

Yoga for Healthy Lower Backs

Yoga for Healthy Lower Backs (YHLB) is an evidence-based yoga course designed for people with general, chronic lower back pain.

This 12-week programme was proven effective by the University of York (Department of Health Sciences) in a randomised controlled trial funded by Arthritis Research UK. The research was carried out in 2007-2011 and published in top journals.

The lead yoga teaching consultants decided to share their work and have been training and supporting teachers around the UK to deliver the programme. Lockerbie yoga teacher, Susan Neal, qualified with Yoga Scotland in 2007 and trained to deliver the YHLB course in 2012. Susan said, "Previous students have given very positive feedback about the results of the Yoga for Backs Course. Some students go on to a regular yoga class, whilst carrying on with their usual exercise. The students all take away the knowledge and confidence to keep back problems at bay and to deal with any future episodes with their back."

This yoga programme is an ideal introductory foundation course for beginners with a focus on low back health:

- Designed for use with students who are not showing signs of serious low back pathology and who do not have any other contraindicating medical conditions, i.e. it is designed for the common-or-garden back pain with which the majority of people suffer from time to time.
- The course aims to give students a good grounding in the subtle and accurate beginnings of most aspects of yoga, including Tadasana; Savasana; backbends; forward bends; twists; foot, leg, hip, hand, arm and shoulder work; seated and standing poses; simple breathing; awareness and mental focus; and yogic philosophical ideas.
- Enables and encourages newcomers to yoga who suffer from low back pain to learn to practise appropriately in class and at home for the long-term health of their back.
- Students are taught once a week in a 12-class course where classes comprise of 75-minute group classes with a mid-course break of one or more weeks.
- Yoga poses (asanas) and variations were chosen to be simple to understand and user-friendly so that students can practise at home from Day 1.
- For ease of understanding and accuracy within home practice, advice on using simple yoga props for some of the poses is taught. These props are: a blanket or pillow, a belt, a block or book, a chair, a firm table, the wall and the floor.
- Poses are taught without physical hands-on adjustments, but with accurate and attentive verbal instructions in order that the students quickly learn to align themselves correctly within the poses.
- All 12 classes differ and each has a separate yoga philosophical theme, such as 'Steadiness'.
- Within the 12 differing classes, the postures are introduced in a gradually progressing way that builds on previous well-learned knowledge for effectiveness, understanding, safety, and in order to keep the students' interest.
- Learning to relax the body and mind is an integral part of the course and is taught from Day 1. A relaxation CD is available from the teacher or it can be purchased online. A student manual is available from Amazon if students would like more detail about the postures and the programme.

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You can find out more about Yoga for Healthy Lower Backs including the results of the research at www.yogaforbacks.co.uk

The 12 week course with Susan Neal costs £144 (payable in 2 x £72 amounts) to include tuition and worksheets.