

## Promoting Fertility with Iyengar Yoga

Iyengar yoga is uniquely focused on awakening the body's intelligence and can promote fertility. The founder of Iyengar yoga, BKS Iyengar, was a very well-respected man, and an expert in his field. His life-long dedication to studying ways in which this type of yoga positively influences physical and physiological health was unparalleled. By the time he passed away, at ninety-four years old, he'd significantly helped so many people and doctors from around the world that he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Iyengar's teachings are passed down through only teachers who are rigorously trained and have had at a bare minimum seven years of devoted practice, study and national exams. They deeply understand the importance of thoughtfully sequencing poses as this affects the inner temperature of the body, of modifying poses based on individuals' needs and cycles, and of course of the medical benefits of each and every pose.

When working to encourage fertility, postures that promote circulation and a healthy spine are crucial. Some from each category ought to be practiced. Standing poses help improve the functioning of the reproductive system, help develop flexibility in the spine, and tone the nervous system. Seated postures improve circulation in the pelvic regions; they can also treat menstrual disorders and bring steadiness to the mind. Backbends are thought to effectively increase the oxygenation of the blood, rejuvenate the spine, and develop vitality. Forward bends tone and massage the abdominal organs and have a soothing effect on the nervous system. Twists bring flexibility to the spine as well; they revitalize the abdominal organs and can also remedy various menstrual disorders. Inversions, whether passive or active, are thought to increase hemoglobin in the blood and stimulate blood supply to the endocrine glands.

In promoting fertility, there is a call to 'charge' certain areas of the body whose functions have not been optimized. This must be done with care and awareness. When practices are more restorative in nature, they allow the nervous system to let go and recharge. Your practice should be individualized as well as based on the timing of your natural cycle.

Often the stress of trying to get pregnant takes us 'away from ourselves'. We can become consumed by the yearning while simultaneously angered by the process. Just as stress can

worsen infertility, infertility often reinforces stress. An Iyengar yoga practice, with the support of an experienced teacher, combined with traditional and/or more innovative medical intervention can be a vital piece in interrupting this conflict. The physiological effects of stress that alter the balance of our hormones and negatively affect multiple systems in our bodies can be treated with a variety of modalities, many of which are taught in Iyengar classes - yoga postures, breathing, meditation, imagery, muscle relaxation and positive self-talk.

Iyengar Yoga allows us to work from the inside out, find our physical and philosophical center, open up (mind and body) in order to trust the bigger picture and fortify our organic body. For women who want to conceive, it can be a crucial component in promoting their fertility. It also helps cultivate a healthy pregnancy and healthy postpartum recovery. Unlike the other types of yoga out there, Iyengar yoga truly teaches the reasons for and honors the effects of this beautiful, ancient practice - in summary, deep and whole health.