

Viniyoga

What does 'Viniyoga' mean

(ref Yoga Well Institute, Yoga Studies and American Viniyoga Institute websites)

- Sanskrit= appropriate application
- Includes these tools of yoga:
 - Asana (movement & body position)
 - Pranayama (breathing)
 - Mantra (Vedic chanting)
 - Meditation
 - Plus bandha, study of texts

- These are modified to meet the individual needs and capacities of each person
- Patanjali used the term Viniyoga in his Yogasutras chpt 3: 6 saying practice is to be accomplished in stages. Others have developed this to teach that one must practice "according to the ground one stands on"
- This has been taken to mean that all the tools of yoga will be adapted to individual needs and capabilities
- And that over time the practices used will evolve, reflecting the internal evolution of the student
- The American Viniyoga Institute uses the term Viniyoga to reflect an approach to yoga that adapts to the unique condition, needs & interests of an individual, giving each practitioner the tools to individualise and actualise the process of self discovery and personal transformation.

Distinguishing Features of Viniyoga

1) Breath & Adaptation

Emphasis is on the breath as the medium for movement in asana, and on the science of adapting to produce different effects. This connection between breath and movement is said to make the movements more powerful and mindful.

2) Repetition & Stay

- Includes the use of repetition into and out of postures, as well as holding postures
- Combination of movement and staying in poses

- Movement warms the body and prepares it for longer holding of asanas. It is said to help retrain habitual patterns of movement, which has a positive impact on the yogi on and off the mat

3) **Function over Form**

Poses are adapted to suit the yogi

. In Viniyoga there is no one 'correct' form. Instead, the intention is for the yogi to find a way to feel the benefits of a posture rather than just adopting a certain shape. The forms of a posture are adapted to achieve different results.

4) **Sequencing**

Sequencing is used to prepare and release the body from each posture.

Teacher will organise a class to ensure the body is ready for each asana and is also counter-stretched and released afterwards

Origins of Viniyoga

- Said to be a comprehensive transmission of authentic teaching from Krishnamacharya, father of TKV Desikachar. Origins also said to be traceable back to a ninth century saint who composed the text Yoga-Rahasya (now lost) and which was received by Krishnamacharya in a dream
- Apparently, Viniyoga is a term (rather than a specific tradition) that TKV Desikachar used to describe his father's teachings when asked by Western Yoga students to provide such a description of the personalized yoga taught by his father. His father's teachings were rooted in the yoga of Patanjali, the Ayurvedic system of health and wellness, and the wisdom of the Vedas which emphasize the traditional Indian understanding of the human system and its functions.

Desikachar said:

' The spirit of Yoga is starting from where one finds oneself. As everyone is different and changes from time to time, there can be no common starting point, and ready-made answers are useless. The present situation must be examined and the habitually established status must be re-examined'.

Today....

From 2002 it is said in some sources that Desikachar began to disassociate himself from the use of the term Viniyoga because of it being commercialised and used as a 'brand'.