

Practicing Ahimsa: Loving Kindness

The **Yamas** [and **Niyamas**] cultivate the positive in ourselves. Iyengar says that, with regular practice, they become “impulses of the heart.” As a matter of fact, the first, foremost **Yama, Ahimsa**, could be considered **the heart of yoga**. It should underlie everything that we do—in yoga and in life. **Ahimsa** literally translates to mean “non-harming”, “non-injurious”, embracing all of life, and most importantly, coming from a place of love and kindness. It acknowledges that our behavior affects those around us, so we must be mindful of our words and actions. We would do well to open our hearts and hold dear what we have.

While you do yoga, think about these ways to observe **Ahimsa**:

- Be kind and loving to yourself! Respect your “edge” in any pose. Do not hurt yourself by straining, resisting, or forcing a pose.
- Be aware of your strengths and your limitations. We all have both.
- Find and accept adaptations; you will still benefit.
- Breathe. Inhale: Open your heart. Exhale: embrace love

My **Ahimsa** quote of the week comes from Tolstoy:
“Nothing can make our life, or the lives of other people, more beautiful than perpetual kindness.”

Improving health and well-being through thoughtful movement.

Poses that Open the Heart

Reclined Chest Opener

Create space around the heart center



Deep Breathing with Wing Breaths

Inhale into the chest with a high arch
Exhale as you bring hands to
Namaste, lower your forehead, hon-
oring those you love



Cat Cow

Round and arch the spine



Bridge Pose

Bring circulation into the heart center



Locust

Strengthen your heart



Poses that Cradle the Heart

Supported Sitting Forward Bend(s)

Soften the heart



Child's Pose

Protect your heart

