

Asteya: Less can be More

The Yama: Asteya literally translates to mean “non-stealing”. We all know we shouldn’t take what isn’t ours; but do we really know how to settle for less in our lives? While hoarding may seem obviously selfish, have we become accustomed to too much? Too much comfort? Too many rights? Too many expectations? Too much dependence on the government? Are we (collectively) using more than our fair share of food, resources, energy, even personal space? Are our requirements to be content a little high perhaps? Or can we be content with what we have and who we are in this time of isolation? If we have what is essential, can we simply be grateful for that?”

You may be wondering what this has to do with your yoga practice. It means that a little bit of yoga goes a long way! When I started my own home practice long ago, my goal was to do 3 poses. That took about 15 minutes (unless I got hooked and did more, once on the mat!). If I could get that short practice in, it changed my day. I felt better, moved more easily, had more energy, more patience, and was a nicer mom and wife!

Any amount of yoga you do is good for your whole body. It is better to be consistent with a short practice than it is to do a long practice every once in a while. Take small bites. Be content with your level of ability and know when to stop. Keep your expectations reasonable. We don’t need to run marathons!

My “less is more” yoga practice this week is actually 5 poses, not 3. It can be done in a few minutes, or it can be stretched out into a hearty practice. It can be done quickly and repeated many times, or it can be done very slowly, deliberately, one time through. You can add other poses into it, like balances or other standing poses. I know this sequence as the Ode to Iyengar. Posted by the Iyengar Yoga National Association of U.S., it was practiced world wide on August 26, 2014 as a communal honoring of Iyengar’s passing. It could be considered the most essential of yoga asana.

Improving health and well-being through thoughtful movement.

Ode to Iyengar

Standing Mountain (Tadasana)



Standing Forward Bend (Uttanasana)



Downfacing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)



Triangle (Trikonasana)
(repeat Dog & Triangle on other side)



Standing Forward Bend (Uttanasana)



Standing Mountain (Tadasana)



Finish by lying down, or sitting quietly for a few minutes.