

Reflections on Yoga for Back Care

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Pain can be overwhelming, distracting, tiring, and limiting. It helps to practice staying present with it, approaching it with curiosity rather than stories, judgment, or expectations.

In my experience, yoga can either help with back pain or make it worse. I'm deeply grateful to all my extraordinary teachers who have guided me throughout my training—and many continue to do so today!

In my yoga classes, I focus on the individual needs of each student to create a safe, mindful, and nurturing practice. I incorporate poses and movements that help keep my own back healthy, balanced, and as pain-free as possible despite my scoliosis.

Along with considerations for cancer recovery, mobility, limitations, and energy levels, here are some of my key guidelines for a yoga practice that soothes and supports the back—including the neck, hips, knees, and core:

- **Listen to your body** – Move in a way that feels good. Stop, adjust, or release any pose / movement that causes pain or discomfort.
- **Incorporate fascia release** and stay hydrated (I can't emphasize this enough! 😊).
- **Breathe into the areas engaged in the pose** and focus on releasing tension rather than pushing for a deeper stretch.
- **Welcome props** to make poses more accessible and comfortable. Props are a yogi's best friend!
- **Move the spine in all directions** (forward bends, back bends, side bends, and twists). When forward bending, keep the back flat rather than rounded to avoid stress on the vertebrae, especially for those with stenosis, osteopenia, or osteoporosis.
- **Practice back-strengthening poses with modifications**, such as bridge, sphinx, locust, core work, engaged child's pose variations, and tabletop balance variations.
- **Balance asymmetrical poses with symmetrical ones.** Take an extra breath on the tighter side, but always engage both sides in all poses.

My intention is to empower each yogi with tools for daily self-care. Your questions are always welcome, and it's a joy to have you in class!

~ Alessandra

