

Brahmacharya Being Content with Less

Brahmacharya is not about depriving yourself of all pleasure. It's like Asteya (last week's Yama) in that it urges us to learn to be satisfied with just enough. It is easy to overdo things we like. But Iyengar says that excess is a corruptive force and focuses on what we think we need instead of what we really need. Eating too much, drinking too much, lazing around too much, over-doing exercise: all are examples of excess. Brahmacharya means acknowledging when things are out of balance, and controlling our behavior accordingly.

In Iyengar [slow] yoga, we control ourselves by practicing a balance of effort and effortlessness in every pose: bringing energy to weak areas, and being careful not to over-indulge in strength or flexibility. We find the depth of every pose—not by going deeper and deeper, or outdoing others, but by embracing the satisfaction that even the simplest of poses offers. Remember that Standing Mountain (Tadasana) is considered the second hardest pose when it is done with full attention and balance of energy. Find joy in the simplicity of your poses. Stay there long enough to notice. And stop before you've stayed too long. Moderation is the key. Intelligence is the result.

Improving health and well-being through thoughtful movement.

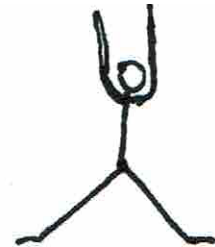
Finding Joy in Simplicity



In each of these asana, take time to find "intelligence" in the pose.

1. Find comfort and an easy breath. Use props if helpful.
2. Extend the pose, especially the spine.
3. Balance your energy: activate essential support; release unnecessary tension.
4. Focus deeply on feeling the aspects of the pose: where is there strength, where is there stretch? Where do you take hold, and where can you let go?

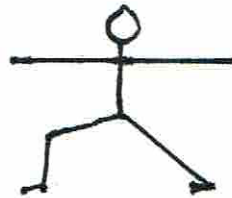
Standing Mountain & Wide Mountain



Triangle



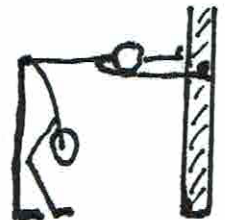
Warrior 2



Warrior 1



Standing Forward Bend or Standing Back Stretch



Chair Twist



Bridge Pose



Lying Side Twist



Lying Hamstring Stretch



Savasana (Relaxation)

