

Adaptive Yoga Information

What is adaptive yoga?

Adaptive yoga classes are for individuals living with mobility impairments, such as partial or total paralysis, amputation, spinal cord injury, severe arthritis, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, head injury, spina bifida and cerebral palsy. Adaptive class participants must be able to follow simple instructions. Teachers adapt classic yoga poses using props and light adjustments.

Our teachings are based on the work of Matthew Sanford. For more information on the work and practice of Matthew Sanford, please look at his website at: www.matthewsanford.com

What are the goals of adaptive yoga?

Simply stated, the goals of adaptive yoga are to enhance breath and movement, build and strengthen one's inherent mind – body relationship, improve overall strength and flexibility and, perhaps most important, to have fun and feel good!

What should I do to prepare myself for a yoga class?

- Dress comfortably in stretchy clothing
- Use the restroom before class
- Try to avoid coming to class with a full belly- if you're hungry just have a light snack
- If you're a new student, arrive early so you can introduce yourself to your teacher and tell him / her about your condition and specific needs
- If you're a returning student, make sure to tell your teacher if you've had any changes to your health

Are there any risks associated with adaptive yoga?

Yes. We do our very best to keep our students safe by encouraging them to listen to their bodies and by teaching gentle poses. However, because of the beautiful mix of students we have in class and because we are not health care professionals, we cannot anticipate the specific risks or contraindications of every yoga pose for every student. It is *your responsibility* to discuss the risks and benefits of adaptive yoga with your health care provider prior to coming to class.

Should I discuss adaptive yoga with my health care provider?

Yes. We highly recommend that you discuss your desire to practice adaptive yoga with your health care provider (HCP) prior to coming to class.

What questions should I ask my HCP before starting adaptive yoga?

- What are the benefits and risks of physical activity for me?
- Are there any yoga poses (movements) I should avoid?
 - For example:
 - Gentle spinal twists, including the neck
 - Placing my head lower than my heart
 - Lying on my back or belly
 - External rotation of the leg with the knee bent (i.e., the Butterfly pose)
 - Gentle backbends
 - Forward folds
- Am I at risk for specific adverse events, such as fractures or other complications? For example, is osteoporosis a concern in my case?
 - If so, should I have a bone density scan (DEXA) done before starting yoga?
 - If I do have osteoporosis, are there specific movements or poses I should avoid?
 - Are there specific things I should do to preserve or improve bone strength?
- Ask your HCP to write out any special instructions for you and your teachers
- Also, consider sharing information about our teacher and pioneer of adaptive yoga, Matthew Sanford ,with your HCP at www.matthewsanford.com

Remember, it is your responsibility to follow your HCP's recommendations and to communicate them to your yoga instructor. If there is a pose taught in class that you should avoid, just ask the teacher for an alternative pose.

Please initial page one and sign and date below confirming you have read the 'Adaptive Yoga Information' handout.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____