

# EMBODIED YOGA PRINCIPLES POSTURE GUIDE



## Forward

This posture guide is an aid for Embodied Yoga Principles teachers and EYP teacher trainees. The photos and text can serve as reminders of the main postures, and I have also included some common mistakes to help you notice these and clarify your practice, as well as new variations, extended explorations, and partner practices. I have also included some art and imagery that relates to the postures.

I hope you enjoy exploring them; remember to share in the Facebook group how you get on with your practice and to keep track of new developments. Because EYP is principles-based it is always evolving and there is continued possibility for creative development.

If you have not been to an EYP teacher training I strongly advise against trying to learn the postures to teach others purely from this guide, without feedback and support. Even for experienced asana teachers it is not only ineffective, but also unsafe to teach others this work. You will however gain a lot from practising yourself.

*- Mark Walsh, Brighton, 2018*

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# THE PURPOSE OF EMBODIED YOGA PRINCIPLES

The purpose of all EYP practice is to:

**- Gain personal insight  
and build pragmatic life skills (it's educational)**

*or to put it another way:*

**- To (re)access a wider range of embodied possibilities**

*or to put it another way:*

**- To create awareness and choice**

***all through asana practice***

# The EYP framework

EYP maps human embodied possibilities with 26 postures and variations of these. There could be more or less poses (and see the next page for more on the word “poses”), but this number is enough to work with most life challenges people have, without things being excessively complex. In a 2-3 day workshop for example you can cover most of them\*, and even a half day workshop will cover enough for a basic “vocabulary”. Other poses can be created but can usually be seen as just variations of this basic set which provide a kind of fundamental alphabet.

There are various ways to conceptualise how the postures fit together, the most simple being to categorise them into “yin” and “yang” poses. Some could also be said to be more yin and yang (e.g. yes/openness, and no and pushing), and others more combined and differentiated.

For further understanding of yin and yang see the embodied work of Dylan Newcomb (whose Uzazu system is a major influence on EYP) and of course the taoist and tai chi classics. Do not get too hung-up on the yang-yin distinction though, it's just a map. Note that when we say "yin" we are referring to the notion more broadly than the specific school of "Yin Yoga" which while I value it highly, is but one way a practice can be considered “yin”.

Note too that postures can have several names. The postures point to something universal and beyond words and I've found people can get hung-up on names or have negative associations with certain words, so it's useful to have alternatives to hand. Ultimately the name doesn't really matter, and we have all kinds of fun with translation (EYP is taught currently in English, Spanish, German, French, Russian, Latvian, Ukrainian, Welsh, Portuguese, Swedish, Texan even... and likely a bunch of other languages by now).

One could see the postures as “energies”, though this word can be used too loosely to be useful; or “archetypes”- Jung's inherited cross-cultural maps of being. EYP is in many ways a Jungian approach to yoga.

*\*safety note - don't try them all in a short space fo time though, it'll likely be extremely perturbing due to their emotional impact! I've found this when demonstrating in teacher trainings and for the book's photos! Total bodymindfuck!*

# “Postures”?

The words “posture” and “pose”<sup>\*</sup> are used here for ease but this is not really the most accurate way to think of the forms within the EYP model. Each “posture” is a gateway to access an archetypal essence, and while knowing the forms thoroughly can be very helpful for revealing tendencies though seeing deviations, it’s not the exact shape itself that really matters. This is why they can all be done in a chair without or adapted to suit different bodies without lessening their impact (but don’t go changing them to suit your neurosis either new teachers!). Because of their deeply resonant archetypal nature they are also surprisingly powerful-emotionally, and in generating insights. This is by design and not to be underestimated.

Each "posture" is actually dynamic, and can be practised as movements on the mat (movements with a direction and quality that could be mapped in say Laban<sup>\*\*</sup> dance analysis notation), or in any other form (see our [walking yoga](#) work for example). Often we use the traditional Buddhist model of practising each in the four positions of walking, sitting, standing and lying down. Due to the nature of the archetypes however some are better done from one position - e.g. rest is best done lying down still, and enthusiasm tends to be standing and with lots of movement! They are also "postures" in the sense of attitudes, being affective frames, cognitive frames, relational frames, perceptual frames and behavioural frames. This means they are the implicit “ground” of how we feel, think, see, relate and act. The purpose of EYP is got create awareness of unconscious frames and add choice. They are a way in accessing the *substrates* of our being. This is no small thing, and this is why they can be used to work with many wide ranging themes.

I dislike the word as it’s used by many very loosely, but you could also call each an “energy”. More dryly one could refer to them as "somatic structures to aid psychological enquiry"... but that's a mouthful... or more poetically as an "architecture of the soul".

*\*NB: Interestingly “posture” and “pose” also don’t really have traditional Sanskrit usages, with “seat” being the best translation for “asana”, and other words being used for flowing and spontaneous practices.*

*\*\* a form of movement analysis used in dance - e.g. “direct, linear and sustained”, vs “indirect, circular and abrupt”*

# Introductory inquiries

The next few pages have examples of inquiries which can be used as an introduction to an Embodied Yoga Principles workshop/class.

Offering simple postures which people are likely to be familiar with from regular yoga classes and pointing to HOW people do them, is often an easy place to start (i.e. from the “known”)\*. You can explore the quality of effort made - a little or a lot - and ask them to reflect up on whether that is familiar for them, is that how they usually practice, is that how they are in life? I.e. the “familiarity” part of the classic EYP method. This gives people the fundamental idea that what they do on the mat reflects what they do off the mat. The next thing you can add is, “how would you like to be in life?” which gently introduces the idea of embodiment - that we can build a way of being on the mat, for off the mat.

\* *“how we are” is a simple definition of embodiment in fact*

# CLASSIC INTRODUCTORY INQUIRY

- exploring effort and surrender (basic yin and yang)

The quantity and quality of effort can be explored in all postures, and contrasted - a little effort, with a



## **Applying more effort**

Trying to move forwards (to reach the toes or not, this doesn't matter. Hands can be placed higher up the leg - at ankles, knees, thighs; whatever).



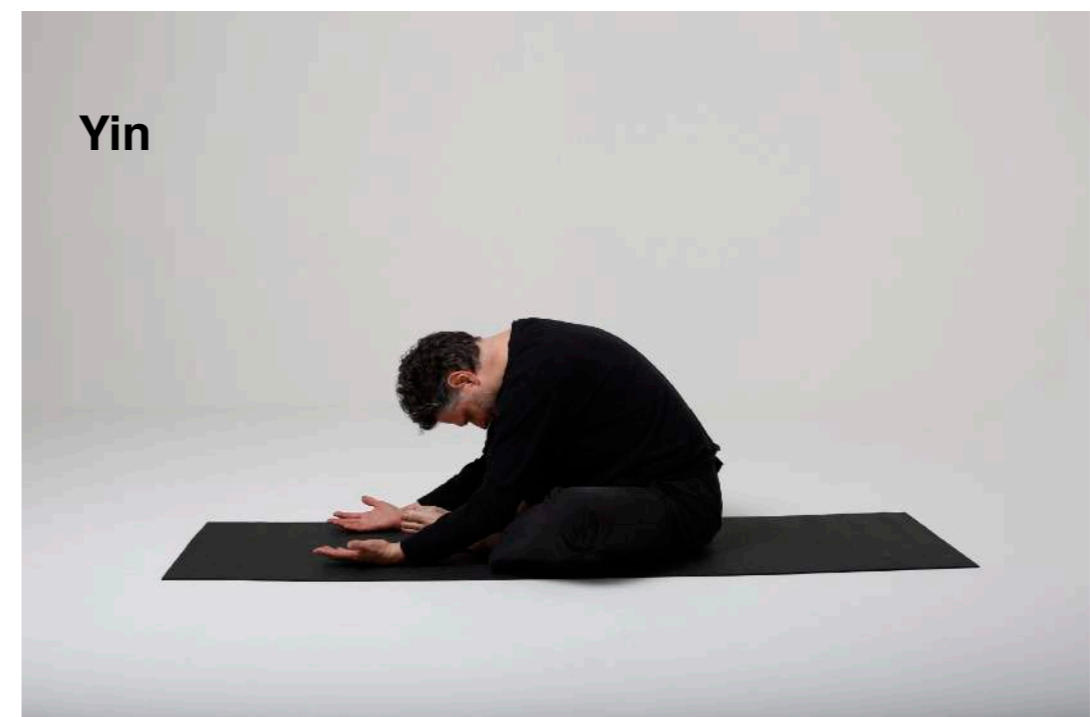
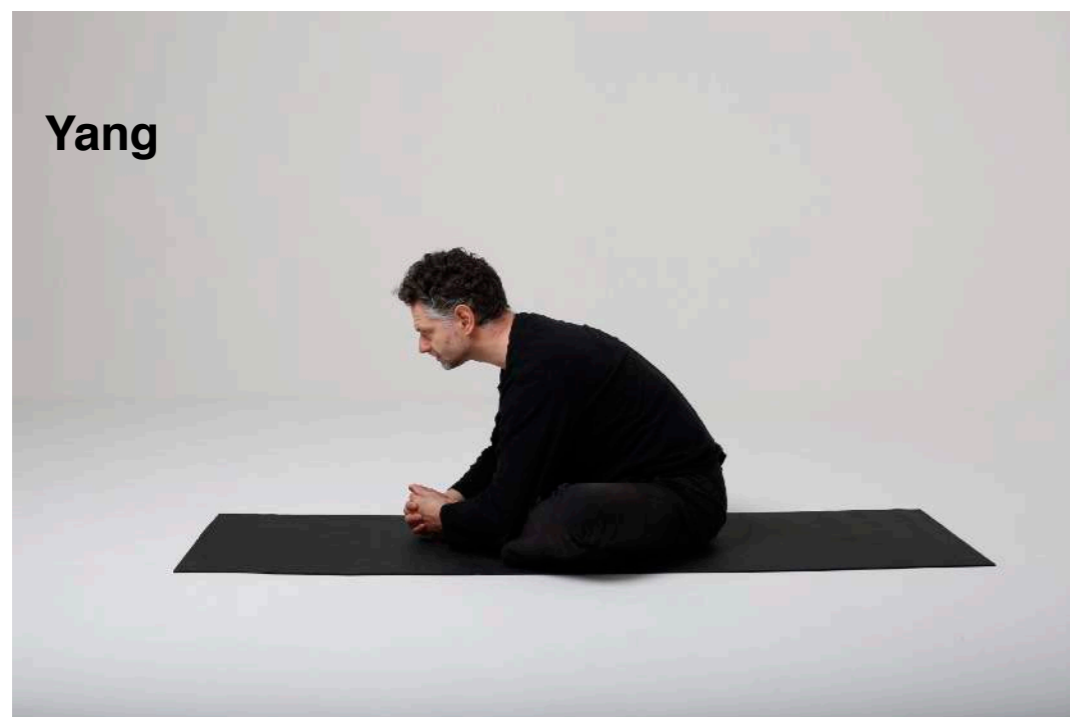
## **Applying less effort / surrendering**

Surrendering to the pose, more relaxed than before, no pulling. Head released.



## CONTRAST

- contrasting trying and allowing (yang vs yin) can be done in many postures



Other poses can be used, e.g. a single leg forward bend (janu sirasana), side bend (e.g. para sukhāsana), or a simple seated twist. What matters is contrasting allowing vs trying. Standing poses can also be used but may be less suitable for all in a class

# Other possible opening inquiries

- **Gentle hatha/vinyasa yoga sequence**

Establish body awareness and then bring awareness to “how” people are doing poses

- **Cat-cow**

Flexion and extension of the spine and “creating” postures from that. Then:

“notice how are you doing it”,

“now choose another way to do it”

- awareness and choice - the heart of EYP and all embodied work
- yin (flexion) and yang (extension) can also be explored this way
- can be done sitting, standing or on all fours (most typical)

- **Freedom vs form**

Establish a form then encourage freedom from the form, or breakdown stages of different possibilities until free from the form. “Just do some yoga” is another way into this (starting with freedom). This can also be used as an enquiry into your relationship to authority - very useful when teaching in the early stages of a workshop to avoid both habitual conformity and blind rebellion - creativity and more.

- **“Do yoga like your life is!” Then, “do yoga how you’d like it to be”.**

This is a simple yet profound enquiry that can throw people right into the deep-end and highlight some painful things, so take care with this. I will do it in a fairly short light-hearted way if an introductory enquiry and in a deeper longer way in an extended enquiry (see later in this guide).

# What makes it “embodied”?

This is another possible opening enquiry :

## **Contrast three ways to practice any yoga techniques**

1. As exercise (body as object)
2. Mindfully (being aware of the body)
3. As embodied practice (body as subject). Being aware *AS* the body/ aware of body as an aspect of self that can give both insights and be a way to practice BEING.

These distinctions are really at the heart of what EYP and embodied practice is so they are worth getting crystal clear about as a teacher. Stage 3 is what makes a way of doing yoga “embodied”.

# GENERAL POSTURE GUIDELINES

The next section the common patterns of the usual EYP spine, feet and hand positions. Many postures share such features so it's actually simpler to learn the forms than there being 26 postures may suggest! These can also be used in daily life as part of micro-poses (see later section on this, as while it's often socially unacceptable to say pull a warrior pose, you can usually subtly change one's spine or hand position without it being obvious or strange.

## **Comfort and body types**

EYP postures should never be more than a little physically uncomfortable, though they may be emotionally so and yang poses should have some effort in them. If the poses are too demanding physically people will not be able to focus on the subtler feelings beneath screaming muscles\* and using the pose as an enquiry. Postures are largely non-athletic and can be adapted to different body types and physical limitations once a teacher understands the essence of the posture. Disability, pregnancy, unusual body types etc; need never be a barrier to practising EYP with a well-trained and considerate teacher, though people are always free to choose to skip a pose if they like (true for any reason, any time in fact).

*\*why a more intense style of yoga can be used NOT to feel (as a sad aside)*

# SPINE POSITION

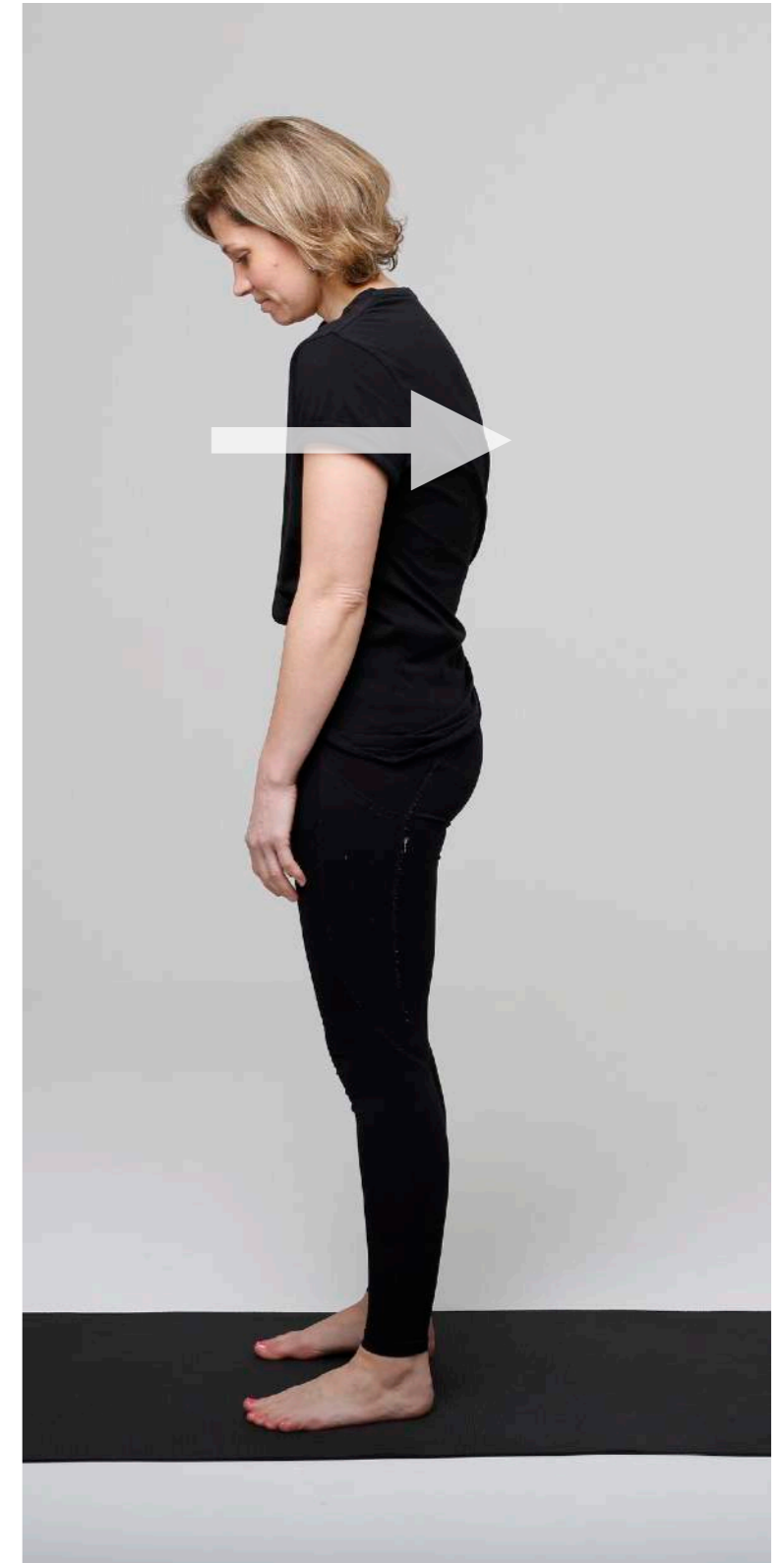


## Spine extended

Yang spine position seen in many yang poses, e.g. giving posture



NB: Sometimes I show this from kneeling cat-cow which is familiar to most yogis, and often illustrated the point clearer than in standing.



## Spine flexed

Yin spine position: e.g. receiving posture



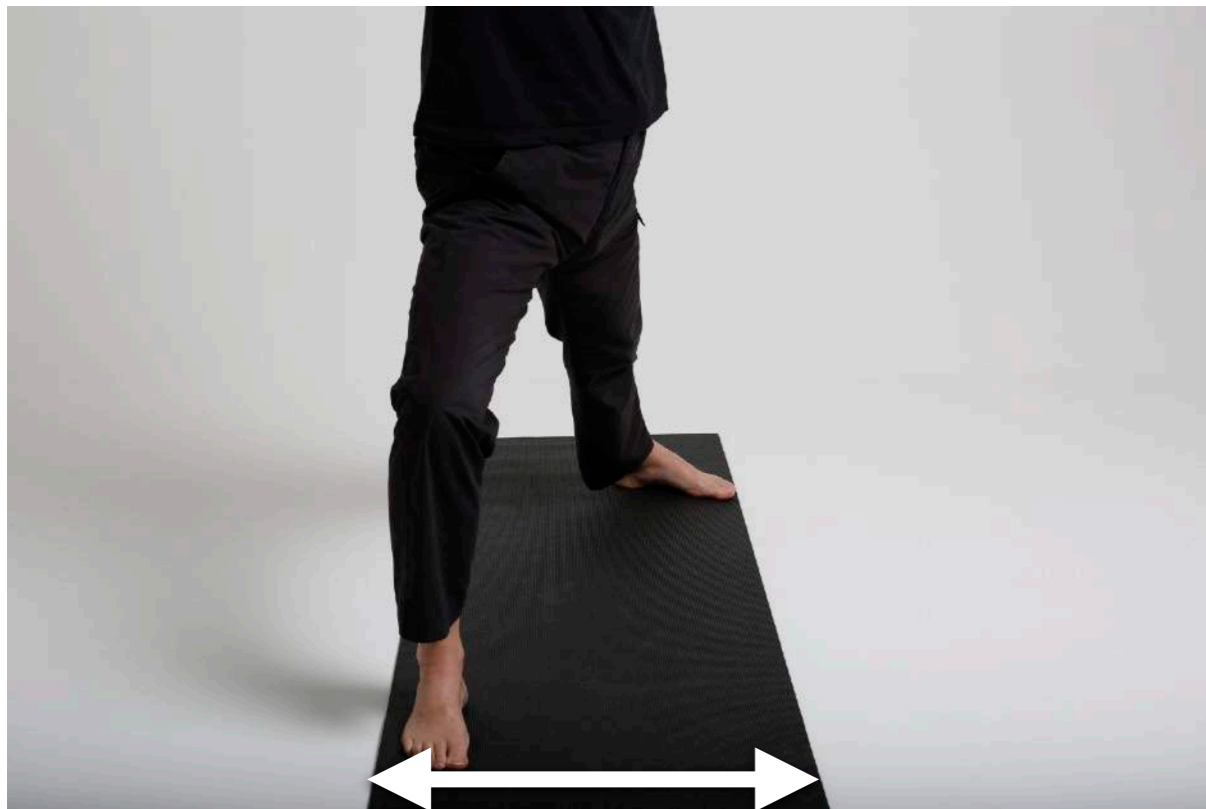
# Feet and legs - classic EYP bases

Generally the base for the 'yang' postures is with the feet as/nearly as wide as the mat (unless person has physical restrictions), with around 60% weight on front foot, back leg extended. In yin postures the back leg is bent (but not uncomfortably so) and around 60% of the weight is on it. Yin postures may be a little less wide than yang ones due to this. Stride can be long and short.

## Yang base

**Front foot** pointing forwards, front knee bent and over middle of foot (not ankle or further back - a common mistake more habitually yin people make), which means some muscular effort is needed.

**Back foot** turned out and extended right down to the little toe to give a strong stable base (another common mistake is to slightly bend the back knee and not extend). Both feet should be "alive".



Some people are less able to do a long stride due to physical limitations. It is fine to make a shorter stance as long as the weighting is correct. Width and weighting is more important than length. There's a personal pattern for some in habitually picking a more challenging stride than is necessary, or a less challenging one than helpful, that can be worth highlighting too.

# Feet and legs - yin base

Here the weight is on the back leg. 60%, is ideal, and there should be some width, but this should not be physically uncomfortable for people or stress the knee. The important thing is just that the weight is back.



In a handful of poses the weight is evenly weighted (e.g. chair and support poses), and in some the feet are in a straight line not wide (e.g. warrior and entering), but many EYP poses use one of these two bases.

# HAND POSITIONS

There's just a few hand positions used in EYP, but like the eyes, breath and spine they're quite critical to a pose. In fact, if someone can only move one hand you could do an entire EYP class with them!

## Yang - Fist

Firm but not tense fist

- as in *no* posture

## Yang - Firm

Fingers together  
- e.g. *warrior* or *authority*

## Yang - Extended open

Fingers spread widely away from each other -  
- e.g. *taking up space* or *giving*

## Yin - Receptive

Open without excess effort  
- e.g. *open* or *rest* posture

## Yin - Released

Completely relaxed (including wrist)  
- as in *letting go* posture



There are more complex mudras which are used in classical yoga which can also be employed and while there's likely some truth in such systems there's also dogma so use with care.

# YIN AND YANG

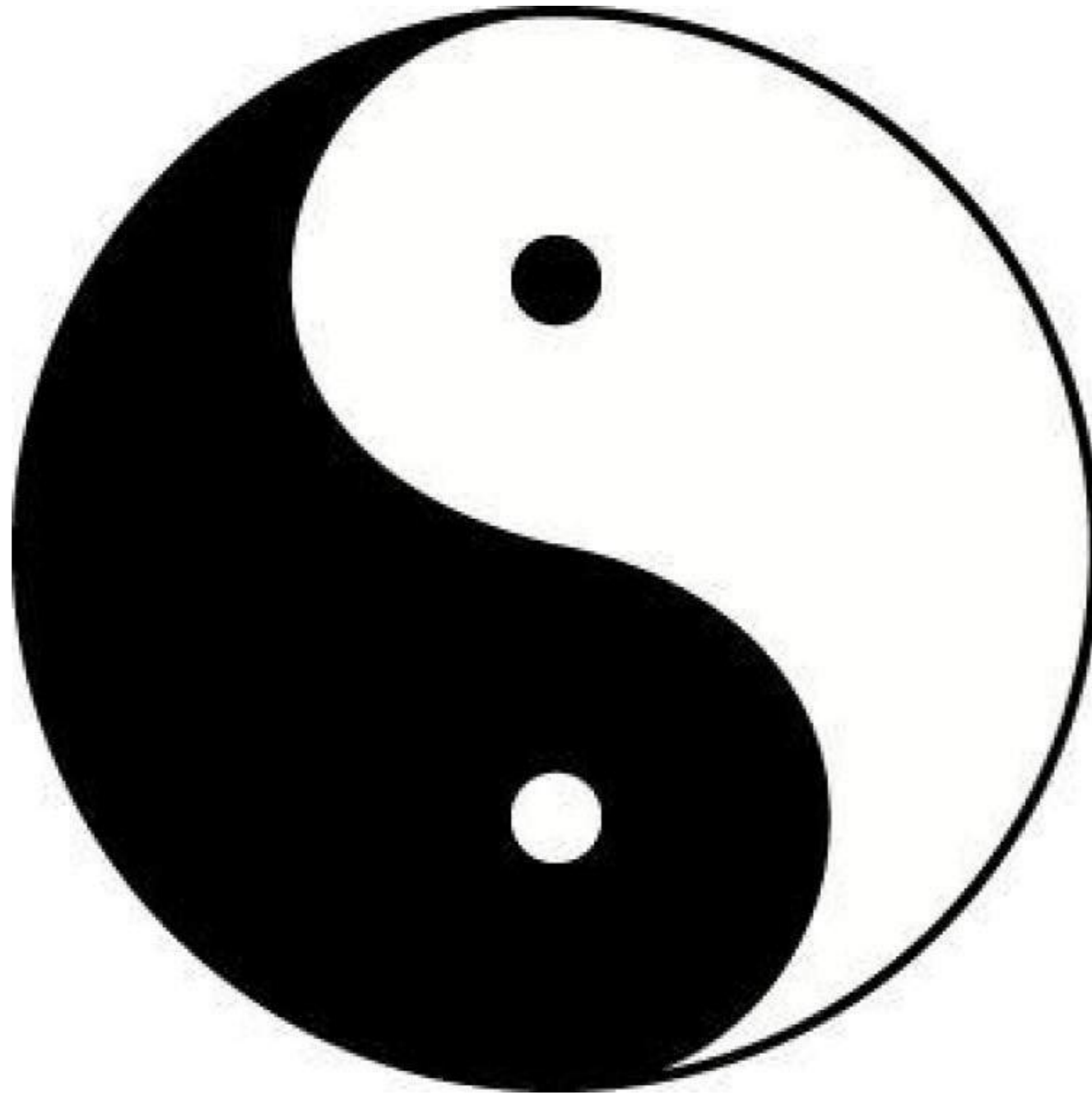
Yin and yang, is a genuinely ancient model of polarity most associated with taoism and Chinese philosophy. In EYP it is one of the main systems used to understand difference and change. Yin and yang are complimentary **polarities** not opposites. This is an important distinction. They are two inseparable halves of wholeness.

Further, as Yin Yoga teacher Paul Grilley points out, yin and yang are **relational** and contextual. The heart for example is yang when it comes to movement (active) but yin when it comes to position (deep). Yin and yang are also **paradoxical** in that one is at the heart of the other. To be truly confident for example (which could be seen as yang) requires great self-acceptance (yin), and vice versa. Nothing is wholly yin and yang and one contains the other.

Yin and yang are also constantly **moving** in relationship, with one containing the birth of and creating the other. Excessive effort creating exhaustion and rest for example. The visual representation of yin and yang should be seen as spinning in three dimensions, with one giving birth to the other and containing it's own demise! It's a map of time and relationship not just "stuff".

The concept of yin and yang is profound and requires thoughtful practice and deep reflection to start to reveal itself beyond a surface understanding. I feel like a beginner in regards to it despite years of study theoretically and through the body (e.g. though aikido and tai chi). I would highly recommend Dylan Newcomb on embodied aspects of this subject. He is the founder of an Mindbody system called Uzazu which is a major influence on EYP and someone I deeply respect professionally .

# Yin-yang





# Yin yang overview

Some general guidelines for yin and yang in the body:

## Yang

- posture: weight forwards and up
- movement: more, linear, direct
- *doing more. Action*
- direction: up and out
- speed: fast
- muscle tone: firm
- eyes: open, focused
- spine: extended
- breath: pushing and faster
- voice: firm, loud, more sound
- hands: extended, often palms down, or fists
- exterior of body
- warm
- *broadly "expressive"*
- *emotions: anger and joy*
- *parts you could hit people with / protect yourself with (lateral surface)*
- *sympathetic nervous system*

## Yin

- posture: weight backwards and down
- movement: less, circular, indirect
- *doing less. Rest*
- direction: down and in
- speed: slow
- muscle tone: relaxed
- eyes: peripheral, or closed
- spine: flexed
- breath: releasing and slower
- voice: soft, quiet, less sound
- hands: closer to body, often palms up or loose
- interior of body
- cool
- broadly "receptive"
- *emotions: sadness and fear*
- *parts you may like being kissed (medial surface)*
- *parasympathetic nervous system*

In **paired work** competition and cooperation can be seen as more yang and yin respectively, and yang seeks differentiation and yin communion in relationship more broadly.

# The what, how, where, when, why and with whom of postures

To practice effectively it is necessary to consider the “what”, “how”, “when”, “where”, “why” and “with whom” of any pose. All of these can support or undermine a practice. These are always present, always impactful and not reducible to each other.

The postures themselves (or forms of any practice) here could be described as the “what” of EYP. The “what” of the shapes is a framework for exploring oneself. Critically though, “how” they are done is the real essence of embodied work. Doing a linear pose in a circular way, or a pose connected to love in a hateful way even, utterly changes its effect. Manner matters.

Further the postures will be quite different when done at different times of day and of the year, and in different environments - the “when” and the “where”. The *same* pose during morning or evening, or mid Summer or mid Winter; is not the same pose. Similarly doing a pose on a mountain top vs in a forrest, or in a cathedral vs in a modern office, is again not the same pose. This is easy to miss if you only practice in a controlled environment like a studio, which while seemingly neutral, is not; nowhere is.

The “why” of a practice also matters. What is motivating a practice? What is it in service to? An asana built with purpose is not the same as one built without meaning. This is subtle but significant.

Lastly, there is always a social context for practice. Who you are doing a practice with (actual or imagined) will strongly impact the practice. It’s very common for example that groups facilitate depth and ease. Specific relationships such as to a teacher, if a friend or lover is present, and wether you feel like you belong to a group are all major factors. More on this in the relational postures section.

# YANG POSTURES



# YANG POSTURES

The YANG postures are aimed to develop such qualities such as being forceful, boundaries and authority, though note the paradoxical and related nature of yin and yang as ever. One is at the heart of the other. Yang postures could broadly said to be "expressive".

EYP postures are helpful for applying short-term to shift state, and for developing qualities longer-term to grow range as a person through embodied growth.

As facilitators it is important to develop as full a range and understanding and experience of these to enable us to draw out these qualities in others. Some qualities are needed in society on a daily basis and if we want to make changes in life we need the clarity, focus and vitality that these yang postures provide.

Note: Various styles of yoga may be more yin or yang so not be complete in this manner. Some "power", acro and vinyasa schools may be more yang for example and hatha and Scaravelli schools more yin.

# Yang postures

1. **Pushing** - for exploring effort, action, drive, power and ambition
2. **No** - for exploring boundaries - with self and others
3. **Warrior** - for exploring focus, determination and fierceness
4. **Entering** - for exploring entering, courage, directness and confidence
5. **Authority** - for exploring declarations, commitment, creating futures and having authority
6. **Standing** - for exploring what you ARE a stand for, dignity and resolution
7. **Enthusiasm** - for exploring passion, diving in, yang “heart” and active surrender
8. **Support** - for exploring giving support and what we “carry”
9. **Giving** - for exploring offers (including professionally, sexually, etc), money and gratitude
10. **Taking space** - for exploring taking up space, visibility, being public and fame
11. **Joker** - for exploring humour, playfulness and teasing
12. **Transcendence** - for exploring spirituality, lightness and “rising above”
13. **Sensuality** - for exploring predatory sexuality, flirting and seduction



YANG

# 1. PUSHING POSE

to explore ability to move forwards with vitality, and in relationship to opposing forces and difficulties. In some ways “pure” yang.



**note:** some people's hands aren't able to be as upright due to wrist restrictions

# PUSHING - Guidelines

**Also known as (AKA):** power (through all poses are powerful), “raw power”, “bloody minded pose”

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring moving forward, effort, drive, ambition, force and determination and in relationship to opposing forces and difficulties. About “just getting on with it”.

**Notes:** this pose is close to “pure” yang. Uzazu influenced.

**Safety:** potentially triggering as can be perceived as aggressive

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard yang base (60% forward)

**Spine:** extended

**Hands:** on hips, palms facing forwards

**Head:** slight fwd tilt

**Face:** serious

**Gaze:** focused, forwards

**Sound/breath:** pushing out “Urggghh”, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** forwards, linear, strong

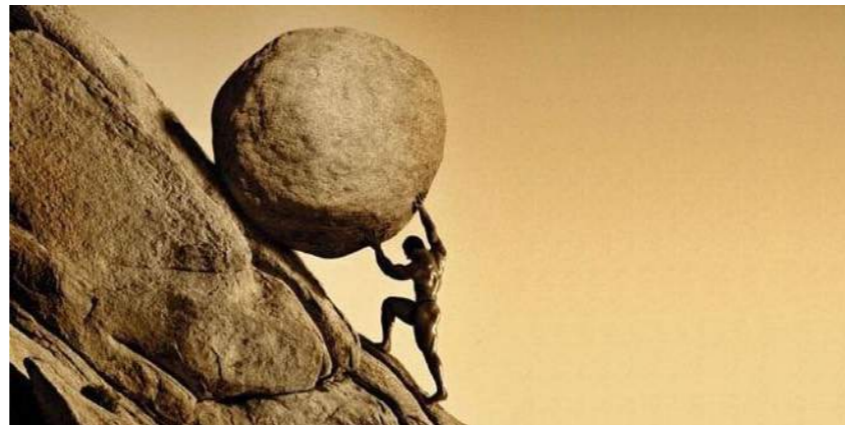
## Common mistakes

- weight not forward
- too yin generally
- hands too far fw (arms outstretched) or at wrong angle

# Pushing - art, imagery and life

For most postures I've included some examples of how they can be seen in art, visual imagery, sculpture, advertising and life. Art and advertising adore these archetypes as they communicate clearly and are psychologically powerful. Some postures can be seen more literally than others. Below for example the rushing business woman, arguing man (left in pic) and typist embody pushing pose but aren't literally making the exact same stance. Usually life involves combinations of watered-down poses. It's just map.

I have tried to take images from various sources but they are influenced by my own biases and travels (for example I'm in Russia a lot). I encourage readers to look out for them in their own environment.





**YANG**

## 2. NO

to explore our ability to say NO to self and others, set boundaries, etc.



**Adaptation: can be shorter as long as weight forward if needed**

# No - Guidelines

**AKA:** decline pose, barrier pose

**Purpose and themes:** For exploring our ability to say “no” to self and others, boundaries, what you don’t want, response to abuse, etc

**Notes:** often used with a verbal “no” in first language. Karate inspired

**Safety:** potentially very triggering (as well as empowering) as can relate to violations. Gender differences are common. Handle with care.

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard yang base (60% forward)

**Spine:** extended slightly

**Hands:** one in front of centre, the other in fist by side (at trouser pocket level), neither tight nor loose

**Head:** straight

**Face:** serious, no smile

**Gaze:** focused, forwards

**Sound/breath:** steady and firm, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** opposing the front

## Common mistakes

- hand positioning
- not facing
- weighting wrong
- many, see see next pages

# NO - Common mistakes cont

I won't illustrate all mistakes for every pose as there's too many, but will for no posture as it's a good example of deviations from a form showing personal patterns - i.e. "mistakes" are not really mistakes, but people's personalities showing through. Deviations may just be physical limitations and there's no simple A=B relationship in "reading" them, but I do see patterns (mentioned in brackets). It's always an enquiry.

Front arm straight, weight forward  
(aggressive/yang type)



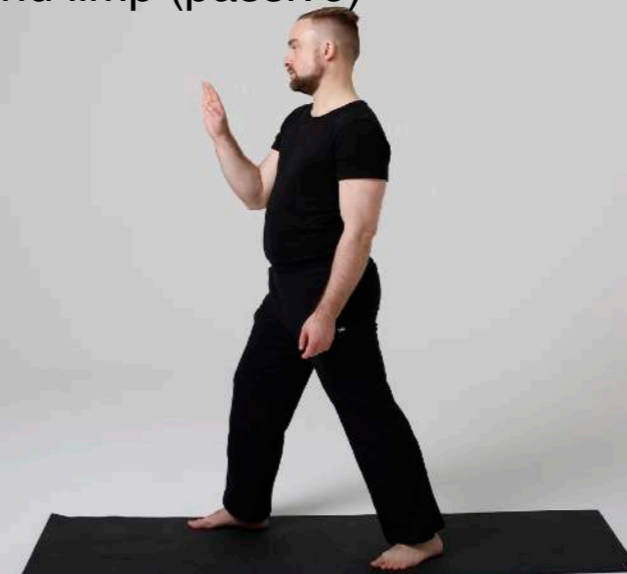
Body turned  
to side (avoidant)



Front hand limp,  
body leaning back  
(timid/yin type)



Side hand limp (passive)



# YANG

## NO Common Mistakes

Front hand  
to one side  
(defensive)



Front hand too  
open to one side  
(too open)



Side hand forwards  
(overly aggressive)



Front hand too open



These 8 deviations I see commonly. There are many more, and an EYP teacher can spot them quickly visually, and using various methods such as pushing on the front hand.

In one instance someone came to a workshop for a few hours and then blogged about EYP including a picture which contained 13 mistakes, so it's very easy to get the postures "wrong" and not notice.



YANG

# No - art, imagery and life

Florentine art



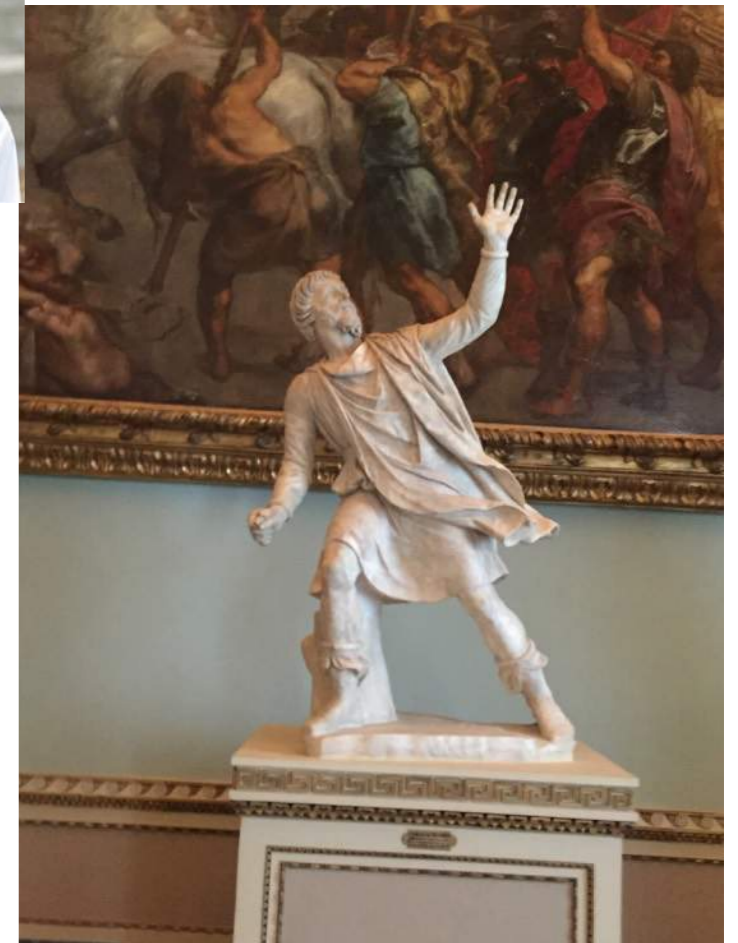
No pose and the EYP yang base is influenced by karate

Unhealthy victim no, this can be contrasted with an EYP firm no as an exercise

Abhaya mudra - "fear not"



combined with authority



Combined with yes - my mate Sid, balanced as ever



# No Variation leaving behind



Sometimes rather than engaging, a no is best done while leaving it behind - useful for ex-partners some find!

# Other no variations

- The back hand can be extended for those really averse to making a fist. It should still feel active and firm though like a “karate-chop” “knife-hand” not limp. Be careful here though as some may be avoiding much needed fierceness in wanting this variation.
- No pose can be done with the back hand touching the centre of the chest/ heart with the palm to help people connect to the idea that all declines come from care and what you value. This hand can also be a fist but again in front of the heart. This symbolic “touching of the heart” can be part of the pose setup, as it can for almost any posture (as shown elsewhere in the guide).
- The hands can also be flipped around in care pose (see the yin poses section) so palms are pushing out. This is not only showing the boundaries needed for care but can also be used as a kind of rejection pose, especially when the face is changed to disgust (no pose is actually more accepting emotionally). The Uzazu Mindbody system has a shape like this with a corresponding sound.
- A healthy facing no can be contrasted with victimhood, aggressive or a passive aggressive half-no (see mistakes). Often contrasting poses with mistakes and “near enemies” (e.g. confusing being aggressive with being a warrior) helps people tune into the archetype.

YANG

## 3. WARRIOR

For exploring “warrior” qualities, focus, determination, and secondarily taking up space

**Front Knee** bent further forwards than regular warrior to emphasise forward direction



Adaptation: can be shorter as long as weight fw. if needed or on a chair like all poses

# Warrior - Guidelines

**AKA:** fierce pose, heroic pose (not to be confused with classic yoga sitting on heels “hero” pose), champion pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring “warrior” qualities, focus, determination, resilience and secondarily taking up space

**Notes:** very similar to a classic yoga warrior 2 but with front knee slightly further forward

**Safety:** potentially triggering as can be perceived as aggressive. War associations

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** long, front knee bent, back leg extended

**Spine:** straight

**Hands:** fingers together, arms extended evenly

**Head:** straight, over hips,

**Face:** serious, no smile

**Gaze:** focused, forwards

**Sound/breath:** “ujjayi”

**Movement/attention:** forwards, linear, strong or holding ground

## Common mistakes

- arms not extended
- smiling or head tilt
- uneven arms (e.g. back arm drops)
- head fw. from hips
- back leg not extended
- soft tone generally



# Warrior - art, imagery and life



Freddie was also GREAT at taking space and many yang poses



cross cultural like all archetypes



with some entering here



warrior look and feel even with arms down

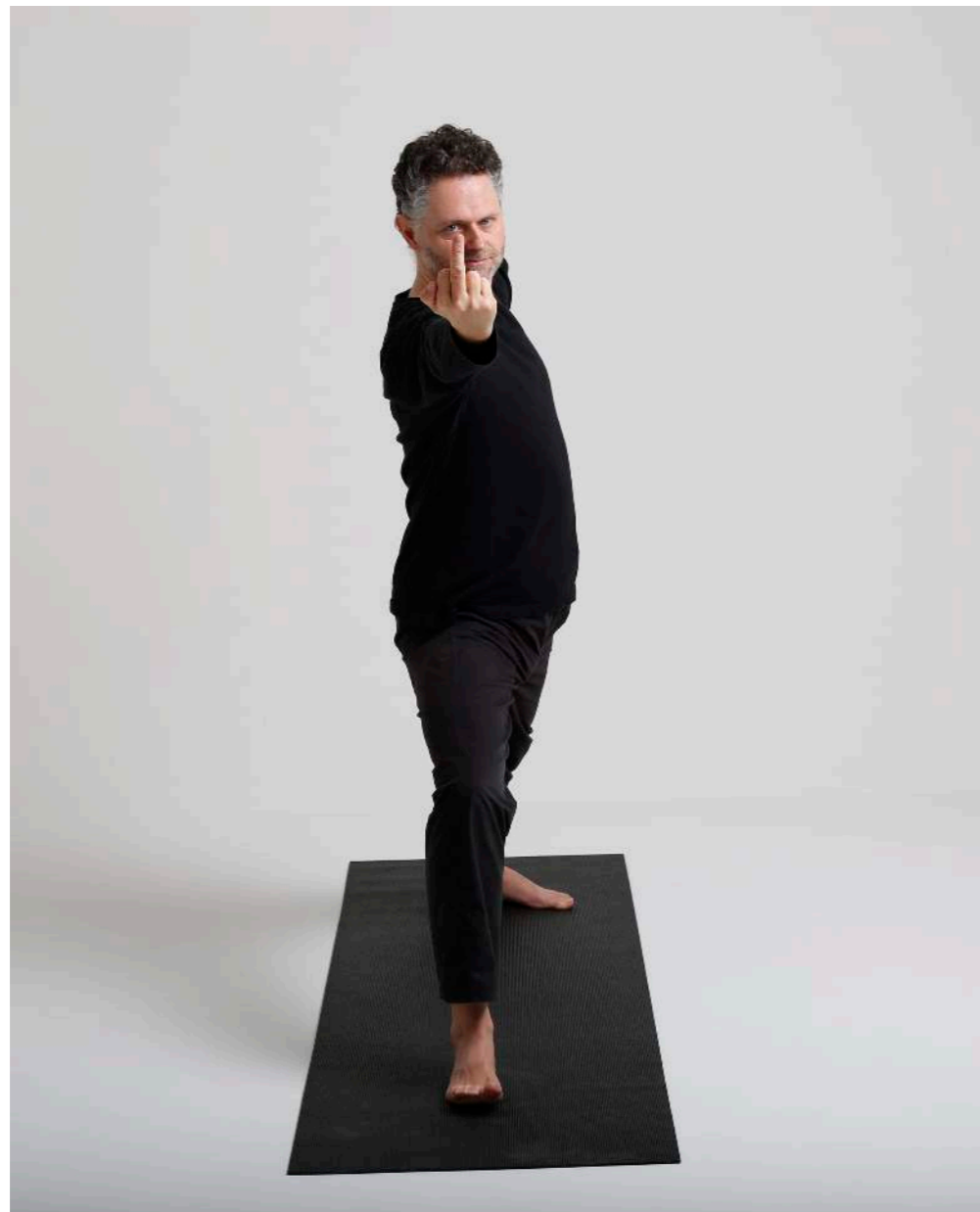


with some transcendence here

# Warrior variations

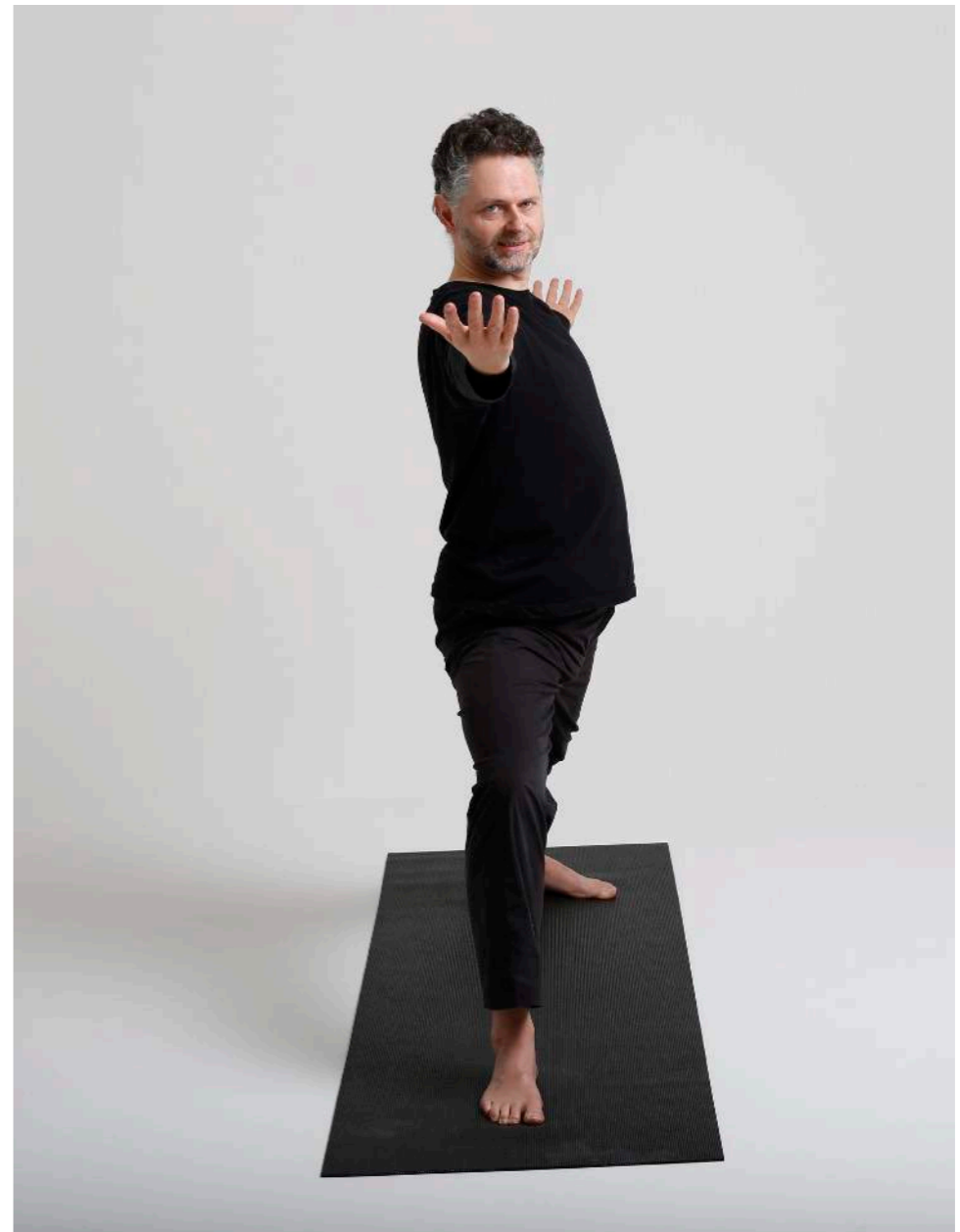
## Fuck you warrior

- A surprisingly useful embodiment for many to develop!



## Open warrior

- For those whose warrior is a bit too fierce!





# Warrior variations

## Exalted warrior

- useful for looking at pride and fierce aspects of spirituality



## Archer warrior

- useful for exploring goals and targets

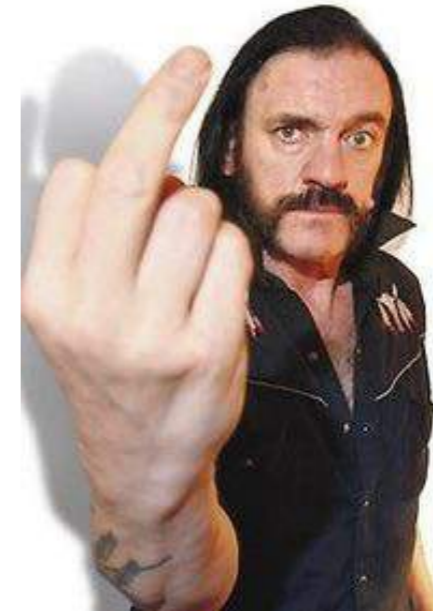


# Warrior variations - art, imagery and life

great focus from Lemmy



Transcendent joy mixed with warrior fierceness



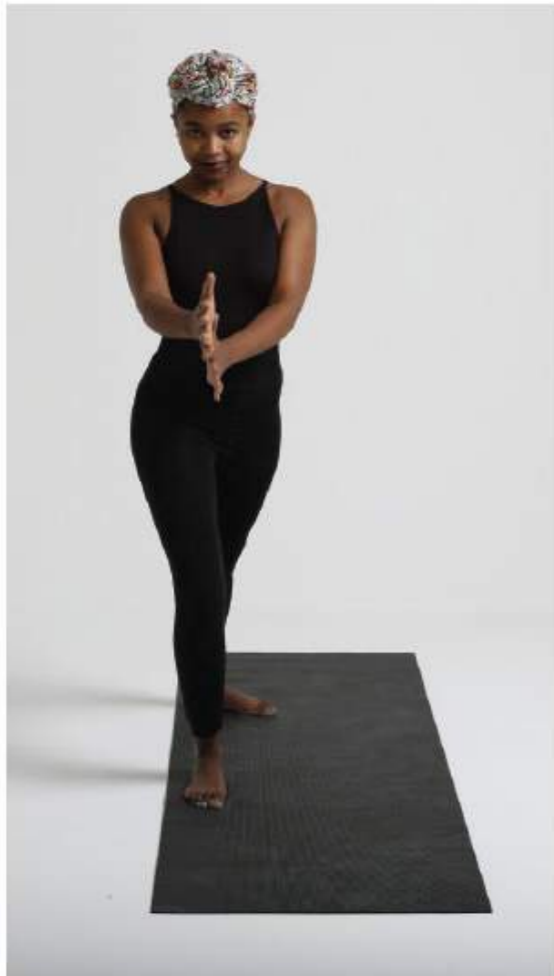
The exalted warrior form as a group image



YANG

## 4. ENTERING

For exploring entering, courage, directness and confidence



Note narrow base as per warrior, not no pose



Weight strongly forward, hands pointed ahead

# Entering - Guidelines

**AKA:** action pose, starting pose, focus pose

**Purpose and themes:** For exploring moving strongly into life, courage, taking action, confidence, beginnings, etc

**Notes:** Very similar to classical Japanese sword pose, kendo and aikido “hanmi” pose

**Safety:** usually no issues, though mentioning the stance comes from sword posture can trigger some

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** long, front knee strongly bent - 70% of weight if possible, back leg strongly extended

**Spine:** straight

**Hands:** fingers together, arms extended in front. No gap between hands

**Head:** straight, over hips, no smile

**Face:** focused

**Gaze:** focused, forwards

**Sound/breath:** “ujjayi”, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** forwards, linear, fast

## Common mistakes

- arms not extended
- gap between hands (as seen from front)
- head fw. from hips
- back leg not extended
- not dynamic
- see next page

# ENTERING - Common mistakes

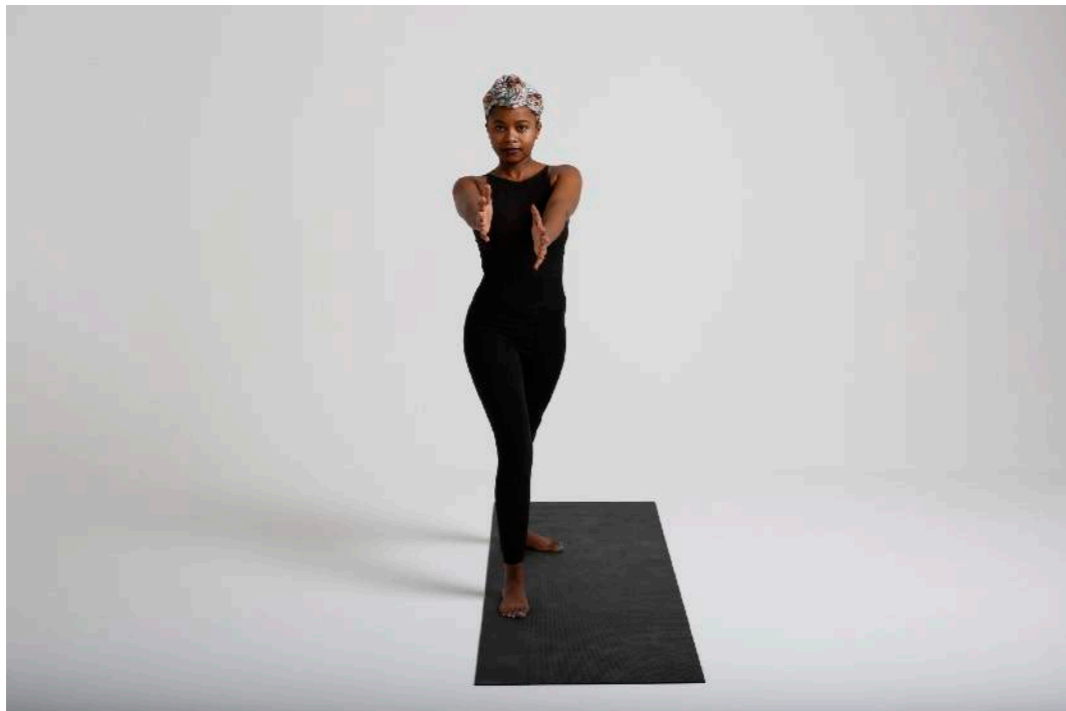
Weight back



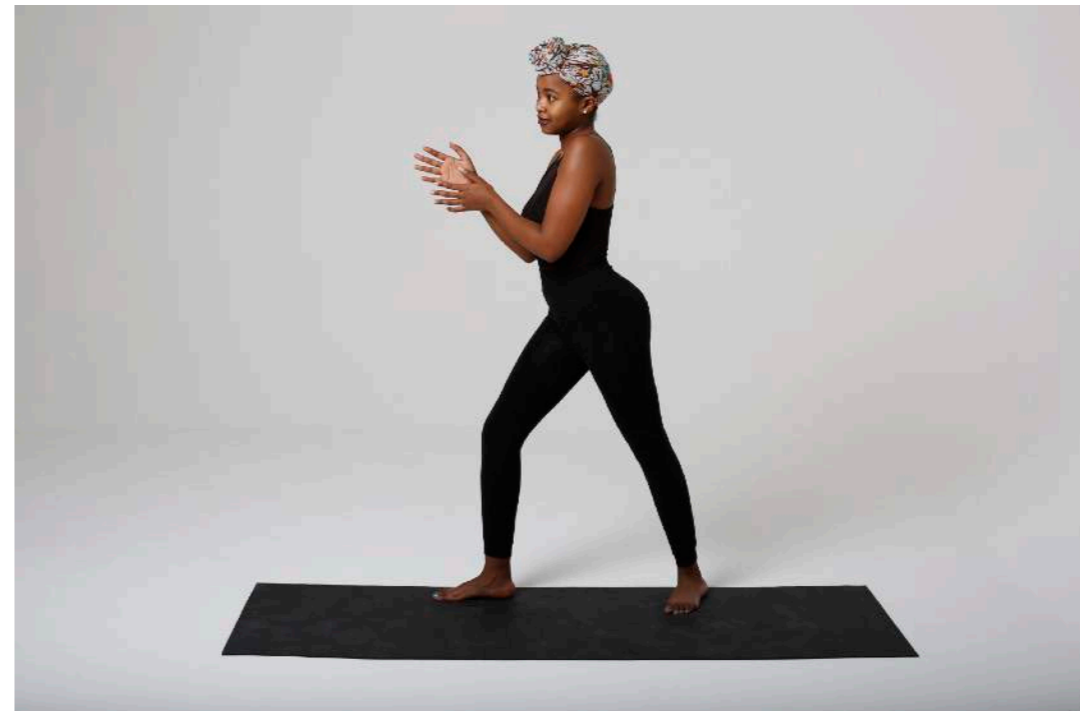
Hands too high / off balance



Gap between hands



Hands not extended



# Entering - art, imagery and life



With opening/enthusiasm pose



Entering and warrior are related poses, but entering is more directional and even more dynamic, and also has a less severe expression



YANG

## 5. AUTHORITY

For exploring declarations, power, commitment, creating futures and having authority



*Adaptation: base can be shorter if needed*

# Authority - Guidelines

**AKA:** leader pose (though leadership is involved in many poses), command pose, mastery pose, monarch pose, declaration pose.

**Purpose and themes:** For exploring relationship to power and authority, for using for declaring new futures, for finding certainty, etc

**Notes:** inspired by a pose used by Richard Strozzi-Heckle. Careful with translation of this one if not using English

**Safety:** one handed version looks like Nazi salute, egalitarian cultures that deny dominance may struggle with it (e.g. Sweden), triggers rebels!

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard yang base (60% forward)

**Spine:** slight extension

**Hands:** fingers together, arms extended in front and high. Palms facing fw. and down

**Head:** straight, over hips, no or wry smile

**Face:** serious and focused

**Gaze:** focused, forwards and down slightly

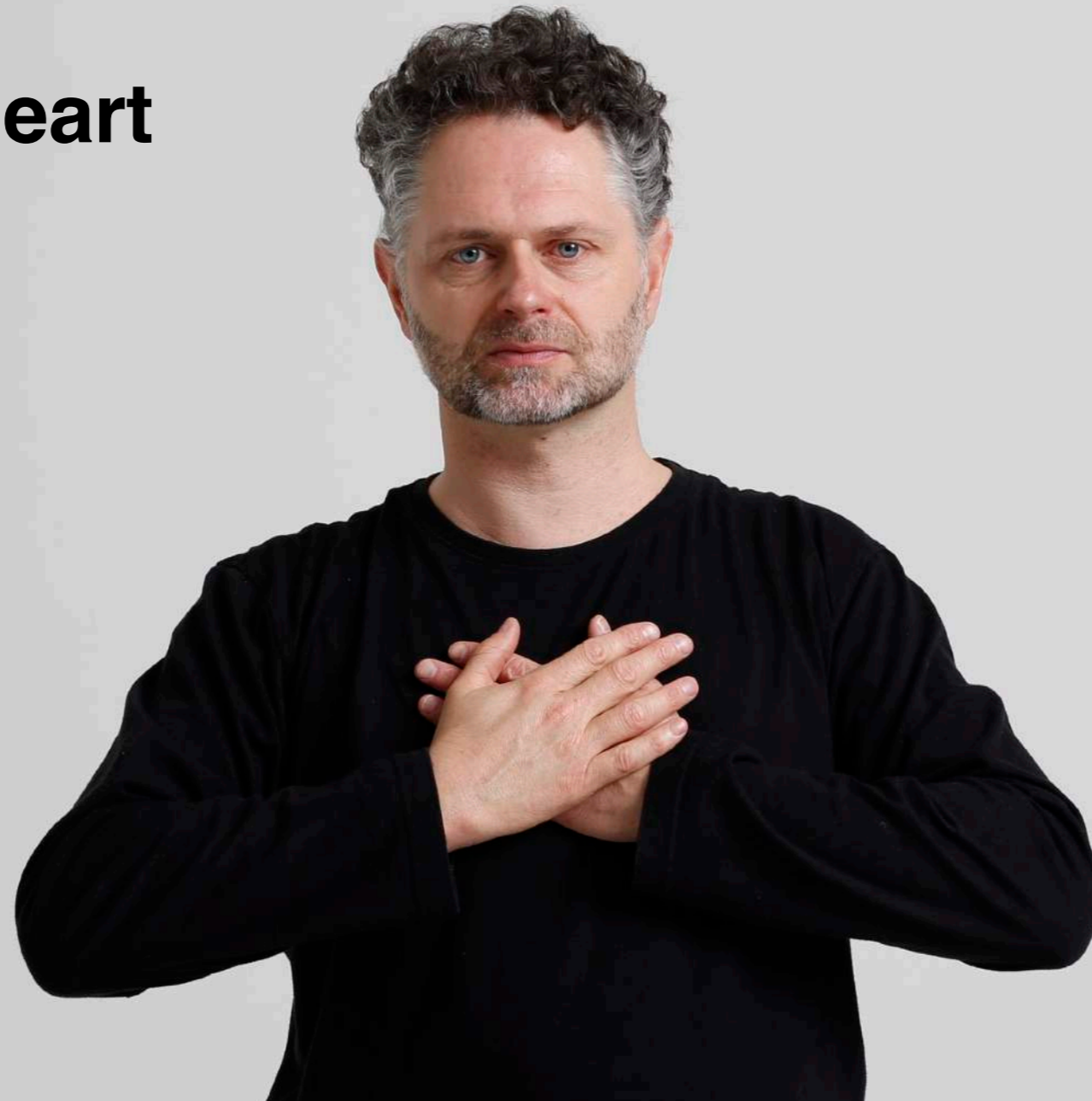
**Sound/breath:** “ujjayi” or just even, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** forwards and down

## Common mistakes

- arms not extended
- palms facing out or in
- weak base

# From the heart



A good way to form many poses with the arms outstretched (e.g. authority or giving pose) is to start with palm on the front of the chest in front of the heart, and extend from there. This can give quite a different feel than just going straight into the pose. You can do it several times as needed.

The belly can also be used (connects to power / intuition) or the head or other significant points (e.g. from a chakra system. Note though this doesn't necessitate a belief in esoteric energy systems). This can add different qualities to poses.

YANG

# AUTHORITY

Common Mistakes  
Hands too high, too low,  
(or can be turned outward or inwards)





# Authority - art, imagery and life



Liberals use this pose less than conservatives and often don't extend the arms fully. They make more palm up gestures

some enthusiasm pose here too



**YANG**

## **6. STAND (MOUNTAIN POSE)**

For exploring what you  
ARE a stand for, dignity  
and resolution



*Adaptation: despite the name like all poses this can be done sitting if needed*

# Stand - Guidelines

**AKA:** leader pose (though leadership involved in many poses), mountain pose (classical yoga name), declaration pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring what you stand for and what you believe in, dignity, commitment, determination, courage and pride

**Notes:** usually combined with “I am a stand for...” after being asked in a challenging way. It can feel like many poses at once

**Safety:** people can feel very “seen” in this pose, and unsafe in making a stand. I usually do this pose towards the middle of a workshop and not at all in short classes, and use slightly differently to most poses (like death pose)

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** feet beneath hip sockets, parallel. “Grounded”

**Spine:** natural but upright

**Hands:** fingers together, arms extended down but not rigidly. Palms facing in.

**Head:** straight, over hips

**Face:** calm and dignified

**Gaze:** focused or open, forwards

**Sound/breath:** deep and even

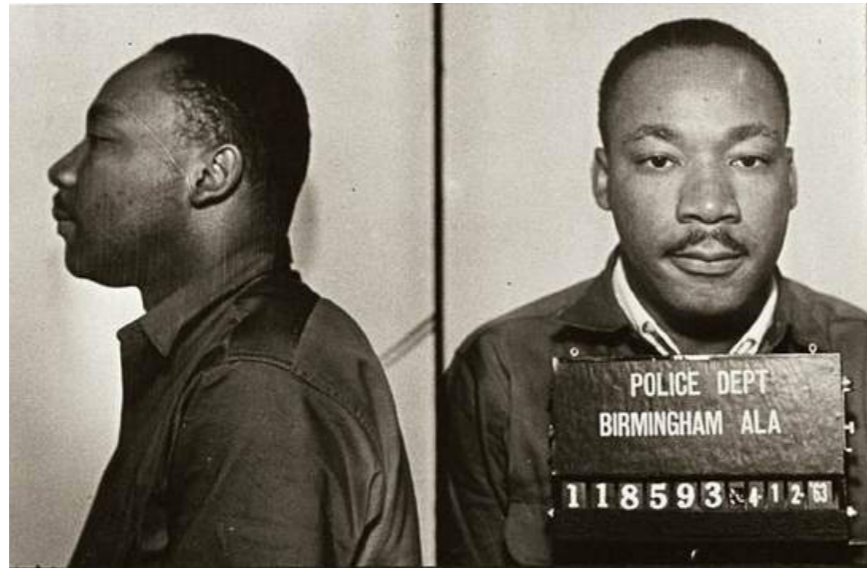
**Movement/attention:** evenly expansive

## Common mistakes

- arms not extended or over extended (like classical yoga mountain)
- not grounded or tall
- off balance
- raised eyebrows, tension, collapse or apologetic tone when speaking
- spine extended/back bend (which feel upright to many yogis)



# Stand - art, imagery and life



pride and commitment



Stand pose can feel like doing all the postures at once, like this cheater here:



YANG

## 7. ENTHUSIASM aka 'FUCK YEAH'



Adaptation: backbend  
can be very modest if needed



mouth open, eyes rolling back



# Enthusiasm - Guidelines

**AKA:** hell yeah pose, fuck yeah pose, passion pose, pleasure pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring passion, “heart”, active surrender, sexuality, relation to pleasure, what you love (e.g in work), abandon, wildness, etc

**Notes:** could be considered a yang yes. Most of the EYP teachers call it “fuck yeah” most commonly, and it’s a fun festival favourite!

**Safety:** often wildly fun but can be embarrassing for more conservative people and bring stuff up around sex. Care with neck in throwing head back needed. A deep backbend is not needed and may be dangerous for some

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** one foot forward knee bent, back heel off ground. Unsteady.

**Spine:** extended strongly (but safely)

**Hands:** by side palm open

**Head:** back

**Face:** mouth open

**Gaze:** eyes rolled up

**Sound/breath:** “aggghhhh”, out-breath emphasised. “yes!” or “fuck/hell yeah!”

**Movement/attention:** forwards and up. Very dynamic

## Common mistakes

- too controlled/ on balance
- eyes and head not back
- mouth not open
- lack of general passion
- no back bend
- all forwards or up not both
- stopping as embarrassed

# Enthusiasm - art, imagery and life



This pose is a bit orgasmic let's face it. The head back is about losing control



Passion and taking space combined



Image from a British advert - advertisers frequently use archetypal imagery to claim space, build authority and try and make us passionate about their products.



A different kind of "passion", note head back again



EYP teacher Catherine at age 5 - the enthusiasm of a child





# Enthusiasm cont.



Partner variation, as part of a slightly wild tango, and during general dance anarchy!



YANG

# Enthusiasm - transcendence variation



This pose is similar to transcendence (but which is straight up) and inspiration (but which has a yin spine).

# Enthusiasm (taking off variations)



Note that all poses can be done as movements, though enthusiasm is particularly dynamic.



Many regular yoga poses such as this lunge have an element of enthusiasm pose in. This is a nice example of how once you know the EYP map you see expression of it throughout more “standard” postural yoga practice and can deliberately include elements of it (blended EYP).



## 8. SUPPORT

For exploring giving support and that we “carry”



Knees quite deeply bent but over feet, hands above head

# Support - Guidelines

**AKA:** roots and branches, Atlas pose (after the Greek Titan), responsibility pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring what we support, what we “carry, responsibility, what depends on you (e.g. work or kids), burdens, etc

**Notes:** like a martial arts “horse” stance but with hands up

**Safety:** generally safe though can bring up sadness around life’s burdens

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** Even weighted, wide stance, feet out

**Spine:** upright

**Hands:** above head, palms up (unless unable to)

**Head:** straight, no smile

**Face:** serious

**Gaze:** forward

**Sound/breath:** “urrggghh” or none

**Movement/attention:** none or down

## Common mistakes

- hands too low
- knees not bent
- fidgeting

# Support - art, imagery and life



With vulnerability pose



Combined with sensuality. This is a classic "feminine" association for many

Happy and burdened variations - these can be explored

**YANG**

**EARTH (SUPPORT VARIATION)**

For exploring solidity and  
your contact with 'ground'





# Earth - art, imagery and life



Stubborn and traditional



Plants and natural landscapes can have qualities of the postures and be used by trainers for visualisations to aid people access them

YANG

## 9. GIVING

to explore our relationships with giving and developing generosity



*Adaptation: base can be shorter if needed*

# Giving - Guidelines

**AKA:** generosity pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring giving, generosity and our offers (e.g professional or sexual). I use it in life purpose and attraction workshops a lot

**Notes:** often formed from hands on heart first. Inspired by a pose used by Wendy Palmer in her Leadership Embodiment system.

**Safety:** generally safe though can bring up sadness around not knowing what to give or feeling like you have nothing to give

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard EYP yang stance (60% forwards and as wide as the mat)

**Spine:** slightly extended

**Hands:** heart height, palms up, fingers spread, arms extended almost straight

**Head:** straight

**Face:** relaxed, mouth slightly open or smiling

**Gaze:** forward and open

**Sound/breath:** “ahhhh” or none, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** forwards and out

## Common mistakes

- unstable base
- head forwards of hips
- arms too wide or narrow
- arms over or under extended
- palms turned in, or occasionally out

**YANG**

# GIVING MISTAKES





YANG

## Giving variation - Offering pose (humble giving)

To create the feeling of offering something “up”, to being of service to something bigger than ourselves.

(Some similarities with palms-up surrender pose)



# Giving - art, imagery and life



Statue in Sophia Bulgaria



an archetype of giving

USSR WW2 victory statue - generosity combined with authority with a perfect EYP base. The communists were experts in manipulating people through archetypes and grandiose statues.



spirituality ;-)



# The many archetypes of Jesus

Depictions of Jesus show how important figures are portrayed with many sides



Giving down and up versions of Jesus. At other times he is shown in authority pose, and Mary usually the more yin yes pose, but Jesus with children is often depicted this way too showing his softer side.



Authority (on mount)



Yes



Transcendence



Warrior Jesus with money changers



Transcendence with care

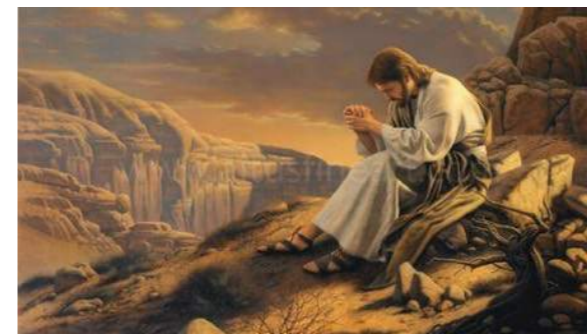
Vulnerability



Magician



Inner



YANG

# 10. TAKING SPACE

For exploring taking up space, visibility, being public and fame



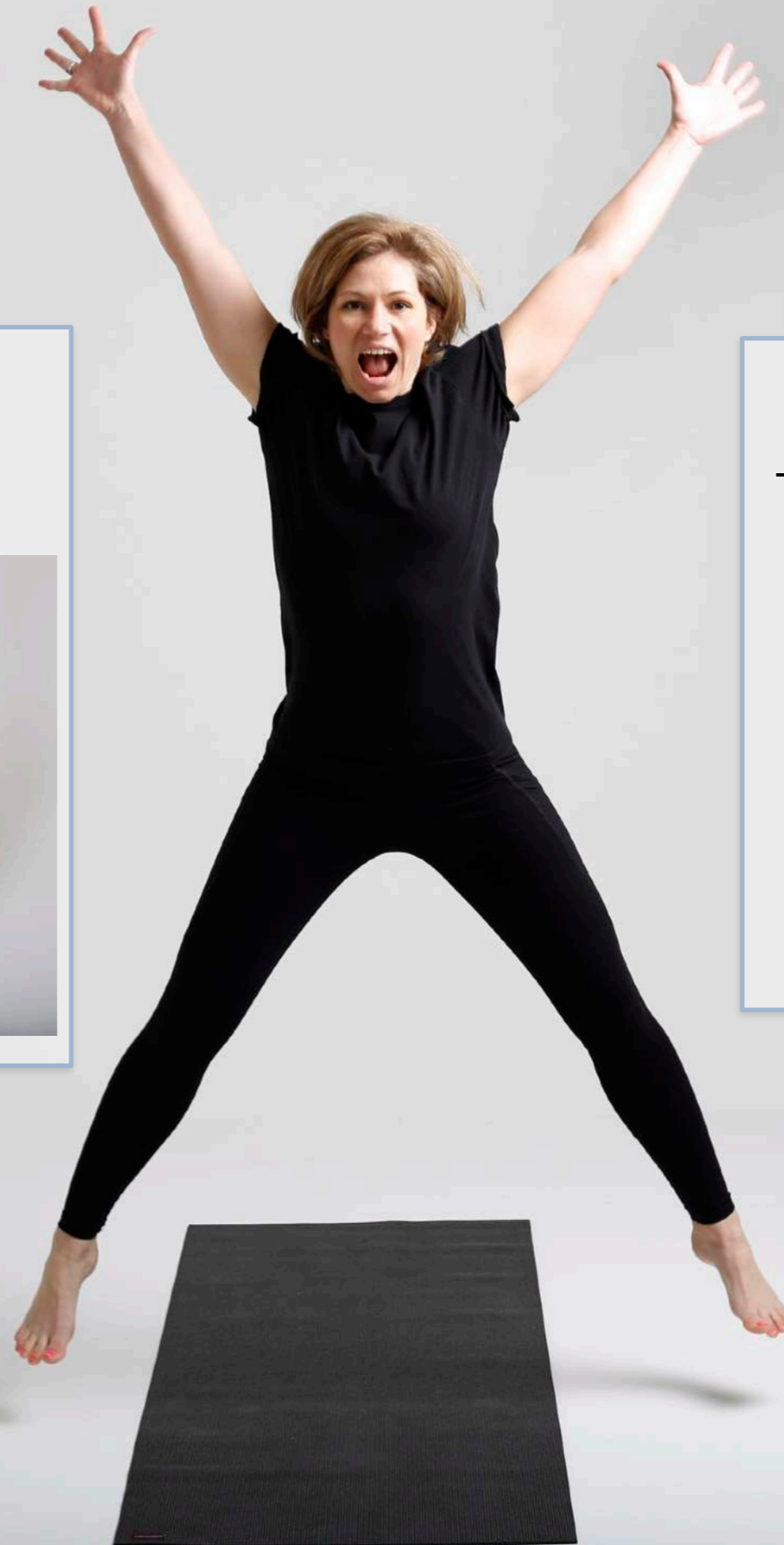


# Taking space - jumping variation

A good example of how a pose can be made very dynamic!

## Expressive variation

Tongue out with back bend  
mouth open



## Paired example

- with thanks to mini-Jamie



# Taking space - Guidelines

**AKA:** being seen pose, rock star pose, star pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring social expressiveness, extroversion, being public, fame and visibility. I use this around “showing up” and being noticed in various domains from marketing to romance

**Notes:** poses like this can be found in several other systems created independently. Several classical yoga poses are similar too

**Safety:** generally safe though can be a real challenge for introverts and those whose strategy for being safe is to not be seen. Those from modest/fake modest “don’t stand out cultures” like UK, Netherlands and Japan often struggle with this pose too

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** Evenly weighted, wide stance, feet out

**Spine:** upright

**Hands:** above head, palms up (unless not possible physically)

**Head:** straight

**Face:** mouth slightly open, grinning widely

**Gaze:** forward and out

**Sound/breath:** “aaaahhhh”, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** outwards in all directions

## Common mistakes

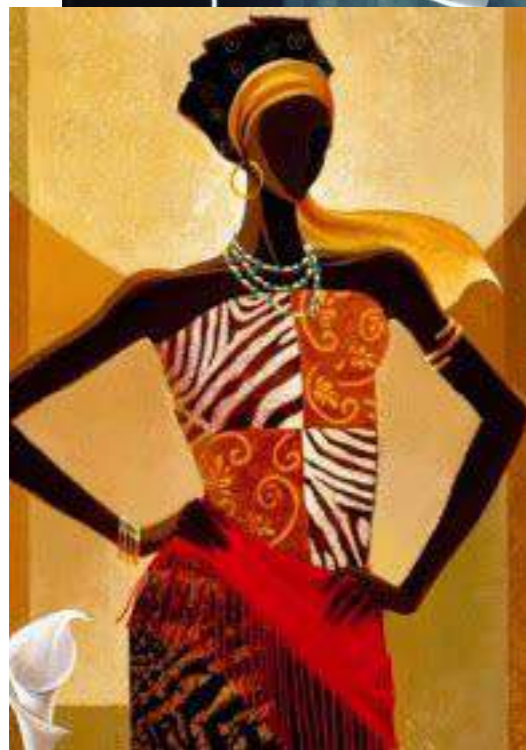
- arms not extended
- arms too low
- backbending
- attention inwards



# Taking space - art, imagery and life



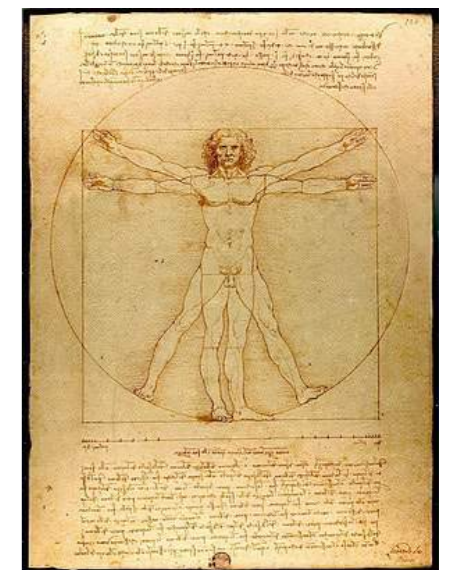
similar Biodanza form



hands on hips variations



with entering



YANG

## 11. JOKER

For exploring humour, playfulness and teasing



*Adaptation: moderate for safety when people have poor balance or fear of falling*



# Joker - Guidelines

**AKA:** humour pose, chaos pose, jester

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring humour, playfulness, lightning-up, teasing and speaking the unpalatable truth by “sweetening the pill”

**Notes:** perhaps the least “postural” posture as it’s about movement and chaos, so hard to hold (which would miss the point). Created by EYP students in Lithuania I think

**Safety:** sometimes annoying for more serious people, care needed physically with those with poor balance and for those with fear of falling

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** On one leg, other back and to side, off balance

**Spine:** flexible

**Hands:** palms extended to the front (“Jazz hands”) and moving

**Head:** loose, smiling

**Face:** open, smiling, mouth open

**Gaze:** open, eyes-wide forward and around

**Sound/breath:** “ah-ah-ah”, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** forwards/chaotic

## Common mistakes

- too much balance and control
- not using hands in front
- insincerity and cynicism
- quitting!

# Joker - art, imagery and life

The joker has many faces, some benign, some less so. The shadow sides of joker can also be explored.



YANG

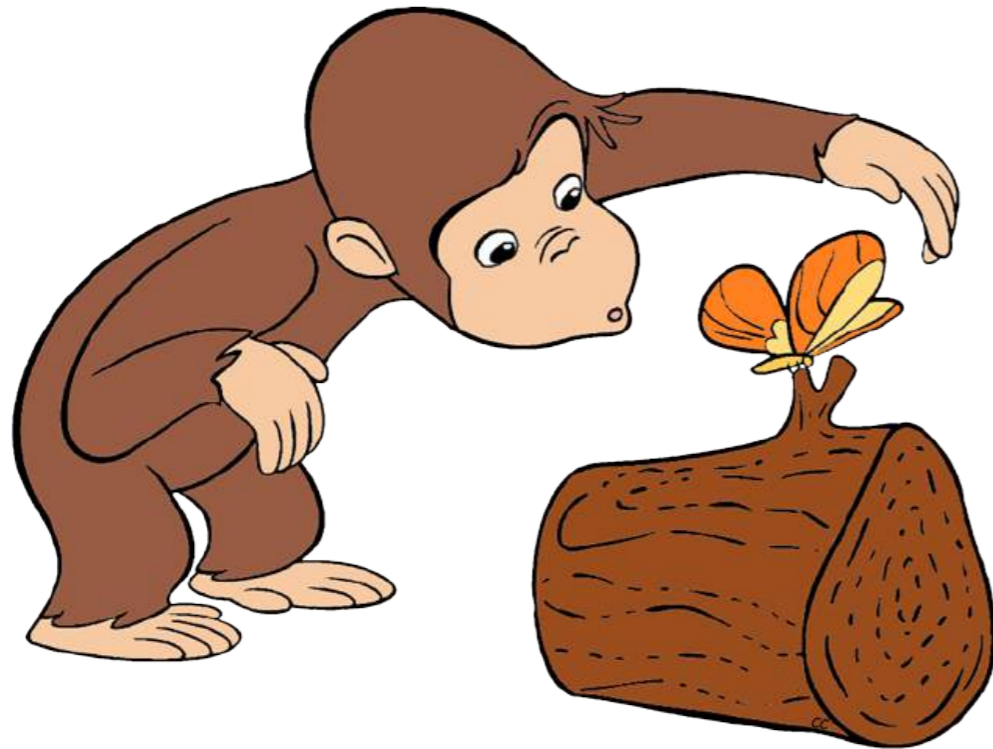
## CURIOSITY - JOKER VARIATION

- for exploring playful engagement and learning  
gaze and hands and front of body facing forwards and open





# Curiosity - art, imagery and life





YANG

# 12. TRANSCENDENCE

For exploring spirituality, lightness and “rising above”



# Transcendence - Guidelines

**AKA:** spiritual pose (though they all are), air pose (it can be contrasted with earth pose), elevation pose, “beam me up to the mother ship” pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring spirituality, transcendence, “rising above”, being elevated, getting high, etc

**Notes:** another quite unstable one that’s hard to hold. Can be combined with many poses to give “upper chakra”/spiritual versions of them

**Safety:** sometimes annoying for more cynical or pragmatic people. Watch for people falling over too

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** Feet close, heels off ground

**Spine:** upright

**Hands:** arms extend up, palms inwards

**Head:** tilted back slightly

**Face:** mouth open, in awe

**Gaze:** open, eyes-wide forward and around

**Sound/breath:** high pitched noise, “aaaaa” or “breathy”, in-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** upwards

## Common mistakes

- heels down
- gaze not up
- quitting!

# Transcendence - art, imagery and life



Take me away from this world!



Renaissance statue of Greek god Hermes (he also has joker elements)



Arms down here, but the direction is up - Uri Gagarin statue in Moscow



The USA is built on the dream of something better (transcendent), as was communism; where transcendence is often combined with a forwards entering (e.g. “the great leap forwards”) or warrior pose





I asked a 7 year old in a workshop once which direction joy was and she jumped saying “up!!” EYP is both intuitive and apparent from language that we use, e.g. we “jump for joy” when we are not feeling “down”. Philosophers Lakoff and Johnson explore this in some detail

Biodanza again. Funnily a friend thought I’d stole three postures from Biodanza but I’d never seen them there. They’re archetypal, and built into the body, so pop up many places.

Many systems have a number of near identical poses but are often heavily biased to one direction due to their genesis. To avoid this I searched far and wide for poses, tested the poses cross culturally, took feedback, and worked with a team to eliminate my cultural and personal neuroses as much as possible. They are still far from perfect as a set I would imagine but I also think they are uniquely broad.



YANG

## SENSUALITY

Asymmetrical

One **hip** higher and knee higher than other

**Hands** level with hip **Head** turned

**Sound** growl/purr

**note** can be emotionally strong as it may bring up history of relationship to sex, shame, body image and perception etc.

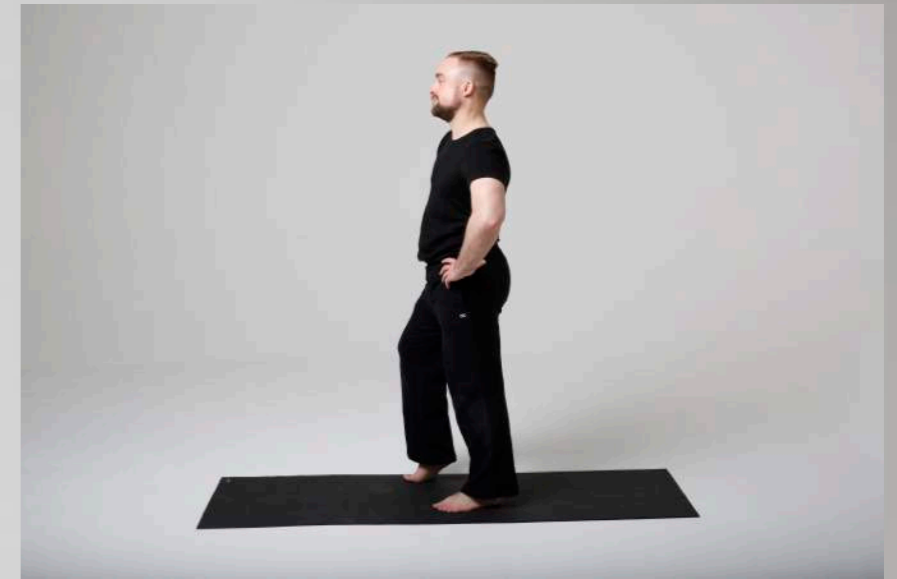


**YANG**

# MALE 'JOEY' VARIATION

Due to gender stereotypes  
I often show a more moderate  
version for men.

For those that know Joey from  
the TV comedy friends...  
"how you doin?"





## 13. Sensuality - Guidelines

**AKA:** sex tiger pose, sex kitten pose, seducer, sexy pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring sexuality, seduction, sensuality and gender issues

**Notes:** inspired by tango and Latin culture. A very asymmetrical pose. The mouth is key to this pose

**Safety:** can be very triggering for those with sexual trauma histories, and incite unhelpful conversations about gender, though there can be a lot of learning and healing there. It needs to be handled delicately and as one more options never as “should”. Likely to get resistance from non Latin men and more feminist women and countries like Sweden, The Netherlands and Germany. Just technically yogis and martial artists may struggle with the asymmetry.

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** One heel raised, one knee fw, one hip up

**Spine:** turned and asymmetrical

**Hands:** on hips

**Head:** tilted down slightly

**Face:** mouth open, attention on mouth, teeth and tongue

**Gaze:** open, can be sideways

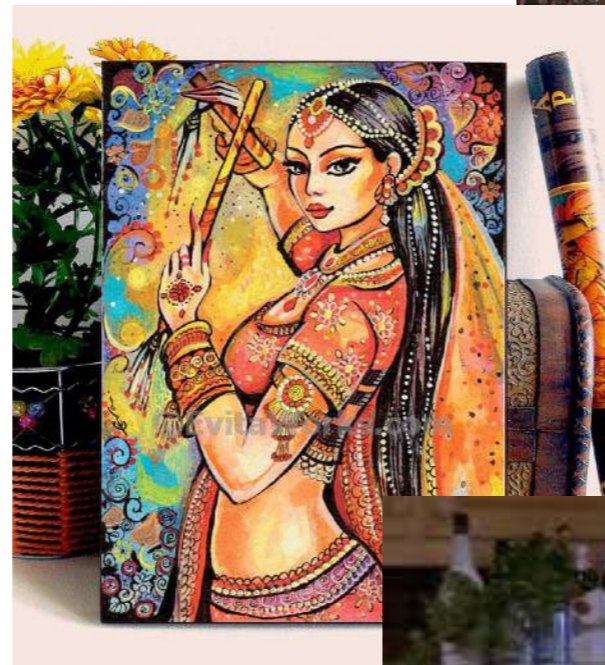
**Sound/breath:** open mouthed breathing

**Movement/attention:** forwards and in, but also away (mixed message).

### Common mistakes

- turning into joker pose/laughing
- making “flat”
- not enough asymmetry
- quitting!

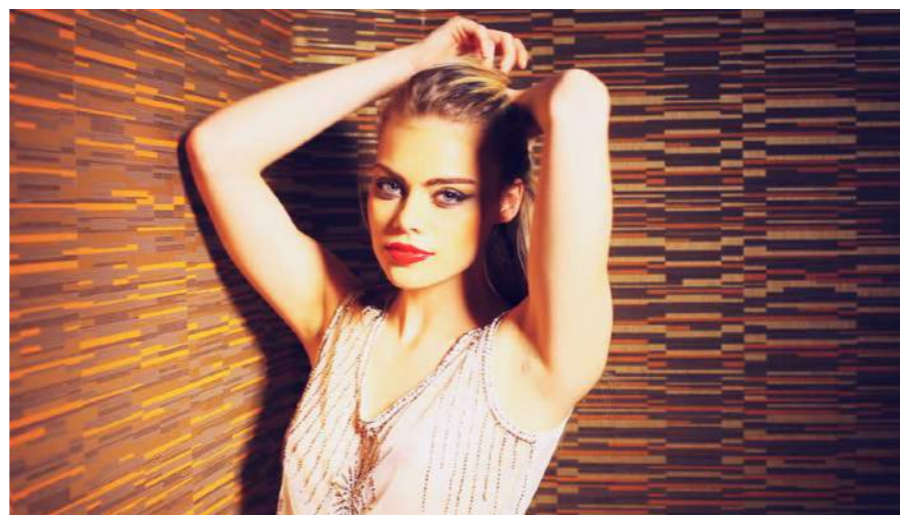
# Sensuality - art, imagery and life



A LOT of advertising using the sensual promise but it's also seen classically in much art



# Sensuality + rest variations





# EYP as themes for any pose

As well as the formal EYP yang poses, it's also possible to explore yang aspects within many other yoga postures. Plank or another challenging pose can be used to explore grit and determination for example, and others like warrior one (shown right) include obvious yang elements and plenty of challenge to work with. In this way the EYP poses can become themes for any asana. This is one way to practice applied or "blended" EYP. AKA "EYP Lite".,



# Creative use of yang themes

Here's an example of making use of a standard yoga posture in an EYP manner.

You can use eagle pose to explore what's complicated, staying relaxed with complexity and where we tie ourselves in knots. This is not one of the main EYP poses, but for those already familiar with yoga it adds a new dimension to a pose. You will no doubt find many others you can play with.



YANG

## Another yang exploration example

Triangle pose can be used to explore our relationship to perfectionism, attention to detail and how we feel about getting things right. Other poses can also be used for this.





# YIN POSTURES



# YIN POSTURES

The yin postures are aimed to develop receptive qualities such as being more open, soft, accommodating, sensitive and flexible; though note yang postures contain aspects of these qualities as well. Yin is not passivity, but actively allowing/ letting go. Yin is also powerful, just as yang can be loving.

The yin postures are for applying and developing yin qualities in life. As teachers/instructors and facilitators it is important we develop as full a range and understanding and experience of these as possible, to enable us to draw out these qualities in others. The qualities are needed in society on a daily basis, and if we want to make changes in life we need to be self aware and able to embody the yin side. As ever, notice if there are postures you find more difficult, and practice them regularly to develop it to enable you to be of service to others more effectively.

Yin qualities are emphasised in some styles of yoga more than others.

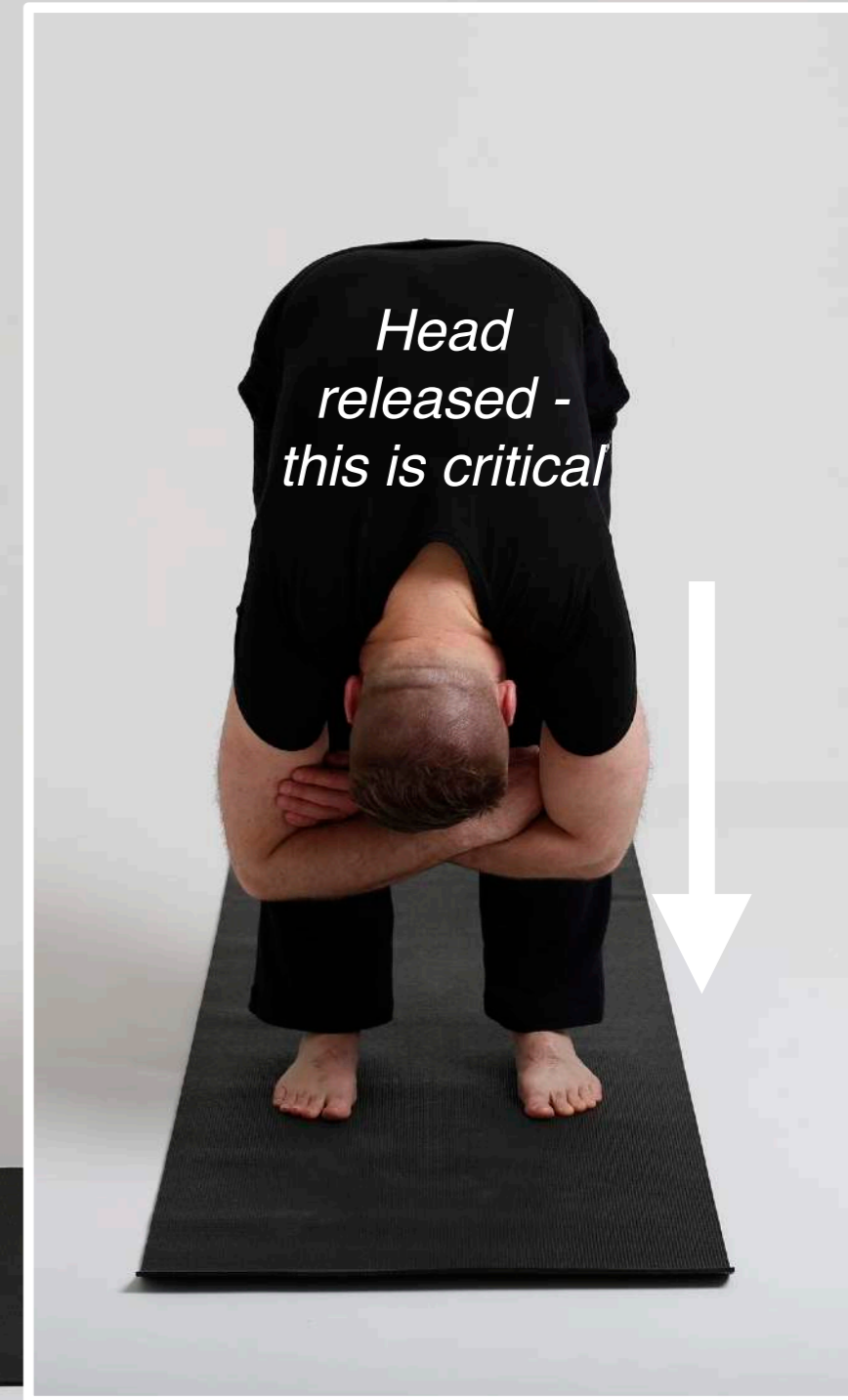
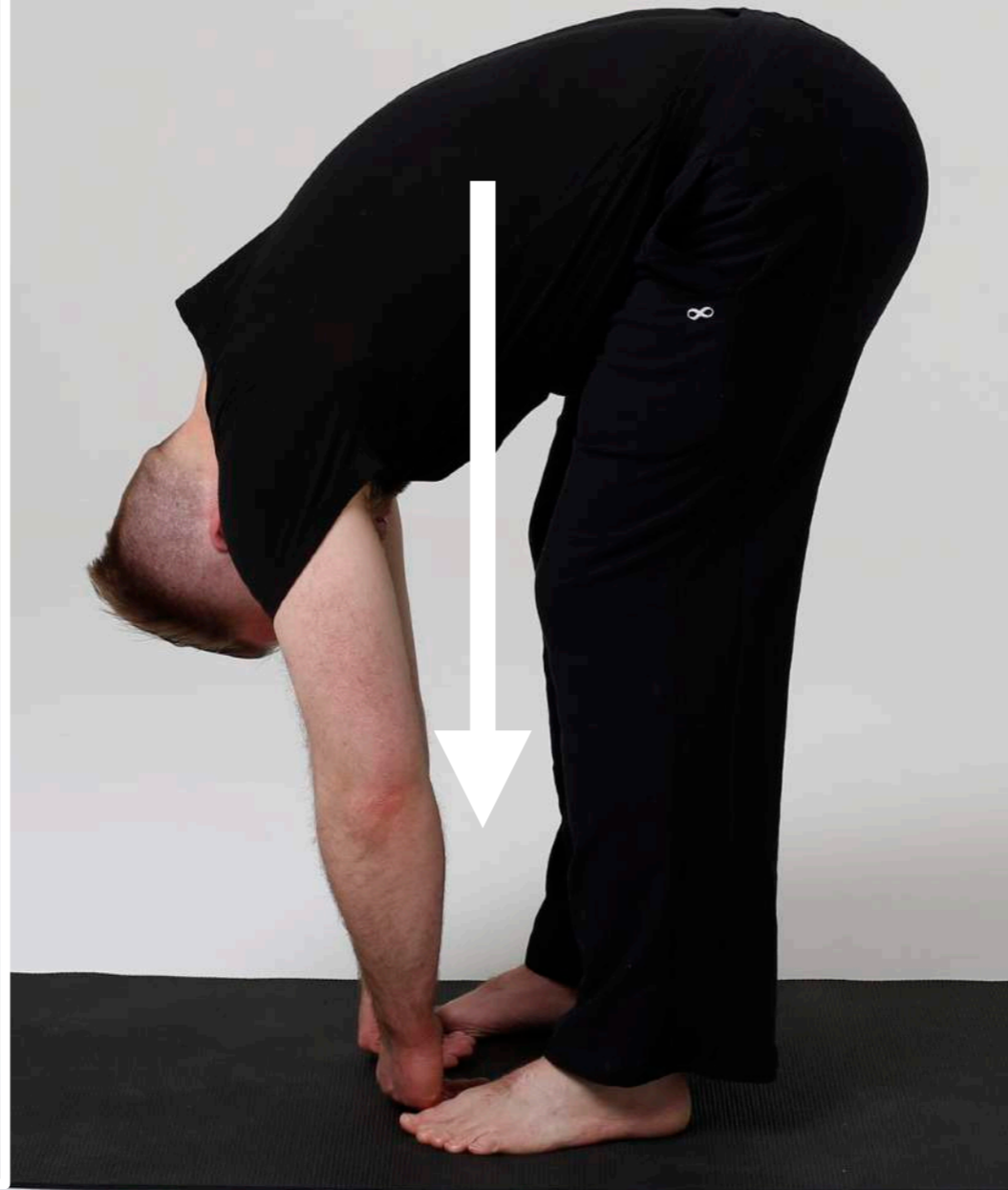
# Yin Postures

1. **Letting go** - for exploring letting go, forgiveness, release and non-attachment
2. **Yes** - for exploring allowing, empathy, acceptance and letting in
3. **Submission** - for exploring submitting to what is greater than oneself and letting go into this
4. **Receiving** - for exploring accepting, taking (eg compliments or money), and making requests
5. **Death** - for exploring mortality, gratitude and purpose
6. **Vulnerability** - for exploring sensitivity, innocence, being delicate, "femininity" and sweetness
7. **Openness** - for exploring surrender, allowing and softening
8. **Self-care** - for exploring self-love, resourcing and tenderness
9. **Inner** - for exploring privacy, not taking space, reflection and going "in"
10. **Evaluation** - for exploring discernment, deciding, criticism and judgement
11. **Care** - for exploring nurturing, containment, protecting and growing
12. **Rest** - for exploring resting, ease and not-doing
13. **Inspiration** - for exploring what inspires us, revelation, our deepest gifts and awe



YIN

# 1. LETTING GO



*Adaptations: legs can be bent or straight, a pillow and chair can be used if hanging hard. Elbows can be held or not*

## Contrast with trying/ extending

A nice way to teach letting go pose from standing is to contrast the pose with pulling down (as in the Ashtanga Primary Series) and extending (straightening back and taking hands to shins, as per a regular sun salutation), with the pose itself. This is another version of the first opening enquiry in this guide and can help people let go more. It is often helpful to connect and contrast EYP with familiar forms.

## Throwing way - Letting go variation

Letting go pose can be done in a more active yang way by starting standing upright with the hands raised and together and dropping into it more forcefully by “throwing away” the hands and being at the waist. Soft objects like towels and small cushions can be used to really bring this to life! This is a great way to enquire into what needs to be discarded in life more forcefully.

*Note: there are some extra safety concerns when doing this and it may not be suitable for all.*

# 1. Letting go - Guidelines

**AKA:** forward bend, hanging out

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring letting go, forgiveness, release and non-attachment

**Notes:** some may have a habitual yang way of doing a forward bend through practice or personality so watch out for this

**Safety:** physical issues for some with hamstrings (maybe most physically demanding pose in EYP!), dizziness from coming up too quick (it's suggested you hold this pose for max three minutes and stop halfway while coming up slowly). Trust issues around letting go may surface.

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** feet ground and hip socket distance apart

**Spine:** relaxed, hanging, flexed

**Hands:** totally relaxed

**Head:** hanging, neck totally relaxed

**Face:** relaxed

**Gaze:** eyes closed

**Sound/breath:** “ahhhhh”, out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** down

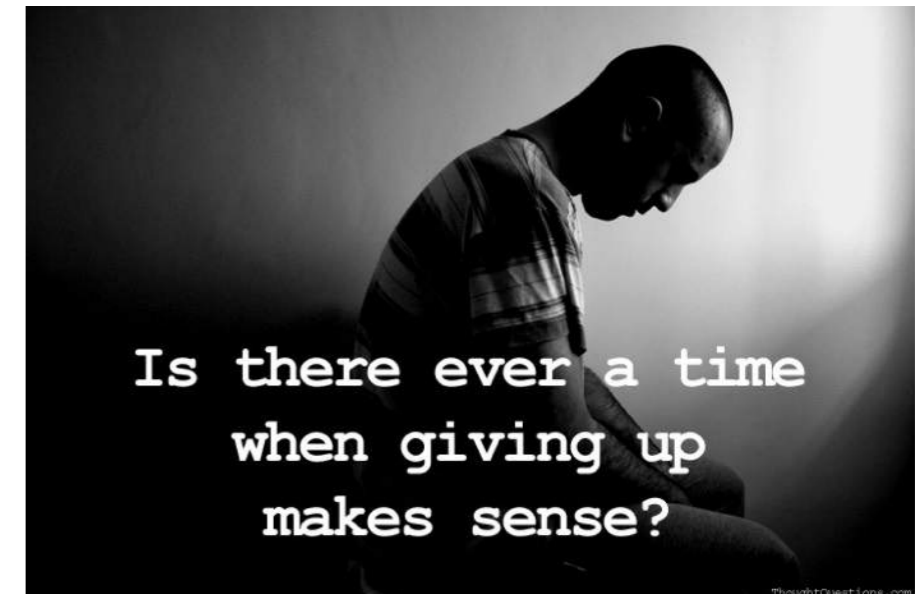
## Common mistakes

- not letting head/neck relax
- pulling in toes
- looking around



# Letting go - art, imagery and life

Relaxed island life by Gauguin



Despair is a version of this pose



Nuns in Bhutan with EYP teacher Karin



Upwards but similar

## 2.YES



*Adaptation: moderation of stance length and width to protect knee as needed*

## 2. Yes - Guidelines

**AKA:** standing open pose, acceptance pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring saying yes, allowing, empathy, acceptance and letting in

**Notes:** surprisingly difficult technically and spiritually for many but mistakes often subtle

**Safety:** usually OK, but the openness may feel very vulnerable to some

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard yin base (60% weight back), feet as wide as mat if not uncomfortable, front foot facing forward, back out

**Spine:** slightly flexed

**Hands:** softly open

**Head:** upright and relaxed

**Face:** open, mouth open slightly

**Gaze:** softly open

**Sound/breath:** “ahhhhh”, in-breath emphasised, saying “yes” in mother tongue

**Movement/attention:** towards, from out to in

### Common mistakes

- arms coming forwards into giving or rolling around to care pose-
- arms at wrong angle (e.g. too open like taking space pose)
- face/mouth closed
- eyes not peripheral
- spine extended (becomes enthusiasm)



# Victim yes - “near enemy” example



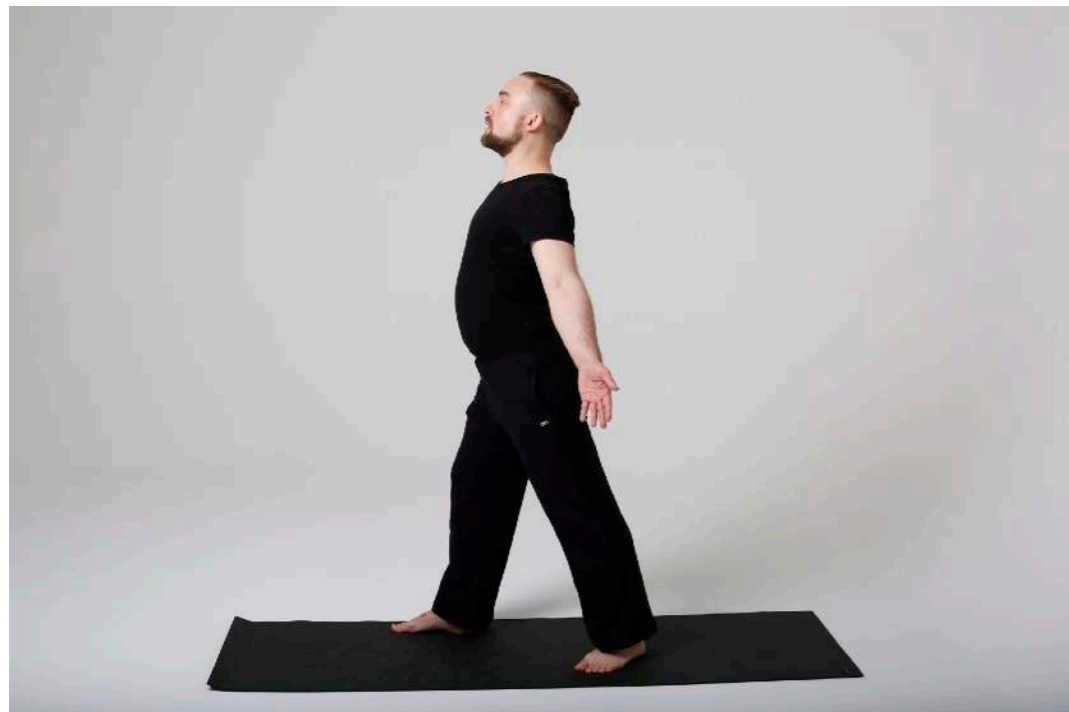
A “near enemy” is a concept borrowed from Buddhism which describes a mistake that is superficially similar to a concept but fundamentally missed the mark. In EYP this often means excluding the dot of yin in the yang, and yang in the yin. This could mean making warrior aggressive (no yin in the yang), or making yes passive, so it becomes a wet-rag victim pose (no yang in the yin).

- victim variation

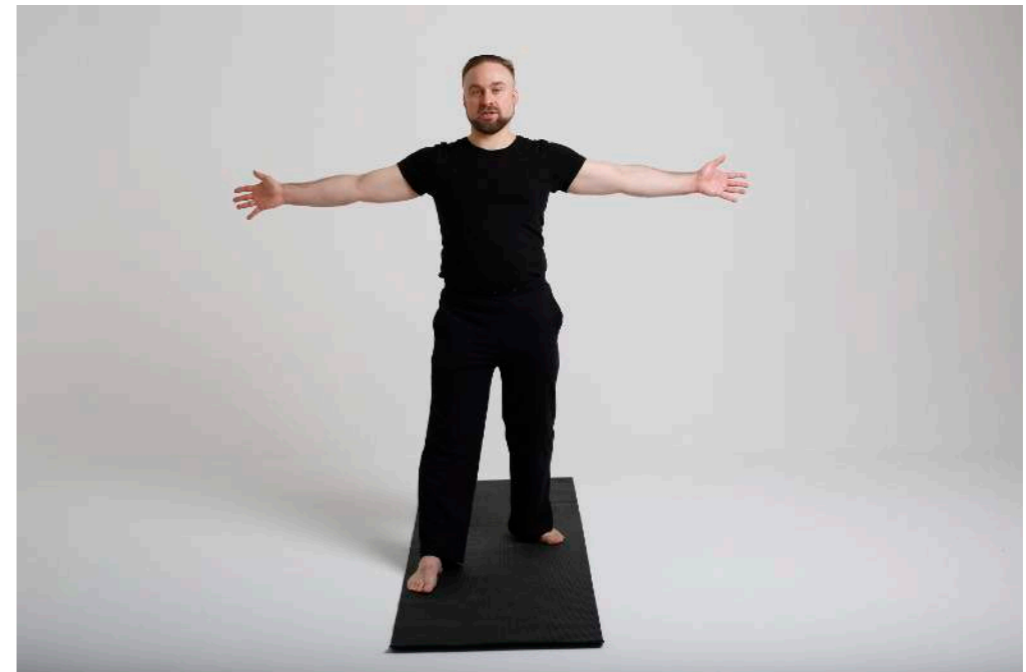
# Yes - mistakes

Yes mistakes are a good example of how the mistakes of one pose slip into other poses. You will see this on the next page, and this illustrates how the poses are not just unique archetypes but points on a map.

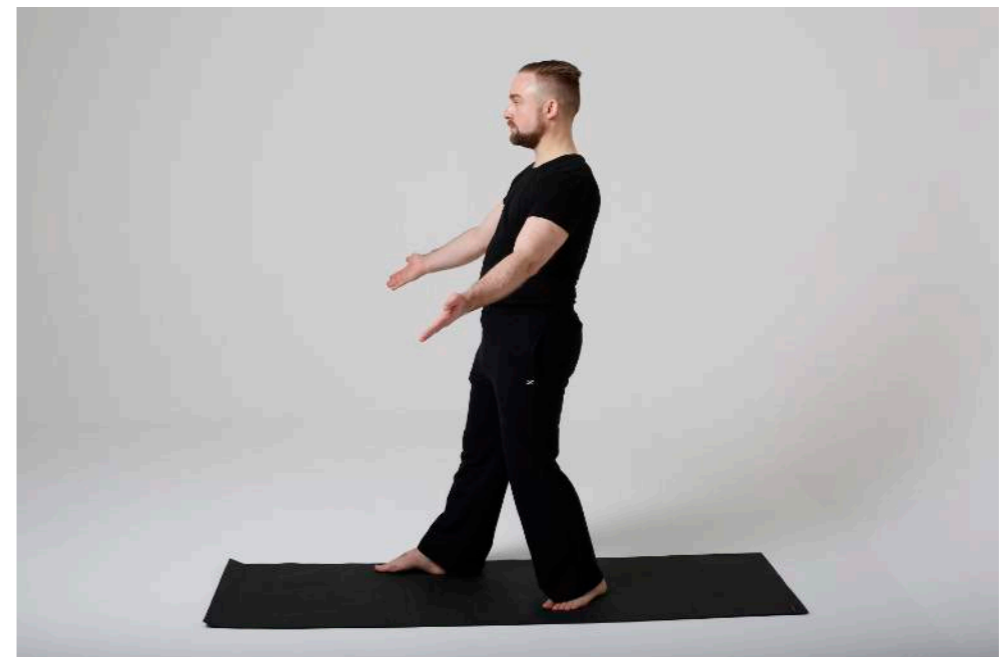
- spine extended - becomes enthusiasm



- arms too wide / high - becomes taking space



- arms too far forward - becomes giving (if palms facing would become care)





# Yes - art, imagery and life



Mary is classically shown in a yes stance (often with generosity and vulnerability in the mix), or in inner pose.



Polarity between a receptive yes (left) and gentle entering



You see yes in much parenting, often mixed with care pose naturally





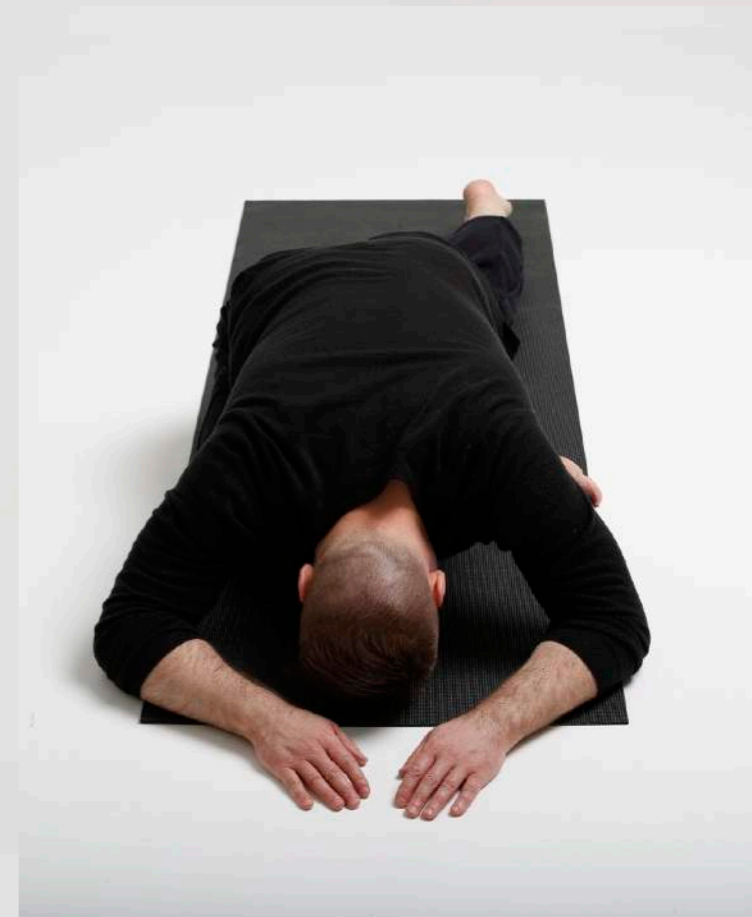
### 3. SUBMISSION

- hands up and down variations



*Adaptation: bolsters or pillows can be placed under body, or the pose done on a chair (as all others)*

## Variation - surrender to intensity (Using pigeon pose or similar)



*Adaptations: pillows can be added and foot position changed as needed*

## 3. Submission - Guidelines

**AKA:** humility pose (we almost renamed it this, as a less triggering word for many), child's pose, surrender pose

**Purpose and themes:** For exploring submitting to what is greater than oneself and letting go into this. Grief. Deep rest. Going in.

Notes:

**Safety:** usually OK, but may need physical adaptation. Care needed in addressing grief and can also trigger domestic violence victims some trauma informed approaches teach. Some may not like the name!

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** knees wide like hare pose or together like regular child's pose

**Spine:** relaxed, flexed

**Hands:** relaxed

**Head:** relaxed, letting go into floor/pillow

**Face:** mouth open slightly

**Gaze:** eyes closed

**Sound/breath:** silent or gentle "mmmm", out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** inwards and down. Deep

### Common mistakes

- fidgeting
- subtle doing
- not letting head go



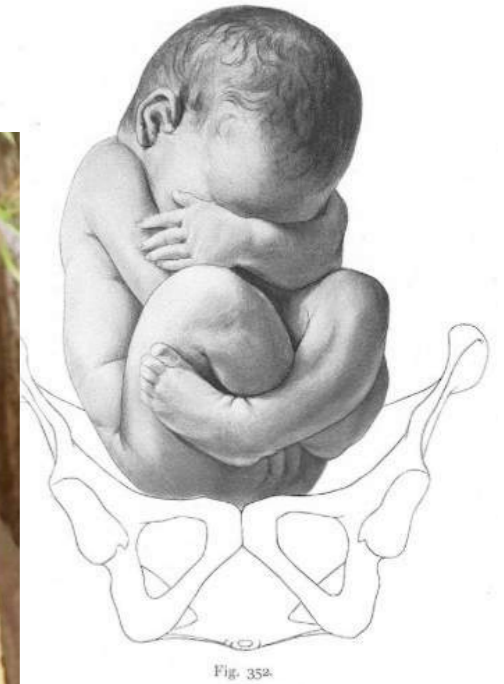
# Submission - art, imagery and life



“Islam” literally means "surrender" and many religions contain this aspect



A primal position



Traumatic aspect - when overwhelmed or exhausted we surrender and seek our most primal and comforting position

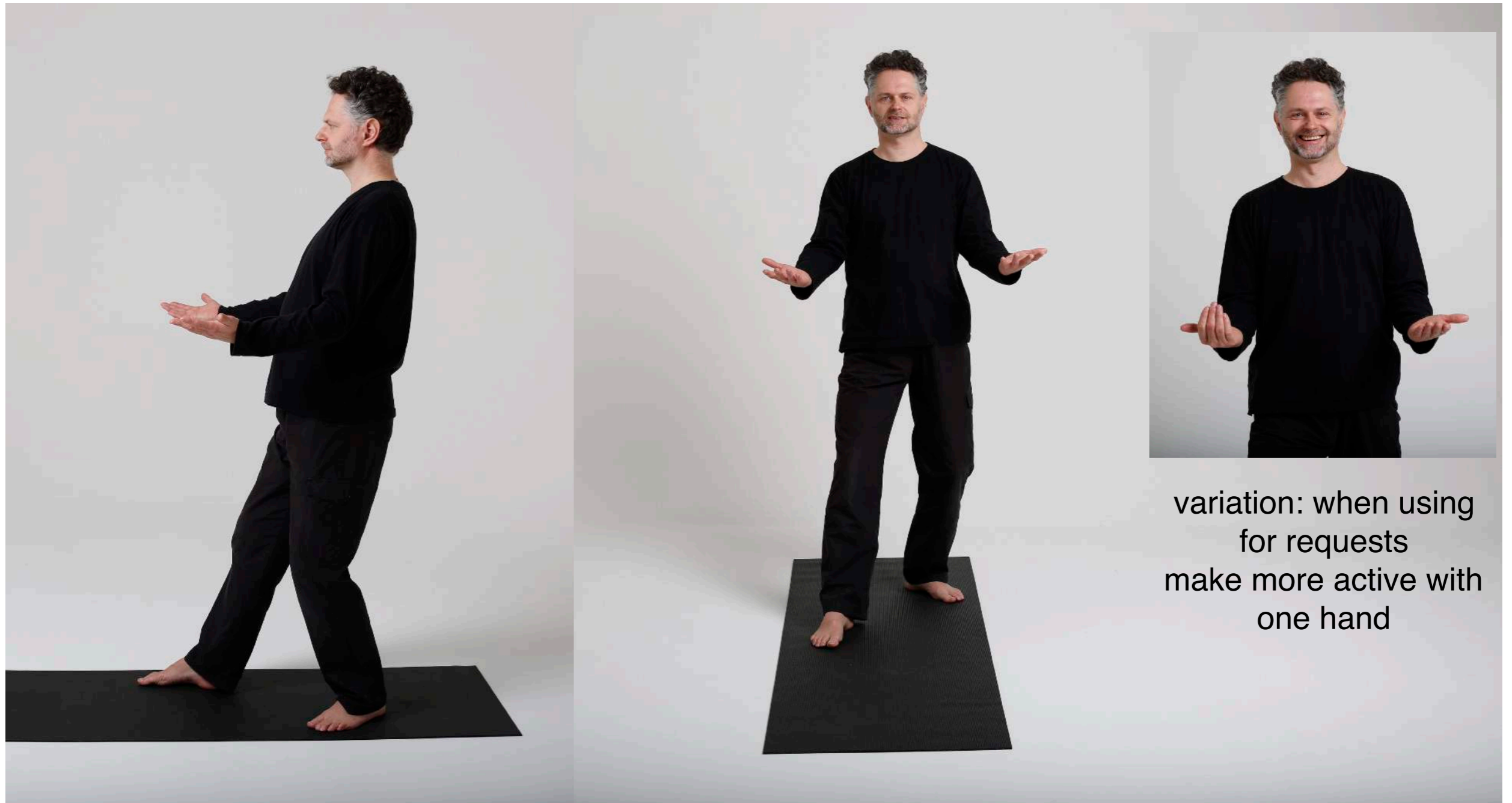


Submission to thought. Turn 90 degrees.



## 4. RECEIVING

Similar to giving pose but with weight back and arms closer to body



variation: when using  
for requests  
make more active with  
one hand

*Adaptation: moderation of stance length and width to protect knee as needed*



## 4. Receiving - Guidelines

**AKA:** asking pose, getting pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring making requests, accepting, asking, taking (e.g. compliments) and money

**Notes:** you can bring this to life by actually giving people things - e.g. yoga bolsters or pillows

**Safety:** usually OK, but may need physical adaptation. Not being able to ask for what they want may be a pattern and painful for some

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard yin base

**Spine:** relaxed, slightly flexed

**Hands:** open and relaxed

**Head:** upright

**Face:** open, mouth open slightly

**Gaze:** soft

**Sound/breath:** silent or gentle “mmmm”, in-breath emphasised

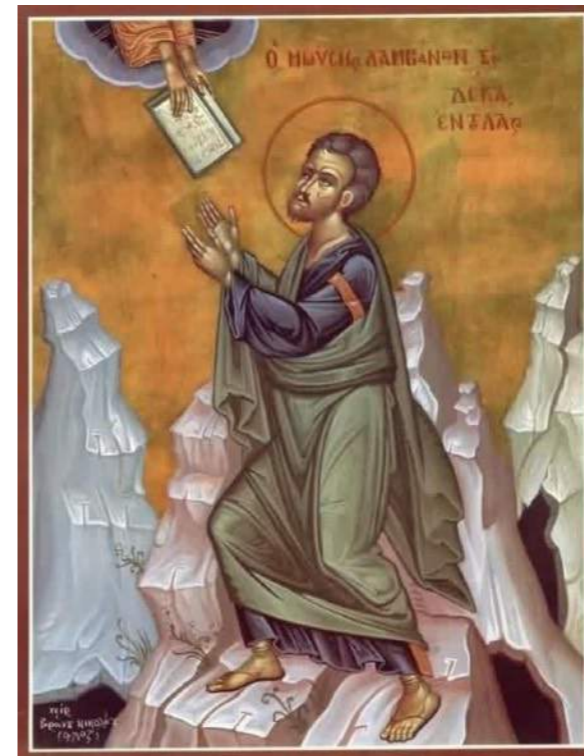
**Movement/attention:** from out to in

### Common mistakes

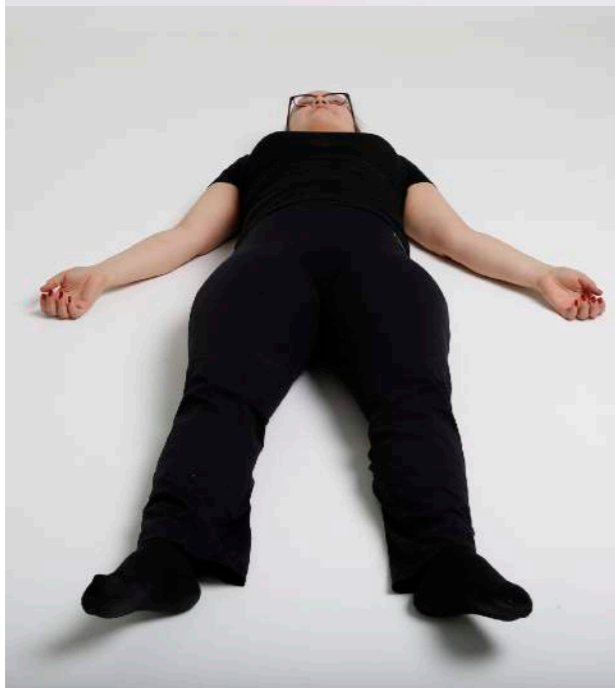
- arms coming fw into giving or rolling around to care
- arms at wrong angle making barrier or ready to drop the present!
- face closed
- spine extended



# Receiving - art, imagery and life



# 5. DEATH



*Adaptation: pillows/ boosters/blocks as needed (e.g. under knees or head), rest pose an alternative*



## 5. Death - Guidelines

**AKA:** “complete yin”, nothing pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring mortality, meanings, values, purpose, gratitude and existential themes

**Notes:** classical savasana pose. Can be done as an extended Buddhist style death meditation, but only with resilient groups. See next page

**Safety:** with some groups calling it “death pose” isn’t wise. If people have had recent bereavement suggest they opt out. I usually do this pose towards the middle of a workshop and not at all in short classes (like stand pose). Handle with care and adapt intensity of meditation to suit groups, some may be fine with imagining crows pluck out their eyes and maggots eat their organs for example, others less so.

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** laying down

**Spine:** laying down

**Hands:** arms to the side, 45 degrees, hands totally relaxed

**Head:** relaxed

**Gaze:** eyes closed

**Sound/breath:** silent, gentle breath

**Movement/attention:** none/in

### Common mistakes

- opening eyes
- activity at subtle level
- arms too far in or out



# Death meditation questions

I tend to use death pose somewhat differently than most EYP poses, turning it into a meditation on mortality.

After a guided contemplation on mortality - the inevitability of death, possible manners of death and decomposition process (Youtube search “Mark Walsh death meditation” for an example or look up traditional Tibetan Buddhist versions), and a period of silence; I usually suggest a debrief with a partner (longer than usual one minute) exploring one or more of these questions:

“what do you want to do before you do”

“how do you want to be day-to-day given that you will die”

“what is your purpose”

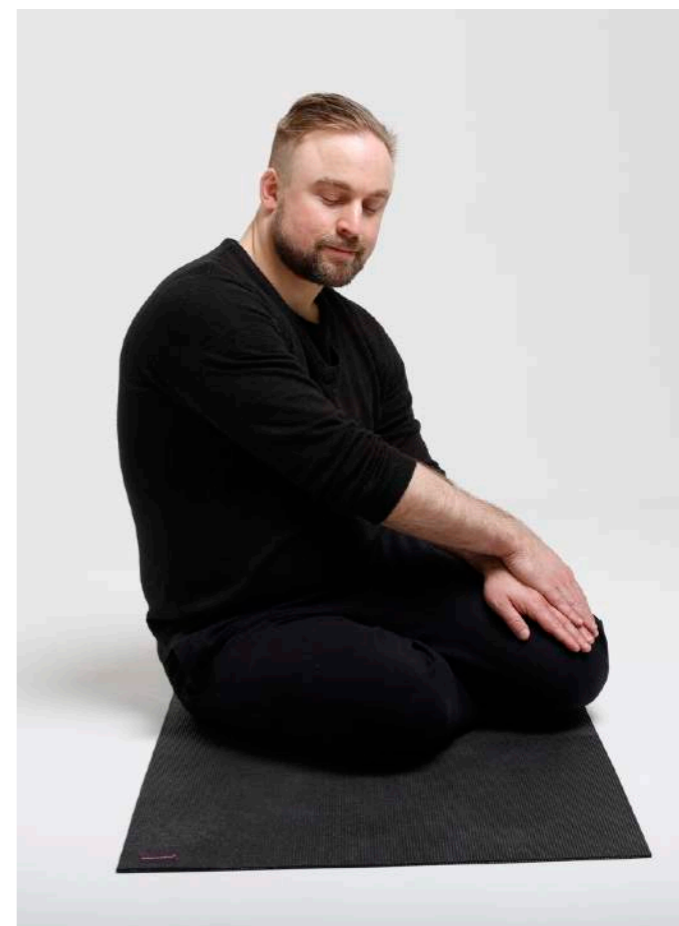
“who do you want to spend your precious time with?”

“what are you grateful for?”



## 6. VULNERABILITY

Highly asymmetrical - feet, head and hands to same side. Hands placed delicately. “Childlike” quality.



*some people (men especially) may need to moderate the pose to handle it emotionally*

*Adaptation: blocks under hip or pillows as needed for comfort*

## 6. Vulnerability - Guidelines

**AKA:** innocence pose, mermaid pose (from the Copenhagen statue), cute pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring vulnerability, innocence, sweetness, our “inner child”, etc

**Notes:** adapted from a classical Iyengar pose that felt immediately “girly” to me when I first did it! Can be used to explore masculinity and femininity and contrasted with a wide kneed hero pose (seiza)

**Safety:** can be triggering if childhood issues or very identified with being tough. Gender issues as usually seen as “feminine” (this is partially true of all yin poses, but especially vulnerability and also sensuality).

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** feet off to one side in sitting position

**Spine:** will be slightly side bent to stay upright

**Hands:** delicately placed on top of each other (the quality here is quite important to the pose)

**Head:** side tilt, slightly forward, soft

**Gaze:** looming up, high blink-rate, open, side glances

**Sound/breath:** “ahh”

**Movement/attention:** upwards as if shy

### Common mistakes

- not having hands, feet and nose in same direction
- making too firm
- turning into a joke
- hands too far (not “delicately” touching knee)



# Vulnerability - art, imagery and life

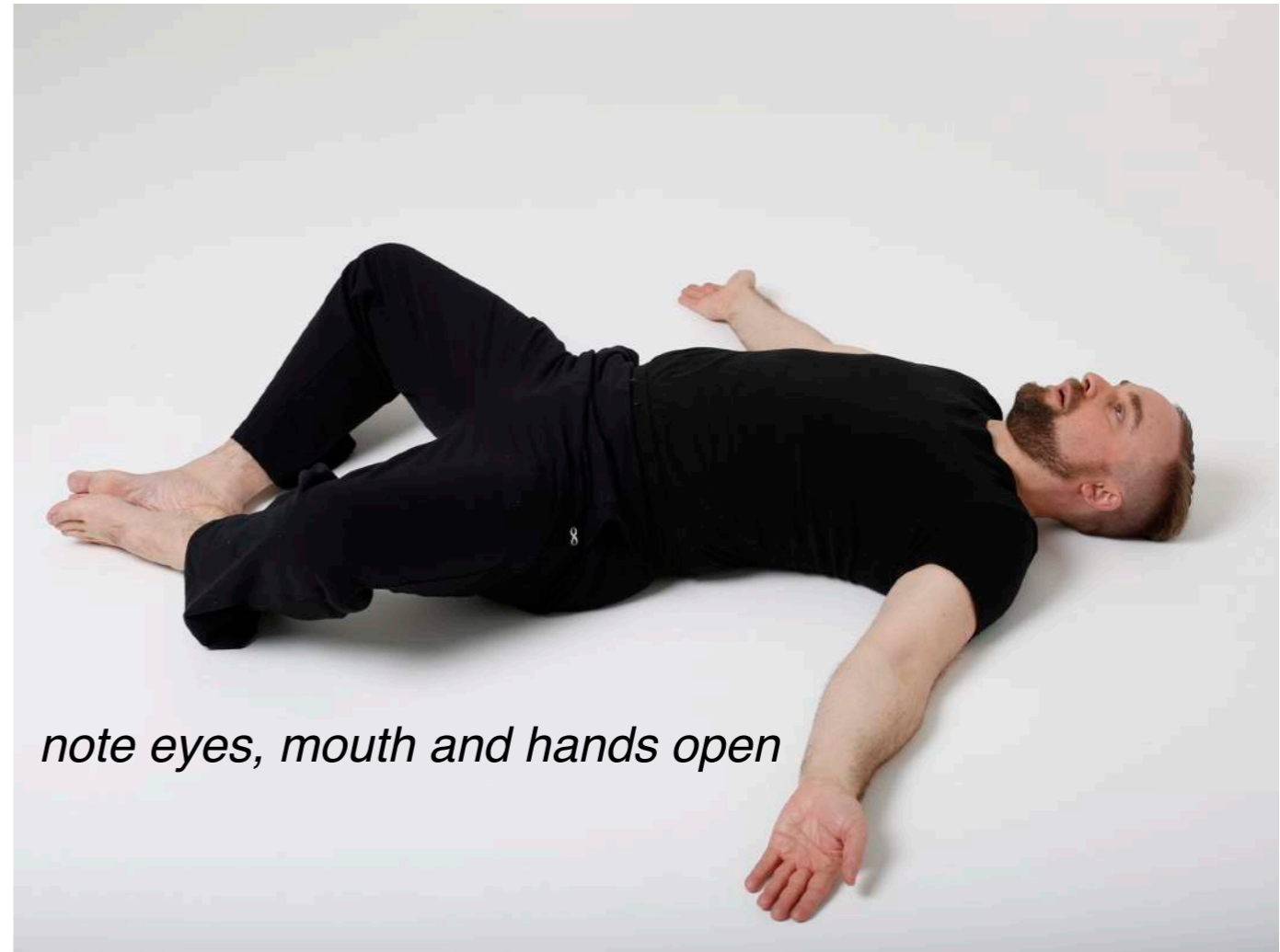


There is a lot of media gender bias around this pose with men almost never being portrayed in this way and women often infantilised with it. You'll also see a lot of the archetype mixed with sensuality pose which is a disturbing combination as it mixes adult sexuality and childlike innocence (pushing two major male buttons simultaneously).

Asian cultures often use this archetype, especially for women again.

## 7. OPEN

Arms + hands out to side palms up



# Open adaptation



*Adaptation: supporting of knees as shown with blocks or with bolsters as needed*



## 7. Open - Guidelines

**AKA:** supta baddha konasana variation, prone yes pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring openness, allowing, softening, empathy

**Notes:** people may close eyes and zone-out so remind them it's not corpse pose but hands and eyes opening are the touch of yang in the yin.

**Safety:** people may feel very exposed (especially women with sexual trauma history), blankets can help, stay in one spot when teaching away from “leg end” of people

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** lying on back, feet together (further away from pelvis than classically), knees apart

**Spine:** relaxed

**Hands:** open, arms to sides 45 degree

**Head:** relaxed

**Gaze:** open, face relaxed and “open”

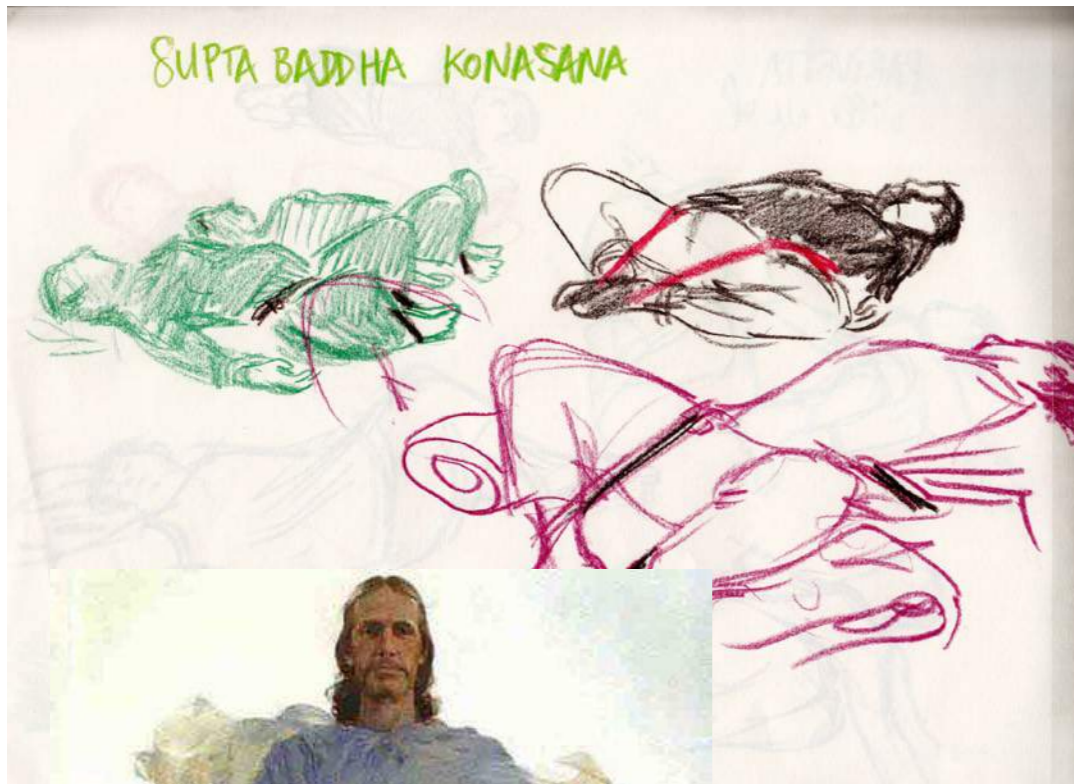
**Sound/breath:** “ahhh”, in-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** from out to in

### Common mistakes

- closing eyes and hands
- feet too close to body-
- being subtly closed in face/attention
- arms too wide or too close to body

# Open - art, imagery and life



The pose can easily be linked to female sexuality but this is just one aspect

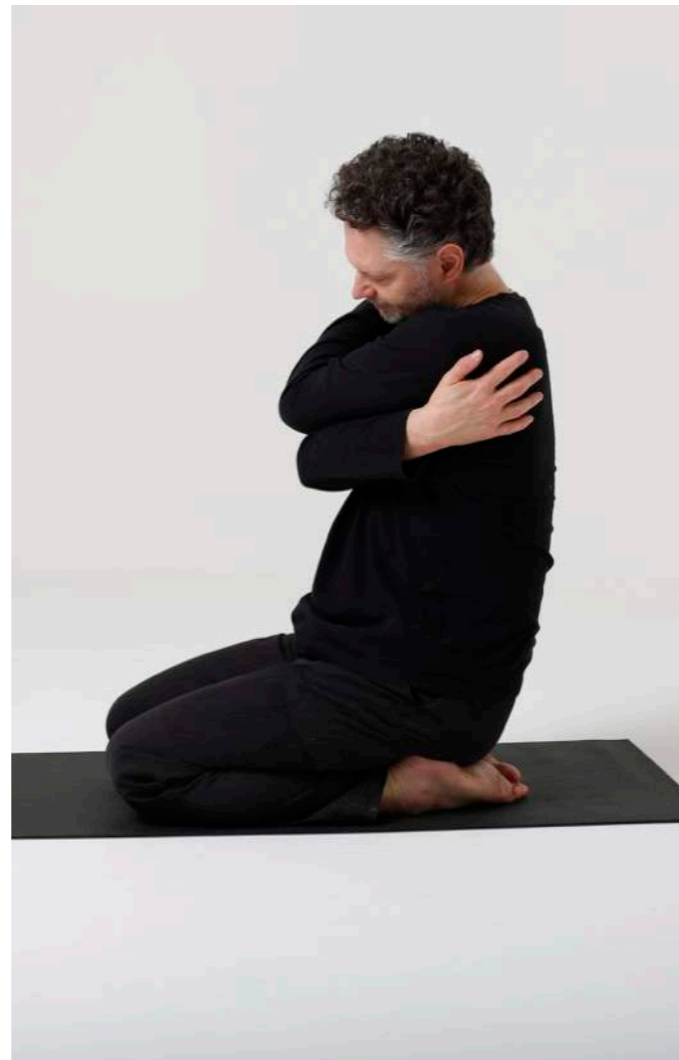
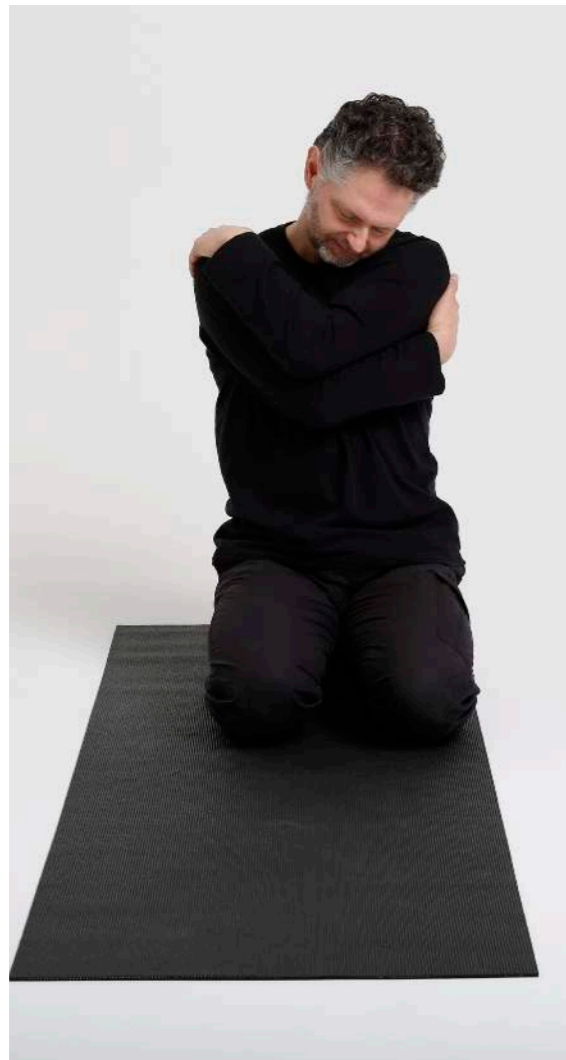


*Open pose is a prone yes pose essentially*

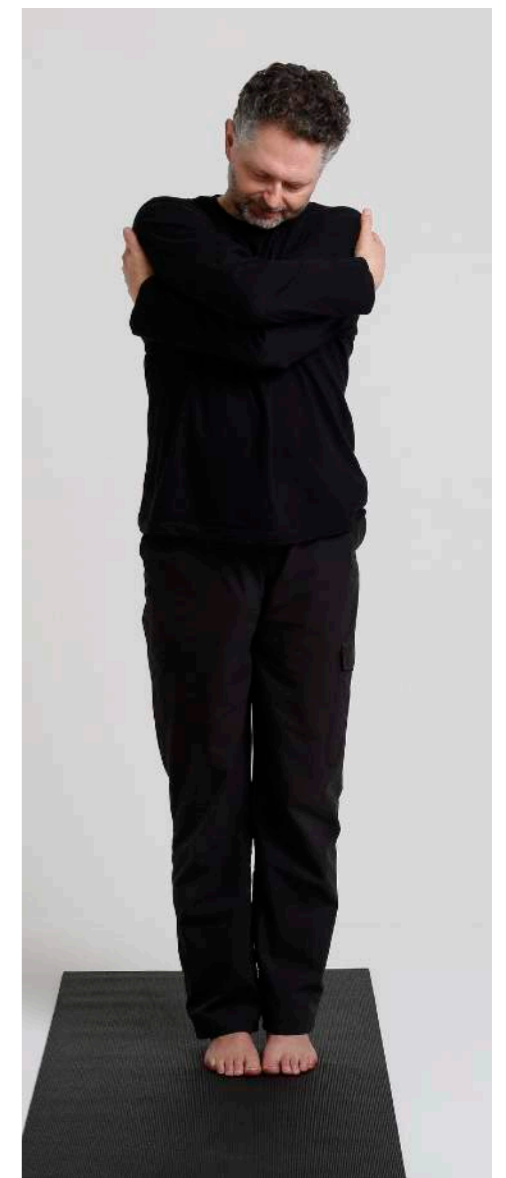


## 8. SELF-CARE

*Kneeling*



*Standing*



*Adaptations: arm positions can be changed for comfort. Hands can be placed palms on chest if the “wrap” isn’t comfortable. Cross-legged (with a slight drawing in feeling) or standing variations are both fine. In standing the big toes touch and heels are apart*



High kneeling, cobblers-pose  
and cross legged variations in a  
workshop in Moscow



## 8. Self-care - Guidelines

**AKA:** self-love pose, compassion form oneself pose, huggy pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring self love, self-care, tenderness, how we look after ourselves

**Notes:** good resourcing pose before for after deep enquiries such as death pose

**Safety:** can be emotional - e.g. sadness, especially if people habitually are very self-critical. In some cultures this is severe and endemic and there are gender differences in this regard

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** kneeling or standing with feet like inner pose

**Spine:** gently flexed

**Hands:** wrapped around self tenderly, variations for comfort fine

**Head:** dipped but not collapsed, slightly tilted to side

**Gaze:** down or eyes closed

**Sound/breath:** “mmm” “ahhh”

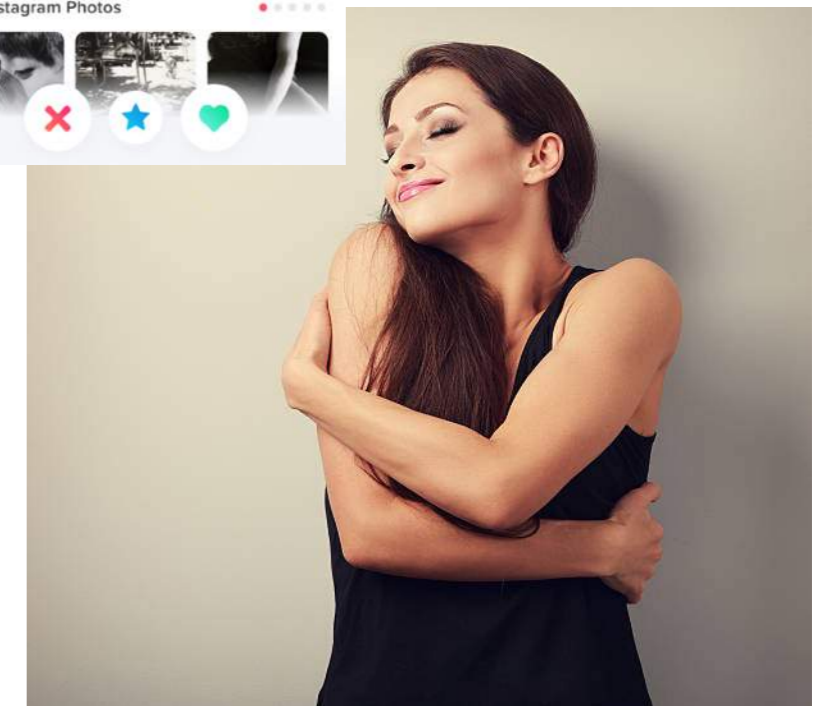
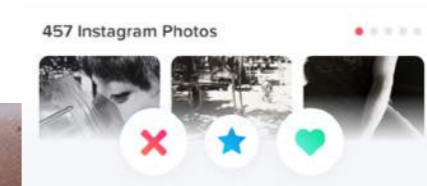
**Movement/attention:** in

### Common mistakes

- self touch mechanical/ had
- attention out
- head not tilted
- chin up (narcissism variation)



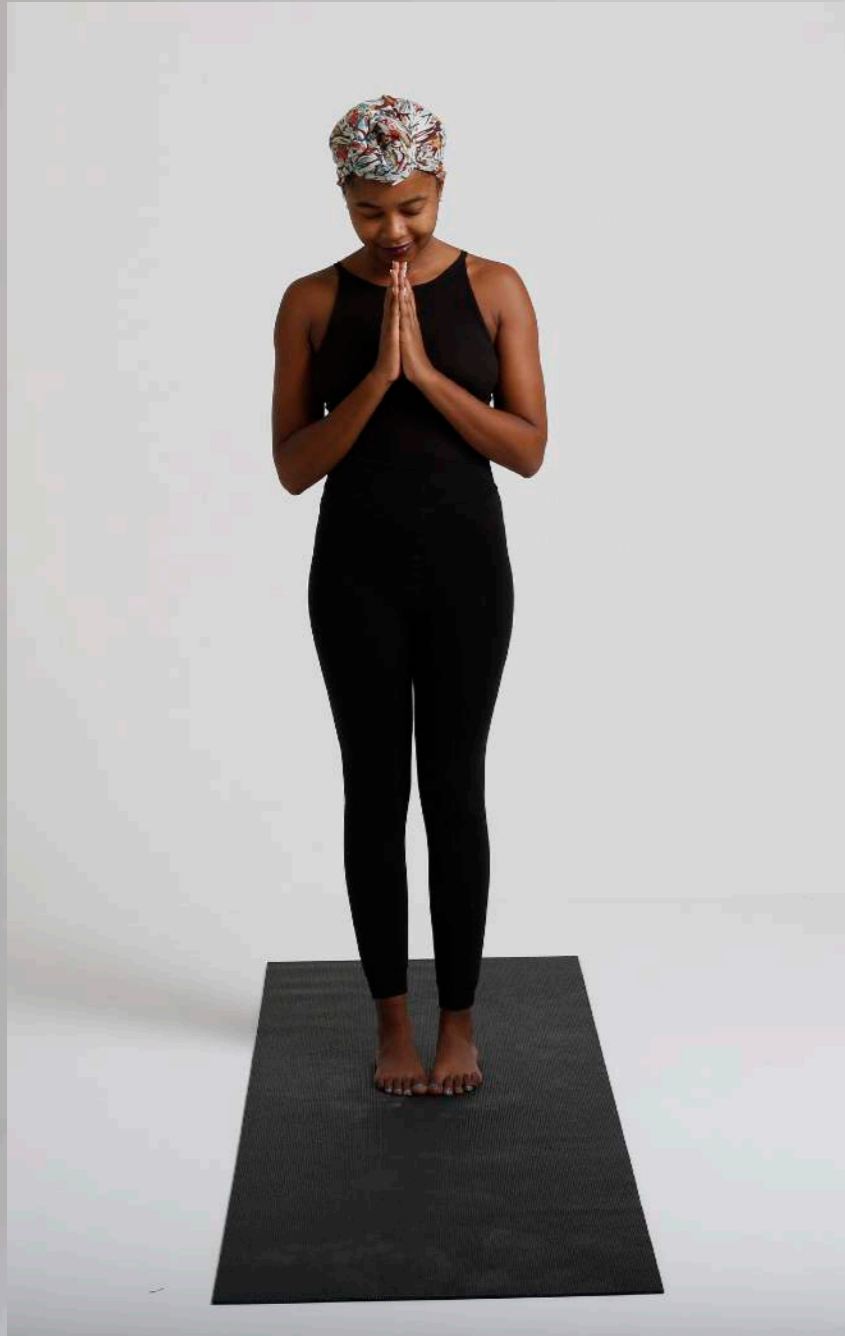
# Self-care - art, imagery and life



With the chin up this pose can have a narcissistic quality worth differentiating



## 9. Inner



Note toes touching, elbows in and down and chin lowered

*Adaptations: can be sitting or standing, hands can be clasped rather than in prayer*

## 9. Inner - Guidelines

**AKA:** privacy pose, prayer pose, meditative pose, introvert pose

**Purpose and themes:** For exploring going inside, privacy, what we keep close to us, inwards focus, etc

**Notes:** Can be combined with various yoga poses

**Safety:** hard for some. Hands clasped variation may be helpful if “prayer” feels too religious or has bad associations

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** standing, big toes touching, heels slightly apart

**Spine:** upright

**Hands:** prayer or gently clasped

**Head:** slightly lowered

**Gaze:** eyes closed

**Sound/breath:** quiet

**Movement/attention:** deeply in

### Common mistakes

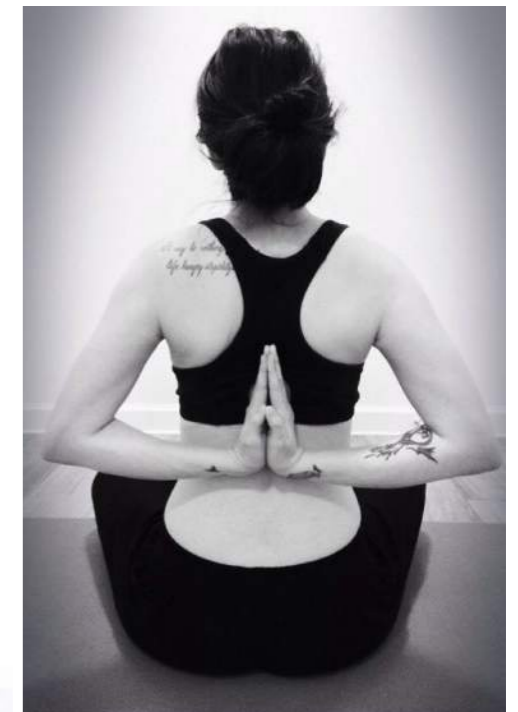
- elbows out to side (classical yoga style)
- attention out
- eyes open
- chin up

# Inner - art, imagery and life

Introverts may like this one...



Focus variation (+entering pose)



Buddha is classically represented as going in, in contrast to Christ's passion and going out (giving, authority etc), though Mary as the yin side of Christianity may be (seen here mixed with a little transcendence pose)

yoga variations



# A poetic visual interpretation of what EYP is

One image I like for EYP is that of going in, while engaged in the flow of life.

EYP teacher Lucy Sabin and I doing a shared inner pose while in central London. What was funny is that this was part of a photoshoot but after doing this we didn't feel like having our pictures taken anymore. EYP works!

EYP as a system, can also be conceptualised as giving pose in a silent context... but this is somewhat poetic.



# 10. EVALUATION



Note chin up and arm crossed

*Adaptation: moderation of stance length and width to protect knee as needed*

## 10. evaluation - Guidelines

**AKA:** critic pose, the knower, the sage, discernment pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring judgement, knowing vs not-knowing, discernment, criticism, inner criticism and assessing

**Notes:** This pose can be can be “positive” or "negative" evaluation, and you see it in life all the time. Someone was literally doing this exact pose in a workshop one while criticising EYP and saying it wasn't valid. Pretty funny when they realised!

**Safety:** when using in pairs/groups note that it can be emotionally impactful and upsetting to be viewed this way, even though “a game”, especially for those with strong inner critics or a critical parent

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** standard EYP yin base with weight back

**Spine:** gently flexed

**Hands:** arms crossed and one up, index finger expended. Beard stroking (real or imagined) is a fun addition

**Head:** tilted back

**Gaze:** narrow

**Sound/breath:** “mmm”, mouth contracted

**Movement/attention:** keeping back from what's in front

### Common mistakes

- no head tilt/ chin lift
- smiling, being too “nice”
- making jokes
- weight not back



# Evaluation - art, imagery and life



Gossip variation

Evaluations aren't always "negative"



Poses can be subtle - as here



Dragon's Den TV show judge



common on social media!



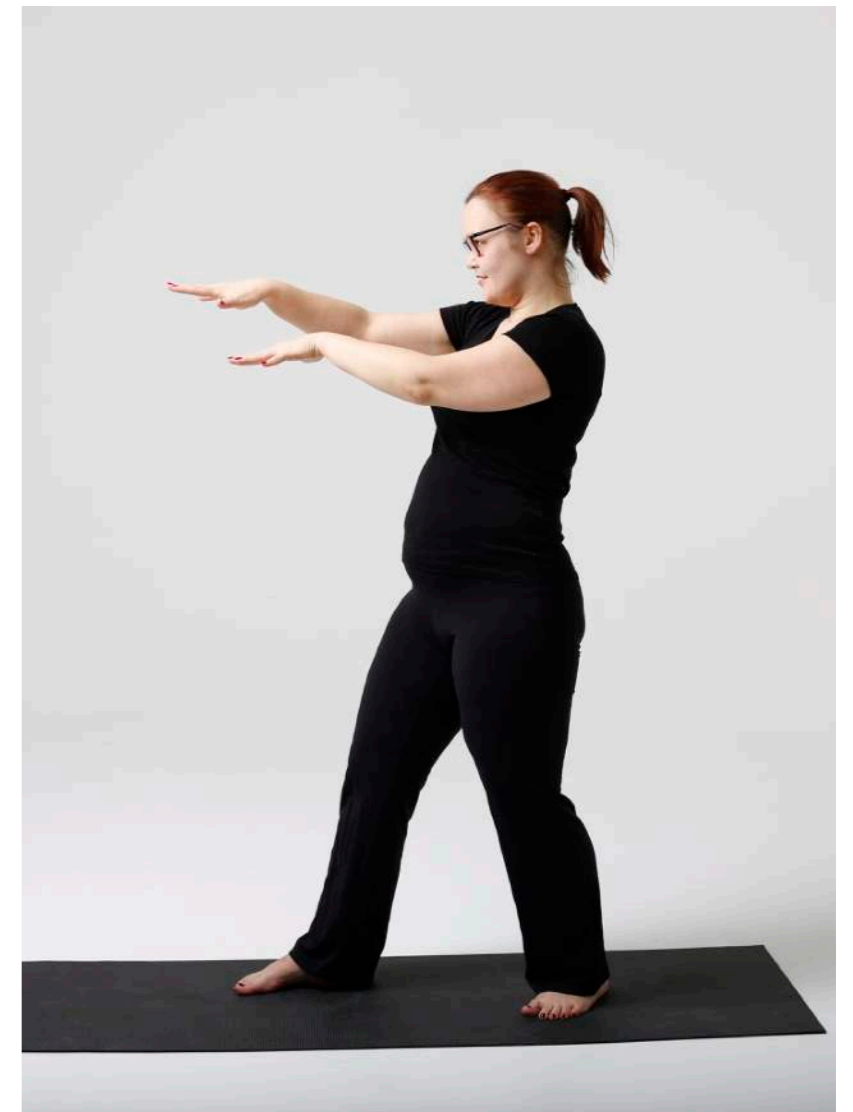
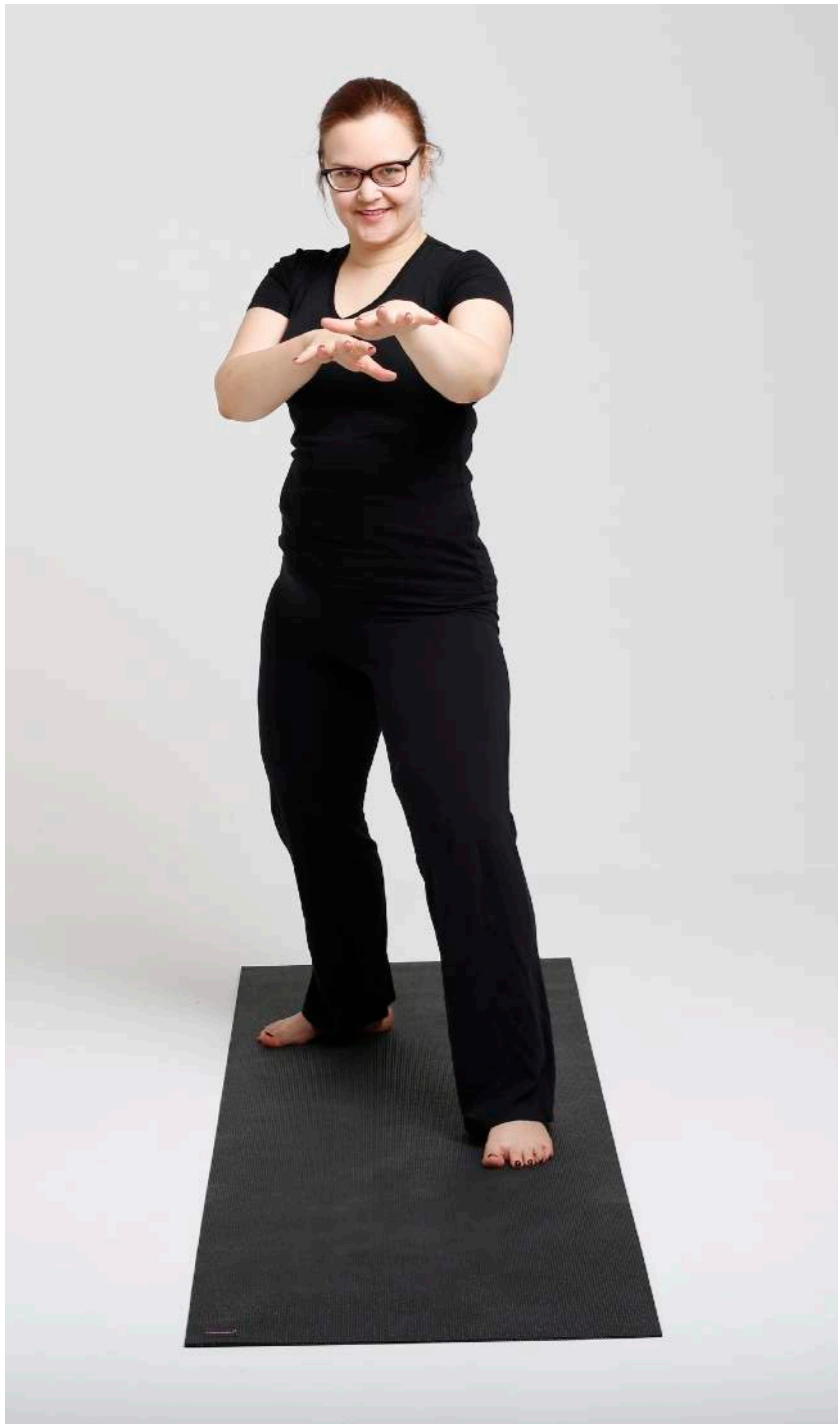
various here but some evaluation poses. I also see this a lot with sceptical trainees

# Magician - evaluation variation

For exploring transcendent  
/ mysterious power

Hands in front and fingers spread wide, eyes wide.

back foot weighted but as though about to move forwards to perform magic



*Adaptation: moderation of stance length and width to protect knee as needed*



# Magician - art, imagery and life

Classic literal magicians and modern variations

Football managers sometimes show this mixed with warrior pose



“Thought leaders”, tech experts (the new “magicians”) and consultants use the power of this pose





# 11. CARE



NB: can be done with soft nurturing quality  
(as though with a child) or a more formal one like for a business project

*Adaptation: moderation of stance length and width to protect knees as needed*

# 11. Care - Guidelines

**AKA:** containment pose, hug pose, womb pose, mum/parent pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring care, containment, and what we're working on/nourishing

**Notes:** a little like some chi-kung poses

**Safety:** can bring up sadness around a longed for or a lost child, or an "empty nest"

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** 50:50 weighted with one leg forward

**Spine:** flexed

**Hands:** softly extended, 10cm from each other

**Head:** very slightly lowered

**Gaze:** looking in space made by arms softly

**Sound/breath:** "mmm", out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** in and around like a womb

## Common mistakes

- hands too close or too far
- hands too limp or tense
- pose tone too tight or loose generally
- weight not 50:50

# Care - common mistakes

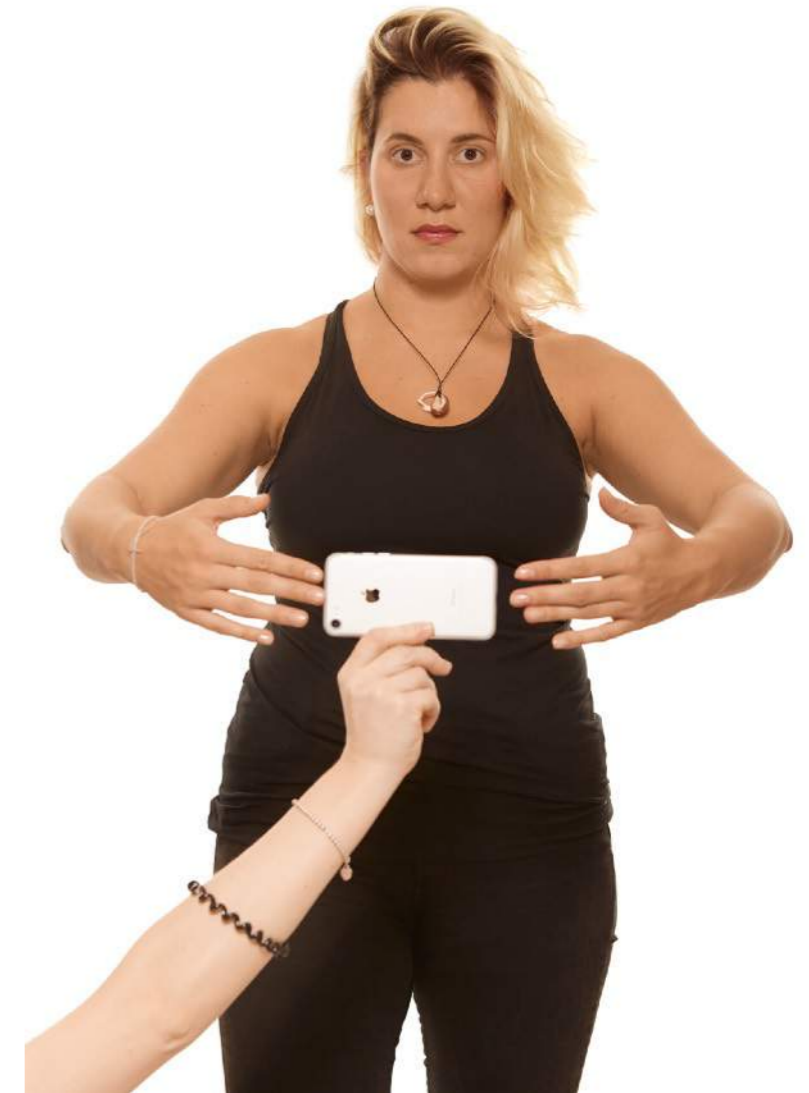


hands too wide, could indicate "Laissez-faire" attitude



hands too tight and too close, could indicate control freakery

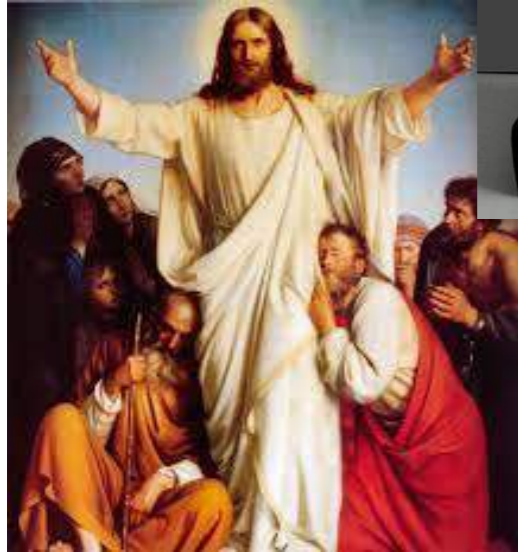
sunglasses or a phone about right distance





# Care - art, imagery and life

The archetypal mother



Transcendent spiritual care



Plenty of earth here too.



a natural expression



The essence of any pose can be expressed with just the hands

various poses here but the project is in the middle being cared for and maintained



# 12. REST



*Note knees straight up  
(but more open and  
inner variations can be  
explored by changing  
this)*

*Adaptations: pillows as needed, arms can be on body if not comfortable behind head*



# Rest - variations

For some a Roman-style reclining position, having legs up a wall, or using a chair (astronaut pose) may be more comfortable. The restful quality is what matters, and blocks, bolsters, sand-bags etc can be used to support this and make a restorative EYP. Remember though, it's EYP only as long as you're still exploring the *relationship* to rest...not just resting without embodied awareness or reflection, and it's not sleep pose!





## Another rest variation



## 12. Rest - Guidelines

**AKA:** ease pose, easy pose, chill pose, holiday pose,

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring resting ,ease, time out, not-doing,

**Notes:** a classic restorative yoga pose, similar to Alexander Technique's "active rest" and positions from The Feldenkrais Method

**Safety:** usually fine though some may have difficulty resting or feel sad that they don't get rest

### Posture Specifics

**Base:** feet on floor knees directly up, on back

**Spine:** relaxed

**Hands:** relaxed behind head (creates pillow-like effect and inhibits "doing" quality of hands), unless this is not comfortable

**Head:** resting in hands (or on block)

**Gaze:** eyes open and soft

**Sound/breath:** "ahhh" or silent. Out-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** in and down

### Common mistakes

- closing eyes/sleeping
- subtle "doing"
- knees going in and out (open and inner rest variations)



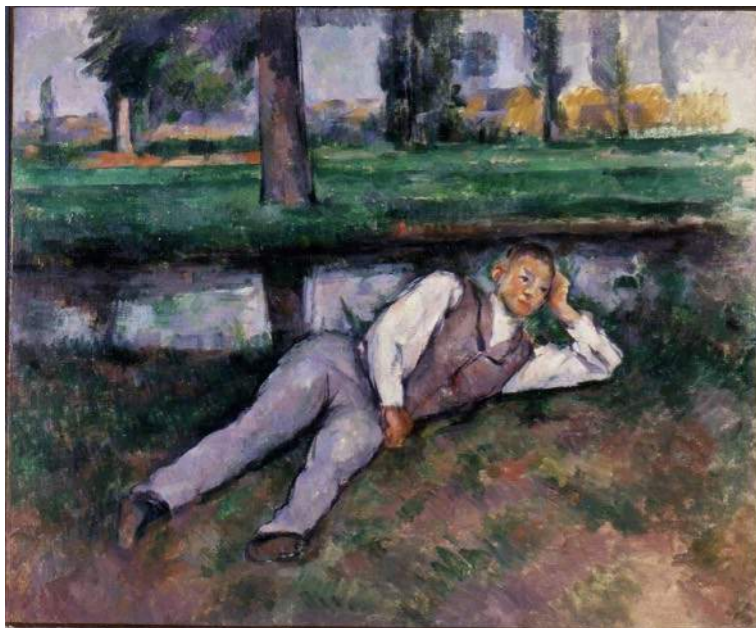
# Rest - art, imagery and life



“Sleeping Lion” Buddhist pose



reclining nudes in art



side variation



animals often have this quality when not active and they're usually better at it than people!



YIN

# 13. INSPIRATION



*Adaptation: moderation of stance length and width to protect knee as needed*

# 13. Inspiration - Guidelines

**AKA:** muse pose, the aliens are coming pose, “wow” pose

**Purpose and themes:** for exploring what inspires, awe, what has a “wow” factor, what ennobles us

**Notes:** influenced by an Uzazu Mindbody Method pose (as have several others) - Dylan Newcomb’s work. Complimentary to enthusiasm (down to up rather than up to down direction) and similar fun for many

**Safety:** not over weighting back knee, can make some “spacey”

## Posture Specifics

**Base:** classic yin base, weight 60% back

**Spine:** flexed

**Hands:** reaching up to receive

**Head:** looking up

**Gaze:** wide open

**Sound/breath:** “woooow” “aaaaaa” in-breath emphasised

**Movement/attention:** from high up to down

## Common mistakes

- reaching up to grab or being too passive
- extending spine into enthusiasm pose
- joking/cynicism

# Inspiration - art, imagery and life

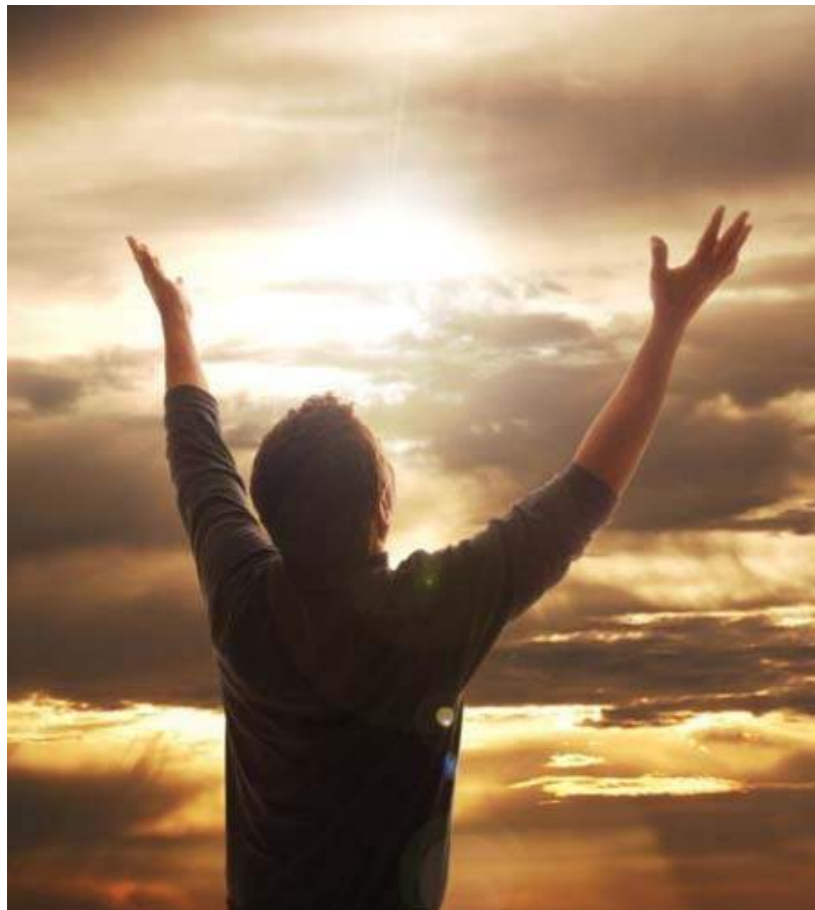
“WOOOOOOWWWW”



Accessing the “muse”



Many postures have childhood / evolutionary beginnings - in this case reaching up for parents, which forms a base for religious and artistic expressions

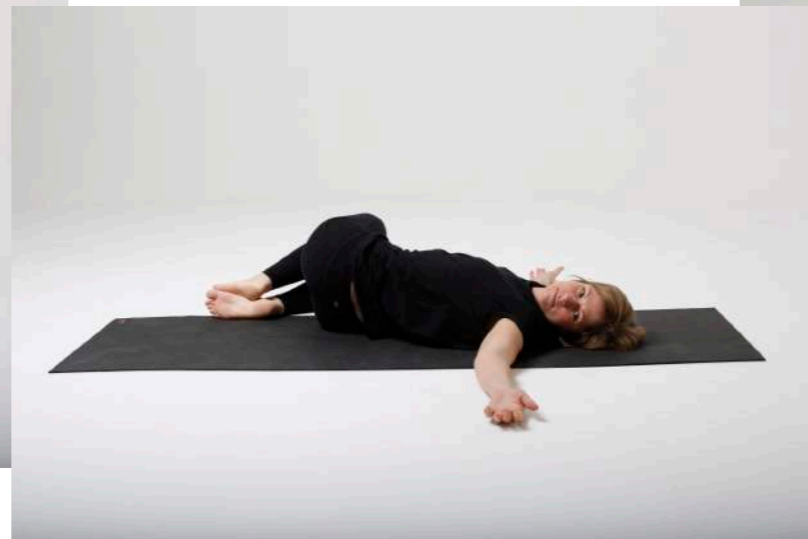
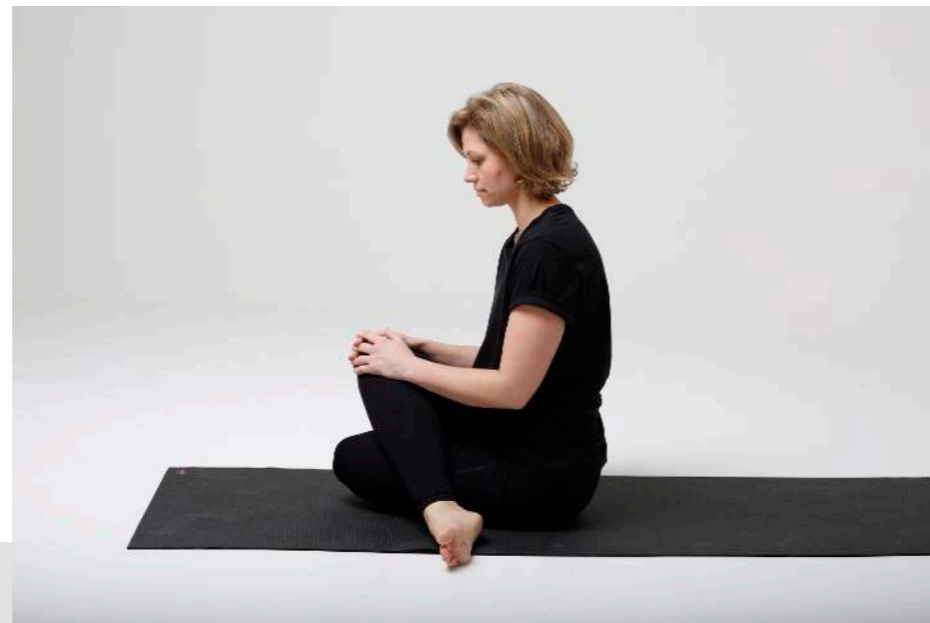


Audience in pose



# Yin as a theme for any pose

Aside from the 13 core yin poses, yin themes like surrender and letting go can be explored through many other postures. While certain poses are more fitting, here what matters is “how” the poses are done, as the 13 EYP yin poses are explored as qualities. For example, *how* you let go, practice self love, or rest into a downwards dog pose or happy baby. This is one way of blending EYP with regular asana practice.



# Poses squared

Any pose can be done in the manner of any other pose - for example doing warrior pose in an open or yes way (giving 676 combinations), to explore subtler aspects of the pose. This is an advanced way of working but may be interesting to those who have been doing EYP for some time, or if there is one pose you want to delve into in great depth. You could even get factual on this and explore say warrior open pose in a yes way! ...but that's getting silly.

# Seated poses

All postures can be done in chairs. Wheel-chair users have been in many EYP workshops and a teacher trainee did a whole teaching training with a broken foot from a regular office chair in Belfast once.

Below warrior, yes, letting go (supported) no, warrior and enthusiasm pose are shown. Note legs are usually still positioned with one forwards, and pelvic tilt creates weighting too. The basic principles and other body positioning of yin and yang stay the same as you can see, and the rest you can work out easily enough, so I've not shown all of them seated.





# Lying down poses

Most poses can be done lying down. Taking space for example can be done as making a star on the floor (if you have enough space!), enthusiasm as a supported back bend with a bolster and open poses is already essentially a lying down yes pose.

This can be good for when people need more support or are just tired. Lying down adds a greater sense of support and ease for most, and is more yin generally. Such poses like transcendence and joker however are not easily done on the floor as their essence does not match this (instability and lifting up in these cases). Once you've practised for a while it will likely become obvious when to use the floor more and which poses are a good and bad fit with floor work.

## Working with the floor

More generally working with the floor can bring out a child-like quality (as most adults don't spend time on the floor) or create a sense of grounding or safety which itself can be interesting to work with and a kind of healing for many.

# Walking “poses”

All poses can be done as ways of walking. This may be quite literal like having the arms open in a walking open pose, or more like a translation of the “energy” of the pose. Walking creates a useful bridge from a formal yoga pose to daily life.

Warrior is a good example of how to translate a pose into walking. As a pose the stance is long, the back leg extended, and the gaze forward. In walking the stride is long, you push strongly from the back foot and the gaze is forward. The front arm does not literally need to be outstretched as in the pose, but can occasionally point forward to give the idea. The speed is fast and the walk direct - like a Monday morning rush to work. Letting go pose by contrast is more relaxed, slow, less linear. More of an ambling Sunday afternoon stroll.

# Examples of subtle deviations

The pictures below show Russian EYP teachers all attempting the same pose (sensuality and a seated authority pose) . Naturally we see their different personalities emerge as is typical in EYP. The teacher on the right in first picture Tonya, tends to be very humorous about her sexuality, while we see the sometimes shy Katya (note lack of full arm extension and side gaze - on left of both pictures) and often serious Ekatarina and Masha (middle authority pose). Knowing these people well I can see many other patterns. EYP poses “expose” personalities, but can also be used for each person to find their personal “flavour” of a pose consciously. To explore their own “way into it” and expression of it.





# Bodywork and Adjustments

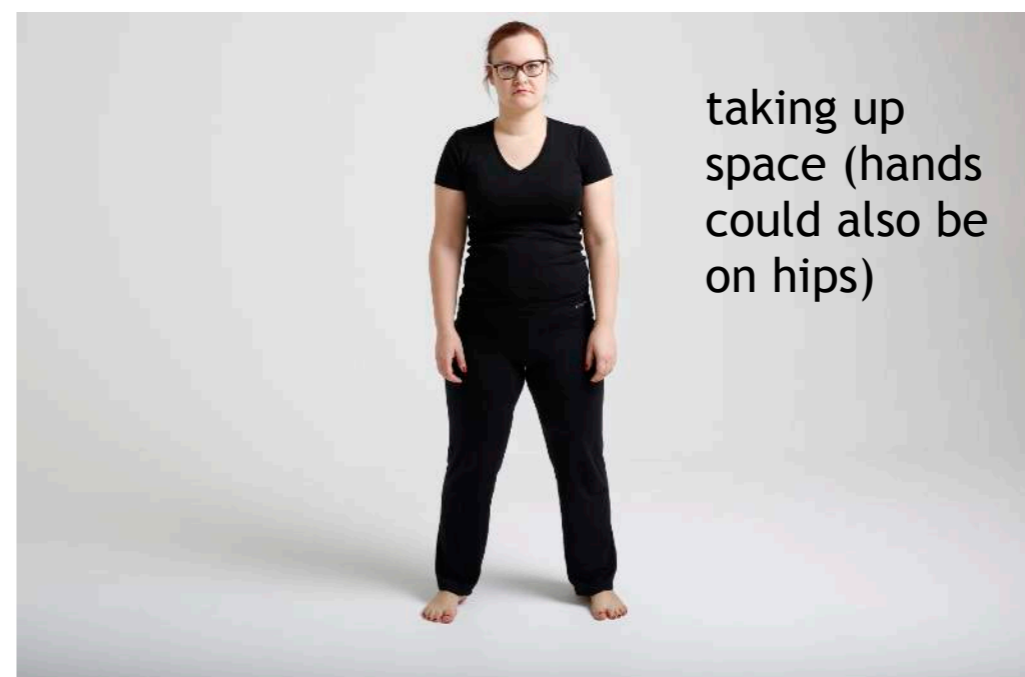
The body shapes itself over time to habitual micro postures. Muscles shorten or lengthen, become weak or overused. This can make non habitual EYP poses actually physically difficult. For example if someone has a “collapsed” “sunken” chest, they will struggle not only emotionally but also physically with yang postures invoking a backbend. Because of this sometimes I use gentle bodywork to help open people up. This may be as simple as in a backbend over a bolster, or more complex hands on work.

Usually EYP teachers make “adjustments” only with instructions, imagery and example (using unconscious mirroring is a powerful implicit way of teaching), however touch can be used - always with consent in EYP. We are not trying to correct a person as *wrong*, but rather help someone inhabit both a form and the “energy” that comes with that archetype. These can be very light stoke-like suggestions with a hand to *intend* in a particular direction or more intense. Enthusiasm pose for example can be encouraged by (carefully and with permission), taking a person’s head from behind by the hair and putting the elbow gently into the back to encourage a backbend. I also pick people up and run across the room with them embodying this one out! There are many possibilities.

I usually discourage all but senior EYP teachers from doing hands-on work as it is easy to get wrong and brutalise people...as you can imagine I hope from this last example...and may mean people do not build the motor skills to do something for themselves which is the point of the practice.

# Micro poses

"Micro-poses" are the applied subtler versions of EYP poses that can be used for state change in daily life. They are always within the socially acceptable range of body positions that we would find in daily life so shouldn't stand out as being "weird". They are therefore usually quite subtle (and may be really subtle like just changing the eyes or the breath) so are somewhat hard to show clearly in a book, but a few examples are given below, mildly exaggerated for clarity.



# Micro poses cont.



Here I'm contrasting a type of inner/vulnerability pose that lacks confidence with a warrior micro pose. In the pose on the right, one foot is forward, the fingers are extended and the gaze is focused, just as in a classical warrior 2 stance.



# EYP Combinations and Flows

While EYP is most easily learnt as a set of static postures they are all actually dynamic and all contain directionality. They can also be combined with each other, and regular yoga asana, as per modern vinyasa yoga into various “flows”. The nature of many of the poses means that they can fit easily into a sun salutation variation, for example adding generosity and no posture in where warrior pose may traditionally be used. A standard sun salutation of course has several EYP poses in already such as letting go and transcendence, and others can be used to bring out themes - for example chaturanga for pushing or no.

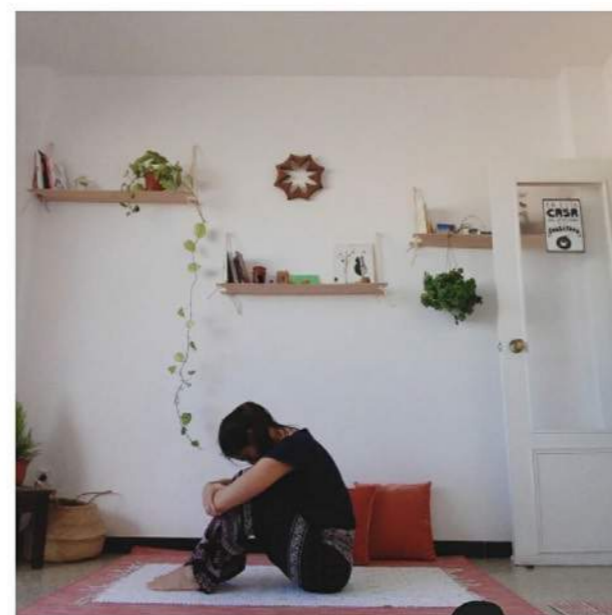
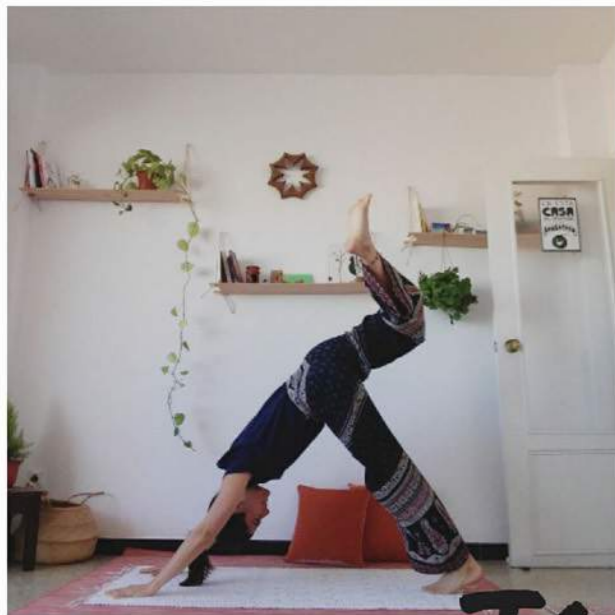
Flows can be simply be combinations of EYP poses, or non EYP and EYP poses, that make sense physically to do in sequence; or you can design flows for certain purposes where the sequence itself is meaningful. I have a short flow for example for making decisions, a long set I give to students working on life purpose, a pre-date set etc. Even two poses can be combined, like this short choice one: Yes pose (for listening and openness) followed by entering pose (for decisive bold action). I am reluctant to describe too many specific flows both because I’d like readers to use their own creativity and because of space limitations in showing them. Some are described in more detail in the practice guide however.

The 4 elements is one simple yet profound model we often use for flows so I’ll describe that briefly shortly.

Flows can also be repeated to become cycles. We often use a 4 seasons cycles model that can be helpful for mapping change, which is what most flows are about in one way or another.

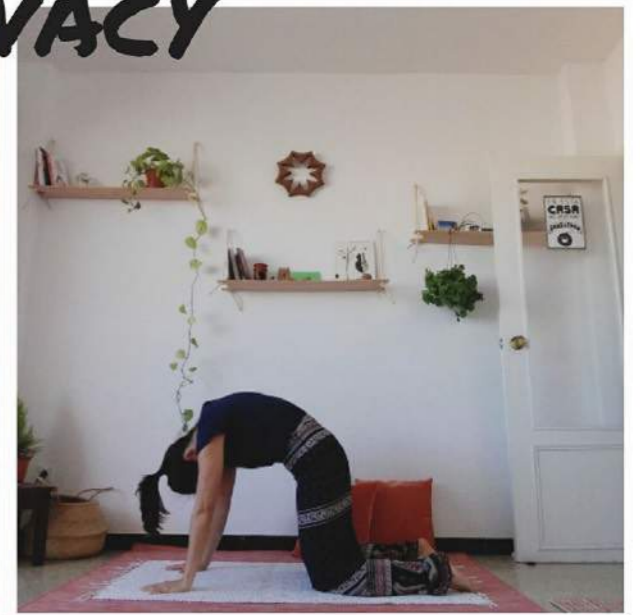
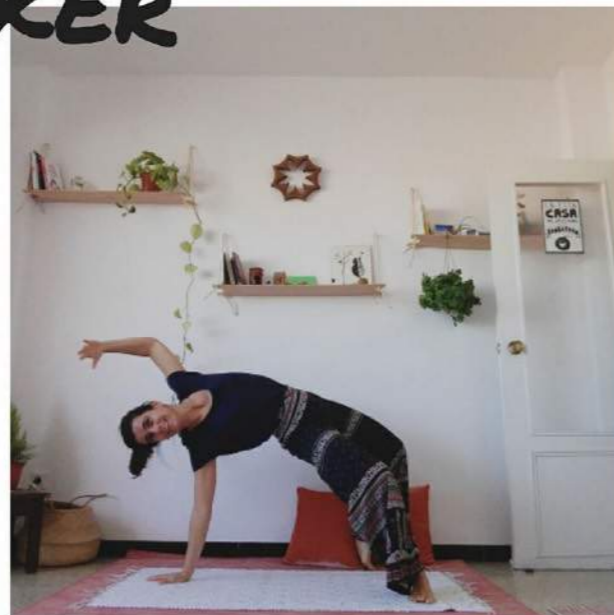
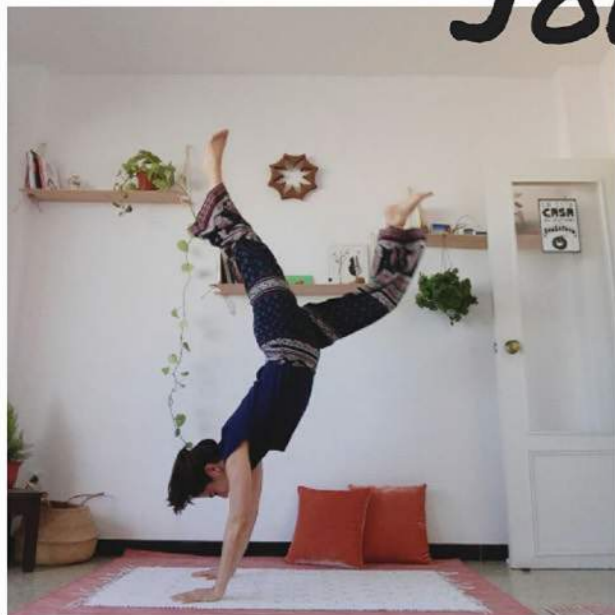
# The “how” of poses - poses as ways of practicing

Any pose or set or poses can be done in the manner of a single EYP archetype. In this way the EYP pose becomes a “how”, a dynamic embodiment than can be applied more generally. Here are Spanish EYP teacher Pilar’s interpretations of some, it’s the “manner” of doing the poses and moving between them that matters, though you will see she has selected poses that basically match to move between.



**JOKER**

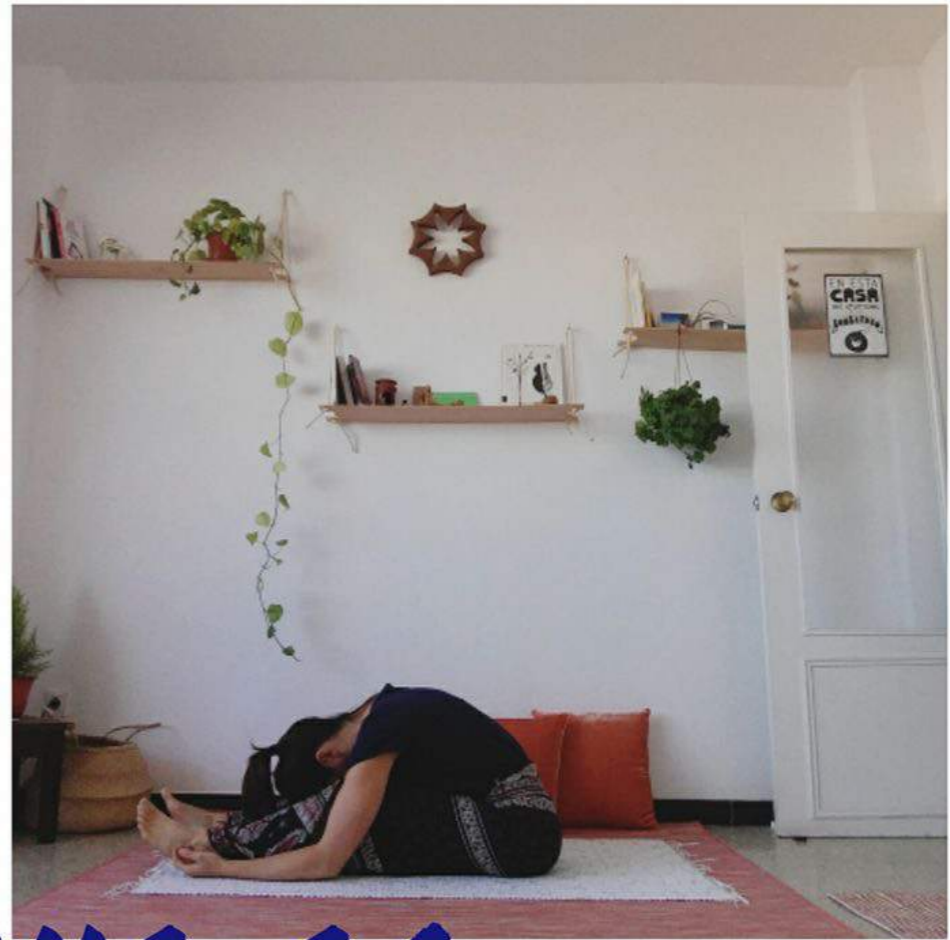
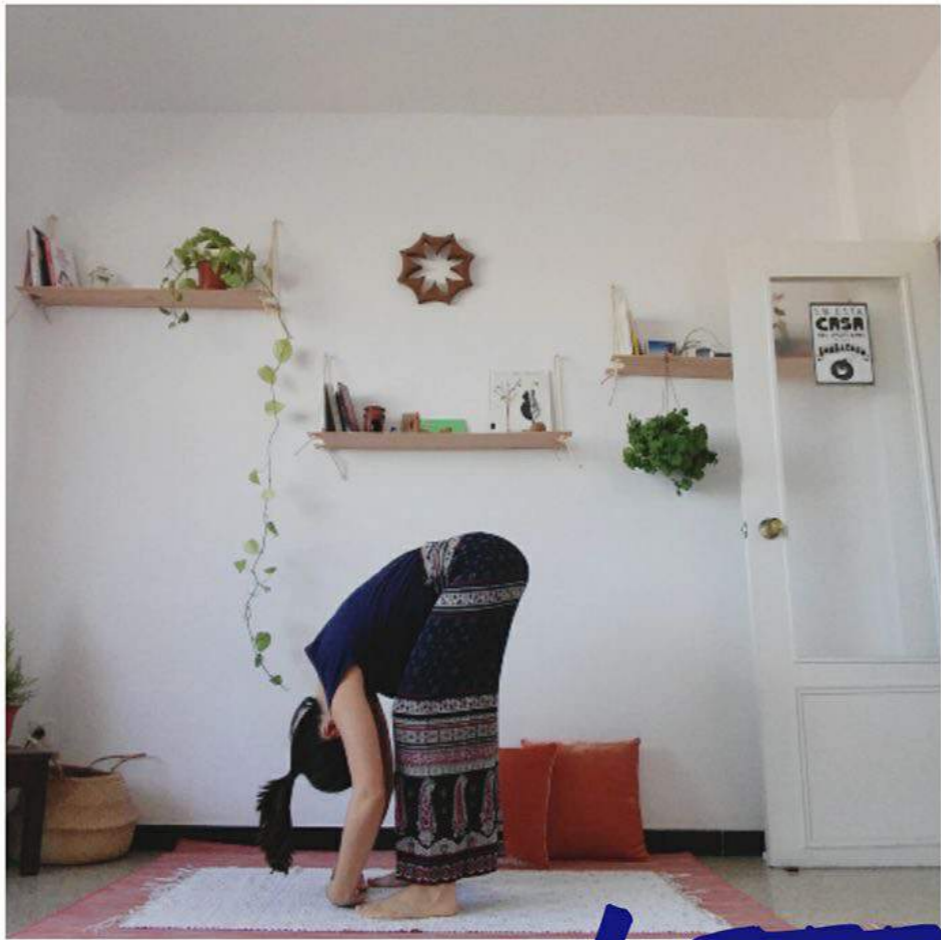
**PRIVACY**



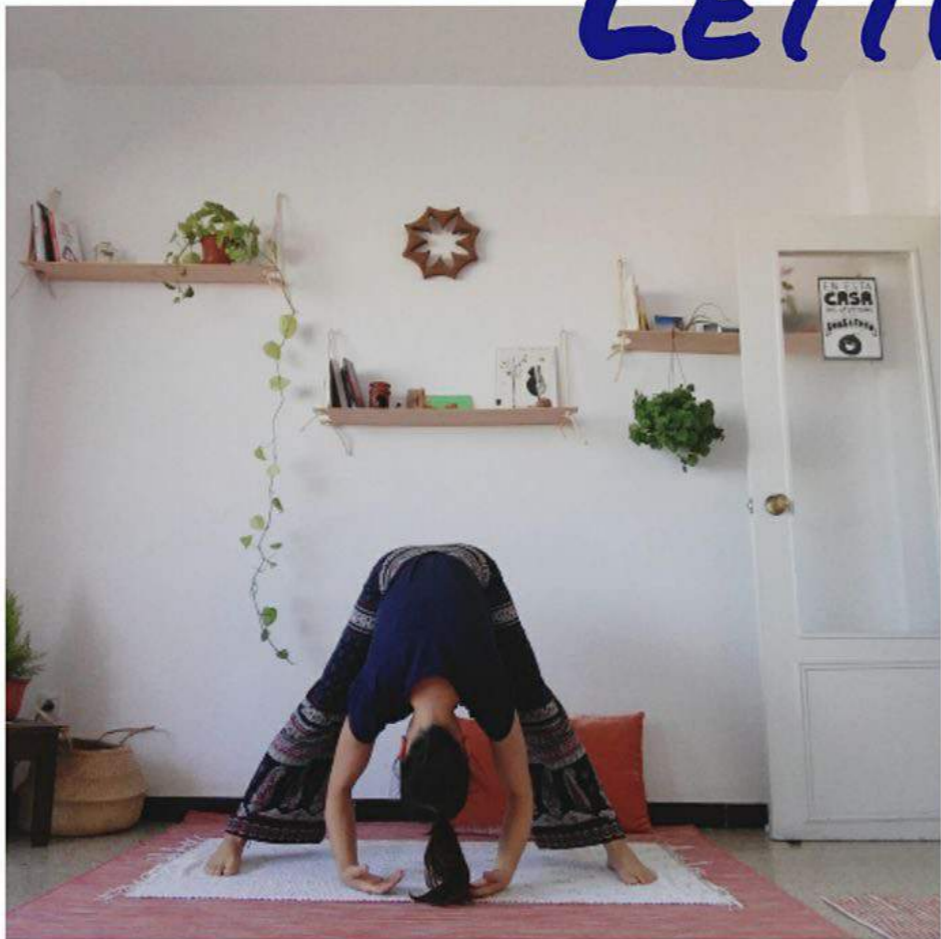








# LETTING GO



# The 4 elements



The 4 elements is a model of embodied preference that we use fairly often in Embodied Yoga Principles to offer a simple intuitive map of embodied habits, embodied development, and for working with the *how* of a yoga flow. This model is easily understood (e.g. “I was all *fired* up”, or “Sara is an air head”), relatively cross cultural and is easy to use. One exercise we do for example is to do a simple vinyasa sequence like a sun salutation in the manner of each of the different elements and ask people which is familiar and where they may need certain elements (or have an excess), in their lives. This is the standard EYP method we also use for poses.

The characteristics of the elements are in this version of the model are:

**Earth** - slowest, linear, angular, formal, staccato (stop-start), exact, correct, dignified, traditional.  
Yoga examples: Iyengar, most traditional hatha, much vinyasa (form based though called “flowing”)

**Water** - slow, flowing, indirect, accommodating, relational, accepting, relaxed, soft, feeling, empathic.  
Yoga examples: Scaravelli, Anukalana, Yin, truly flowing vinyasa

**Fire** - fast, direct, pushing, passionate, driving, expressive, energised, fierce, boundaried.  
Yoga examples: Ashtanga, Rocket, Power, Hot - though all these have a form so also earthy

**Air** - fastest, free, spontaneous, creative, fun, transcendent, spacious, humorous.  
Yoga examples: Acro yoga, freestyle yoga ...few examples in modern yoga actually but this is changing



# The 4 elements continued

You can use elements to help people identify character strengths and weakness, to see their preferred communication styles, to look at cultural differences, to design teams, and to see how their current yoga style either supports an habitual embodiment or balances/challenges it. They can also all be explored relationally (e.g. comparing formal, harmonious, competitive and fun/flirty pairings), or to explore different aspects of one pose - e.g. fiery vs watery warrior.

The 4 elements model is the base of many other typologies out there such as Myers-Briggs, and has ancient shamanistic roots. There are other 5, 6 and more elements models, and different perspectives on the four elements, but try to put these aside while working with this particular approach to them. Ultimately all such models are just maps. Please note too that it is a model of preference, not *type*, or about putting people into boxes. Embodiment is situationally and relationally layered in that we are different in different times and places and with different people. We do however have a personality and preferences. More on elements can be found in the appendices.





# Elements vs poses vs polarities

Poses do not always fit neatly within the elements model however the following can be used to explore each element:

**Earth** - support, ground, submission, rest, authority, and stand poses

**Water** - yes, open, receiving, vulnerability, and care poses

**Fire** - pushing, passion, warrior, giving, no, and entering poses

**Air** - joker, transcendence, evaluation, inspiration, and letting go pose

More broadly we could say that earth and water are more yin, and that fire and air more yang; but I have some caution in trying to force the models together. What we could say is that using yin and yang, the 4 elements (which can be combined) and the 26 poses gives various levels of complexity which may be more useful in different situations. When looking at what a group needs in a training I may be thinking broadly in terms of yin and yang, but in assessing personality I may well want to work with the four elements, but in offering a specific practice to help an individual develop as a person I may well offer one of the 26 poses for example.

# Seasons cycles model

The seasons is a model we use to explore change, cycles and rhythms. As with all things embodied people have preferences and it's the job of facilitators to help reveal these, and offer practices for embodied change. This can be played with in various ways though EYP.



Season	Features	Images and archetypes	Direction	Human life-stage	Simple
<b>Spring</b>	starting, awakening, growing, accelerating, rising, increasing	blossom light green shoots conception and birth spring showers	up	childhood	turning on / waking (I) greeting (we) prepare (it)
<b>Summer</b>	fulfilling, expressing, full growth, full speed, high, maximum	fruit full green leaves mature animals and families sun	forward	early adulthood	on / awake (I) relating (we) do (it)
<b>Autumn</b>	containing, slowing, declining, falling, less speed, decreasing	storing nuts falling brown leaves ageing animals cloud and drizzle	back	'middle' age	turning off / sleepy (I) parting (we) stop (it)
<b>Winter</b>	ending and preparing, resting, slowest, low, minimum	no fruit or leaves hibernation and death snow	down	elderhood	off / sleeping (I) alone (we) don't do (it)



# PARTNER SECTION





# Partner section introduction

Life is about relationships. Most of our greatest joys and challenges in life come from other people, and during the fast flow of life, with much at stake, it's hard to see our patterns in this area. Therefore we need relational forms to explore and develop our relational patterns. Solo practice is a good start, but won't on its own translate into life with others, nor even reveal our patterns with others. For this reason partner practice has always been an essential part of EYP.

## The “with whom” of practice

Who we practice with impacts our yoga hugely. Many yogis have for example experienced how much easier a class is in a supportive group environment, to give one simple example. I have also noted differences in how I do postures, quite unconsciously, if teachers, students, lovers, friends, and others I have particular relationships with are in classes. This can be noted and explored. To be observed (see the first relational form) for example by a man or vs a woman, is quite different for many people as we may wish those broad groups to see us differently. The same could be true with age, ethnicity or with specific individuals across all the forms.

## Choosing a partner

You don't need long complex forms to start seeing patterns. Even the way in which we choose a partner for an exercise for example reveals patterns. Do you choose or wait to be chosen (yang and yin)? Grab people forcefully or shyly suggest? How selective or “seductive” are you? How do you feel if you're the odd one out and don't get a partner? Etc. This can be really juicy and is a good example of how people's patterns reveal themselves most honestly “in the gaps” between exercises when they are not self regulating! A bit sneaky but effective for exposing habits.

# EYP Partner Sets

The seven sets of EYP partner sets are an elegant map the complexity of human relationships. They each explore different relational possibilities - e.g cooperation or competition - and cover many significant human relational dynamics. Try and think of a situation which doesn't fit into one of them in fact.

As with solo postures these can be used to identify patterns and build range, but in relationships of all kinds - with partners, friends, or work colleagues.

The six relational sets are:

- 1. Witnessed / ignored**
- 2. Cooperation / opposed or competed with**
- 3. Supported / undermined**
- 4. Contrasted / mirrored**
- 5. Exaggerated / reduced**
- 6. Led / followed**

A lot can be explored through the sets and they're often used creatively by teachers - it's a principles based approach after all. I'll give a few examples for most sets though.

# 1. WITNESSED / IGNORED

- *For exploring how others pay attention to us, or don't*

Illustrated with warrior pose but could be used to expose any pose and reactions will often differ according to the pose. For example, do you like to be seen by others while saying yes, but not no.



Do not underestimate the power of this seemingly simple partner set, they can really trigger people as being seen is a major psychological theme. Several times as a facilitator people have hit me on the back of the head after I tend my back on them or example, half jokingly; and I have seen other immediately burst into tears.

These could be used to explore such things as what you get attention for, how you like to be seen, fame, how the world ignores you, etc. Deep stuff.



# 1. Judging/judged variation



Sometimes we combine this with a third person in yes pose who is complimenting the “poser” while the judge criticises them. This can be a powerful exercise!

# **A note on balances and other other miscellaneous poses**

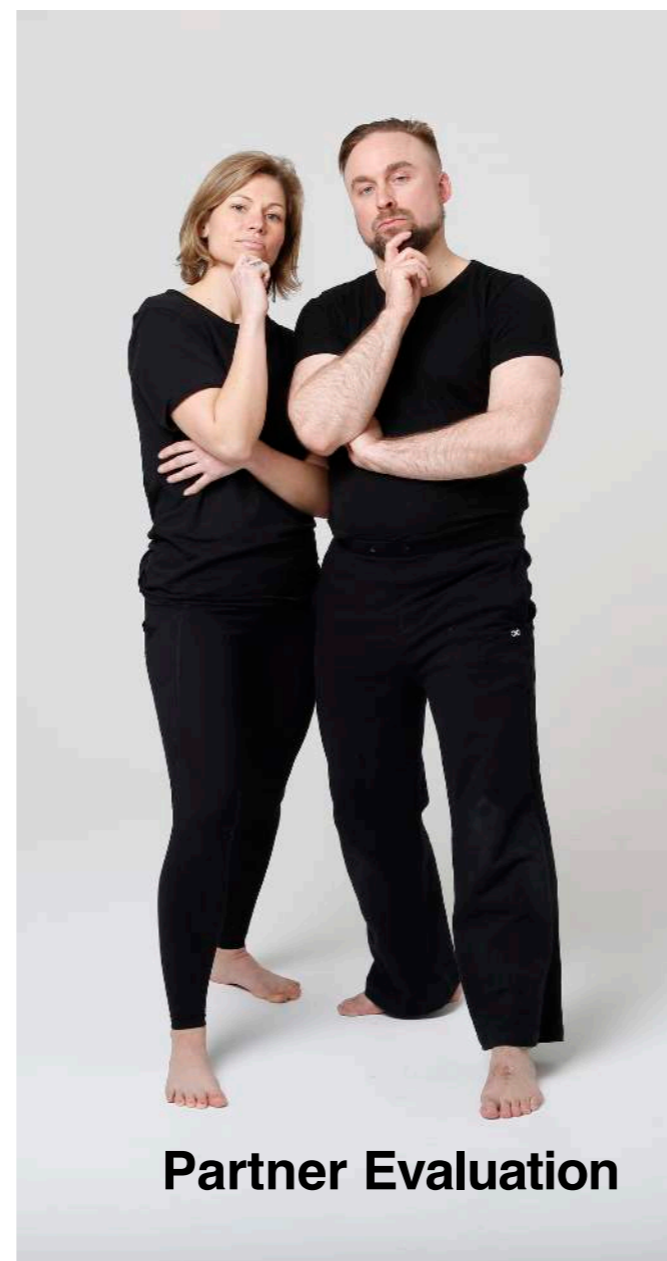
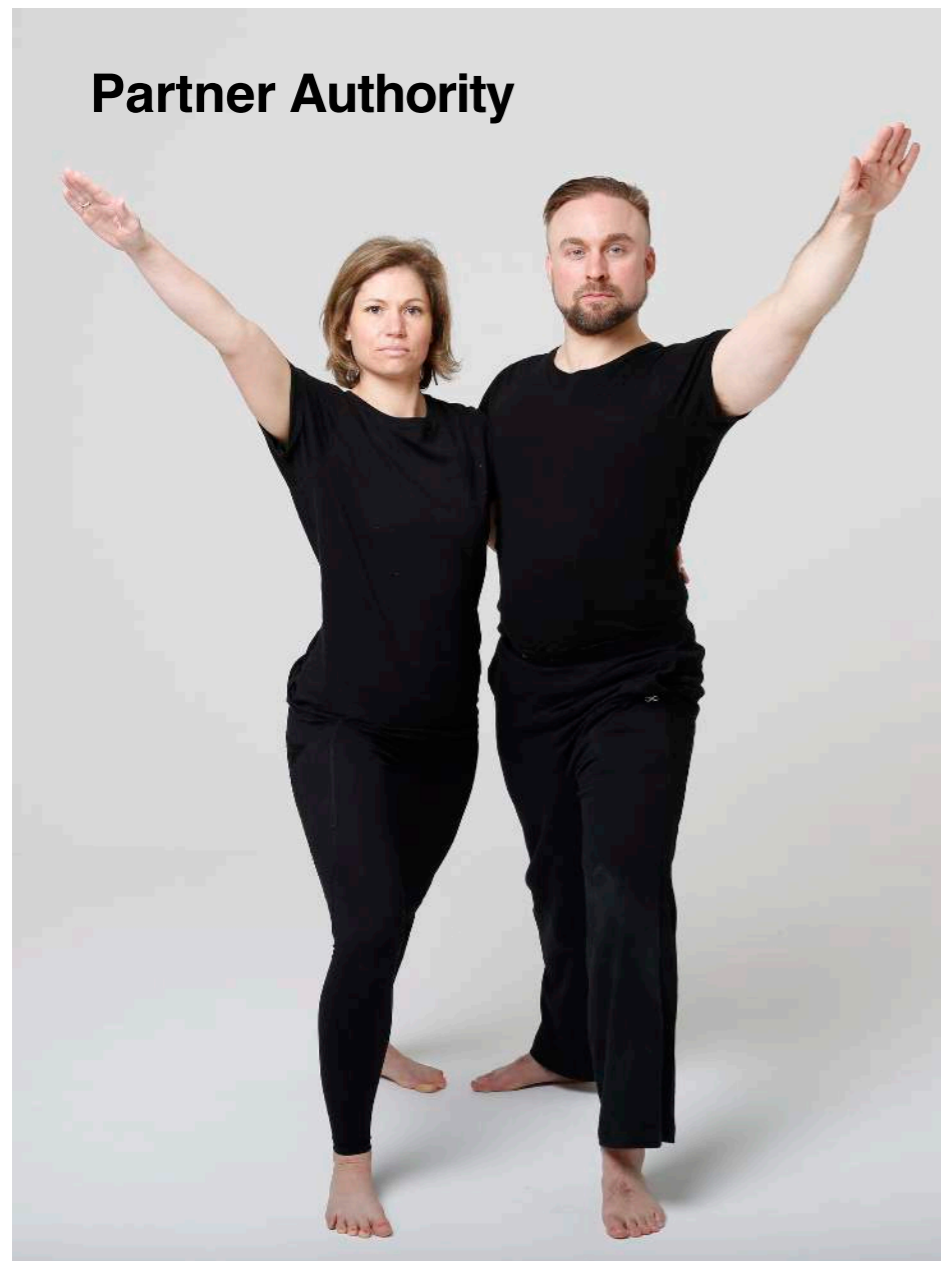
Useful additions to the EYP collection from the modern postural yoga repertoire are standing balances like tree pose. They are excellent for exploring pride and embarrassment /shame as there's a very definite "fail" when someone falls over. The sense of being seen and possibly competing in these poses can be brought in and emphasised in EYP, and I find them useful for working with a number of other themes such as working with challenges, perfectionism, social pressure etc .

## **Handstands and inversions**

Handstands and other inversions are usually not part of an EYP workshop as they require too much physical ability for most to explore embodied pact within them easily. However,. simple inversion - e.g. using chair can be used to examine how we can see things differently, challenge, letting go of control, risk etc; and handstand can too if time is taken and participants are suitably "advanced" in their practice. How one approaches the handstand and the process of achieving it become the focus, not athletics or the Instagram photo.

## 2. COOPERATIVE (close variations)

- *For exploring how we work with others*



**Partner Evaluation**

Authority pose in cooperation could be used to explore parenting, or a shared business; to give but two examples. Evaluation might be used to explore how you judge others with friends, or how colleagues help you be discerning (e.g. do you listen to them too much or not enough?).

Note: Most EYP postures can be done with all the partner sets. I will show some examples using the cooperative close form, then just use warrior as any example of other partner forms to save space. 170



# COOPERATIVE (close)

Partner Giving

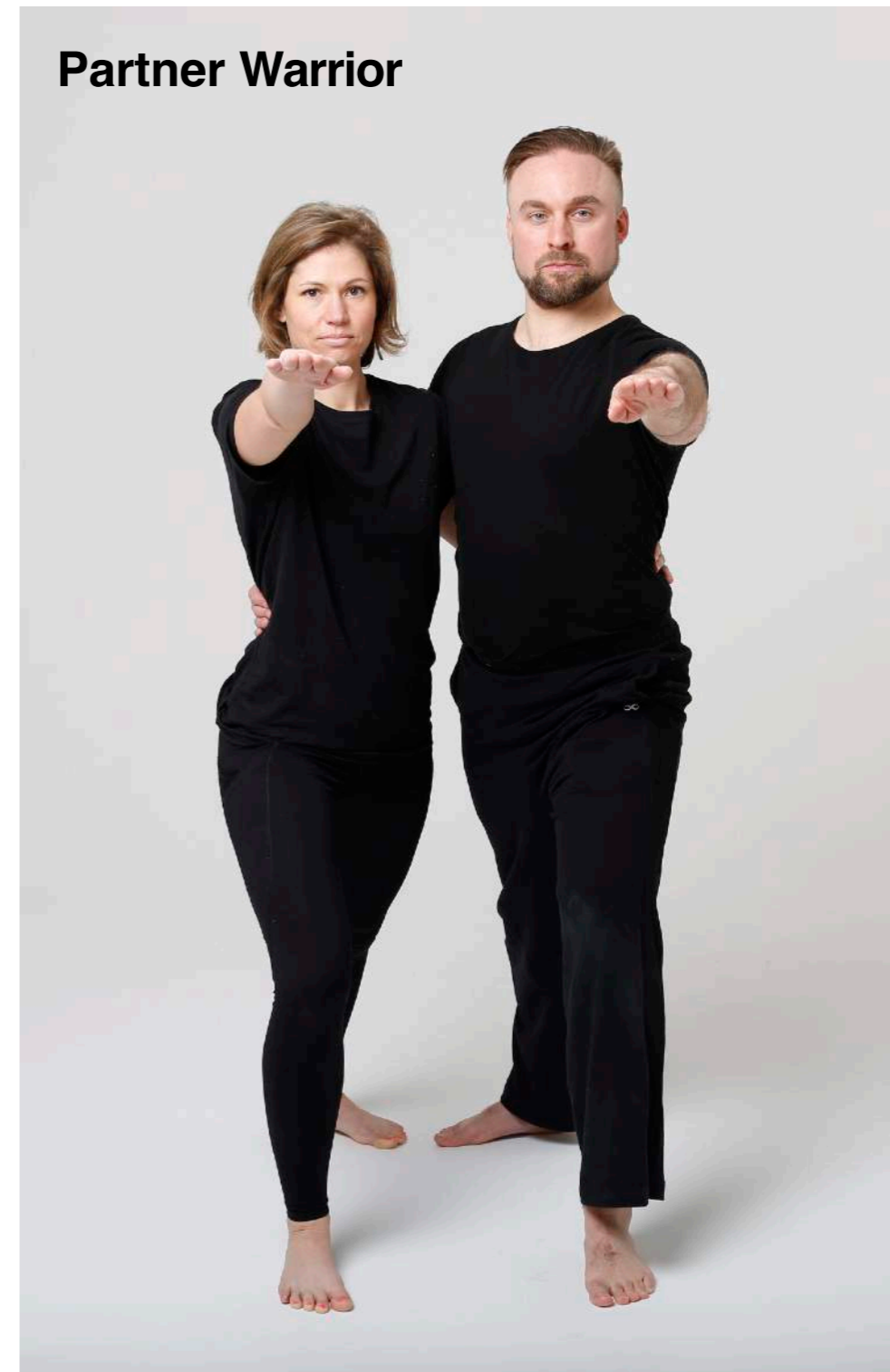
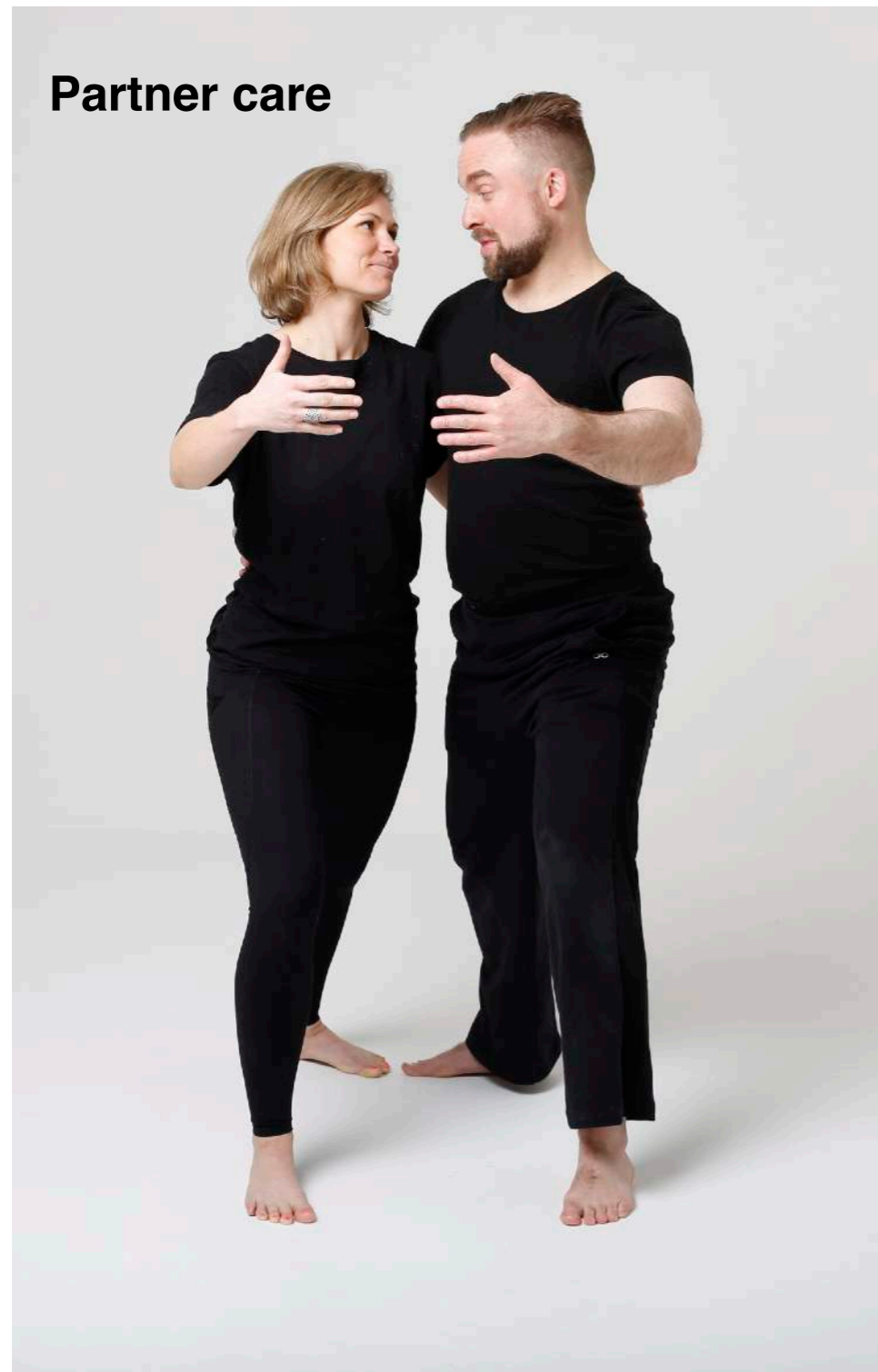


Partner Yes



The giving partner form could be used to explore a shared offer, and the yes form used to look at how two siblings might accept the death of a parent (others like letting go are good for 171 shared grief too).

# COOPERATIVE (close)



NB: The care cooperative partner form can be very useful for couples and those in business partnerships...though be careful, it can quickly “bring stuff up”!

# COOPERATIVE (close)

Partner No

What do you want to resist together?





# Russian warrior women



# COOPERATIVE (less close)



Less intimate back-to-back and no touch cooperative examples. These may be preferred by some people, and are also better for modelling certain situations where people are less close.

## 2. OPPOSED

Used to explore conflict and competition.



Fuck you variation

Dominating/ dominated  
variation (note hand on top)

Holding someone back is  
another way to explore  
opposition and a different feel  
from resistance.





# EYP Competitions

EYP explores completion as competition is a part of life.

There is often historical pain around excess competition in life, but it is part of nature, inevitable to some degree at least, and like all things worth bringing awareness to. So while some may think the idea of yoga competitions is an anathema...usually these people gain the most from exploring it and often have a great time in the process! EYP competitions because they are often fun and more like the energy of the world outside the studio, are also useful for exiting the “U” depth of a training in the second half of a workshop.

The most basic form is to just do a posture, preferably a yang one like warrior, and ask two people to try and be better at each other at it! Of course, this happens all the time in yoga classes unconsciously, so again, this is just about light-heartedly bringing awareness. Other possibilities include (shown on next page):

## Shown on next page:

- toe-off
- tree off
- squat off
- plank off (with head-to-head and patty-cake variations)
- boat-off
- OM-off
- superman off

Also possible (games from outside of yoga...ask me):

- Samurai patty-cake
- Polish wrestling
- Jo staff (aikido stick) games
- Beauty/ ugliness comp. (note, can be triggering!)
- Spirituality comp
- Knee wars



# EYP Competitive partner forms





### 3. SUPPORTED

*- For exploring how we give and receive help.*



*Technical note - the supporter takes some of their partner's arm weight.*

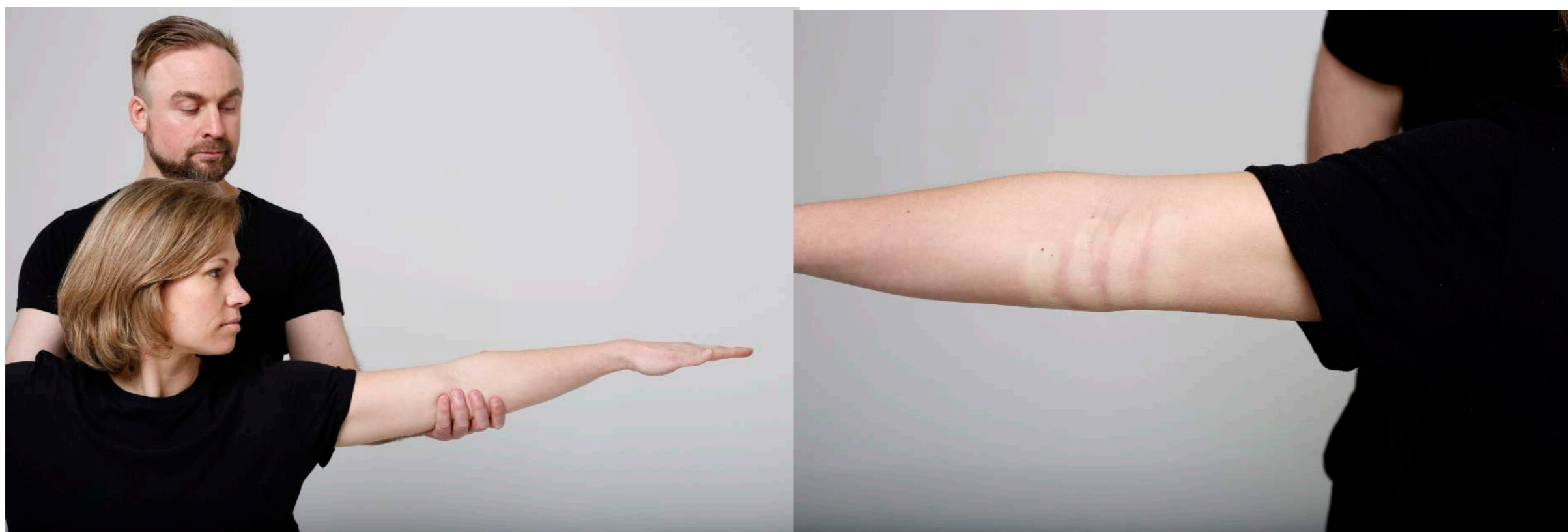


Simple hand on back variation.  
Shown here with stand pose (this  
variation can be done with almost  
any pose)



# Control-freak variation!

Controlling rather than supporting variation. A unconscious pattern for many. You can also work with this deliberately.



# More support variations



As you can see, you can be creative with support variations (but don't try these at home kids!), as you can with any pose. More complex partner yoga can be used to explore EYP themes (see following page) but by making it complex and athletic this takes up people's attention and subtler patterns are missed (the same principle for solo forms). I have for example done workshops using Acroyoga which is excellent for looking at such things as trust, safety and communication; but found that unless people were already experienced practitioners much insight was missed.



# Using other partner yoga forms

These can be used more broadly to explore many themes. Be creative.



Also

- various acro-yoga forms such as bird and throne
- balk to back squats
- holding hands and leaning back
- shared tree poses
- informal sitting/hugging even!
- etc



Simple giving and receiving support form from sitting. Variations like with feet together is also possible, or or surrender/child pose, or standing up (aikido back stretch)



# Deviations

People will reveal their patterns in these forms as in all others. “Mistakes” in partner sets expose our relational embodiment, just as solo forms expose our personal ones.

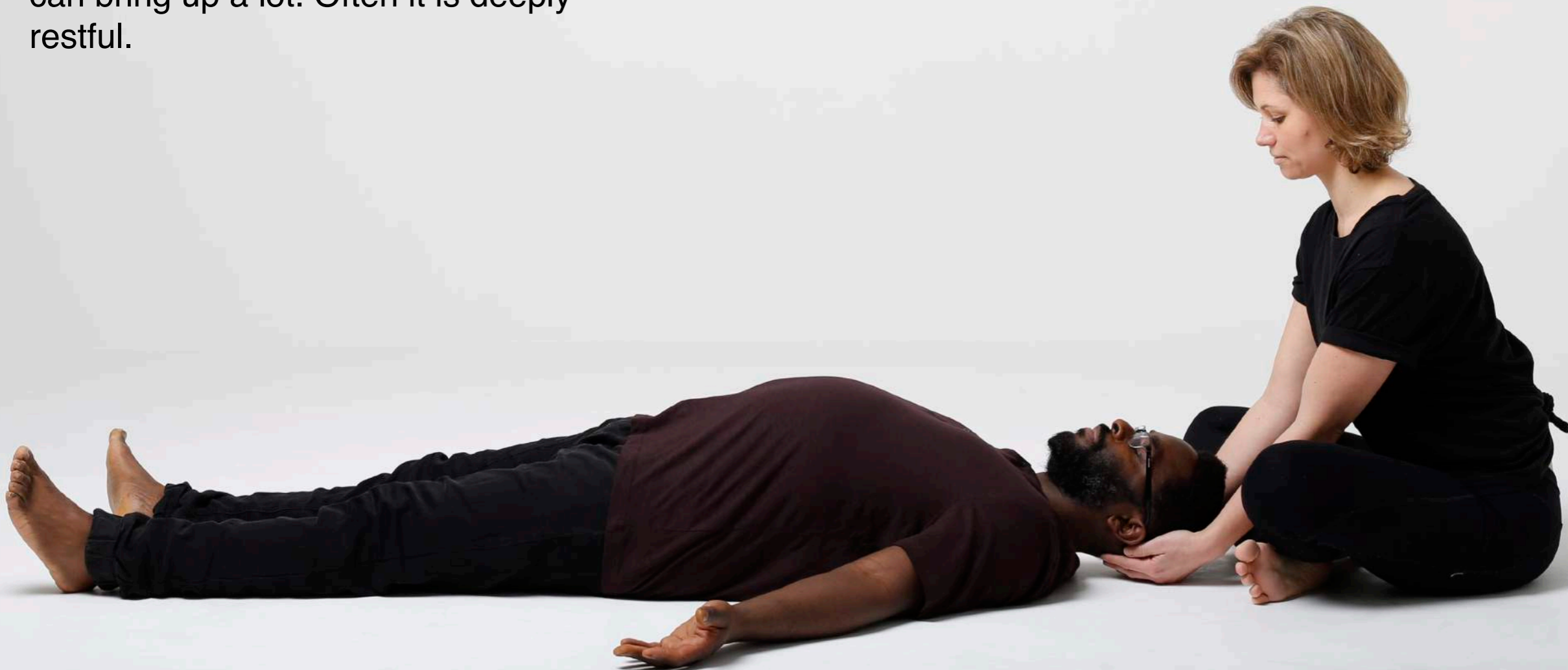
A common pattern with support for example is to not let others take any weight from their arms in those who like to be ever independent. Another more dependant pattern is to flop passively onto the supporter (pictured).



# SUPPORT - Death Pose Variation

- supporting partner's head in hands with caring attention and attitude

This can feel like being held as a baby/  
holding someone else very tenderly, so  
can bring up a lot. Often it is deeply  
restful.



# 3. UNDERMINED

- For exploring how we handle antagonism and aggression, and our mischievous side!



Partner can be pushed, prodded, poked and even insulted (get consent for areas of body touched, strength of touch and the nature of any insult!)

A group version. Caution, can be very triggering



## 4. CONTRASTED

*- For supporting, challenging and further bringing out people's relationship to any pose.*



Warrior and vulnerability polarity

# Contrasted continued

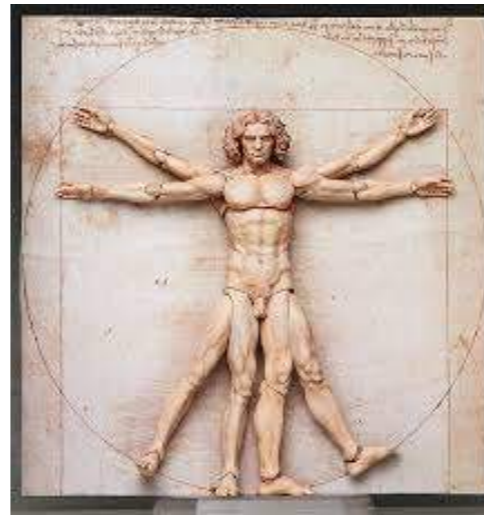


Yes and no, being seen and inner pose, receiving and giving pose. Three classic combinations.

Having someone offer a complimentary polarity can really help bring out a form.



# Contrasted continued - Vitruvian sequence

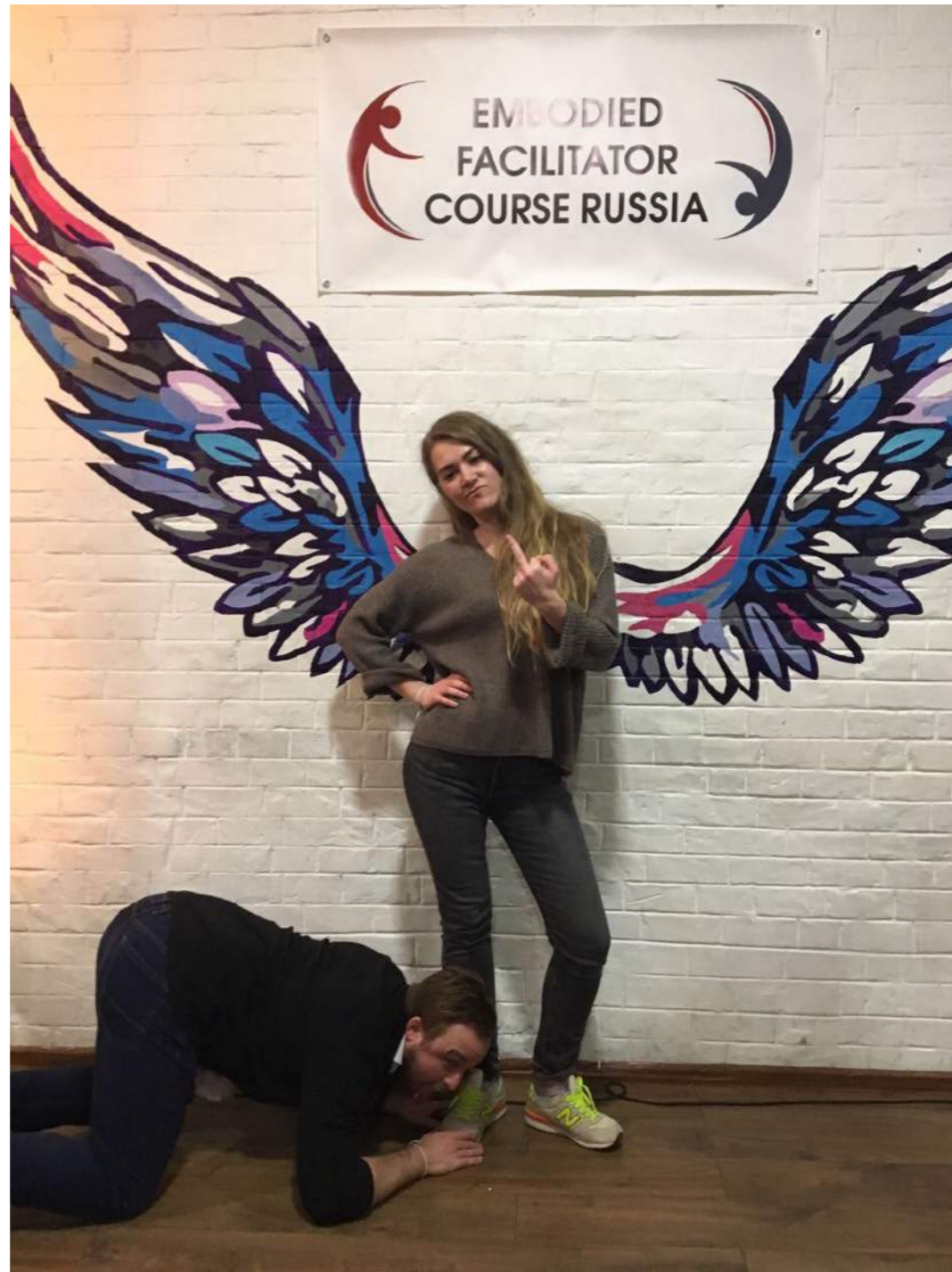


In and out, up and down and forwards and back. There are other poses that you could do this “Vitruvian” group with.





# Fuck you warrior/sensuality combo with submission variation



#50shadesofyoga

## A nice example of micro-pose polarity



Daria and Haru. Can you see who's more yang and who's more yin in this friendship at this time (yin and yang is relational and contextual remember)?!

## 4. Mirrored

*- For exploring belonging, being the same as others, fitting in, being copied etc*

Very close to cooperative obviously, and a support very often





## 6. EXAGGERATED/ REDUCED

- *To explore being less or more of something, moderations vs excess and other themes.*



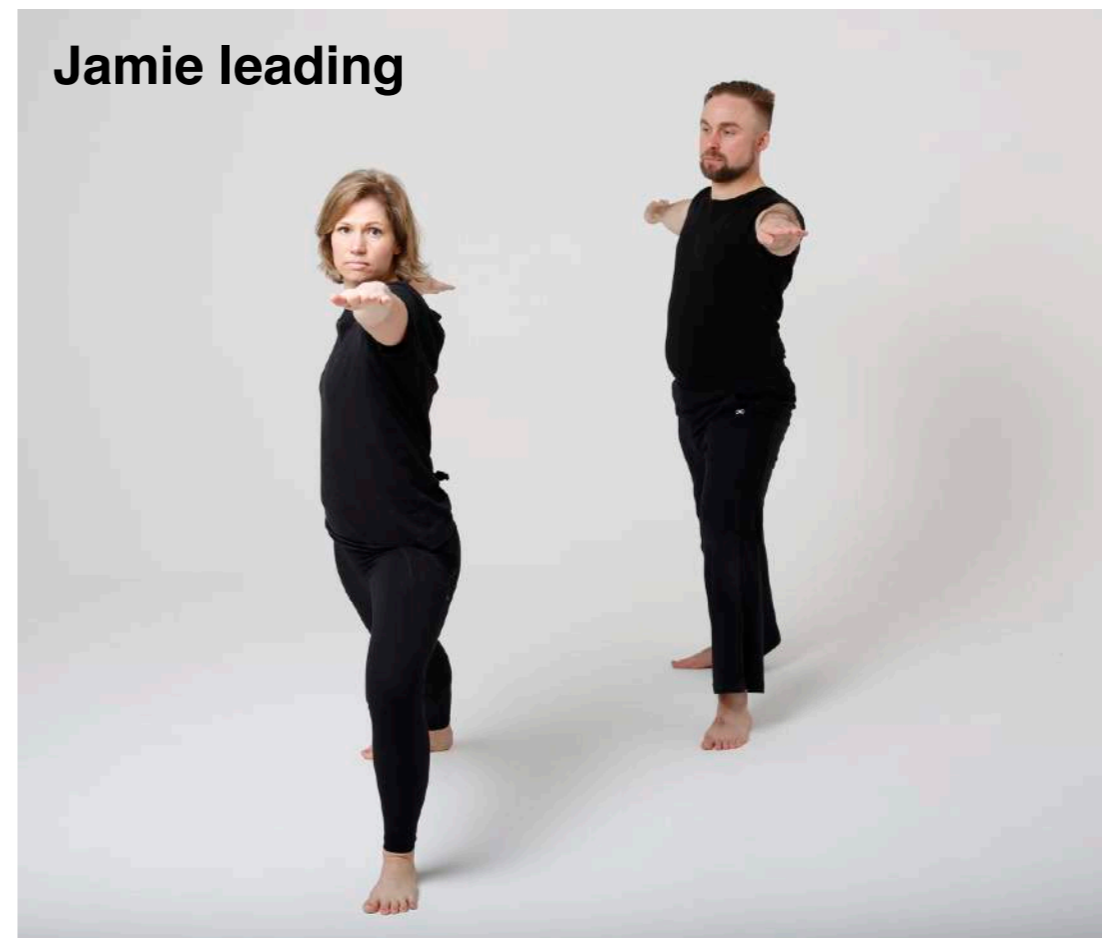
Here Jamie is doing an exaggerated, or if you prefer I am doing a more “toned-down”, version of warrior, enthusiasm and taking up space. We are both good at all three of these so it was unusual for me to try more moderate versions. Also we could have been exploring our cultural backgrounds as America (Jamie) and Britain (me) are quite different in regards to size of yang expression!

# 7. LED/ FOLLOWED

*- To explore our relationship to leadership and being of service*

A leader follows dynamic can be modelled by:

1. Having one person in front
2. Having a hand over and under (good for exploring dominance)
3. By one person following another into and out of a pose



# Hand on top example



(this is how Jamie rolls)



# General purpose EYP partner exercise

## - from sitting back to back

This is a classic EYP exercise and can be used in lots of ways to explore things such as contact, closeness, empathy, leadership/followership, etc



Giving and receiving support. Variations like with feet together also possible, or or surrender/child pose, or standing up (aikido back stretch)



Leader/follower possibility  
NB: twists, side-bends etc can also be used

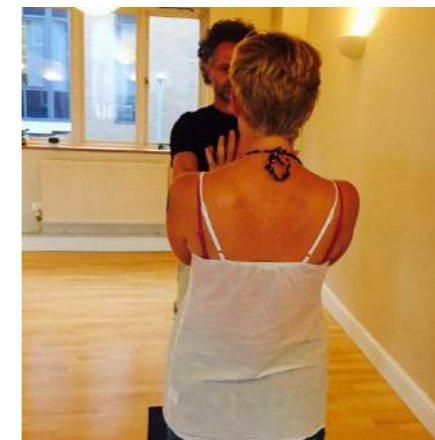
# General purpose EYP partner exercise

- from standing face to face

Basic form



- Deviations**
- light touch
  - controlling thumbs
  - “sleazy” fingers
  - closed vs open



**More deviations**

- left:
- social distance variation (Jude close)
  - dominance (may just be height related, but here not as Jude is shorter)
  - there are many more

# “Testing” poses

One way to help people find stability in poses is to have someone first gently then gradually with more force push or pull on them. This can also be used as a "test" to reveal how integrated and therefore strong someone feels in the pose\*. Sometimes I test a whole pose or just part of it, like with the stopping hand of no pose (illustrated). For some people this arm will be very firm, for others not at all. The point of all “tests” is feedback.

*\*This is influenced by the work of Paul Linden, and is a kind of whole body "muscle testing" if you're familiar with kinesiology. This way of working is also in line with the empirical approach of EYP (no belief is necessary). It is remarkable to me that this simple approach is unheard of in yoga.*





# Example of working in threes - support set

Working in threes follows the same principles as working in pair. Here two people are supporting one to do a pose they find tricky.

The supporters can also examine their relationship to cooperation (or occasionally competition in supporting!).



# EYP Group Exercises

EYP poses can be done in groups of almost any size. There are many many possibilities, but here are a few examples:

**Taking up space while being adored**





# Group exercises cont.



A group supported enthusiasm and no poses



# Group exercises cont.



Learning receiving and giving with help from friends

# Group exercises cont.



Group rest pose at EYP teacher's day at my home in Brighton, and Russian teachers doing a group warrior for binding.



# Group exercises cont.

## Supported group no, and supported giving



Part of a teacher training group from England, Wales, Ireland, Russia, Germany and Canary Islands.



This type of group process can be a VERY emotional powerful experience for people. I've seen it be genuinely life changing a number of times.



# Group exercises cont. - dioramas

Entire groups can help a person with a pose - here Maud from Paris (standing with the rose) is working on her sensuality, and a range of poses set up by her and the group, are being used to create a psychological “diorama”. Intuition is a powerful tool in such situations.

If done with people representing inner parts of a person, this work has much in common with psychodrama, and if people are representing part of a system (e.g. a family) it is similar to constellations work. This is extremely deep work and requires well qualified people (e.g. therapists) to hold.





# Group photo!



End of class pictures in Romania and in the US - we often do a shot where everyone picks their favourite pose; for fun, feedback, to see cultural trends and to help people embed a particularly powerful insight as people tend to remember the last thing in a workshop vividly.





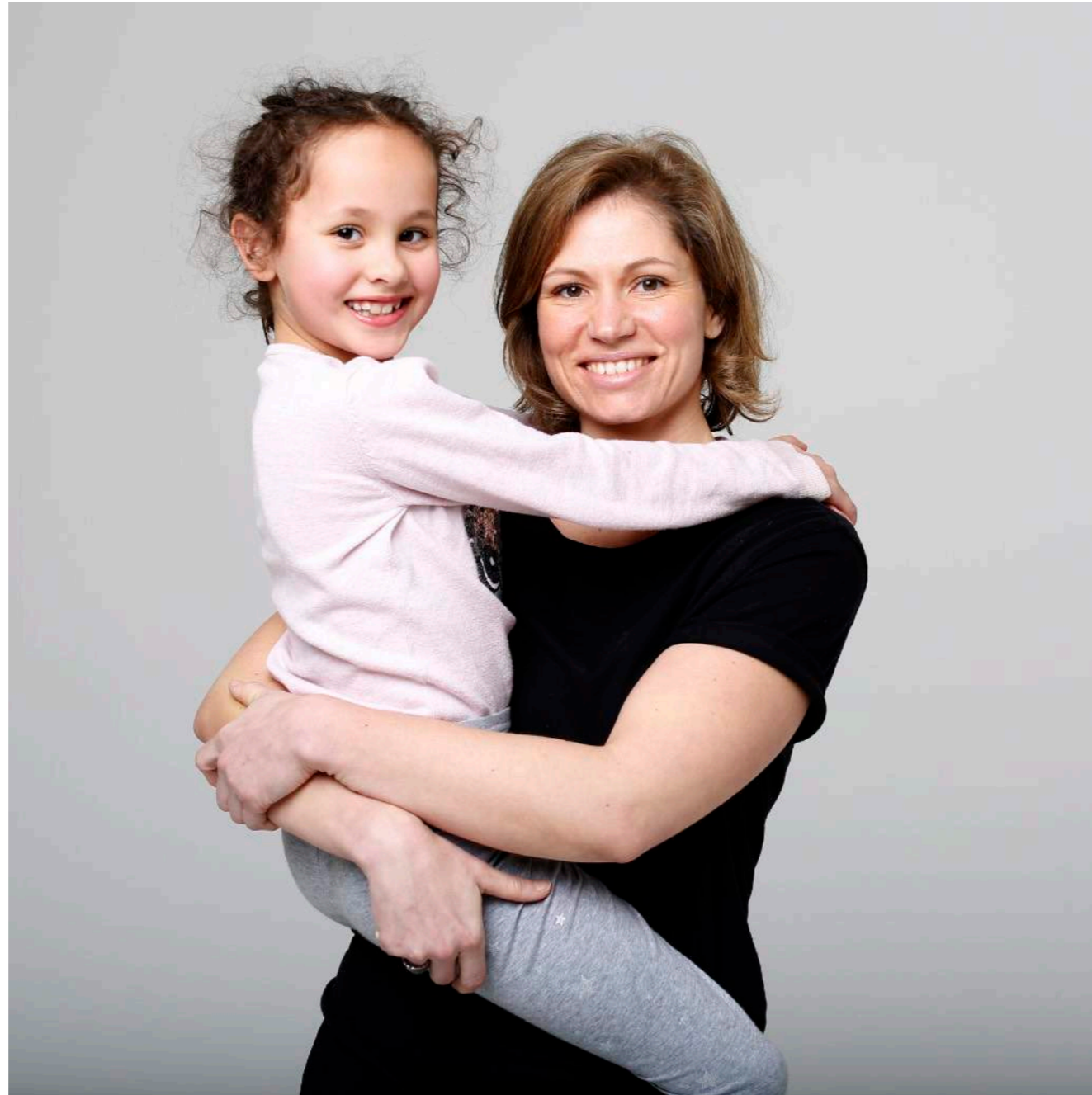
**Playing with cultural stereotypes with group shots (the strong Russian male leader with sexy Russian women). Humour is a powerful tool.**





# EXTRAS SECTION

The last section of the posture guide is for aspects of EYP practice that are not forms or parter forms, but something else.



# Extended Enquiries

There are a great number of exercises and simulations where EYP is used to bring out patterns around different topics. These are often too complicated to detail, but here are a few:

- The “do yoga like your life is” exercise has been mentioned as an introductory enquiry and can be used more deeply
- We often use the 4 elements described previously to explore character as a classic extended enquiry.
- You can create a social class simulator where upper class yogis have mats and space and snacks, middle class ones less so, and lower class yogis are crammed together and ignored. It’s a little like Barry Oshrey’s work on systems or the classic “blue-eyes brown-eyes” racism workshops by Jane Elliot.
- Followership / form vs freedom. Exploring autonomy and authority issues
- Dioramas
- Expression - express yourself using any postures! Then don’t (music could help and hinder this one)
- Animals explorations - which are most like you? Can be fun. Evolutionary sequence possible
- Developmental progression - using poses to show life stages. EYP teacher Clive Fogelman specialises in this
- Exploring an ethical component through a series of postures - Buddhist, yogic, Christian or whatever - e.g. honesty (can you really do it), greed (not grasping after it), stealing (partner practice), non harming (eg pushing too hard or), intoxication, etc
- Legacy posture - "Stand or sit in the posture you wish to be remembered in. They will build a 10,000 metre tall statue of this". "Are you living this way now?"
- Pride vs shame/embarrassment - tree pose in front of group good, or any poses they are first proud of then ashamed of

## Exploration method

While there are many complicated extended enquiries using EYP possible and I'm always creating new ones, there's one basic methods I use a lot. Once people have explored at least some of the basic "vocabulary" of EYP postures you can explore ANY concept by asking:

"What pose (or two poses) is/are most French/British/Russian/etc?"

"What pose is most masculine"/ "feminine"?"

"What pose is most loving?\*"

"What pose is most powerful\*?"

"What pose is most beautiful?"

Etc...

and the perhaps, "how would you like Britain/men/whatever to be like?" or "what's most missing?"

In this way people explore their existing beliefs and unconscious biases, and can see differences with others. I have found this method can be used to explore delicate topics in a constructive way and is relatively clean of instructor bias.

*\*somewhat of a trick question as all poses are expressions of love and power which I view as two sides of the same thing - see Paul Linden's work.*



# Use of props

I tend to use whatever is around to teach EYP, here for example I'm working with giving and receiving. Later in the day during a money exploration this became "sacks of gold and cash". I have also used actual wads of cash, swords to teach entering pose (illustrated), flowers to bring out sensuality (see dioramas) and more.



Aikido wooden sword (bokken)  
used to teach entering pose

# Using the environment

The physical embodiment and how you use that is part of our embodiment and can be explored in EYP.

For example, just laying yoga mats out in a circle (typical for EYP) is already changing a lot for some people! Another “fun” thing I do is also more form-orientated students to practice on an unaligned mat. Iyengar yoga trained EYP teacher Ekatarina is being tortured this way in the picture right in Moscow. The mirror here could also be used to enhance some poses (e.g. being seen), but should be covered for other more private ones.

Use of lighting, if windows are open, how neat the room is, scent and more are all variables I play with. Music could also be thought of in this way. There are many many others ways to play with space to reveal patterns and create new choices (as ever).





# Photo and phone fun

Instagram culture has infected much of yoga, and while the turn from the internal to managing appearances is sad, cameras can also be used to reveal patterns as to how people wish others to view them and turned into an awareness tool. They can be used to explore how we "socially present" and manage our image. Humans have always been concerned with how others see them as social animals and this can be a deep theme.

A simple exercise involves getting a camera out and asking people to notice how they changed their posture. People can also take their own "selfies" in a class and note how they want others to view them. "How would you NOT take a selfie" is also a fun and revealing game.

Similarly while many in yoga decry the ubiquitous and often intrusive use of smartphones, they can also be used to explore patterns. I like to have people practice poses while on facebook for example, or to notice their breathing while texting. Various centring and EYP micro-posture exercises can be practised while holding phones for transfer to life. In fact, if we don't as yoga teachers help transfer people's skill to technology we don't serve them well as this is such a big part of life today.

Note too that allowing or not allowing photography during course impacts people sense of being seen, so should be considered. I will for example ask photographers to leave during some poses (inner and rest for example) and to make themselves EXTRA obvious during others (stand and being seen for example).







# Asking for what you want/ pleasure exploration

A simple yet profound exercise we often do towards the end of an EYP workshop is to have people to ask each other for what they'd like. This may well include massage but sometimes people ask for a compliment, a song, some new music suggestions, to be left alone, and much more! The idea is to be restorative, but also to expose patterns around this topic (as well as sometimes saying now which is always an option for partners of course). Many people struggle with this area as we're simply not taught it usually, and this translates into problems with business, friendship, sex and many others areas.

The other aspect of the exercise is to enjoy it as much as possible! Diving fully into pleasure may sound easy but again, many struggle with this due to their upbringings, and most can practice it to improve!



# Concluding notes

- EYP is a large body of work so even a posture guide of this size can not cover all details
- Find a teacher if you don't have one already at: <http://embodiedyogaprinciples.com/>
- This guide is intended for personal practice not teaching unless you have attended an EYP teacher training. These are not just shapes and even experienced asana teachers can quickly get into deep water with them
- Have fun, explore and enjoy!

*Mark Walsh, Brighton UK, 2018*





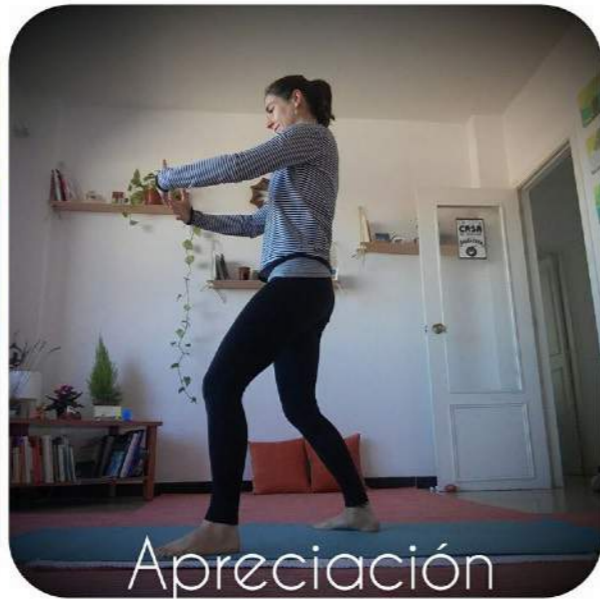
## Appendix - some Spanish interpretations from our teacher in The Canary Islands Pilar







Claridad



Apreciación



Estar en el mundo



Estar conmigo



Humildad



Perdón



Inspiración



Sensualidad





Acepto



Me atiendo



Dejo ir  
lo viejo



Dejo entrar  
lo nuevo



Soltar



Enfrentarlo



Amarme



Confiar



Conectar



# Appendix - 4 Elements details

Element	Shape	Yin/Yang	I, We, It	8 tools strengths	Primary/relational direction	Dominant emotion + relation	Movement types (Laban system)	Breathing
Air	none	yang	all/none	responsiveness movement	up away from	joy excitement disengage	<b>float</b> stillness light indirect disintegrated sudden free	upper chest in mouth, out nose fast 'light/inspirational'
Fire	triangle	yang	I	intention	forward towards / against	curiosity <b>anger</b> engage/ challenge	<b>thrust</b> +movement light direct disintegrated sudden free	chest in nose, out mouth emphasise in-breath fast 'heating/growling'
Water	circle	yin	we	relaxation acceptance	backward receiving	awe <b>fear</b> receive/ accept	<b>flow</b> +movement heavy indirect integrated sustained bound	lower back in mouth, out nose emphasise out-breath slow 'flowing/sighing'
Earth	square	yin	it	structure	down standing ground	sadness <b>despair</b> resist	hold ground/ sink stillness heavy direct integrated sustained bound	belly in nose, out mouth slow 'steady/ grounding'

Element	Fears	Desires	Primary virtues	Ways to engage	When you may need more of	Communication styles	Music
Air	being controlled boredom imperfection	freedom creativity perfection	curiosity transcendence innovation humour	inspire, be original explore, adventure study, learn with joke go fast	when needing clarity, fresh ideas or lightness	creative humorous	jazz new-age funny experiential
Fire	not being enough not doing enough losing	recognition achievement / progress / results winning	courage vitality fierceness get things done	motivate action be competent challenge compete give goals go fast	when you have goals to achieve, need energy or bravery	direct challenging	hip-hop heavy metal Wagner
Water	rejection conflict loss	relationships harmony loyalty	humanity creativity responsiveness empathy	listen to, care, be sincere enter into relationship with/socialise share feelings go slow	when in relationship or conflict	empathic relational	romantic Chopin singer-songwriter
Earth	change lack of control rushing	stability control correctness	justice reliability groundedness temperance	show them the facts/numbers be reliable regularity structure and analysis go slow	when things get chaotic, unfair or ungrounded	factual practical	classical country traditional African

Element	Thinking: questions	Emotions	Work activities	Relationships and conversations	Lifestyle	Places and environment	Season (kind a)
Air	What is possible?	create with your emotions / rise above them	vision and strategy leadership invent brainstorm reflect	co-create be flexible joke inspire	be spontaneous, make time for creativity and deep thought	bright light open space colours and chaos hills and mountains	spring
Fire	What needs to be done?	express your emotions – get energised and assertive	take action get results hire and fire prioritise	tell challenge be sincere make headway	do more, faster, stronger	cities and deserts bright light hard surfaces functionality	summer
Water	What needs to be accepted?	accept your emotions and flow with them in relationship	have meetings get feedback staff-care and HR network celebrate	listen accommodate care support	allow more time for flow and relationships	rivers and sea soft light and soft surfaces comfort	autumn
Earth	What is true?	balance your emotions – calm down	planning management budgeting make lists keep traditions	support be reliable hold your ground/ keep standards	slow down, consider, be careful	gardens, forests and parks contained spaces (eg houses) order	winter

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# A big thank you to our posture guide “models”

## **EYP Teachers**

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