

#### Steps:

- Sit in a comfortable position facing your partner
- Rest the back of your hands on your knees
- Lift up through the top of your head, sitting up tall
- Drop your chin slightly and close your eyes
- Begin breathing slowly and deeply through your nose
- Adjust your breathing, so you are breathing in unison with your partner
- Continue with about 20 full breaths together, focusing on your partner's breath

#### Variation:

You can also do this exercise looking right into your partner's eyes. This can be a little disconcerting as first, especially if you don't know the person, but resist the urge to giggle or look away and focus on bringing your breath in unison.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Back to Back Standing or Seated Movements

This is a great exercise for partners who are of similar height. If your heights are much different, it is best to skip this one.

#### Benefits

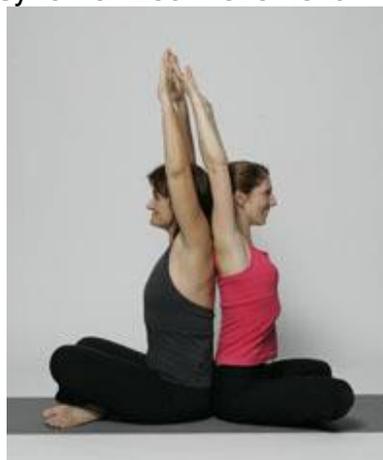
- More active way to connect with your partner
- Prepares you for your practice
- Improves your postures
- Builds awareness of your posture

#### Steps:

- Stand or sit back to back with your partner
- Lengthen through your spine to stand (or sit) up tall
- Roll your shoulders back and down to open the chest
- Have your head upright and facing forward
- Bring your hands to your sides and place the backs of your hands on your partners
- Begin breathing deeply through your nose
- Adjust your breathing, so you and your partner are breathing in unison
- Continue this breathing pattern for about 20 breaths, focusing on your partner's breath

#### Variation:

- After completing the breathing portion of this exercise, you can do a more active variation:
- With the backs of your hands together, inhale, sweeping your arms overhead together
- Exhale, lower your hands back to your sides together
- Do about 6-8 rounds of this synchronized movement



## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Sun Salutation

You can warm up before you start your partner practice by doing Sun Salutations – either side by side or facing each other. Try facing each other first.

#### Benefits:

- Warms up the body
- Improves the strength and flexibility of the spine
- Increases energy
- Develops your ability to synchronize and work with your partner

#### Steps:

- Start facing your partner, standing about four feet away from your partner
- (If you are using mats, your mats should have the short ends facing each other, about four feet apart)
- Stand with your feet parallel
- Let your partner know when you are ready to begin
- Do your best to move in sync with your partner as you do your sun salutation
- Inhale, both partners reach arms overhead
- Exhale, fold forward
- Inhale, Step one foot back into a lunge (try to mirror your partner, so you may want to decide before you start who will step back with the right foot first and who will step back with the left foot first)
- Step your other foot back into plank (top of a push up)
- Exhale, lower down, remaining in sync with your partner
- Inhale, push through to up dog
- Exhale, push back to down dog
- Inhale, step forward with the same foot as you stepped back with
- Step your other foot forward
- Exhale, fold forward
- Inhale, sweep your arms overhead as you come up to standing and arch back slightly
- Exhale, bring your hands to your heart
- Repeat your sun salutation, this time stepping back and forward with your other foot
- Do one more round on each side

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Postures

The following postures can be done with your partner, once you have warmed up.

### Partner Warrior 2

#### Benefits

- Strengthens the legs and knees
- Improves core strength
- Increases endurance
- Strengthens the arms and shoulders

#### Steps

- Start standing beside your partner with your feet a little wider than hip width apart
- Bring your inside foot next to your partner's foot with both of your feet facing forward
- Bring your hands together
- Step your outside foot away from your partner about 3 feet and bend your outside knee away from your partner, coming into warrior 2
- Continue holding your partner's hand, while you raise your outside hand and look over your outside fingertips.
- Make sure your bent knee stays directly over your ankle
- Keep your torso centered over your hips.
- Stay in this position for 6-10 breaths.
- Come out and turn to the other side to repeat on the opposite side.

### Partner – Reverse Warrior



## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Warrior 3



#### Benefits

- Improves balance
- Strengthens the legs and back
- Improves focus and concentration

#### Steps

- Start facing your partner about 5 feet apart
- Both partners bring your left foot back and arms up to shoulder height
- Exhale, reach your arms forward towards your partner, as you lift your back leg off the floor
- Hold onto your partner's upper arms or shoulders
- Keep your standing leg straight and look towards your partner
- Drop the hip of your lifted leg, so your torso is parallel to the floor
- Stay in this position for 4-6 breaths
- Let your partner know when you are ready to come out of this position
- Come back to standing and repeat on the other side.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Back to Back Triangle



#### Benefits

- Tones the legs
- Strengthens the spinal muscles
- Lengthens the spine

#### Steps:

- Stand back to back with your partner
- Stand in a straddle position with your feet about 3 feet apart – your heels should be almost touching your partner's heels
- Both you and your partner turn your right feet out 90 degrees and your left foot in slightly
- Inhale, reach your arms up to shoulder height
- Exhale, both you and your partner slide your right hands down your right legs – so you're moving in the opposite direction
- You can keep your hand on your right shin or ankle, or you can place your hand on your partner's shin or ankle.
- Draw your left shoulder back, so it is barely touching your partner, to open your chest
- Stay in this position for 4-6 breaths, breathing in unison with your partner
- Come back up to standing
- Repeat on the left side

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Standing Straddle Stretch



#### Benefits:

- Stretches the hips and backs of the legs
- Develops balance and provides a gentle inversion
- Improves leg strength

#### Steps:

- Start standing back to back with your partner, then move about a foot away from each other, still back to back
- Stand in a straddle position with your feet about 3 feet apart – your heels are almost touching your partner's heels and your feet are facing straight forward
- Slowly fold forward, keeping your back flat, and bringing your hands to the floor
- Drop your head, looking towards your partner
- Slowly walk your hands towards your partner's hands
- If you are both well balanced, you can hold onto each other's lower arms or elbows
- Keep reaching up through your tailbone, as you further drop your head, lengthening your spine

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Standing Forward Fold



#### Benefits:

- Stretches the hamstring muscles
- Elongates the spine
- Stimulates digestion
- Increases circulation to the brain

#### Steps:

- Stand back to back with your partner – about 3 feet away from each other
- Stand with your feet parallel and about hip width apart
- Exhale, fold forward, folding from your hips, maintaining a flat back
- If necessary, bend your knees, so you can fold down
- Drop your head and look towards your partner
- Drop your arms down, then push your hands back, until you can reach your partner's hands
- Hold onto your partner's wrists, lower arms or elbows – depending on flexibility
- Slowly bring your hands up your partner's arms to stretch more deeply
- Drop the top of your head towards the floor and look towards your partner
- Stay in this position for 6-8 breaths
- Release your hold on each other's arms and slowly roll back up to standing

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Standing Back Bend



#### Benefits

- Strengthens muscles of the back
- Improves flexibility of spine
- Energizes the body

#### Steps

- Start standing back to back about 2 to 3 feet apart
- Stand with your feet hip width apart and parallel
- Inhale, both partners sweep their arms overhead
- Exhale, both partners begin to reach up with their chest and reach back with their hands keeping their arms next to their ears
- Both partners reach back until their hands reach each other
- Keep reaching up through your chest, as you press your hands against your partner's hands
- If you both feel comfortable, you can step slightly further apart to create a great back bend
- Stay in this position for 4-5 breaths
- Come back to standing and fold forward to release your back muscles

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Sit



#### Benefits

- Strengthens the muscles of the legs and knee joints
- Tones the back and abdominal muscles
- Develops focus and concentration

#### Steps:

- Stand with your feet hip width apart and your back pressing against your partner's back
- Exhale, begin bending your knees and slowly lowering down, walking your feet out as you lower down
- Lower down as much as is comfortable for you, or until your knees are bent at a right angle
- Tuck your tailbone in and press firmly into each other's backs for support
- Link elbows with your partner if you like for added support
- Stay in this position for 4-6 breaths, or as long as it's comfortable for both of you
- Come back to standing by slowly walking your feet in as you slide up to standing

#### Variation:

- Stand facing your partner with feet hip width apart
- Hold your partner's right hand with your own right hand
- As both you and your partner begin to sit down into chair posture, sit back and pull gently against each other's hands
- Place your left hand on your right thigh to help stabilize and support yourself



## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Tree Pose



#### Benefits:

- Opens the hips
- Strengthens your legs
- Improves your focus and concentration
- Enhances awareness of your posture

#### Steps:

- Stand side by side with your partner, with your inside arms around each other's waist
- Place your weight on your inside leg
- Slowly bend the knee of your outside leg, bringing your foot to the calf or thigh of your standing leg
- Draw the knee of your bent leg back, to open your hips more
- Keep your standing leg straight, pressing your foot into the floor to become more stable
- Bring your outside hand up and across your chest and place your palm together with your partner's palm.
- Keep your gaze straight in front of you on one spot
- Stay in this position for 6-8 soft breaths
- Slowly come down, dropping your foot and dropping your hands to your sides.
- Turn and repeat on the other side

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Cobbler's Pose/Chest Opener



#### Benefits

- Opens the shoulders and chest
- Stretches the front of the body
- Stretches the hips
- Relaxes the body

#### Steps:

- Start sitting back to back with your partner with your backs touching each other
- Bring the soles of your feet together and push your feet away from you, so your legs make a diamond shape (both partners do this)
- One partner folds forward, reaching forward with their hands on the floor
- The other partner lies back on the back of their partner – once in place the partner who is lying back can hold onto their opposite elbows over head to create a greater stretch in the shoulders and front of the body
- Be careful not to put too much weight on your partner – communicate to make sure you are not placing too much weight on your partner
- Stay in this position for 8-10 long breaths
- The partner who is lying back comes back to sitting first, then the partner in cobbler's pose comes back up to sitting
- Repeat by swapping positions with your partner

#### **Variation**

##### **Partner Child's Pose/Chest Opener**

This exercise can also be done using child's pose (instead of cobbler's pose). This provides a different stretch of the hips and back. You may want to stay in this position for a shorter amount of time than the previous exercise, as having weight on the back in Child's pose makes it a little more difficult to breathe fully.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Partner Locust Lift



#### Benefits

- Strengthens the back muscles
- Opens the chest
- Promotes deep full breathing
- Stretches the shoulders and spine

#### Steps:

- One partner lies on their stomach, with their legs extending behind them and arms at their sides (palms towards their thighs)
- The other partner stands over their partner, facing in the same direction, with their feet on either side of their partner's thighs
- The partner lying on the floor lifts up their head, chest and arms as they inhale
- The partner standing over, takes hold of their partner's hands as they come up
- As the partner on the floor exhales, the partner standing over pulls back slightly on their partner's arms to encourage more lift and opening of the chest
- The standing partner must make sure they are not going too far by communicating with their partner on the floor
- Partners stay in this position for 4-6 breaths
- The partner on the floor slowly releases back to the floor
- Repeat this one more time in the same positions, then change partner positions and do the exercise in that position twice
- Do child's pose as a counter pose to stretch the back muscles in the opposite direction

## **Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students**

### **Variation**

#### **Partner Bow Lift**

This exercise can also be done for bow pose (dhanurasana). In this variation, the standing partner stands just to the side of the legs to start. The partner on the ground comes into bow pose by holding onto their ankles and then lifting the head, chest and feet (bringing the knees and shoulders an equal distance off the floor). The standing partner then stands directly behind their partner (with slightly bent knees to support lifting) and holding their partner's wrists, lifts them directly upward. This promotes more back flexion, so it must be done slowly and with constant communication to make sure you don't go too far for your partner.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Seated Partner Twist



#### Benefits

- Stretches and strengthens the spine
- Improves digestion
- Relieves back tension

#### Steps:

- Sit in a cross-legged position back to back with your partner, so your backs and shoulders are touching
- Inhale, sitting up tall
- Exhale, place your right hand on your left knee, and your left hand on your partner's right knee
- Look over your left shoulder
- You and your partner will be doing the same twist, so you'll both be turning to look in the opposite direction
- Inhale and exhale together, twisting a little further with each breath
- Stay in this position for 6-8 breaths
- Release your hands and come back to center
- Repeat on the other side

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Seated Partner Twist – One Leg Straight



#### Benefits

- Stretches and tones the spine
- Improves digestion
- Relieves back tension

#### Steps:

- Sit facing your partner with your legs extended side by side
- Bend the knee of your inside leg and place your foot close in next to you with your knee facing straight up
- The foot of your extended leg should be in line with your partner's hip
- Bring your opposite arm to the outside of your bent knee and turn towards your bent knee, extending your arm forward
- Bring your other arm behind your back
- With the hand of your extended arm, hold your partner's hand they have brought behind their back
- Pull your partner's hand to increase each other's stretch in the posture
- Stay in this position for 6-8 breaths
- Release your hands and come back to sitting
- Extend both legs out, changing the sides they are on and repeat on this other side

## **Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students**

### **Partner Seated Straddle**

#### Benefits

- Stretches hips and hamstrings
- Improves flexibility
- Stimulates circulation

#### Steps

- Sit on the floor facing your partner with your legs in a straddle position
- One partner comes into a full straddle – legs straight and spread, knees and toes facing the ceiling
- The other partner bends their knees slightly in their straddle, placing their feet on the inside of their partner's calves
- Both partners reach their arms up to shoulder height and hold each other's elbows
- The partner in the full straddle begins to fold forward (maintaining a flat back), while the other partner gently presses against their partner's legs to help them open further and gently pulls their arms forward
- Communicate with your partner throughout this process to ensure that both partners are comfortable
- Stay in this position for 4-6 breaths, then change partner positions.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Balancing Boat



#### Benefits:

- Strengthens the abdominal muscles
- Strengthens legs and arms
- Improves balance and coordination

#### Steps:

- Sit facing your partner with your knees bent and your feet on the floor and hands at your sides
- Bring the balls of your feet together
- Hold your partner's hands
- Lean back, tucking your tail bone under, so you're sitting back on your tailbone
- Slowly begin raising your feet up, straightening your legs as you raise your feet
- When you reach a point where you can balance, draw your shoulders back and open your chest
- Stay in this position for 4-6 breaths
- Slowly drop your feet back to the floor
- Repeat one more time

#### Variation

Instead of having your feet on the inside and your arms on the outside, both partners bring their arms between their legs and hold hands between the legs.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Combined Leg Lifts

#### Benefits:

- Strengthens abdominal muscles
- Improves digestion
- Stretches the legs and hips

#### Steps:

- Lie on your backs, head to head, but with a few inches in between
- Extend your arms above your head and hold your partner's upper arms
- Inhale, bring your knees to your chest
- Exhale, extend your legs into the air, creating a 90 degree angle with your hips
- You can stay in this position, or bring your feet back further, until your feet and your partner's feet come together
- Stay in this position for 10-12 breaths, or you can raise your legs up and down
- Bend your knees, bringing your knees to your chest
- Roll up to sitting

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Flying Yogis



#### Benefits:

- Strengthens legs and shoulders
- Improves balance and coordination
- Increases trust of partner

#### Steps:

- Have one partner lie on his/her back
- The other partner will stand at partner's feet facing them
- The standing partner will place the feet of the other partner in the creases between their thigh and hips
- The partner lying on the floor will have their knees bent while their feet are placed on their partner's hip creases.
- Hold on to each other's hands and straighten the arms
- It's important for both partners to keep their arms straight the whole time
- The partner lying on the floor can begin to straighten their legs and pull their arms back, causing their partner to "fly."
- Stay in this position for 6-10 breaths.
- Slowly lower the "flying" partner back to the ground and switch positions.
- Repeat the process in the switched positions.

## **Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students**

### **Adjusting Students in Yoga**

When assisting or adjusting students during yoga practice, make sure you are standing or squatting in a way that gives you the most stability, so you can fully help your students without worry of falling.

Some general positions for yoga instructors when assisting others include:

- 1) Half squat: In this position, one leg is in a squatting position (knee bent towards ceiling, foot flat on floor), while the other leg is in a kneeling position. This position gives you leverage and stability when assisting people who are on the floor doing forward bending or twisting postures.
- 2) Wide leg stance: In this position, your legs are about one foot wider than hip width apart and your knees are bent with your feet turned out and firmly planted on the floor. This stance is helpful when assisting someone in a standing or balancing posture, since it provides you with a lower and wider center of balance.
- 3) Straddle position: In some assisting, it may be helpful to straddle your legs over your student to better reach a particular part of their body. For example, when drawing someone's shoulders back in locust, you would stand with your feet on either side of their hips (as they are lying on their belly) with your knees bent, so you can pull equally on both shoulders while maintaining your stability.
- 4) Lunge: In some assisting when you are pushing your student, a lunge may be the best stance to be able to push more effectively while maintaining your balance.

### **General Tips for Adjusting and Assisting**

The following are some general tips to consider when assisting or adjusting your students:

- 1) Make sure you are in a stable position before you assist your student. If you are not balanced and grounded, you are more likely to strain yourself or fall over.
- 2) Talk to new students about assisting before class. Explain what adjustments are and ask a new student if she/he wants to receive adjustments or not. This way you won't need to constantly ask them during class.
- 3) Pay attention to the student's breath. Adjust the posture in harmony with the breath. For example, in folding forward positions, press down on the exhale, and release your pressure on the inhale.
- 4) Use some soft verbal instructions during assistance. Let the student know what you want them to do in the adjustment/assistance, but keep your voice low so as not to distract other students.
- 5) Don't overcorrect. Correction is fine, but overcorrecting can make your student feel incompetent.
- 6) Keep some of your attention on the rest of the class while assisting. Continue to observe and give verbal instruction to the rest of the class while assisting a student.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Standing Backbend (arms overhead)



#### Steps:

- Stand to one side of the person
- Place one hand on their back between their shoulder blades and press upward
- With your other hand, hold the student's forearm or wrist and gently pull them back
- Go a little further with the assist on the student's exhalation
- Release your hands, allowing them to come back to a regular standing position

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Tuck your tailbone under
- Drop your shoulders away from your ears
- Breathe deeply into your chest

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Warrior 1



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student and place your inside foot next to the back of their back foot to help anchor it down
- Use your free hands to press the shoulders down, or turn the pelvic bowl forward (whichever is necessary)
- Release your hands and slowly move away

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Press both feet firmly into the floor
- Turn your chest towards your front leg
- Let your hips face forward
- Let your shoulders relax

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Warrior 2 (Arm Stretch)



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student
- Wrap your hands around the bottom of their wrists/forearms
- Stretch their arms out away from their body
- Make sure that you are stretching their arms in a “T” position parallel to the floor
- Release your hands

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Breathe deeply, using your ujjayi breath
- Reach out through your fingertips
- Let your shoulders relax

### Warrior 2 (knee alignment)

#### Steps:

- Kneel in front of the student in a half squat
- Use your hands to move their front knee into alignment with their ankle
- Encourage them to press firmly into both feet
- Release your hands
- Repeat when they move into warrior 2 on the other side

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Keep equal weight in both feet
- Press into all parts of your feet
- Turn your hips and torso away from the front leg

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### King Dancer



#### Steps:

- Stand to the side of your student (same side as their standing leg)
- Place one hand under the thigh of their leg that is lift
- Place your other hand under the tricep of their raised arm
- Lift both their arm and leg with your hands
- Make sure their hips are square and their bent knee doesn't flare out to the side
- Slowly release your hands

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Press your leg in the air away from your body
- Lift and expand your chest

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Crescent Stretch



#### Steps:

- Stand to the side and slightly behind your student
- Place one hand on the hip/pelvic bone
- With your other hand, hold the wrist that is furthest away from you
- Push the student's hip away from you with one hand, as you pull their wrist up and towards you with the other hand.
- Release your hands and repeat on the other side when your student changes sides
  
- If you notice that your student is leaning forward (rather than just to the side), stand behind them. Hold the student's wrists with your hand (same hand as the side to which they are leaning). Place your other hand on their low back towards the side to which they are leaning. Pull their wrists back towards you while supporting their back.

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Reach your arms up and extend your arms
- Keep your head in line with your arms
- Elongate your spine

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Tree



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student and let them know you are there, and check if they would like some help going deeper into the posture.
- Place one hand on their bent knee and draw it back towards you
- With your other hand, draw back their opposite shoulder
- Once they are stable, very slowly release your hands
- Repeat on the other side when your student changes sides.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Lift up through the crown of your head
- Lift up through your hips, so your hips are square and even height
- Draw your shoulders back and down
- Bring your bent knee back and open through your hips.

#### Adjustments with Props:

It can also be helpful to have students stand with their backs against the wall and try to bring their bent knee also back to the wall.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Triangle



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student and let them know you are there.
- Place one hand on their upper shoulder and draw it back towards you
- With your other hand, draw back their top hip
- Once they are stable, very slowly release your hands
- Repeat on the other side when your student changes sides.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Stack your shoulders one on top of the other
- Open your chest to the side
- Tuck your tailbone under
- Relax your shoulder away from your ear and create space
- Bring the stretch into your side body

#### Adjustments with Props:

It can also be helpful to have students stand with their backs against the wall and practice triangle against the wall, keeping both shoulder blades against the wall. A block can also be used for support and so students don't feel that they need to drop down too far.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Half Moon



#### Steps:

- Allow your student to get into half moon as best they can first
- Stand behind your student with your belly next to their middle back
- Make sure your stance is wide and stable
- Place your hand that is nearest their lifted leg under the thigh (of the lifted leg)
- Cup your other hand around their shoulder/upper arm of the arm that is in the air
- Draw their shoulder towards your body with one hand, as you lift their leg with your other hand.
- Let your student lean their weight back against you, as if you were a wall, for support
- Slowly release your hands, but remain standing behind your student until they can balance on their own

#### Suggested vocal instruction

- Keep opening your chest and hips
- Turn your foot (of the lifted leg) towards the ceiling to open your hips
- Draw your shoulder back

#### Adjustments with Props:

It can also be helpful for students to use a block under their lower hand for support.

This way they don't have to go down as far to come into the posture.

The wall can also be helpful for students who are having difficulty balancing in this posture. Have students practice half moon with their back to the wall for support. They should start with their feet about 3-4 inches from the wall to make room for their hand.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Pyramid



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student and let them know you are there.
- Place your foot behind your student's back foot to stabilize them
- Place your hands on your student's hips and square their hips forward (pull back the hip of the forward leg and push forward the hip of the back leg)
- Once they are stable, very slowly release your hands
- Repeat on the other side when your student changes sides.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Square your hips forward
- Relax your head and neck
- (If right foot forward) Draw your right hip back and your left hip forward

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Down Dog

#### 1) Down Dog (push)



#### Steps:

- Stand in front of your student in a lunge type position with your foot between their hands
- Place the heel of your hands on their sacrum with your fingers pointing upward
- Press their sacrum back and slightly up, using even pressure with your arms straight
- Release your hands

#### Suggested vocal instructions

- Spread your fingers wide and press down into your whole palm
- Relax your shoulders away from your ears
- Look towards your feet
- Press your chest towards your knees

#### 2) Down Dog (pull)



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student, with your feet on either side of their feet
- Place your hands around their hip bones
- Keep your arms straight as you pull their hips back and up
- Release your hands when ready

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Press your hips up towards the ceiling
- Press down through your palms
- Press your heels towards the floor

### **3) Down Dog (heel press)**

#### Steps:

- Stand in a deep squat behind your student with your feet wider than theirs
- Hold the back on their heel between your thumb and index finger (with your thumb on the outside part of the heel and index finger on the inside)
- Keeping your arms straight, press their heel towards the floor

#### Suggested vocal instructions

- Reach your heels towards the floor
- Lift your hips up towards the ceiling
- Press your chest towards your knees

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Forward Fold



#### Steps:

- Stand to the side of your student
- Place one hand on their sacrum for stability and place your other hand in the middle of their back (between the lower parts of the shoulder blades).
- Use the hand on the student's middle back to gently press down.
- Run your hand from the middle back to the student's neck, gently pressing down.
- Release your hands

#### Suggested vocal instructions

- Bend your knees slightly
- Shift your weight forward
- Drop your head down, bringing the crown of your head towards the floor, and let your head hang loose
- Bring your belly towards your thighs

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Chest Expander Forward Fold



#### Steps:

- Stand in front of your student's back (facing them)
- Cup your hands around their shoulders
- Begin to roll their shoulders gently inward towards their spine
- Release your hands
- Place your hands on their hands, and without pushing or pulling, allow the weight of your hands to help to gently bring their hands further away from their tailbone and increase the stretch in their shoulders.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Squeeze your shoulder blades together
- Let your head hang
- Bend your knees

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Chair



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student and let them know you are there before they begin to squat down.
- As your student begins to squat, you will also squat (providing a “chair” for them to sit into).
- Place your hands on their shoulders and pull down and slightly back towards you.
- Stay in this position for a few breaths.
- Stand up with your student and have them practice the posture again on their own.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Drop your tailbone down
- Sit back into your heels
- Keep your shoulders relaxed

#### Adjustments with Props

It can be helpful to have students place a block between their knees to stabilize and engage the legs.

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Lunge (with back leg lifted)



#### Steps:

- Have student get into a lunge position
- Straddle their back leg and bend your knees until you can reach their body
- Place one hand under their back thigh and lift upward
- At the same time, press down on the middle of their sacrum with your other hand
- Continue pressing down the sacrum and lifting the back thigh
- Release your hands, then repeat on the other side when they change sides

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Let your hips drop towards the floor
- Push through your back heel
- Keep your front knee directly over your ankle
- Look towards the floor in front of you and keep your neck long

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Locust



#### Steps:

- Straddle your legs on either side of your student's knees, facing in the same direction as your student
- Have your student bring their hands behind their back
- Squat down and hold onto your student's wrists or forearms
- Pull their arms towards you as you sink your weight into your hips
- Lift them more on their inhalation
- Slowly release your student's arms, stand up and step out of the way

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions

- Press your shoulders back away from your ears
- Keep your tailbone tucked under
- Expand your chest

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Bow



#### Steps:

- Stand with your feet on either side of your student's lower thighs, facing the same direction as your student
- As your student reaches to hold onto their feet or ankles, wrap your hands around the outside of their wrists and hold onto their heels.
- Keep your arms straight and use your leg strength to lift their body up
- Lift your student more on inhalation
- Slowly release your student back to the floor, release their heels and step out of the way

#### Suggested Vocal Instruction:

- Lift up through both your legs and your shoulders
- Try to keep your knees and shoulders a parallel distance to the floor
- Breathe deeply through your chest and open through your shoulders

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Child's Pose



#### Steps:

- Stand behind your student, and squat down so you can reach their back
- Place your hands on each side of their spine, near the sacrum area, with your fingers facing out
- Keeping your arms straight, press down onto their sacrum and then press away, using your body weight, as your student exhales
- Back off your pressure as your student inhales
- Then, press down again as your student exhales.
- Do this for 3-4 breaths
- Using your thumbs and fingers, make little circles on either side of the student's spine, starting at the bottom and working towards the neck.
- Slowly release your hands and walk away
- In extended child's pose, you can also place your hands on your student's shoulders (on either side of the neck) and pull back, to release tension in the shoulders.

#### Suggested vocal instructions

- Breathe deeply into your back
- Relax your shoulders
- Let your body sink into the floor

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Seated Twist



#### Steps

- Stand in a half squat behind your student's back
- Wrap one hand around the shoulder they are turning towards
- Place your other hand on the opposite back shoulder blade
- As the student exhales, press the shoulder blade forward, while you simultaneously pull the opposite shoulder back.
- Use pressure to twist your student on their exhalations, then lighten the pressure on their inhalations.
- Do this for 2-3 breaths
- Release your hands and let them twist on their own

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions

- As you exhale, twist deeper
- Sit up tall as you inhale

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Seated Forward Folds



#### Steps:

- Stand just behind your student with your feet on either side of their hips, and your knees bent
- Place your hands on your student's back, with your hands on either side of the spine on the mid to low back, and your fingers pointing out.
- As your student exhales, press forward and slightly down, using equal pressure from both hands
- As your student inhale, release any pressure and let your hands gently rise with the rise of their back.
- Press down again on the next exhale.
- Continue doing this for 3 or 4 breaths
- Release your hands and back away slowly

#### Suggested vocal instructions

- Reach your chest forward
- Press back through your hips
- As you exhale, relax more deeply into the stretch

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Bridge



#### Steps:

- Stand with your feet on either side of your student's arms facing towards their feet.
- Squat enough so you can reach your hands under the student's mid back
- If your student is really tall and you have trouble reaching under the back, you can lunge at the side
- As your student lifts into a bridge, place your hands under their mid back with your fingers pointing towards each other
- Lean your weight backwards and lift up their back with both your hands, as you pull towards you.
- After holding them for a few seconds, release your hands and let them hold the pose.
  
- You can also help your student's alignment by standing with your feet on either side of their feet facing your student.
- Gently press their knees towards each other.
- Gently use your feet to press their feet into a parallel position if they are turned out.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions

- Push into your feet
- Bring your knees towards each other
- Roll your shoulders under

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Wheel



#### Steps:

- Stand facing your student with your feet on either side of their head, your toes just in line with the top of your student's head
- Ask the student to hold onto your ankles with their thumbs on your inner ankles and their elbows facing towards the ceiling.
- Bend down and place your hands under the student's shoulder blades with your fingers facing towards their spine
- As the student begins to lift up, pull their body up
- As they lift up further, support their shoulders with your hands, and continue to pull them up and slightly towards you
- When the student is ready to come down, tell them to tuck their chin to their chest, as you bend your knees and lower them to the floor.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions

- Lift up through your chest
- Let your head relax
- Push down with your hands

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Reclined Hip Opener



#### Steps:

- Stand facing your student, near their legs, with your feet about hip width apart
- Place the foot of their free leg against your hip bone
- Hold onto the knee of their bent leg
- Gently push the knee of the free leg towards the student's chest
- Gently pull the knee of the bent leg towards yourself
- Slowly release your hands and back away, allowing the student to hold their position.

This all helps more deeply stretch the rotator muscles of the hip

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions

- Relax your legs
- Gently pull your leg towards your chest
- Use your elbow to press your bent knee away from you

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Reclined Knee to Chest



#### Steps:

- Start by standing over the student, standing next to their extended leg, facing diagonal towards them, with your feet hip width apart.
- Fold forward from your hips.
- If your student's left leg is extended, place your right hand on their the thigh of their left extended leg. Then place your left hand on the shin (just below the knee) of their right bent leg.
- As you gently press the right knee towards the student's armpit, press the left leg in a gentle external rotation.
- Release your hands and let the student hold their position.

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Bring your knee towards your armpit
- As you exhale, relax your hips and go deeper into the stretch
- Relax your neck and shoulders
- Breathe into your belly and feel your belly press against your bent leg

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Plow



#### Steps:

- Once your student is in plow position, stand close to their back in a squat position
- Place your fingers in the crease made by their bent legs
- Using your leg strength, lift their hips straight up with both hands and let them roll their shoulders under their body
- Release your hands and let your student hold the posture
- Back away to give them room to roll back down to a lying position

#### Suggested Vocal Instructions:

- Scoot your shoulders under your back
- Lift up through your tailbone
- Press back through your heels

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Supine Twist



#### Steps:

- Half squat to the side of your student (just behind their hip/bottom)
- Place one hand on their shoulder near you and the other hand on top of the thigh of their upper leg.
- The fingers of both your hands should be facing away from the student's torso
- As the student exhales, simultaneously press down on their shoulder and thigh to help them go deeper into the stretch.
- Keep your elbows straight and use your body weight to press down as your student exhales.
- Do this for 2-3 breaths
- Release your hands.

#### Suggested vocal instructions:

- Relax your shoulders and back towards the floor
- Turn your head and look in the opposite direction of your knees.
- Reach through your fingertips for a deeper stretch

## Partner Yoga and Assisting/Adjusting Students

### Savasana



### Leg Pull

#### Steps:

- As your student is preparing for savasana, place your hands behind their heels and lift their feet off the floor.
- Lean back, as you move their legs from side to side
- Bring feet back to floor and press them gently into the mat.

### Shoulder Press

#### Steps:

- As your student is preparing for savasana, come into a squat, standing just behind their head, facing the rest of their body
- Place your hands on their upper arms
- Keeping your elbows straight, run your hands from their upper arms to their shoulders, then press their shoulders firmly but gently into the floor
- Press their shoulders for a few seconds, then release your hands and slowly move away

### Suggested Vocal Instructions

- Feel your body relax into the floor
- Let any tension go
- As you exhale, feel your body go limp