



Karlene Linxweiler
Kama Fitness LLC
Kama Fit TV
Aerial Yoga Girl

AERIAL YOGA MANUAL

5TH EDITION

GROUND. FLOW. FLY.

KARLENE LINXWEILER
KAMA FITNESS LLC 2020
KAMA FIT TV
AERIAL YOGA GIRL



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Purchase or use of this document constitutes agreement that all involved in the making of this manual will not accept responsibility for injury to any degree, including death, to any person as a result of participation in activities described in this manual. Rigging and aerial fabric, while referred to in this manual, does not replace consulting a professional rigger when it comes to hanging any aerial equipment or its use. It is highly recommended that you contact a professional rigger and practice under the supervision of a trained instructor whenever inverting or using an aerial fabric.

It is recommended that you check with your doctor or healthcare provider before commencing any exercise. By purchasing and use of this manual, you are making an agreement that you understand the risks involved with aerial fitness and have investigated the risks involved with performing inversions.

Please [Visit KamaFitTV.com](https://www.kamafit.com) for complete Aerial Yoga Sequences and Tutorials.



Acknowledgements

Kama Fitness was founded by lovers of movement and physical fitness. In order to facilitate a safe and regulated means of transferring all the poses, sequences, and techniques taught under our studio ceilings, we created this manual, originally written by Karlene M. Linxweiler, in 2015/2016. Karlene's study and practice in fitness, aerial, and yoga is laid out in this manual for instructors and students of the Kama Fitness, LLC studios. It was edited and revised by legal staff. Karlene would like to thank the following mentors for their inspiration, support, and guidance in the writing of this manual: Amy Bartlett, Elsie and Serenity Smith, Elizabeth Hobin Vlangas, Cirque Body, Rebekkah Leach, Lisa N. Thompson, E S Q, as well as the hundreds (thousands?!) of students she has had the pleasure of working with both in her studio, and internationally.

Disclaimer

In view of the complex, individual nature of health and fitness issues, this book and the ideas, programs, procedures, and suggestions contained herein are not intended to replace the advice of trained medical professionals. Those with special health considerations should consult their physician before starting any new exercise program. The author's role in the context of the information presented in this book is strictly educational and is not in any manner a substitute for medical advice or the direct guidance of a qualified yoga instructor. Not all yoga poses are suitable for all people. Please remember that no practice can be adequately learned from written descriptions alone. All aerial yoga techniques mentioned in this book are designed to complement instruction by an experienced aerial yoga instructor. Practicing under the direct supervision and guidance of a qualified aerial yoga instructor may reduce the risk of injuries. While we would like to think that this book gives a solid, well-rounded introduction to the practice of aerial yoga, that does not mean that this or any other book can take the place of an experienced instructor. If you are inspired to begin an aerial yoga practice, or to take your existing practice deeper, please seek out a capable, qualified, and caring instructor who can guide you personally. The author of Kama Fitness, LLC assumes no responsibility or liability for any injuries or losses that may result from practicing aerial yoga, or any of the techniques, poses, and programs discussed in this book.



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INTRODUCTION (5th Edition, 2020)

As I sit here at my laptop on a November afternoon of 2019, the day after my 34th birthday, I can't help but reflect on how the past 7 years have been deeply rooted in aerial movement. The world has certainly changed in such a short amount of time, and this has been more than evident in the world of social media and the aerial arts. What began as a hobby became a passion and turned into a career for me. Aerial yoga catapulted me from being a full-time history teacher to a world traveling, international teacher both in person and online, as well as a small business owner in New England.

I am blown away, as well as humbled, by the thousands of aerial students I have encountered all over the globe through social media. As the aerial world has grown, so has the need for many of my online products and services to evolve, as well. Hence, I have finally decided to sit down and set out on the journey of revamping this ebook into its 5th edition. I like to do an annual check in and my revisions for the last few years have been simply to edit or delete information I had felt was redundant or outdated. This year I have decided to dedicate myself to making this manual a living, interactive one – where students can click on links directly guiding them to tutorials of each move, as well as facilitating safety and sequence structuring. While I do not claim for my work to ever be perfect, it is my desire to create a useful and integrative tool students and teachers can access from any mobile device and develop their own training and practice.

As you journey into your own path and passion for aerial yoga, may this book act as an invaluable resource for your own practice and development. Whether you are a studio owner, part time aerial teacher, avid student, or circus expert, it is my hope you will find tools and knowledge within this text to further you along your way.

Karlene Marie



Introduction (from 2015)

It is an exciting time in the fitness world – people are discovering more unique and fun ways to work out. This has brought much attention to the yoga and aerial worlds as many adults are beginning to find new methods of moving that feel good and are effective. Aerial has been around for many years, but only recently has taken off in the mainstream fitness community. Yoga, likewise, has been around for thousands of years, and only in the last few years has it evolved into so many different forms.

For almost ten years I enjoyed various forms of fitness, including Pilates and running, to aerobic kick boxing and the martial arts. While I enjoyed all these workouts, nothing quite challenged and intrigued me as much as aerial yoga. This new fitness trend has been growing exponentially over the last 10–15 years, and for good reason. Aerial and yoga provide many therapeutic benefits, along with being an exhilarating workout. Like any other prop in yoga, the silk hammock works as a tool to help students get deeper into a pose, explore a pose differently, or challenge us in poses that would otherwise be easier.

At the time I began studying Yoga and working on my 200 hours of teacher training, I began to play around with a yoga swing. As I kept studying and researching, and playing, I found out that many yogic poses translated beautifully onto the aerial hammock. I owe a big thanks to so many of my earliest students who allowed me to explore different poses and movement. As my curriculum grew, so did local interest, and thus, Kama Fitness was born. I finally found a workout that I loved and was able to share my love with others. If you're reading this, it is likely that somewhere along the line someone inspired you with aerial and/or yoga, and you discovered that spark as well. Welcome to this exciting new world.

Like all new ventures, as they become more popular and receive more attention, the negative comes with the positive. A lot of these thoughts can come from a place of misunderstanding. Many view aerial yoga as not “true yoga,” or that is very dangerous, requires great skill, or can be unattainable unless you are strong and flexible. Using a silk hammock in a yoga class is not unlike using any other prop, such as a block, bolster, strap, or mat. Many of my students have come to me with injuries, back pain, flexibility issues, weakness, and all have seen continual improvement in these areas from the use of the silk hammock.

Regardless of gender, weight, age, mobility, athleticism, and yoga knowledge, countless people have benefited from aerial yoga. How you incorporate this tool in your class structure is entirely up to you. Aerial Yoga is not just some new trend for circus performers. It’s a bridge, a tool, a fusion of two arts that can empower, heal, and is just plain fun.

Fly Well, Karlene Marie





W

elcome!

And Congratulations. You are currently one of the first pioneers in the world of Aerial Yoga. While aerial has been an art that has been well established in the circus community, it has only recently been transferred to the Yogic world.

This is an exciting endeavor – you are stepping into some uncharted territory and have the chance to create unique movements and flows, assist students in the art of aerial, and find a mind-body connection.

Let's begin with some self-reflection. On the following page. please answer each question as honestly as you can. This reflection will help you in your personal growth as a teacher, yogi, and aerial artist.



Why do you wish to teach Aerial Yoga?

What do you hope to learn from this program?

What are your concerns about becoming an Aerial Yoga Instructor?

What kind(s) of classes do you wish to teach – Vinyasa Flow, Yin, Restorative, Power, or a creative mix?

How much experience do you have in aerial? How much in yoga? Please be specific.



B

enefits of Aerial Yoga

- **Increases balance and flexibility:** The hammock increases pose access when full weight bearing on certain joints is contraindicated or uncomfortable. The hammock is also used as a support prop in a balance pose and holds part of your body weight to gradually build strength and balance.
- **Makes poses more accessible:** You can practice traditional yoga poses in the hammock, such as downward dog, allowing joints such as shoulders, hips, and knees to relax and not work as hard without the added suspension.
- **Improved alignment and pain relief:** When inverted, the combination of the hammock and gravity can allow therapeutic relief from spinal compression. Other yoga poses using the aerial hammock allow for increased range of motion when done in a safe manner to relieve tension that would otherwise be difficult to access.
- **Increases adventure and playfulness:** Play is the highest form of research, according to Physicist Albert Einstein. The aerial hammock allows students to explore, cultivates self-trust, and adds playfulness for better mind and body health.



B

enefits of Aerial Yoga (*continued*)

- Fosters positivity and happiness: There are students who struggle with the perceived vulnerability of letting go and placing full trust into the hammock. Students can learn to “let go” and trust their bodies and the hammock within a safe and playful atmosphere.
- Calms the nervous system and helps you focus: The feeling of suspension creates a sensation of weightlessness, allowing the mind and body to relax and slow the breath. This, in turn, calms the nervous system down, decreasing blood pressure.

Can You Think of Any other Benefits of an Aerial Yoga practice? List them below.

Responsible Flying

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF AERIAL YOGA

Whether you are a Student or Teacher of Aerial Yoga, there are a few things to understand and take into consideration in order to ensure yourself, and others, can Fly Safely.

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONALISM

As a representative of your studio, it is important to uphold a level of professionalism with students at your studio. This may encompass a wide range of items including your own training and certification, how you market your services, how you treat students, as well as safety in materials and rigging knowledge.

Let's begin with your responsibility to your students. As an instructor, you have created a relationship with your student that is reflected in your appearance, behavior, and attitude. It is important that you keep a student/teacher relationship that is appropriate at all times – including not using language that is aggressive or offensive. Please avoid using profanity, making comments about body image, or telling personal stories in front of students. These types of conversations can foster negativity, and make students feel uncomfortable (even if they don't say so!). Keep conversations with students in an appropriate and respectful sphere. In addition, be sure to wear proper attire that is comfortable and safe to move in, nails trimmed, proper hygiene, and overall behavior.

You are a representative of your studio, and this should be reflected in your dress, demeanor, and behavior. Always prepare your class with a lesson plan that is thorough and considers the theme and class you are teaching. Choose music that fits the mood of your class, and dress that is not distracting or revealing. Always respect students' time by arriving early to set up the studio, greet and sign in students, and prepare yourself mentally. Begin class on time, and end on time. When instructing, be personable and friendly- know their name, and remember to thank students at the end of class with an authentic smile.

Another piece of professionalism is your public appearance to other studio owners and teachers. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to create a positive, uplifting community with businesses and instructors in your area. Make an effort to reach out to other professionals; talk to them, take their classes, pick their brains. It's a good idea to network and get to know other people who love what you do and connect with them in a positive way. Likewise, it sets a great example to other studios and says a lot about you as a teacher. Do not take your role for granted!

Responsible Flying

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF AERIAL YOGA

Whether you are a Student or Teacher of Aerial Yoga, there are a few things to understand and take into consideration in order to ensure yourself, and others, can Fly Safely.

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism also extends to keeping up with your own personal development as a teacher, yogi, and aerialist. Maintain a personal practice in aerial and yoga by practicing at home, other studios, or during Open Studio time at your own space. Be open to outside feedback from other teachers and mentors – often people can readily see where we need improvement before we can. Take this as an opportunity for growth and becoming a better instructor.

In addition, always seek out professional development by going to workshops, classes, reading, taking courses, and private sessions with people in aerial and yoga. Attend studio staff meetings to discuss techniques, concerns, and practice spotting and cueing.

I have been a teacher for over 15 years. Being a teacher, in my opinion, is a huge responsibility. Students are coming to your class excited to learn, looking to unwind from their busy schedule, or in need of a workout. They are trusting you with their bodies and their time. Respect and be aware of how important this is – prepare your lesson with thoughtfulness, be flexible with students' energy levels and abilities, and teach with patience.

It is also imperative to know your apparatus. Think of a musician who doesn't understand how to tune his instrument. Likewise, an aerial teacher should understand how to adjust their own and students' equipment, how to check for rigging safety, and how to cue and assist in an aerial based class.

An aerial yoga student may be unaware of how to fly safely, but a teacher of aerial yoga can bridge this gap. Being aware of how to rig your fabric for classes as a hammock or sling, how to adjust the height, and proper care and maintenance of aerial equipment is imperative to master.

These items will all be covered within the contents of this book.



A Good Teacher

A GOOD TEACHER ...

Is Creative

Is a Lifelong Learner

Is a Manager, not a Dictator

Is Flexible

Is Patient

Is Punctual

Remembers How it Feels to be a Beginner

Plans ahead

Is a Role Model

Is Respectful in Demeanor

Respects Students Time, Energy, and Abilities

Knows their Strengths

Knows their Weaknesses

Stays Humble



Responsible Flying

INSURANCE

If you wish to teach aerial or yoga, it is required that you get your own personal insurance. There are a variety of insurance companies that will provide aerial yoga teacher coverage, but may vary depending on the height of silks, the height of the ceilings, rigging equipment, circus, dance, or yoga affiliation, and location of where you will be teaching (online, at a studio, internationally, outdoors, etc.) Research and ask questions to help you find the best coverage for your situation.

It is also highly recommended to receive CPR /AED certification (standard for all fitness instructors in the United States), and to make every effort to receive ongoing education in your area of expertise.

CERTIFICATION & CONTINUING EDUCATION

While at this time there is no universal or national accredited teacher trainings for aerial yoga, it would make sense for a serious instructor to pursue at least a 200 hour Yoga Teacher Training program that is accredited with the Yoga Alliance, as well as investigating Aerial Instructor programs within their region and country.

Gather referrals and research the training programs in your area to see what is the best fit for you and your vision. If you are seeking advice and guidance with opening, operating, and marketing your own aerial yoga studio, I offer an online Masterclass course, “Loving Your Living” that is available online. For more information, please [Go Here](#).

Responsible Flying

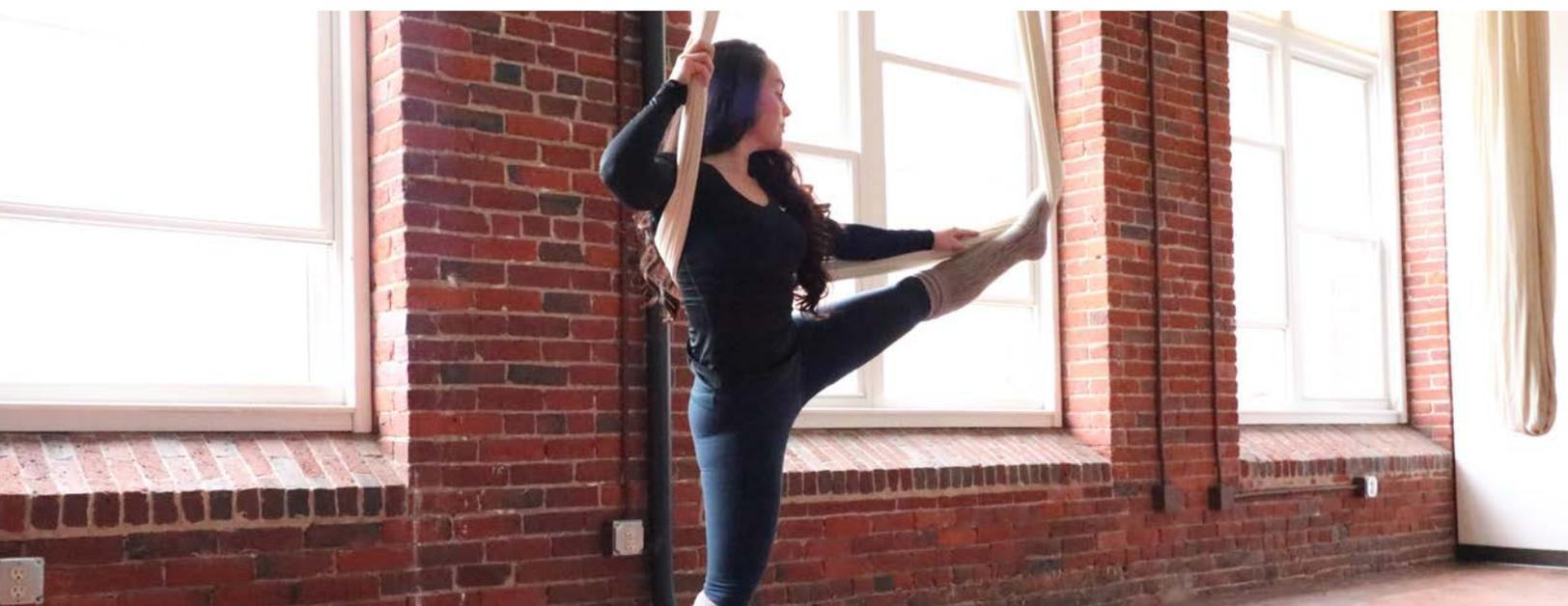
SILK SAFETY: RIGGING AND EQUIPMENT CARE GUIDELINES

Aerial Yoga goes beyond the traditional use of just using a yoga mat, blocks, and bolsters, and straps in your practice. While blocks, straps, and bolsters are also great tools that can be incorporated in class, the aerial hammock is the crux of your class materials.

Recall your first time on an aerial hammock- remember the fears, questions, and concerns you had - especially around your own body's safety! It is likely your students may have these same emotions and concerns. Going upside down can be a frightening and exhilarating experience that allows students to get in touch with their inner child, but in a safe space. Your ability to keep students safe lies in your knowledge of the aerial apparatus, rigging structure, and hardware.

Before an aerial class, do a visual check of all hammocks. Look for holes, knots coming undone, and check the hardware for malfunction or deformities. If you notice the steel hardware becoming bent or deformed, bring this to your manager's or manufacturer's immediate attention.

In the world of circus performance, aerial rigging should be able to support at least 3,000-5,000 pounds of force (or, 100 times the Weight of the performer) for stunts and drops to be done in a safe manner. Aerial Yoga classes, however, don't include drops, but force is still applied. Therefore, rigging Rigging should be able to support at least 2,000-3,000 pounds of force as a safety net. Hiring a professional circus rigger is highly recommended in order to ensure your studio and/or home is rigged safely.



Responsible Flying

SILK SAFETY: RIGGING AND EQUIPMENT CARE GUIDELINES

In addition, aerial hardware should be made of steel, not aluminum or any other metal material that may warp and bend over time. It also should not be made from nylon or cotton or any synthetic materials, as these are not designed to withhold the force and weight of a human body completely in the air.

You have probably noticed by now that Aerial Yoga Hammocks come in a variety of length, stretch, colors, materials, and choices in hardware. Over the last 7 years or so, I have experienced a wide range of hammocks and fabrics rigged in different ways. This allowed me to make an informed decision of what stretch of fabric, length of fabric, and hardware I wanted for a public studio. Through conversations with a certified circus rigger in my area, we were able to design a set up that was safe, aesthetically pleasing, and comfortable for most people in the community.

Likewise, Some studios prefer single point, others double point. Some studios prefer nylon hammocks, while others love a low to medium stretch cotton tricot blend. I have taught and used both within my studios. While it is certainly a personal opinion, I feel that double points are great for beginners, and is what I began my own practice and my studio with years ago. Double points often are rigged at two points about 24 inches (2 feet) apart, and tend to swing more than spin. On the other hand, I have switched to Single point hammocks, often referred to as a Sling, as they allow for more spin and mobility.

Whichever you choose will be a personal preference, but be aware not all poses and skills will be as easily accessible on a double point hammock as they can be on single point.





Responsible Flying, continued

SILK SAFETY: RIGGING AND EQUIPMENT CARE GUIDELINES

Fabric Care: It is advisable to wash your aerial fabrics quarterly- or, at least on a regular and consistent basis, especially if your materials are used frequently by the public. If you wash your fabric too frequently, however, it can damage the integrity of your silks. They are machine washable, but you can hand wash, and can be dried on medium/low heat, or you may hang air dry them.

If you work with the public, it would be wise to use non-allergenic detergent, without any scent or perfumes. as well as no softeners or bleach. If you do not use a dryer, be sure to avoid rigging your silks when they are still wet or damp. If you choose to let fabric air dry, lay it out on a flat, clean surface for 12-24 hours. Be mindful to not rig your silks before they have completely dried as this may cause damage to your fabrics.

As a teacher, studio owner, or student, you will want to routinely check your hammocks for tears and holes. Small tears and holes usually will not affect the safety of the fabric, but you need to keep an eye on them if they begin to get bigger. A hole any larger than ½ an inch is cause for replacement.

I often retire old silks by cutting them up and turning them into decorative items at home or the studio - we recently decorated the ceilings of our studio with our retired, cut up silks for a very ethereal looking silk-cloud heaven! (see image above.)

A photograph of an aerial fitness studio. The room features a white ceiling with several blue silks hanging from it. In the center, a large purple pyramid is mounted on the wall. The lighting is soft and even.

Responsible Flying, continued

SILK SAFETY: RIGGING AND EQUIPMENT CARE GUIDELINES

Fabric Care: Silks Spray

Silks Spray are a great way to keep silks smelling fresh between washes and keeps clients/students happy, too!

Our favorite silks spray (and there are many recipes floating around these days on the internet!) is half part water and half part witch hazel. Next, add in Thieves Essential Oils, along with Peppermint Essential Oil and Lavender Essential Oil. Create a large batch for your studio, or individual spray bottles for students to spray in between classes.

Here's a short video on how I make large batches for the studio [using this recipe.](#)

If you would like to purchase your own essential oils of high quality, please visit this website for Thieves, Lavender, Peppermint oil, and more!

Word of Caution: Aerial is an exciting endeavor.

Many new students can't wait to fly again, and immediately wish to hang a hammock or silk in their home or backyard. Please encourage students to attend at least 6-12 months of continuous training (1-2 times a week) before looking into rigging and practicing from home.

There are so many mistakes and mishaps that can happen when you are just learning a new art and taking your body above the ground without a licensed instructor nearby can be dangerous, if not lethal. Be smart and discourage students (gently) that rigging fabric from trees or swing sets or any make-shift rig created at home from pieces bought at a local hardware store is far from wise.

This is by no means a complete description on rigging for aerial fitness. You must contact a licensed rigger for any aerial apparatus, whether at home or within your business. **It is your professional responsibility to attend workshops and increase your own personal knowledge if you desire to have a home or studio set up for aerial.** This book is not a reference for any of these topics.

(Very Basic) Review of Anatomy and Physiology

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MOVE - BOTH ON THE GROUND, AND IN THE AIR

When it comes to guiding an aerial yoga movement practice, always be mindful of what is touching the floor and what is being supported by the fabric. When students or yourself go into a pose, check the body parts that are in contact with the ground. Ensure that all joints are in a safe placement to support a safe range of movement. Feet placement in standing poses such as warrior poses and lunges should be in position to avoid knee pain and possible strain and injury. Review the poses portion of this manual to check for proper foot placement. In addition to being mindful of what is rooting you down, being aware of where the fabric is holding the body is a key piece of knowledge, as well.

Students are usually not accustomed to having their body be supported by a piece of fabric, either completely or partially suspended in air, and, therefore, will not know where it should be holding them. Likewise, they may not know how much pressure is OK, and how much is too little or too intense. Your experience and knowledge in this is important in guiding students into safety and helping them become more comfortable. In each pose, remind students of where they may feel pressure and how intense it should feel.

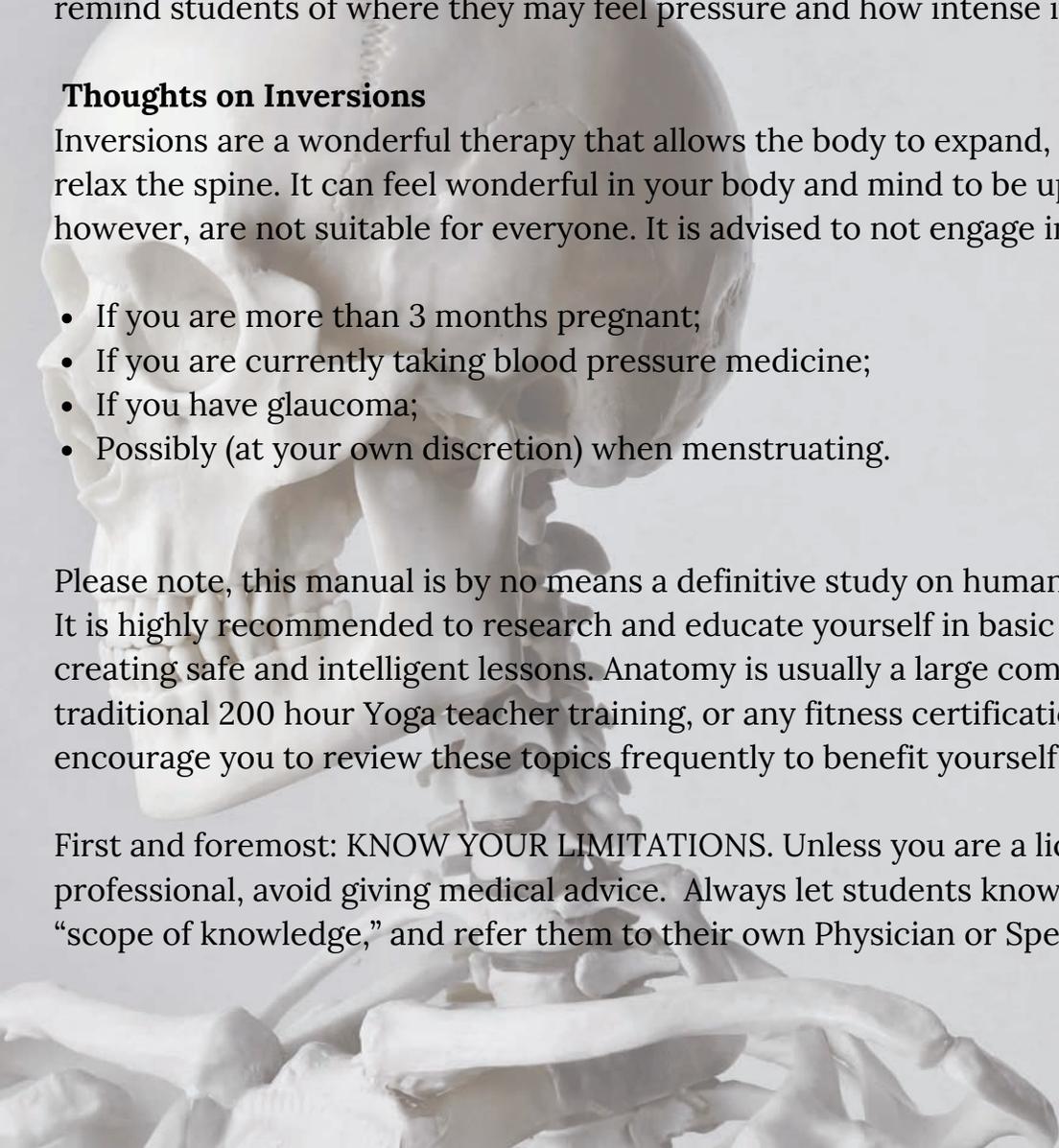
Thoughts on Inversions

Inversions are a wonderful therapy that allows the body to expand, change blood flow, and relax the spine. It can feel wonderful in your body and mind to be upside down. Inversions, however, are not suitable for everyone. It is advised to not engage in an inversion practice if:

- If you are more than 3 months pregnant;
- If you are currently taking blood pressure medicine;
- If you have glaucoma;
- Possibly (at your own discretion) when menstruating.

Please note, this manual is by no means a definitive study on human anatomy and physiology. It is highly recommended to research and educate yourself in basic human anatomy for creating safe and intelligent lessons. Anatomy is usually a large component of a traditional 200 hour Yoga teacher training, or any fitness certification program, and I encourage you to review these topics frequently to benefit yourself and your students.

First and foremost: **KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS**. Unless you are a licensed medical professional, avoid giving medical advice. Always let students know what is outside your “scope of knowledge,” and refer them to their own Physician or Specialist.

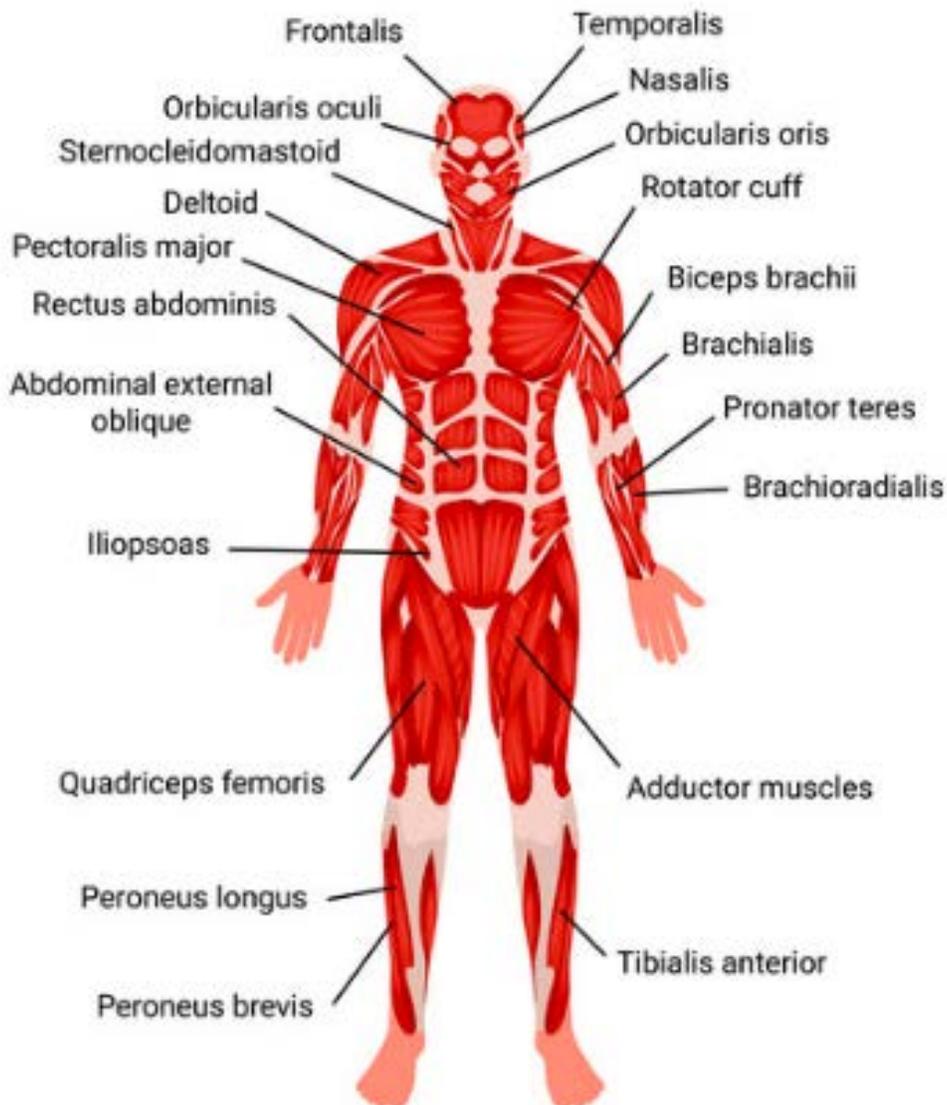


(Very Basic) Review of Anatomy and Physiology

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MOVE - BOTH ON THE GROUND, AND IN THE AIR

Included are basic images of the Muscular and Skeletal Systems of the human anatomy. While it is not required to memorize every muscle and bone, it is crucial to make yourself familiar with their names and locations, in addition to their function(s).

MUSCULAR SYSTEM

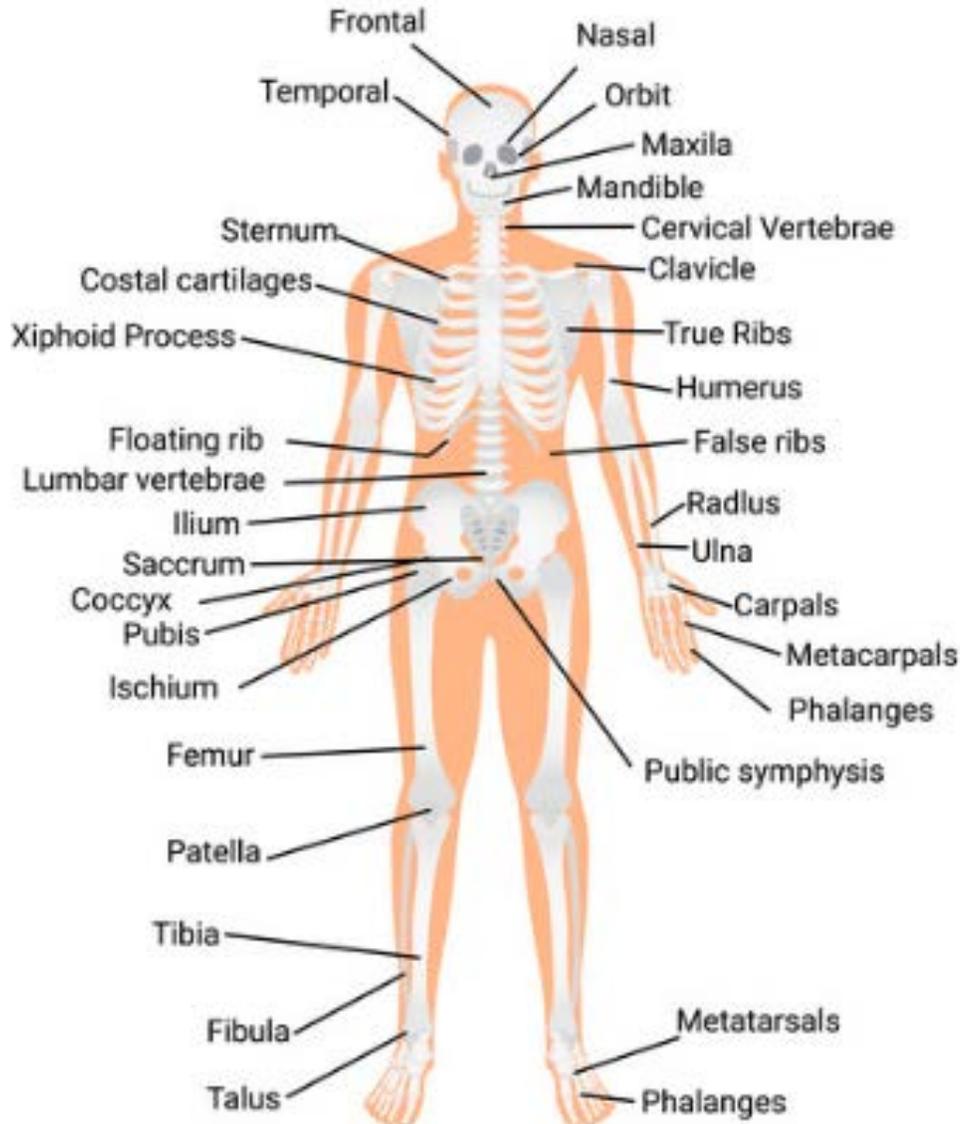


(Very Basic) Review of Anatomy and Physiology

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MOVE - BOTH ON THE GROUND, AND IN THE AIR

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SKELETAL SYSTEM



(Very Basic) Review of Anatomy and Physiology

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MOVE - BOTH ON THE GROUND, AND IN THE AIR

Here is a Quick Reference of terms commonly used to describe how the body moves. Take some time to familiar yourself with these terms and their meanings.

BODY MOVEMENTS:

Anterior – the front

Posterior – behind, the back

Lateral – to the side

Medial – towards the middle (or midline)

Superior – above, towards the head

Inferior – below, towards the feet

Dorsal – towards the top

Plantar – towards the bottom (sole of foot)

Supine – lying face up (hand, body)

Prone – lying face down

Distal – farther from the core

Proximal – closer to the core

PLANES OF MOVEMENT:

Sagittal – Divides the body into equal right and left halves (flexion, extension)

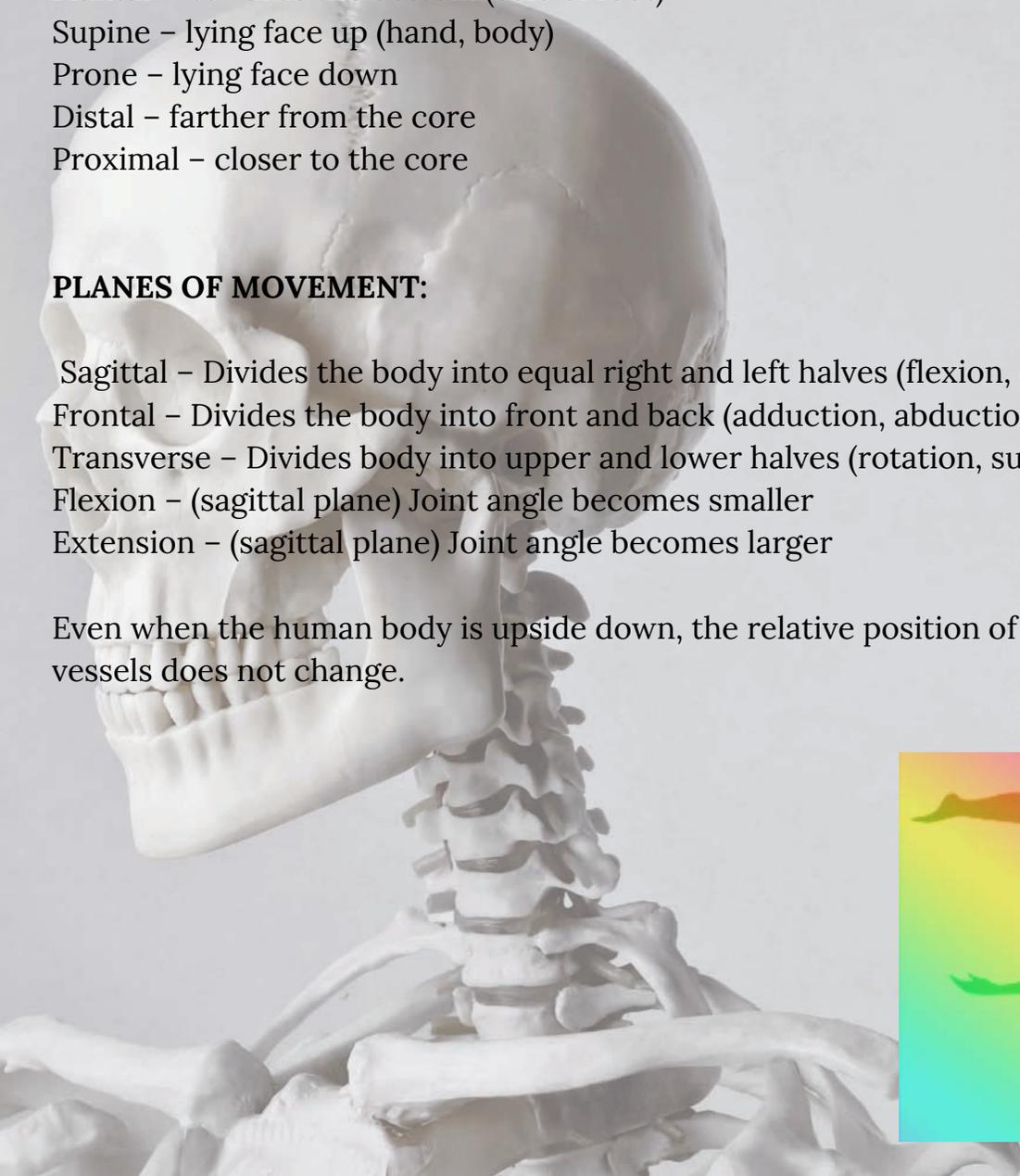
Frontal – Divides the body into front and back (adduction, abduction)

Transverse – Divides body into upper and lower halves (rotation, supination, pronation)

Flexion – (sagittal plane) Joint angle becomes smaller

Extension – (sagittal plane) Joint angle becomes larger

Even when the human body is upside down, the relative position of organs, nerves, and blood vessels does not change.



(Very Basic) Review of Anatomy and Physiology

UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MOVE - BOTH ON THE GROUND, AND IN THE AIR

SPECIFIC MOVEMENT:

SCAPULA AND SHOULDER

Retraction – Scapula being pulled towards the spine

Protraction – Scapula pushing away from the spine

Elevation – Scapula being raised up towards the ears (avoided in most yoga and aerial movement)

Depression – Scapula moving down the back of the spine (used in most yoga and aerial movement)

HIP, KNEE, ELBOW

Extension – Increases the angle of the joint, such as leaning backwards or lengthening legs

Flexion – Decreases the angle of the joint, such as bending a knee or elbow, or folding forward

FEET

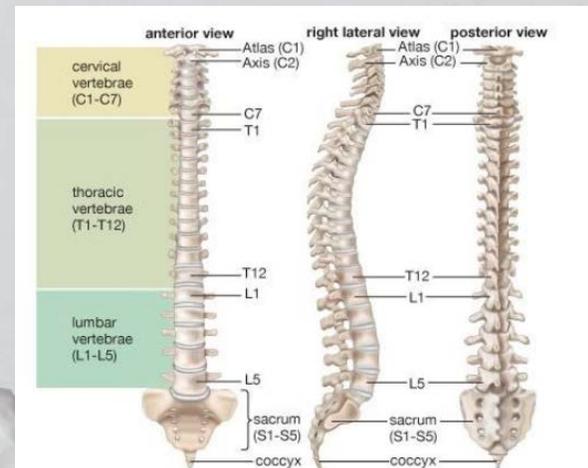
Dorsiflexion – Superior surface of foot moves toward tibia (point toes back at face)

Plantar Flexion – S ole of foot points away from midline of body

SPINE

The spine is designed not as a straight rod, but a stack of movable pieces that can handle shock absorption with a wide base at the Sacrum, and a narrower top at the Cervical spine. The most range of movement occurs between the Lumbar and Sacrum, the Lumbar and Thoracic, and the Thoracic and Cervical.

Many (if not most) students in the United States will describe pain in their back, primarily the lower (lumbar) spine. The Lumbar spine consists of the 5 vertebrae in the lower “S” curve below the rib cage and above the sacrum. The Lumbar can be a cause of discomfort for many because of our posture – standing or sitting. By strengthening the lower back muscles and engaging the core, lower back pain can be alleviated significantly. Aerial yoga offers a great therapeutic affect for those with back pain and alleviating these aches.





Shoulders and Hips

The shoulder and hip joints are the most proximal, or closest, to the spinal column, and therefore make it easier to foster safe movement in the spine through correcting hip and shoulder placement. In short, reminding students to maintain stability in the shoulder girdle throughout poses will positively affect posture and spinal health. You will most often see students rounding their shoulders forward (most likely from frequent sitting, and hovering over electronic devices). This rounding of the shoulders causes a great deal of tension in the upper back, which can lead to problems in the cervical spine and rotator cuff as they are compensating for the weakness in the pectorals.

Teaching students during poses to “drop/relax their shoulders” or “keep the shoulders neutral” will help strengthen the pectorals and trapezius muscle groups of the chest and shoulders, and give the latissimus and rhomboid muscles of the back a rest.

Proper shoulder alignment is important to teach students from the beginning of their aerial classes. To avoid injury, it is critical you understand proper shoulder alignment in your own body and can translate this to your students.

Take a moment, and Compare the two images above – can you tell which one is in proper “neutral” shoulder alignment, and which is using improper movement?

As both a student and a teacher, be aware of the difference in the effectiveness of Proper Shoulder Alignment. The image on the Left is the correct engagement of the upper back, shoulders, and arms to execute movement without strain or injury.



Shoulders and Hips

It is important to teach students as they progress in their aerial classes is the engagement of the shoulder blades in Protraction and Retraction.

You may describe Protraction as (when in plank) the shoulder blades separate as the hands press firmly into the floor. No other muscle in the body should move or become engaged. Retraction is (when in plank or performing a pull up) the sinking of the chest towards the floor (in plank) as you squeeze the shoulder blades together. This trains the trapezius muscles to engage and foster movement, as opposed to the deltoids (shoulders), which in turn protects the spine and overall posture.

Please practice Protraction and Retraction many times in your own body so that you may understand the sensation and difference between engaging the shoulder blades as opposed to the shoulders.

This movement can also be practiced on all fours or in a plank position. To do this, Practice sinking the ribs down and allowing the shoulder blades to come together – this is Retraction. Then, press into the floor and feel the shoulder blades separate from each other – this is Protraction.



Protraction



Retraction



Proper Hand Placement



Improper Hand Placement

Proper Hand Placement

It is imperative that students understand how to properly disperse weight into their hands. From Cat/Cow to Planks, Inversions, and Arm Balances, proper hand placement will prevent injury to the wrists and shoulders.

Begin by coming to all fours in a table top position. With a neutral spine, equally distribute your weight into your hands and knees. Make sure your knees are hip distance apart, and your hands are right below your shoulders.

Stack your wrists, elbows, and shoulders in one line. From here, focus on your hands. Press down all ten fingers down, along with the “meaty” part of your palm (the base of the thumb.) Allow a tiny space only between the center of your palm and the floor. Maintaining this position, begin to move your legs back into a plank position. Did your hands begin to “cup” or “claw the ground” ?

Be mindful of this, and work towards keeping that pressure down to protect your wrists and shoulders.

(Very Basic) Review of Anatomy and Physiology

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MUSCLES

To create balanced movement and workouts, it is important to understand the relationship between a movement and the muscles it uses, and how. When a joint is moved, muscles must contract to move the bone in its joint.

In every movement:

- A muscle(s) must contract, another muscle releases, and a third stabilizes.
- Agonist – the “prime movers” that contract primarily for movement to occur.
- Antagonists – Move in the opposite direction of the Agonist muscles. They stretch during movement.
- Stabilizers – Do not move but stabilize so that the movement can occur. They can make movement fluid and easy, or rigid and laborious.

If a body is having difficulty exploring a range of motion, or their range is limited:

The **Agonist muscles** are weak and cannot contract enough to move the joint; The **Antagonist muscles** are tight, holding back the Agonist muscles;

The **Stabilizers** are not strong enough to stabilize the movement;

Pain caused by variety of reasons, including arthritis/tendonitis, etc. limits muscles moving comfortably.

Key Notes:

1. Moving the Spine in 6 directions
2. Warm Up the Hips, Shoulders, and knee joints
3. Balancing Movement - forward and back, lateral movement, twisting.

When teaching a class, always explore the above 3 KEY NOTES. **Be sure to Move the Spine in all 6 directions of movement** (unless a student has a medical condition that limits this range of motion). In every exercise, consider the major Joint Locations – Hips, Shoulders, Knees – making sure students are moving in a manner that will not create injury or pain. Lastly, Balancing Movement – being sure that if you have students completing many lunges and squats, that you give them time to stretch the hamstrings. Healthy bodies desire movement in opposing directions. This creates balance, feels good, and keeps the musculo-skeletal systems healthy.

Balancing Opposing Muscle Groups:

Quads/Glutes – Hamstrings

Biceps – Triceps

Shoulders/ Back – Chest

Core – Spine

Ankles – Calves



Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Class Preparation

It's always best to plan and prepare for teaching every class. While your class lesson plan is important, and will be discussed in depth in this section, we will first cover the basic checklist of items you should cover every time you teach in your studio space.

Arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled class. This will give you time to settle in, prepare the studio, and yourself mentally. Check over all the equipment you will be using in class to ensure you have enough, they are clean, and easy for students to get to. You may even want to set up the equipment for yourself and students beforehand to save time. This also makes the class feel more welcoming and inviting.

Check over all the aerial hammocks – look for holes, make sure they are securely knotted, and inspect the rigging hardware for any obvious problems. Check for any damages and be sure to mention to the studio owner as soon as possible.

Set the Space - Take the time to set up your music, your yoga mat and hammock, lighting, and your lesson plan. If you have time, you can make sure the bathroom is clean and the First Aid Kit is in an easily accessible spot should you need it.

Check your class roster and know the names of who is coming, their age, and medical issues. Make note of any new students and prepare a waiver form for them to sign. As students arrive, greet them by name and make a visual check that they are not wearing any jewelry or metallic objects on their clothing that could tear the fabric of the hammock. During class, check in on students' energy levels and abilities. Are they following along, or getting tired? Are your poses too difficult, or too easy? Adjust the class as needed. If you are not sure, ask the class how they're doing. Be personable, ask for requests, and remember to check in with every student at least once. Give a sincere compliment to each student, avoiding favoring anyone..

Check their energy levels and ask if they have any concerns or health issues, they'd like you to know. Use this information to offer modifications to your lesson plan. Be ready to change your lesson plan should major issues arise.

Respect your students' time by beginning class as scheduled. Ensure all hammocks are rigged to the correct height before centering students and move around the room to double check if you have any doubts. At the end of class, close with a Thank You, and encourage students to clean off the equipment they used.



Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Class Purpose

In order to create a safe environment for all your students, your class design should integrate to some degree ALL of the following goals:

Flexibility – increasing flexibility in a safe manner, use modifications, proper warm up, and props to increase range of motion while avoiding injury.

Core Strength – the core is central to almost all movement, in addition to spinal health. All classes should have a focus on keeping the core engaged to protect the spinal column and increase range of mobility while avoiding injury.

Balance – Core strength goes hand in hand with finding balance. Another important piece is noting what's in contact with the ground – and rooting down, while lifting. This double energetic flow will foster a stronger sense of balance, and thus creates greater core strength.

Mobility – Range of motion is essential in health and fitness. Increasing a student's mobility is always a goal, in order to work muscles efficiently and protect the skeletal structure. Finding movement for each student's safest range of motion, while still being challenged, is critical.

Alignment – No matter how you move (sitting, running, lunging, curling) – protecting the spine means protecting the body. Keeping knees and elbows slightly bent (never locking joints), core engagement, and shrugging shoulders down will all aid in creating proper alignment. This means, more efficient movement that is safe.

Safety – ALWAYS choose safety over aesthetics. Looking good versus feeling good is a great way to remember this- the student needs to ENJOY their movement, not suffer. There should always be a challenge, but never pain. Teach students to play with their “edge” of pushing yourself, without causing pain or injury. By following the 5 previous guidelines, safety is attained effectively.



Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Class Design

It is imperative to make every effort to design your class structure with safety and intelligence. Class lesson plans should not be “made up as you go.” Please research and plan for every class you teach - ask questions if you need ideas or help!

A class should be structured in an intelligent manner – with a basic Warm Up for the entire body, from head to toe, as well as moving the spine in all 6 directions of motion.

Setting a class INTENTION is always a good idea, as this will help you organize your class layout. The class should be structured with a FOCUS in mind (upper body, lower body, core strength, balance, mobility, endurance, etc.) and usually work up to a “Peak” pose or poses. The class should work to build to this peak pose by opening and warming up the correct body parts for this pose, then counterbalancing this pose before cooling down.

Possible class INTENTIONS could be: balance, twisting (detoxing), core strength, lower body, upper body, arms and back, “butts and guts,” hip opening, flexibility in shoulders, backbends, forward folds.

Themes could include aligning chakras, waxing or waning moon cycle, solstice or equinox (seasonal), positive energy, setting goals, partner work, focusing on our own bodies, play. Be creative!

When you begin planning your class, always be ready to make adjustments and changes based on who shows up. All levels of age, experience, injury, and emotional baggage can be presented in the studio. Be ready to be flexible and give students what they need (not always what they want.) This may sometimes mean scrapping your entire lesson plan because students’ energy levels or injuries come up. It is also important to note who is coming to your class and planning your class structure around the participants’ needs and physical capabilities, and challenge them in a safe range of motion, providing modifications or adjustments. Let the class know what your intention or focus will be and ask if they have any requests or concerns before beginning.

Tone is the final piece to be considered – setting the tone of your class in terms of music, voice, lighting, and ambiance. Some teachers prefer silence, while other classes may call for soothing sounds, or more energetic pop music. Play around with what works for the style of your class style and how it resonates with your students. Your tone of voice should also reflect the intention of the class - loud and encouraging, soft and calm. Be mindful of choosing positive words and avoid making negative comments.



Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Class Sequence

Sequences can be fun to create, or a cause for anxiety. Some of the best teachers out there begin with a notebook the first year of teaching before they are comfortable enough to go by memory. Sequences should always follow a logical and safe format, and you should be flexible to allow room for change depending on who shows up to your class. Here are some guidelines to consider that will help you in your own class sequence design.

When you write your first sequences, **identify what type of class you are teaching**. Is it Restorative, Power, Yin, Flow, Conditioning, or acrobatic/dance influenced? Be comfortable with teaching the theme and purpose of your class. This will help you choose appropriate poses to help students relax, become energized, or explore. Likewise, the more comfortable and confident you feel in your instruction, the more comfortable your students will feel.

From there, **decide what the goal for the class is** – for students to be more flexible, more relaxed, energized, achieve a stunt, work on breathing, work on proper form, inversions, upper body strength, core strength.... The list goes on! Choose the goal of your class. Make sure it aligns with your Type of Class (for example, inversions strength would likely not be the goal for a restorative class. Twisting poses, however, could fit nicely in a restorative class focused on detoxing.)

The workout **needs to flow logically**. All sequences require a Warm Up (10-15 minutes), Main Class (20-30 minutes), Core Conditioning (though this can be omitted), and Cool Down (5-15 minutes. Yoga classes should incorporate a savasana, even if it's only 5 minutes long. Give yourself and your students time to cool down, reflect, and be still. Allow them to sense the difference in their body and minds from taking your class.

Move mindfully. Avoid having students move from floor to standing, then to floor again. Likewise, avoid using open hammock to closed hammock to open hammock again. Be sure that your sequence makes sense in your body and mind. If you try to put too much in and get too fancy, students can become confused, frustrated, and likely unsafe.

A person is shown in a dark-colored outfit, suspended in a white aerial yoga hammock. They are in a dynamic pose, with one leg extended upwards and arms reaching out. The background is a blurred indoor studio setting with wooden floors and vertical poles.

Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Class Sequence

Consider your students. If you have a much younger crowd with high energy on a weekend morning, you may wish to give them a more challenging sequence. If it's a Monday night and you have a few people who are exhausted from their workday and need to relax, give them that space. You are not teaching for yourself – you are teaching for your students. If you have new students, provide close guidance, go slow, and encourage them so they feel accomplished. If you have a group with injuries, adjust so that they can receive the full benefit of moving in the hammock in a pain free range of motion.

Also, **avoid being a people pleaser at any cost** by doing only poses “you like” or that a “students wants.” This can lead to dangerous territory. Just because you love a pose, does not always mean your class will love it, too. They have different bodies, emotions, and experience than you. Likewise, do not feel that you must always give students poses they love or want. If it's not safe, or outside the class format (such as Vampire Pose in a Restorative class), then it really shouldn't be an option. Be ready to say NO to yourself or students (always in a kind, diplomatic way), when safety is in question. What we want is not always in alignment with what we need.

Now, you are ready to create your own sequence. Using your tools of asana poses, as well as the guidelines above, begin to piece together your flow. Feel free to seek out inspiration in the form of other teachers, music, yogi principles, spiritual beliefs, and dance. You can first write up your Warm Up with the goal in mind. If it's upper body strength, you will focus your warm up on arms, shoulders, core, and wrists. If you wish to work on relaxation, your warm up will be much softer and may include more inward based poses such as Child's, Staff, Butterfly, and Down Dog.

Please review the following page for an example of an Aerial Yoga Flow class.

Need Some Inspiration?

Over 30 Tutorials of Aerial Yoga Sequences on KamaFitTV.com

Over 150 Live Aerial Yoga Classes on [Facebook Live](https://www.facebook.com/KamaFitTV).

EXAMPLE OF CLASS LAYOUT:

Warm Up (5-10 MIN):

Child's Pose with shoulder stretches
Cat/Cow
Spine circles
Down Dog to Child's Pose (flow with breath)
Dolphin to Elbow Plank
Elbow Plank circles
Down Dog to Up Dog (flow with breath)

Workout (10-20 MIN):

Standing Dynamic Stretches
Down Dog
Straddle Back and Inverted Pigeon
Down Dog
Open Hammock Stretches

Core/Conditioning (10-15 MIN):

Inverted Plank (add variations if class is advanced)
Mermaid Pose

Cool Down/Stretch (5-10 MIN):

Straddle stretches
Butterfly stretches
Shoulders and Triceps
Centering

Savasana (5-10 minutes)

Optional Reading

Class Ending



(For more examples of class sequences, see the back of this manual.)

A background image showing a group of people practicing aerial yoga in a studio. They are suspended in the air by ropes, with some in inverted positions. The text is overlaid on this image.

Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Challenges

From over 15 years experience teaching both in the classroom and in fitness studios, I have found there are similar areas of conflict that may arise when instructing. You will no doubt teach to a wide range of ages, abilities, and personalities – and unless you have a few years of teaching under your belt, you may not be prepared for some of unforeseen challenges that may arise. In my opinion, experience is the best teacher – but, it doesn't hurt to have some tools in your toolbox to confront these potential situations.

Ability/Level – You will likely teach in front of a class with true beginners, to seasoned yogis or aerialists. Be ready to modify and offer variations for all levels in your lesson plan.

Gender – It is a safe bet you will be teaching primarily females in class, but you will sometimes teach men, as well. Be aware of their physical abilities, experience, age, and relationships (are they a boyfriend or husband of someone in class?). Spotting males in inversions may be uncomfortable, so it would be helpful to practice on your own spouse or male friend to avoid a potentially awkward situation. Often, the biggest challenge with teaching males is encouraging them to slow down rather than power through a pose or transition.

Health Concerns – Always check their waivers for this information. If you have a comfortable relationship with the student, you may ask. Be aware that students' will not always tell you what's bothering them. This can be important when cueing a pose – you may wish to suggest modifications in a way that suggests if they have an ache or pain, they may wish to avoid this pose. For example, in down dog, I often will say, "If you have had surgery on your pelvis or lower belly, this may feel strange. Go slow, and back out if it causes discomfort."

Fears – Going upside can be frightening. Chances are your students are excited about aerial, but still nervous about going upside down. Keep a calm voice, be empathetic, and give clear directions that will make them feel more secure. Always offer an exit out of a pose or move, and encourage students to, "Listen to their Bodies."

Communication – Be aware of students' body language. If they seem confused or nervous, try rewording your instructions. Be aware of your choice of words and using appropriate language that is positive, clear, and encouraging. If you make a mistake, apologize and move on. This is so important when building trust with students. And, most importantly, BE YOURSELF. While you are the authority in the room, you can use humor (appropriately!) and your own personality in your teaching. Students who feel you are authentic will want to come to your classes more often than not.



Teaching Aerial Yoga

CLASS PREPARATION / PURPOSE / DESIGN / SEQUENCE

Communication, continued

Perhaps the most important piece of being an effective teacher is communication. Reflect on your favorite teachers, mentors, and instructors – and likely they all were excellent in communicating their message to you. Students feel they can trust a teacher more when instructions are clear and they understand what the teacher is trying to explain.

When instructing a class, you have a goal, a lesson plan, and a skill set that you wish to translate to the class. To do this effectively, you must be aware of the different learning styles that each student has. In my years of being an educator, there are three primary learning styles that are universal among learners. These are Visual (seeing), Auditory (hearing), and Kinesthetic (feeling or doing). While many people are a mixture of these three, one or two characteristics will be stronger. To ensure students understand what you want them to know or do, you must teach your class in a way that benefits each type of learner.

Visual – They need to SEE you, or another student, do the movement or action. This type of learner benefits most from pictures and demonstrations. This means yourself or another student in class will need to perform the skill or movement in a proper way for the student to best learn.

Auditory – These learners need to HEAR your verbal cues, either while you demonstrate, another student demonstrates, or as they perform the pose or skill. Auditory learners prefer simple, clear instructions that offer modifications, and help explain the pose and how to make it easier or more difficult. They may also need to hear what the fabric should be doing, their arms and legs, and how to make adjustments.

Kinesthetic – These are the MOVERS ! A Kinesthetic (also known as a tactical learner) needs to feel the movement in their own body before they completely understand it. Kinesthetic students will often jump right into doing a pose or skill before you finished explaining it, and often learn best by trial and error. Be aware of this, and be ready to stand physically near them if you spot them jumping ahead. I often will say, “Please watch me first,” or, “Please wait until I am next to you if you’ve never done this pose before.” This helps the Kinesthetic learn by movement, while keeping them safe.

You will find that many of the students you meet will be a mixture of these three types. With that in mind, make every effort to instruct using Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic methods of teaching to be the most effective and safe.

The Art of Assisting

Assisting students can be a complex topic. There are many workshops within the yoga community that are worth signing up for to get hands on experience in a safe, real world setting. Assisting is not something you can learn from only reading from a book, like this. It requires practice, practice, practice!

Assisting can be a touchy subject, pun intended. When you teach an aerial yoga class, it is a given that you will need to touch students. How, When, and Where, are all critical pieces to know and be comfortable with. Be aware that many people do NOT like to be touched, and this is often not an issue in a traditional yoga class. Assisting students in class can help students in deepening a pose, adjusting a pose, or cueing a student to move safely. When bodies are in the air, however, assisting becomes critical and necessary.

Begin cueing a movement, transition, or pose with your words and by example. When teaching, be sure to give the move or pose a name (if it has one), demonstrate the pose or movement slowly, and talk through every movement. This can be a tricky balance as you do not want to give TOO MANY cues when teaching, but will improve over time with practice. Let your students know where they may feel pressure from the fabric, and where their hands and feet should go in relation to the floor and the fabric. Keep your instructions short and simple. You may wish to identify common mistakes that people can make their first time, but always show the correct way first. Whenever you have a new student in class, after giving a verbal and visual cue, physically stand by them and coach them through their first inversions – be sure to teach them how to get in AND out of the pose safely.

If a particular pose can be dangerous when done incorrectly, be sure to tell students to wait for you to be next to them before they attempt it. If they seem especially nervous, you can ask for permission to touch them in order to aid them. As a general rule, always ask for permission, but you may assume permission when a student's safety is jeopardized. When you do touch students, be aware of where you touch – many spots are “no-no” areas that should be avoided. The sides of the hips and back between the shoulder blades are the best areas to touch in order to keep safety and avoid touching in an inappropriate place.

As students' progress, you can then offer more challenging variations. When they are new, however, be sure to offer modifications to help them ease into poses that could be difficult for them. If you teach, be sure to practice a pose many times until you master it, and understand how to get in, what can go wrong, how it can feel, and how to exit, before teaching to a group.

The Art of Assisting

Quality of Touch - Touch with care, by avoiding grabbing or pressing. Use a gentle but firm touch that uses the palm of your hand, not just the fingers (that can feel odd.) Whenever a new student goes upside down for the first time (usually into Aerial Down Dog), you can assist without even touching their bodies. You may do this by placing your arm as a block between the hammock poles so that their feet will not fall through. Using your own arm as a guide to avoid students from falling out can be a clever way of assisting without making students uncomfortable.

Be comfortable and confident in your own cues and touch– if a student makes you feel nervous and does not follow your instructions, if safety is in question, you may address them in a gentle but firm manner. If the student continues to move in an unsafe range of motion that puts their own body in jeopardy, you may ask them to leave class, or open up a dialogue with your studio owner about the relationship.

Common Cues that work:

- When inverting, feet go around and in.
- Lock with your toes.
- Engage your core when going down and coming up.
- Go slowly.
- Keep breathing!
- Avoid getting back up too fast to avoid dizziness.

In practice, you may find that some of the best cues remind students *where they may feel the pressure of the fabric, as well as what their hands and feet should be doing.*

Remind students that the thinner (or less) amount of fabric supporting their body in a pose, the more intense the stretch and more work their body must do. You can offer the suggestion to pull the fabric wider or adjust its placement away from a joint or location of pain to still reap the benefits of a movement, as long as their safety is not sacrificed.

Next, always cue what is in contact with the floor (in yoga grounded poses) and go from there. Check students' feet to make sure they are not putting their ankle, knees, or hips in a risky situation. If they are on their hands, cue wide fingers with pressure coming down on all 10 fingers, and the palm. Remind them to stack "wrists, elbows, and shoulders." Look for hyperextension and/or locking out of joints, and remind students verbally to keep the knees and elbows soft. Keep an eye out for bodies going limp and losing core engagement, and remind students to lift from their core, hold their bodies up, and allow the fabric to assist, but not do all the work.

The Art of Assisting

The best teacher for giving assists is practicing.

It would be wise to spend a good deal of time on this piece with practical work, meaning practicing on your own teacher, colleagues, and experienced aerial yogis before the general public.

One Gentle Remember – do not feel you need to touch or assist a student frequently when teaching. Physically adjusting a student unnecessarily can actually cause their muscles to contract more than release, due to the stretch reflex we are all equipped with. If you move a body too quickly or too far out of a safe range of motion, even with the best intentions, the muscles' spindles will reflex and resist more by contracting. Be aware when assisting.

“Drishti” is a Sanskrit word that means “point of focus.” When students utilize the aerial silk hammock as a prop within their yoga practice, it always is helpful to remind them to find their “drishti,” or point of focus. A drishti can be a mandala on the wall, a knot in the wood of the floor, the top of their mat, or a brick in the wall – really, anything will do! Especially in balance poses where students could have the potential to fall out of alignment be mindful to remind them to find their Drishti, their point of focus, and root down before flying or moving.



The Yoga Connection

BRINGING THE ETHICS OF YOGA INTO YOUR AERIAL PRACTICE

If you desire to teach Aerial Yoga, it is assumed you have received some formal Yoga Teacher Training instruction, along with experience in teaching Yoga and/or fitness to groups before. With this in mind, Yoga is an ancient tradition with a 5,000 year old history, that has been carried over into Western Culture in the last century. With its many physical, mental, and spiritual benefits, Yoga has become one of the most popular programs in the United States for fitness and spirituality seekers. Aerial Yoga is in its baby stages, as the aerial hammock has become a prop that lends itself to create a sense of trust, a deeper understanding of the balance between strength and flexibility and creating a unique mind-body connection.

With teaching any Yoga class, there is an ethical responsibility you hold to the students that enter your classroom. These ethics are laid out in the 8 Limbs of Yoga:

1. YAMAS

2. NIYAMAS

3. ASANAS

4. PRANAYAMA

5. PRATYAHARA

6. DHARANA

7. DHYANA

8. SAMADHI

Presenting these 8 Limbs in your class structure is important whether you teach any Yoga or Aerial Yoga class – the addition of the silk hammock as a prop to your class should only aid in further deepening students' practice and mind-body connection.



The Yoga Connection

THE YAMAS

The first limb of the Yoga Tree is the Yamas - which refers to five ethical codes, labelled Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brachmacharya, and Aparigraha.

Bringing these ethics into your class structure and teaching will create a more authentic experience for your students. Let's investigate each ethical code within this limb.

Ahimsa - Literally meaning “nonviolence,” Ahimsa calls on us to do no harm to ourselves or others. This means teaching to your students with intentions of challenging them in a safe range of movement. This also applies to safety - the movements you coach them through, the quality of the aerial hammocks, and your rigging standards. All of these elements contribute to respecting your students' bodies and personal well being. As a teacher, it is your moral responsibility to give students an experience that is safe and challenges them appropriately.

Satya - Translate as “truthfulness,” Satya asks that we be careful in how we speak. Without lying or sugar coating, we must be willing to offer constructive feedback that holds no judgement. Ask students to be honest with themselves - is this stretch too intense, is this move too difficult or too easy. Encourage students to reflect on their progress without judgement.



Asteya - The ethical code of “nonstealing,” implies we be present in the moment. Try to avoid being late to class, or starting class late, as this steals from ourselves and everyone else in the room. We must also not steal from ourselves by comparing our progress or physical appearance to others in the room. Comparison like this robs us of the ability to truly benefit from what a pose or moment in class can offer us.

Brachmacharya - In the code of “nonexcess,” Brachmacharya is being mindful of how we use our energy. The key is to find balance, and in aerial yoga this connects directly to balancing between flexibility in a pose and strength in controlling our own bodies in the fabric. When we direct our energy appropriately, we find an ease of movement that is fluid and healthy.

Aparigraha - or “nonpossessive” in our teaching and for students requires that we let go of our expectations. When we release what we *think* our bodies should look like, feel like, be able to do, then we can truly be in the moment and enjoy the things that we are already capable of. Reminding students to stay with the breath, connect their inhale and exhale to each stretch and movement, will create a sense of ease and release of negative thoughts that don't serve them. Remind students (and yourself!) that there is no perfection in aerial yoga!

The Yoga Connection

THE NIYAMAS

The second Yogic limb asks us to be mindful in our actions, our Karma. Like the Yamas, the Niyamas are a way to improve ourselves both as teachers, as well as students.

Saucha – Saucha means “purity,” and asks us to be mindful of our own physical cleanliness and hygiene. This is important in aerial yoga, in keeping the studio clean, our own bodies clean to respect our students and ourselves, and maintaining the cleanliness of the silk hammocks. Keep the studio tidy and neat, with materials easy to access and out away. Have a clear designation for where yoga mats and yoga props belong, where students can store their personal belongings, and maintain a clean atmosphere. This fosters a respect for the studio and the teacher. It is also important that aerial hammocks are clean, free from unpleasant odor and stains.

Santosha – Requires finding “contentment” in our minds throughout our teaching and practice. The unexpected may come up in class – previous injuries, lighting or music issues – and it is our job to find peace with these elements and keep the class flowing. This also applies to students being content with their own bodies’ limitation and abilities. Remind them to listen to their body and move in a pain free range of motion without strain. Accept where your body is now.



Tapas – The road to “self-discipline” demands being diligent in our yoga practice. Continue to work on poses that you struggle with, in a safe range of motion without force. Self-discipline also requires you as a teacher to seek out continuing education in aerial, yoga, teaching practices, and safety.

Svadhaya – “Self-Study” is being willing to reflect on ourselves and analyze our decisions. Are we living out the 5 Yamas honestly, are we on our own road to self improvement. Svadhaya calls us to look at our own progress, and what needs improvement. As a teacher it is important to ‘know thyself’ and your weaknesses, along with strengths, and willingness to work to make yourself better.

Ishvara Pranidhana – And the last ethical code of yoga, “surrender.” Letting go of your intentions and surrendering to the idea that what will happen, will happen. Hold no expectations, accept what is, and surrender to the present moment. This translates beautifully when doing an aerial inversion or suspending weightless in the aerial hammock – reminding ourselves, and our students, to just LET GO.

The Yoga Connection

THE LIMBS OF YOGA

After the Yamas and Niyamas, the other 5 Limbs create a culmination of what the intention of Yoga is. Each Limb is complex, and they make up the branches of the entire tree that we present to students as teachers of a yoga discipline.

The third Limb, **Asana**, is the actual poses of your physical practice. This is what most people think of when they hear the word, "yoga," they think of simply just the physical practice. Yoga poses are designed to help energy, or *Prana*, flow through our bodies to foster a mind-body connection. The poses used in aerial yoga are laid out in the following section of this book. The silk hammock works as a prop to foster a heightened experience for students in Asana.

Pranayama, or fourth limb of Yoga, is the breath. While it can be difficult for students at first, it is important to learn to create the connection between the breath and the movement. As mentioned throughout this manual, the inhale should occur with the preparation for a stretch or movement, and the exhalation coordinates with the execution. Moving this way fosters a safer range of movement that is slower and relaxes the muscles in each pose. Encourage students to learn to breath slowly and deeply, as this will help them to relax and be more mindful of their movement.

The last 4 Yogic limbs bring us to withdrawing our senses and focusing our attention and awareness to attain a union with the Divine or Universe. This may sound like simply Meditation, but it is important to understand Meditation can occur even when we are in motion!

Pratyahara is the fifth limb, can be described as being so absorbed in what you are doing that you no longer are analyzing and overthinking, you simply are observing with your entire being through your senses. Like the first time you go upside down in a hammock, being completely immersed in the experience.

Dharana, the sixth limb, is all of your mental focus on one thing, a single object. This can be a mandala or mantra, the breath, or even the movement in class.

The final two limbs, **Dhyana** and **Samadhi**, describe the ultimate goal of Yoga. as a result of practicing Asana and Pranayama. This is where the person unites with the object of their focus. I believe this is an experience of when I am free flowing and flying on the fabric, listening to music, and in complete Bliss.

These teachings of Yoga are available for you in your personal practice and as a student of both yoga and aerial. Focused attention and awareness in the aerial yoga classroom is essential for not just student safety, but also to help foster a more fulfilling experience.

Focused attention and awareness in your personal practice, or play time, can create insightful moments of Bliss and Connection that may occur more frequently when you are in Alignment with these 8 limbs.



Aerial Asana

AERIAL YOGA POSES

This manual is designed and organized by poses as they would appear in a class in order of difficulty. If a pose or movement can also be used for conditioning purposes, this will be identified for you. Likewise, if a pose is ideal for a more restorative class, it will be identified as well. This manual only covers yogic inspired movement and poses. For more advanced poses and sequences, along with both verbal and visual cues, please access <https://www.kamafittv.com/aerial-yoga-sequences.html>.

In addition, every pose will be broken down into how to cue in this manual, how to enter and exit, variations that make the pose more or less challenging, which muscle groups are being primarily used, and how to negate any movements so that the body feels balanced. We recommend never teaching a pose or move that you have not practiced yourself several times and feel comfortable with the cueing and spotting.

AERIAL YOGA POSES KEY

Prerequisites: what poses students should be familiar with before learning this pose

C/R: Indicates if this pose works well for Conditioning or Restorative classes.

Primary Muscle Groups: What major muscle group or groups are utilized for this pose.

Counter Balance: Which poses help to negate and balance this pose.

For more than 30 aerial yoga sequences and hundreds more poses as tutorials, please visit [KamaFitTV.com](https://www.kamafittv.com).

For Over 150 Aerial Yoga Sequences and New Classes Weekly, [Join Live Aerial Yoga Here.](https://www.kamafittv.com)



Aerial Asana

AERIAL YOGA POSES

This manual is organized by ASANA - some classes, some more modern, yoga poses that you may be familiar with, using the aerial hammock. If a pose or movement can also be used for conditioning purposes, this will be identified for you. Likewise, if a pose is ideal for a more restorative class, it will be identified as well. This manual only covers basic movement and poses. For more advanced poses and sequences, along with both verbal and visual cues, please access <https://www.kamafittv.com/aerial-yoga-sequences.html>.

If you need a more personal experience, please [Learn More about Live Aerial Yoga classes](#).

AERIAL YOGA POSES KEY

Prerequisites: what poses students should be familiar with before learning this pose

C/R: Indicates if this pose works well for Conditioning or Restorative classes.

Primary Muscle Groups: What major muscle group or groups are utilized for this pose.

Counter Balance: Which poses help to negate and balance this pose.

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Child's Pose / Balasana

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders, Hips, Spine

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend (see next page)

VERBAL CUES

- Feet together, knees wide or together (based on preference)
- Root hips down to floor Relax elbows, sink chest to floor
- Keep the neck relaxed
- Allow students to experiment with hand grip on the fabric and encourage them to find the position they find most comfortable

DIRECTIONS

Begin in a kneeling position with toes touching and knees together or wide (as pictured.) Stack your hands inside the bottom of the hammock, soften your elbows as you push the fabric away. Soften your elbows and bring your ears between your arms. Press your hips to your heels as you lengthen the upper body.



VARIATIONS

One Arm:



Remove one arm from the fabric and place on the floor as you turn your head to one side. I find this gentle twist deepens the stretch in the upper back and shoulders.

Easy Back Bend:



Hold each side of the fabric above your head as you slowly lengthen your arms and drop back. Be careful of your neck (cervical spine) and dropping your head back. Feel free to slowly rock yourself side-to-side to relax the lower spine (lumbar), upper back, as well as a gentle stretch for the quadriceps.

Cat Cow / Marjaryasana:

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders, Hips, Spine

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend (see previous page)

VERBAL CUES

- Stack Wrists beneath the shoulder points
- Keep knees hip distance apart Keep elbows soft
- Press into floor with wide, flat hands
- Engage the core to keep lower back supported

DIRECTIONS

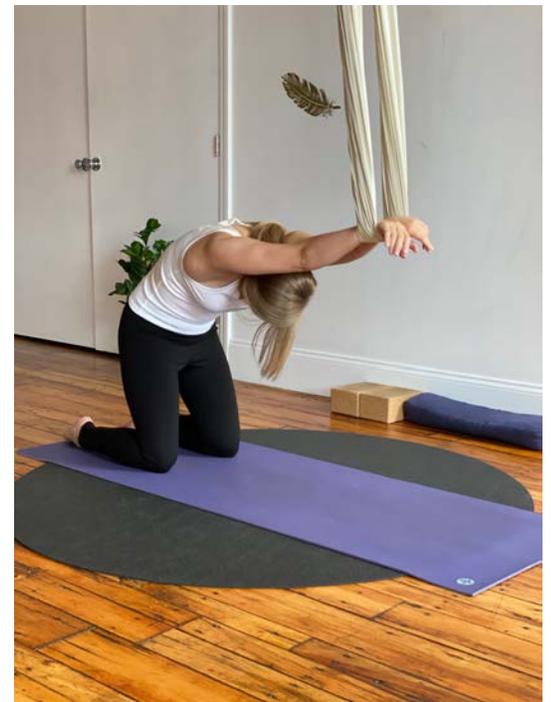
Begin in a kneeling position with toes touching and knees hip distance and hips raised. Stack your hands inside the bottom of the hammock, soften your elbows as you drop the belly and lift the chin for COW - Breath IN.

Lower the belly, press the silk down, tuck the chin into the chest, and arch the spine to the sky for CAT - Breath OUT.



VARIATIONS

Cat (below) exhale as you tuck the chin, arch the back, and press the silks down



Seated Forward Fold / Paschimottanasana:

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders,
Hamstrings

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend

VERBAL CUES

- Ground down in your hips. Optional to place bolster beneath you.
- Sit up straight with a long spine and soft elbows as you lean forward
- Keep your feet flexed

DIRECTIONS

Sitting with hips beneath the rigging point, Students can have both hands in fabric, or just one (as pictured above) with shoulder opening as an option.

To negate, have students grab hammock with an underhand grip, and lean back into an easy backbend, with legs extended and head in neutral position to protect the neck.



VARIATIONS

A gentle twist can be found here by simply placing one hand, thumb down, on the opposite foot. Turn the same side ear as the reaching arm down, as pictured: left arm and left ear reaching towards right leg.



Bound Angle / Baddha Konasana:

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders,
Hamstrings

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend, Seated
Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Ground down in your hips. Optional to place bolster beneath you for lower back pain or tight hips.
- Bring the soles of your feet together and pull your heels towards your body
- Keep your neck relaxed, chin drawing towards the chest

DIRECTIONS

Sitting with hips beneath the rigging point, this simple seated stretch can turn into a twist by taking one hand out and placing it on your opposite knee.

You can also turn this into a gentle backbend (Supta Baddha Konasana) by reaching the arms up high on each fabric and leaning back as you gently hold, or rock, side to side.



VARIATIONS

A gentle twist can be found here by simply placing one hand, bound toes.

Bend the elbow of the grabbing arm as you gently turn the same side ear down.



Floating Variation -

Take your Bound Angle in the air by straddling the fabric, then bend the knees with hips turned out, and bring the soles of the feet together.



Wide Leg Seated Forward Fold / Prasarita Padottanasana:

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders,
Hamstrings

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend, Seated
Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Open your legs wide and flex your toes back towards your face
- Root down through the hips
- Keep your neck relaxed
- Soften the elbows as you bring ears between the arms

DIRECTIONS

Sitting with hips beneath the rigging point, both hands can be in fabric, or only one to create a gentle twist.



VARIATIONS

Grounded Pigeon/ Eka Pada Rajakapotasana:

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders,
Hamstrings

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend, Seated
Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Begin on all fours with silk behind your body
- Keep your wrists stacked beneath your shoulders
- Looking over one shoulder, place one foot inside the loop of your fabric
- Keep the core engaged as you bring your hips under the rigging point and your standing knee to the center of your mat
- Come down to the forearms if your wrists need a rest

DIRECTIONS

Encourage students to come down to elbows if their wrists are bothering them. Bolster under the supporting knee may also be necessary.



VARIATIONS

With flat back, allow the supported leg to move side to side. This is a wonderful hip opener.

From the above position, grab one of the fabrics with a thumb up grip and allow the leg inside the fabric to move behind you. Press your hips back for a deeper stretch in the shoulders and hip. (see image below)



Legs Up Silk/ Viparita Karani :

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Lower Back

Counter Balance: Happy Baby, Forward Fold,
Gentle Twisting

VERBAL CUES

- Support head with bolster or blanket
- Support hips with block or blanket, directly under rigging point
- Relax legs in hammock, slightly turned out
- Open hands palms up by your sides to open shoulders and chest

DIRECTIONS

Lie comfortably in a supine position with hips beneath the fabric. You may wish to lift the hips and support the lower back with a blanket or bolster.

If feet slip out of the fabric, the hammock height needs to be lowered.



VARIATIONS

To make this a Conditioning Exercise, Lift the hips with palms facing down by side for support. You can begin to bend the knees in and out with hips raised to strengthen the Hamstrings.

For Inner thighs, try out Frog Legs by pressing the palms facing down by your sides for support, with feet flexed and heels kissing. This will cause a turn out in the hips. You can bend and extend the legs with hips lifted or on the ground.



Legs Up Silk/ *Viparita Karani : (cont'd)*

KEY

Prerequisites: Legs Up Silk

C/R: Restorative Pose

Primary Muscle Groups: Lower Back, Hips

Counter Balance: Savasana

VERBAL CUES

- Support head with bolster or blanket
- Support hips with block or blanket, directly under rigging point
- Relax legs in hammock, slightly turned out
- Open hands palms up by your sides to open shoulders and chest
- Take one foot into your same side hand, pull the knee to 90 degrees towards the floor, option to extend the leg (middle right)
- Option for a gentle twist by arcing the leg over to the opposite side of the mat (bottom right) knees slightly bent, shoulders anchored into the floor

DIRECTIONS

Lie comfortably in a supine position with hips beneath the fabric. You may wish to lift the hips and support the lower back with a blanket or bolster.

If feet slip out of the fabric, the hammock height needs to be lowered.



VARIATIONS



Chair/ Utkatasana:

KEY

Prerequisites: None

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Core

Counter Balance: Extended Back Bend,
Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports beneath armpits
- Actively press feet into floor and arms into fabric
- Bend knees to a 90 degree angle, and feet firmly planted into floor
- Hips directly beneath the rigging point
- Tuck the pelvis for a flat lower back

DIRECTIONS

Place the fabric under the arm pits like a back pack, and lower the hips by walking the feet forward into a chair position. The fabric should support the upper back comfortably, while feet are hip distance apart, pelvis tucked under, and knees bent at a 90 degree angle.



VARIATIONS

Modified Seated Pigeon - from Chair, Cross one ankle over the opposite thigh.



Extended Chair with Side Stretch - from Chair, press feet firmly into the floor as you press back, lifting the hips, and extending the arms overhead. This is a sweet stretch, and one of my absolute favorites to release tension in the side body and back body.



Crescent Low Lunge/ Anjaneyasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Standing, Forward Fold

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips

Counter Balance: Runner's Lunge, Down Dog

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports beneath armpits or wrists or front bent knee (variations)
- Actively press feet into floor and arms into fabric
- Bend knees to a 90 degree angle, and feet firmly planted into floor
- Hips directly beneath the rigging point
- Tuck the pelvis for a flat lower back

DIRECTIONS

Fabric supports beneath armpits or wrists or front bent knee (variations). Put a wrist lock on, or wrap the fabric under the arm pits as you bend one knee in front of the body. If you wish to have the front knee in the fabric, begin from standing and place the bent knee inside. Slowly, with one hand on either fabric, lower the hips and back leg to the floor (see image) You can add a twist by reaching back with one hand at a time for the heel on the floor. Be sure to keep pressing the hips forward as you twist.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)



VARIATIONS

Hands can be in Wrist Locks (more intense for the shoulders and upper body), or Fabric can be under the front bent knee (see image above), with back knee dropping towards the floor. This variation can be much more intense on the quadriceps and hip flexors.



Crescent High Lunge/ Ashta Chandrasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Crescent Low Lunge

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips, Calves, Glutes

Counter Balance: Runner's Lunge, Down Dog, Standing Forward Fold



VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports the wrists, beneath armpits, or under the front bent knee (Variations)
- Pull the front hip back
- Squeeze inner thighs together and engage the core
- Keep bent knee in 90 degree angle in line with ankle joint

DIRECTIONS

Fabric supports beneath armpits or wrists or front bent knee (variations). Put a wrist lock on, or wrap the fabric under the arm pits as you bend one knee in front of the body. If you wish to have the front knee in the fabric, begin from standing and place the bent knee inside.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)

VARIATIONS

Hands can be in Wrist Locks (more intense for the shoulders and upper body), or Fabric can be under the front bent knee (see image above), with back foot pressing the floor away.



Warrior I/ Virabhadrasana 1 :

KEY

Prerequisites: Crescent Low Lunge and High Lunge

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips, Calves, Glutes

Counter Balance: Runner's Lunge, Warrior II, Down Dog, Standing Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports the wrists, beneath armpits, or under the front bent knee (Variations)
- Pull the front hip back
- Squeeze inner thighs together and engage the core
- Keep bent knee in 90 degree angle in line with ankle joint
- Back foot firmly pressing at 45 degree angle

DIRECTIONS

Fabric supports beneath armpits or wrists or front bent knee (variations). Put a wrist lock on, or wrap the fabric under the arm pits as you bend one knee in front of the body. If you wish to have the front knee in the fabric, begin from standing and place the bent knee inside.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)



VARIATIONS

Hands can be in Wrist Locks (more intense for the shoulders and upper body), or Fabric can be under the front bent knee (see bottom image), with back foot pressing the floor away.



Warrior II/ Virabhadrasana 2 :

KEY

Prerequisites: Crescent Low Lunge and High Lunge, Warrior 1

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips, Calves, Glutes

Counter Balance: Runner's Lunge, Down Dog, Standing Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports the wrists, beneath armpits, or under the front bent knee (Variations)
- Pull the front hip crease back
- Keep bent knee in 90 degree angle in line with ankle joint
- Arch of the back foot firmly pressing with arch in line with heel of front foot

DIRECTIONS

Fabric supports beneath armpits or wrists or front bent knee (variations). Put a wrist lock on, or wrap the fabric under the arm pits as you bend one knee in front of the body. If you wish to have the front knee in the fabric, begin from standing and place the bent knee inside.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)



VARIATIONS



Warrior III/ Virabhadrasana 3 :

KEY

Prerequisites: Crescent Low Lunge and High Lunge, Warrior 1, Warrior 2

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips, Calves, Glutes, Core, Back Extension

Counter Balance: Easy Backbend

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports the wrists, beneath armpits, or under the back foot/ankle
- Firmly root down into standing foot
- Find a visual point of focus
- Find softness in the joints, and control in the core
- Keep Hips square to the mat as you extend through all four limbs

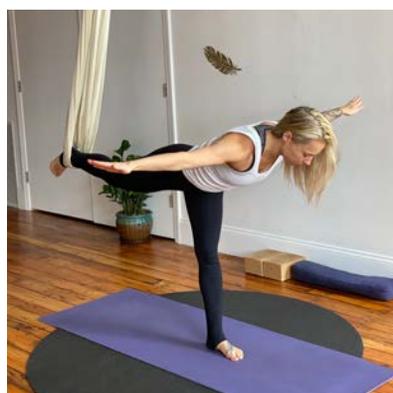
DIRECTIONS

Fabric supports beneath armpits or wrists or under back foot/ankle (variations)
Stand in front of fabric, placing hands at shoulder height, Firmly root down into standing foot. Press fabric out wide as you hinge forward and Lift one leg up keeping the foot flexed behind you and hips squared to the floor.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)



VARIATIONS



You can turn this into a variation with a back bend that resembles Balancing Half Moon (see image below) to make this move more difficult.



Pyramid/ Parsvottanasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Crescent Low Lunge and High Lunge, Warrior 1, Warrior 2

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips, Calves, Glutes, Core, Back Extension

Counter Balance: Easy Backbend

VERBAL CUES

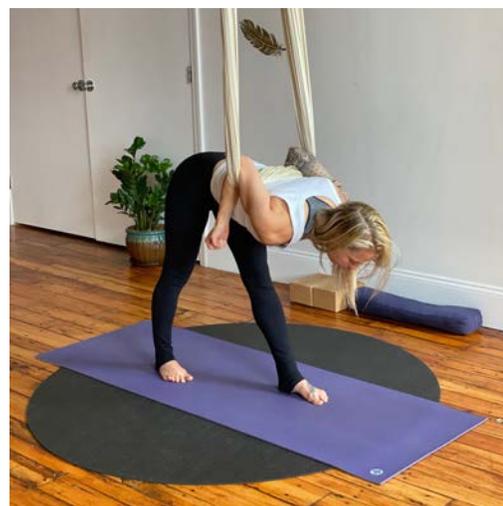
- Fabric supports the wrists, or elbow creases (bend elbows!), or beneath armpits
- Firmly root down into both feet
- Maintain a flat back by lifting core
- Find softness in the joints
- Keep Hips square to the mat as you extend

DIRECTIONS

From standing, the fabric may be wrapped around the wrists, under the elbows (bent), or under the arms. Feet both firmly rooted in the mat, toes all facing the same direction. Keep hips squared to the floor and back extension, with gaze on the ground.



VARIATIONS



Upward Dog / Urdhva Mukha Svanasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Cat and Cow, Down Dog

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders, Lower (Lumbar) Spine, Abdominals

Counter Balance: Down Dog, Child's Pose, Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from Cat or Cow with a wrist wrap
- Engaging the shoulder girdle and core, slowly exhale as you lower your belly towards the floor
- Lift and lengthen through the chest
- Slowly return to child's pose using your arms, back, and core to control the movement and support the lower spine

DIRECTIONS

From kneeling beneath the rigging point, wrap the wrists. With shoulders, arms, and core engaged, slowly exhale as you lower your belly towards the floor.



Easy Back Bend to Wheel / Chakrasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Cat and Cow, Cobra, Up Dog, Supported Chair, Extended Chair, Bow or Camel

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Shoulders, Back

Counter Balance: Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports lower back
- Hands on fabric, legs are wide
- Slowly lower down
- Relax arms towards floor, or reach for feet
- Grab fabric and tuck chin in as you SLOWLY pull yourself back up

DIRECTIONS

From standing, the fabric may be wrapped around the lower back (Lumbar Spine, around L4/L5) . As you lower your weight into the fabric, walk the legs out wide at a 45 degree angle. Keep hips beneath the rigging point.

Slowly, with hands on the fabric at forehead height, lower the upper body towards the floor.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)



VARIATIONS

Crochet (wrap from the outside) one leg on one fabric pole for a Wheel pose with one foot pressing the floor away. This is an intense inversion – remind students to slowly come out of this pose and encourage a relaxed breath.

Backbends like Wheel Pose are intense – they open the chest and shoulders, while working the quads. They can be wonderful for stretching the abdominals. Be aware that Wheel Pose is not for everyone – allow students to stay in **Extended Chair** as an alternative to Wheel Pose, where the fabric supports the Thoracic spine (upper back, where the bra line usually is) and the legs straighten as you reach the arms overhead.



Wide Legged Forward Fold/ Prasarita Padottanasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Wide Leg Seated Forward Fold

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Adductors, Abductors, Back Extension

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend, Mountain

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports wrists, elbow creases, arm pits or hip hinge (variations)
- Facing wide end of the yoga mat, turn toes out slightly
- Hinge at hips while pulling the arches of the feet towards the midline
- Softness in the joints
- Play with gentle movement - side to side, twists, bending in knees and elbows to explore the benefits of this hip opener

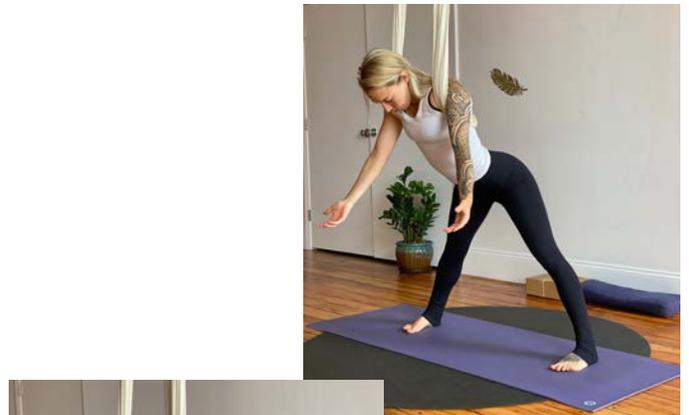
DIRECTIONS

From standing, the fabric may be wrapped around the wrists, under the elbow creases, the arm pits, or placed in front of the body under the hip hinge AS YOU FORWARD FOLD.

With feet actively pulling your mat together, slowly lower your head towards the floor as the fabric supports your body. Safely explore movement by moving side to side, gently twisting, or bending the knees and elbows.



VARIATIONS



Down Dog / Adho Mukha Svanasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Forward Fold, Plank

C/R: Restorative or Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Shoulders, Back, Arms, Core

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend

VERBAL CUES

- Begin standing under rigging point
- Legs as wide as yoga mat
- Press fabric to under the Hip Hinge, or the Top of your Thigh Shelf, as You forward fold
- Palms come wide and flat to the top corners of the mat. and do NOT Move
- Press the hips into the fabric and hands into floor FIRMLY as you walk the toes back and off the floor
- Option to keep feet wide (middle right) or wrap the feet around the poles (top right)

DIRECTIONS

Keep your hips under the rigging point for getting In and out of this move. The pressure of the fabric on the hips can be intimidating at first - it can feel like a deep tissue massage. Be patient as your body gets used to the pressure over time.

You can also go into a traditional (non-Aerial) Down Dog, and place one ankle in the Fabric for an easier variation (bottom right.)

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)



VARIATIONS



Balancing Half Moon / *Ardha Chandrasana:*

KEY

Prerequisites: High Lunge, Warrior II, Down Dog, Warrior III

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Glutes, Obliques, Shoulders Back, Core

Counter Balance: Forward Fold, Easy Back Bend



VERBAL CUES

- This pose can be approached from Aerial Down Dog (top right) Where one leg is crocheted into 3 Legged Dog.
- The supporting leg and same side hand are the foundation as the opposite arm grabs the fabric pole with a thumb UP grip and the OPTION for the standing foot leaves the ground (middle right)
- This can also be approached from the fabric on the waist and the use of a yoga block beneath the grounding hand
- The free hand may grab the free foot by bending the knee
- Be sure to find your DRISHTI - Your visual Focus Point!

DIRECTIONS

You can approach this pose from Aerial Down Dog (top 2 pictures) or from a waist wrap (bottom 2 pictures.) Whichever you choose, your body will be challenged in its balance and focus!

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)

VARIATIONS



Camel / Ustrasana :

(2 versions)

KEY

Prerequisites: Easy Back Bend, Up Dog

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Lower Back, Shoulders

Counter Balance: Forward Fold, Gentle Twist

VERBAL CUES

Fabric Grip with Hands from Kneeling:

- Grip silks together with both hands
- Knees wider than hips, push forward as one hand reaches back for ankle

Fabric Under Armpits from Kneeling:

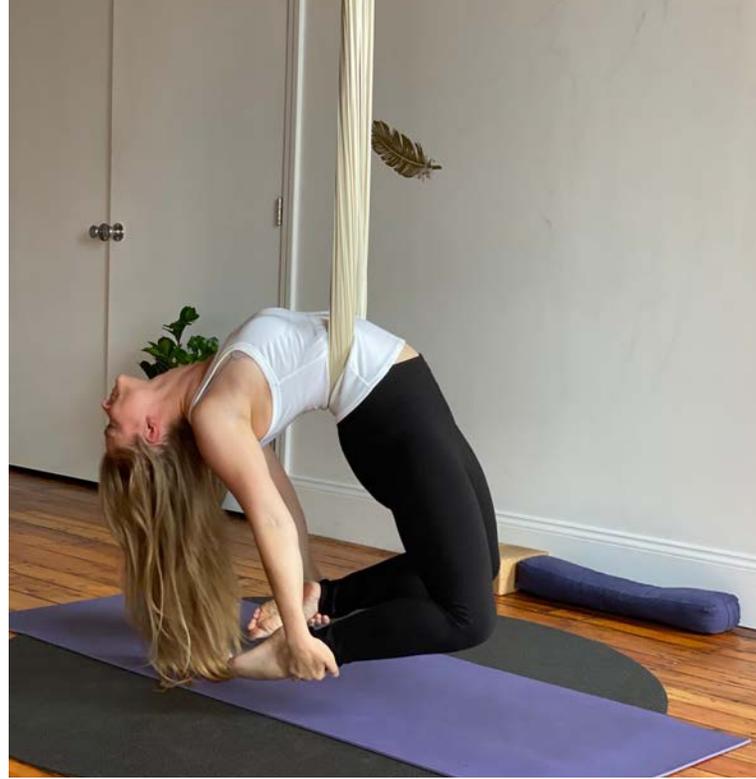
- From kneeling, place silk under the armpits like a back back
- Knees bent, legs wide
- Slowly reach one hand at a time for each ankle

Fabric Supporting Hips:

- From sitting in the silk, have fabric pulled over hips
- Keep silk at lower back/waist as you lower head towards floor
- Keep legs bent and knees wide
- Reach towards the floor or the ankles with your hands

DIRECTIONS

In either variation, this can be an intense back bend. Encourage students to breath going in, and coming out slowly, from this pose.



VARIATIONS



Goddess / Utkata Konasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Lunges, Warrior II, Pigeon

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Hips, Glutes

Counter Balance: Mountain Pose, Extended Chair

VERBAL CUES

- From standing with legs wider than hips, turn toes out to 45 degrees.
- Knees tracking over ankles, keep pelvis tucked under to support lower spine as you lower your torso
- The fabric can support you under the arms, or you can make this more difficult with the fabric under one knee

DIRECTIONS

From standing under your rigging point, face the wide side of your mat. Keep feet wider than hips, with toes turned out to 45 degrees. Pelvic floor tucked under, slowly exhale as you lower your body.

Flying Goddess is a more advanced movement where the legs wrap around the poles to create thigh wraps. [Click Here for a Video Tutorial.](#)

Floating Goddess is Restorative (previously called "Saddle" in previous classes and manuals.



VARIATIONS



Pigeon / Eka Pada Rajakapotasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Lunges, Warrior II

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Hips, Glutes

Counter Balance: Wide Leg Forward Fold, Down Dog, Extended Chair

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from standing under the rigging point, raise one leg and place the ankle in the loop
- Turn the hip out of the supported leg, and bend the knee to draw the heel towards the body
- You can support the bent leg by wrapping the fabric over the knee joint (see image on right)
- Press your belly and chest into the fabric

DIRECTIONS

From standing under your rigging point, raise one leg and place the ankle in the loop. As you bend your knee of the supporting leg, turn the hip out.

The thinner the fabric (top right image). the more intense the stretch can be. To lessen the intensity, pull the fabric over the knee for more support.

Your standing foot may stay completely rooted, or you can lift the heel to deepen the stretch.



VARIATIONS



Dancer/ Natarajasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Lunges, Warrior II, gentle back bend

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Hips, Glutes, Shoulders

Counter Balance: Wide Leg Forward Fold, Down Dog, Extended Chair

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from standing under the rigging point, raise one leg and place the ankle or arch of the foot in the loop
- Bring your leg to the back of your body, with knee bent
- Find a DRISHTI - focus point, as you grab the poles above you with thumbs turned DOWN
- Lean forward, dropping the chest, squeeze the elbows together, and press your foot back into the fabric

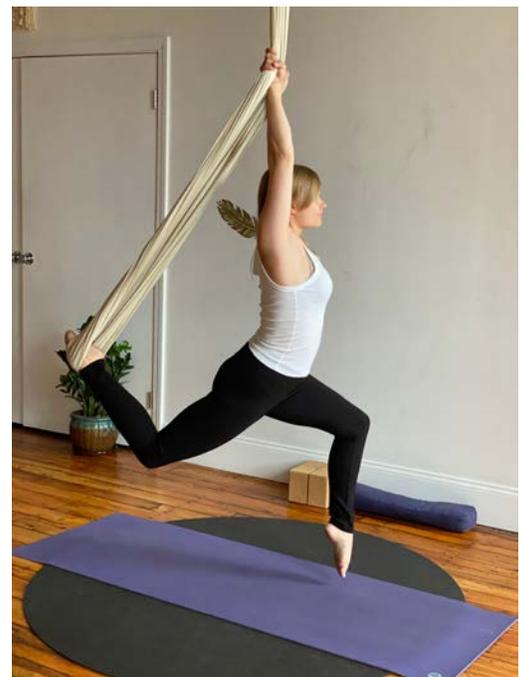
DIRECTIONS

From standing under your rigging point, raise one leg and place the ankle in the loop. As you bend your knee of the supporting leg, turn the hip out., and bring your leg behind you.

If you have a 2 point hammock - You can switch to an INSIDE GRIP (see bottom right image) and hands are INSIDE of the fabrics. You have the option here to lift the front foot off the floor for more intensity! Go slow, breath, and Listen to your body.



VARIATIONS



Tree/ Vrksasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Lunges, Dancer

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Hips, Glutes, Core

Counter Balance: Mountain Pose, Forward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from standing under the rigging point, raise one leg and place the ankle or arch of the foot in the loop
- Reach arms high for either fabric and step up as you keep the free leg and hip behind the pole
- Bring the ankle of the free foot around the same side pole and place the sole of the foot on the inside of your standing thigh or calf muscle (top right)
- The same side shoulder as the floating leg can come to the front of the pole for prayer mudra (top right image)

DIRECTIONS

From standing under your rigging point, raise one leg and place the ankle in the loop. As you stand on one foot, you may notice some uncomfortable pressure on the sole of your foot. This pressure will go away in time with practice as your body adjusts and acclimates to this new sensation.

You have the option to make this pose extended, as shown in the bottom right image, where the same side hand holds the outside of the floating foot.



VARIATIONS



[Click Here for a Tutorial on getting In and Out of this Pose.](#)

3 Legged Dog / *Eka Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana :*

KEY

Prerequisites: Down Dog

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Hips,
Shoulders

Counter Balance: Backbend

VERBAL CUES

- Hands are wide and flat, palms pressing the floor away
- Chest is lowered towards the floor
- Hips stay lifted
- Press the heel down of the standing foot

DIRECTIONS

From Standing under the rigging point, place one foot at the bottom of the fabric loop. Maintaining balance with hips slightly turned out, slowly rotate through the supported legs hip joint to bring the leg behind you. From here, slowly lower your hands towards the floor, lift the hips, and hop the standing leg back.



VARIATIONS

You can also approach a 3 legged dog that I argue could also be called "Standing Splits," which is also a common Yoga pose in modern classes.

Look Below - this variation comes from an AERIAL Down Dog, where one leg crochets UP the fabric, and the supporting foot and hand stay grounded.



Side Plank/ Vrksasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Plank, Down Dog

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Obliques, Shoulders

Counter Balance: Child's Pose, Pigeon

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from Down Dog with one ankle in the fabric behind you
- Lower hips to plank with hands wide and flat, stacked wrists beneath shoulders, and belly tucked in
- Rotate on the grounded foot to its side (top right) and keep pressing the floor away as you LIFT your Hips and hand towards the sky

DIRECTIONS

You can move the fabric to the top thigh (middle right) or the hips (bottom right) to change the intensity of this pose as you grow stronger.

[Click Here for a Tutorial on getting In and Out of this Pose.](#)



VARIATIONS



Wild Thing / Camatkarasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Down Dog, Three Legged Dog, Plank

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Arms, Core, Shoulders

Counter Balance: Child's Pose

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from Down Dog with one ankle in the fabric (also called 3 legged dog)
- Keep hips high as you HOP the standing foot (with soft knee) to the opposite side of the mat
- Keep hands wide and flat and hips high as you move the wrapped foot/ankle behind your head
- Option to bend the knee and grab the foot with the same side hand (top right)

DIRECTIONS

You can also approach a FLYING Wild Thing (aka "Flying Manta Ray") - (bottom right) from standing in Tree Pose, press one fabric away as you take the same side foot and press the silk at thigh height with a turn out.

[Click Here for a Tutorial on getting In and Out of this Pose.](#)



VARIATIONS



Handstand/ Adho Mukha Vrksasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Down Dog, Three Legged Dog, Plank

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Arms, Core, Shoulders

Counter Balance: CForward Fold

VERBAL CUES

- Begin from Aerial Down Dog, with the fabric on your hips
- Keep Hips and Hands beneath your rigging point and hook the ankles around the fabric poles
- With flat palms, stack your wrists under shoulders and shoulders **DIRECTLY UNDER** your rigging point
- Press the floor away as you squeeze your thighs together, knees bent and ankles locked (bottom right)
- When you are ready, keep your hips lifted and hands pressing the floor away, as your legs V out - one leg towards the top of your mat, the other towards the back

DIRECTIONS

This pose will take some work to be comfortable in. Keep your legs and feet pressing firmly into the fabric as the legs press in opposite directions in a V shape (see top right image.) Notice that one leg has 2 wraps, while the front leg appears to be unwrapped. This is normal. Do not let the fabric slide down your legs beneath the knees, keep it on your thighs the entire time or you may slip out.

[Click Here for a Tutorial on getting In and Out of this Pose.](#)



PROGRESSION



Splits / Hanumanasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Lunges, Warrior II, Pigeon

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Hips, Glutes

Counter Balance: Gentle hip openers, gentle twisting

VERBAL CUES

- Fabric supports ankle with hips and standing leg directly under the rigging point
- Place the ankle or arch (more intense) on the fabric in front of you
- You can split with the leg in FRONT of you, elevating on your standing foot
- You can split with the leg in BACK of you, pushing hands and front foot into the floor

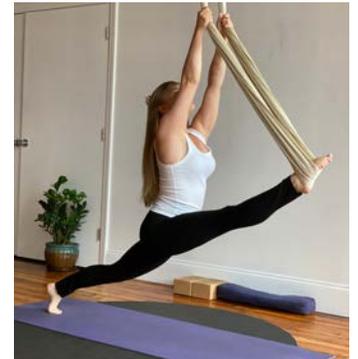
DIRECTIONS

From standing under your rigging point, place your ankle or arch of the foot at the bottom of the fabric loop. Maintain balance in your standing leg as you bring your hands to the silks and pressing the front foot and hips forward.

If you bring the wrapped foot behind you, carefully lower your head and hands towards the floor as you press the back foot in the silk away into a support split.



VARIATIONS



Floating Splits!

Floating Splits are a wonderfully supportive way to enter your splits. You can be inside the hammock completely and split, or you can enter from one end and split on the outside of the silks! See the Image Below.



Basic Inversions:

KEY

Prerequisites: Basic Inversion (shown), Pigeon from standing

C/R: Restorative

Primary Muscle Groups: Quads, Hips, Shoulders, Lower Back

Counter Balance: Forward Fold, Chair

VERBAL CUES

- Begin with hips under rigging point, legs wide and toes turned out.
- Place fabric on your lower back as you lean into the fabric
- Press the poles forward with your hands at forehead height as you drop your head back and spread your legs wide
- Gently hook the ankles around the poles right above your hands
- BREATH as you release your grip and relax

DIRECTIONS

From Standing under the rigging point, place the fabric in your lower back. Keep the legs wide with toes turned out as you invert slowly. Inhale, and push the fabrics forward as you slowly go upside down with legs wide. When ready, place your ankles right above your hands on the fabric. Slowly release your grip as you Exhale.

Release one foot as you allow the hip to further open and hang behind your head. Option to grab your foot with one or both hands.

**Knuckles on the floor, pictured bottom right, is safer than pressing the floor way with your palms.



Inversion Variations:

On the previous page, we explore how to invert with the fabric in the lower back. In the beginning, many people may find this pressure uncomfortable. If you find this wrap is pinching, simply fan the fabric out into a silk swing seat that you can sit inside, wrapping your hips, before inverting the same way as described on the previous page (see image, top right.)

MERMAID VARIATION

You can also try out the mermaid tail variation, center right image, where you lay in the fabric that is pulled and covering you from your waist to your toes. Lower your head slowly towards the floor.

MERMAID INTO SKIRT WRAP

Hold the edges of the fabric as you keep your legs, wrapped, straight and hook your ankles onto the edges (bottom 2 images.)

The exit is to grab hold of the edges as you tuck your chin, and slowly unlock the feet from the edges. Return to Mermaid, then sit up for a Forward Fold in the fabric.



Shoulderstand & Plow / Halasana :

SHOULDER STAND

From Mermaid on the previous page, wrap the shoulders and hold the edges of the silk above your face securely with thumbs up. Place your flexed feet on the edges of the fabric above your hands. Slide your feet and hips up.

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial of Shoulder Stand,](#)

PLOW

From Mermaid on the previous page, wrap the shoulders AND your feet and legs in a blanket that goes at least to your knees. Hold the edges of the fabric above you with a secure, thumbs up grip. Bring your wrapped feet up and over the head (middle image) into a Plow position,

You have the option to reverse from here to exit, OR you may continue to press your feet into the fabric and lower your hips into an inverted, wrapped plank (see bottom left image.)

You can reverse from here to exit, OR you may drop one foot onto the ground and stand into a lunge. Be sure to pop the silks off your shoulders! (see bottom right image.)

[Click Here for a Video Tutorial of Plow and Dancer Pose Exit.](#)



Flying Boat and Bound Angle / Navasana & Baddha Konasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Aerial Down Dog, Plank,
Inverted Pigeon

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Hands, Forearms,
Back, Core

Counter Balance: Easy Back Bend,
Supported Chair

VERBAL CUES

- Begin under your rigging point, place the arch of one foot in the fabric loop
- Hands high on each pole, lift the standing foot into the fabric loop and drop the hips back for BOAT (top right)
- Turn hips out and bend the knees as you lower down to Bound Angle, bring ONLY ONE ARM through the front (middle right)
- If you choose to lower down, use one arm on the pole and one reaching towards the floor

DIRECTIONS

This move can be very difficult to get out of. Please have someone spotting you the first few times until you get the hang of this - you can get stuck.

The process of going down uses one hand on the pole as you slowly lower with the other hand reaching for the floor. To come OUT - look at the bottom right image - both hands must be used, with a THUMBS DOWN GRIP and head tucked in. Arch the back slightly as you lift the chest and exit SLOWLY bringing one arm back through at a time, and extending your legs back to Boat, then back to standing on the floor again.



Bird of Paradise/ Svarga Dvijasana :

KEY

Prerequisites: Wild Thing, Flying Wild Thing

C/R: Conditioning

Primary Muscle Groups: Hamstrings, Obliques, Shoulders, Hips

Counter Balance: Down Dog, Forward Fold



VERBAL CUES

- Begin with fabric in the lower back and hips directly under rigging point
- Keep your chest lifted as you take one leg through the center of the fabrics and place the back of your leg against the same side pole (middle right)
- Extend the "wrapped" leg as much as possible, without strain
- Move the fabric from your waist to your arm pits
- Lengthen the free foot towards the top of the mat

VARIATIONS



DIRECTIONS

This is an intense stretch that you will need to revisit before your hips and hamstrings can open into balancing on the standing split, shown in the bottom left image.

Notice upon standing, you may keep the fabric UNDER the arm pit, as you extend the opposite foot into the fabric, making a Martini glass shape.

You can always bend the knee and release the arm pit to EXIT.



Strength Builders

One of the most common questions I get asked is how did I get stronger for silks.

While I have recently uploaded and created many tutorials for free on my YouTube channel for Hammock and Silks Conditioning, [including this Hammock Conditioning Video Here](#), I wanted to include a few images of my favorite ways to strengthen your grip, shoulders, core, back, and arms.

STANDING ROWS

- Keep elbows squeezing in to the sides
- Keep shoulders relaxed from the ears



PLANK, TUCKS, AND LEG LIFTS

- Stack wide flat palms under shoulders
- Lift the hips over the heart
- Play with variations progressing from Plank, to Knee Tuck, to Hip Lift, and finally One Leg Hip Lift (shown below in order)



HOLLOW BODY HOLD

- Keep chest lifted, core engaged, and back parallel to the floor without an arch
- Point the toes, and work to straighten the legs over time
- Keep hands near fabrics until you are ready to release (shown below)



Savasana : Moving into Stillness

"COVER YOURSELF UP, FROM HEAD TO TOES, AND BEGIN TO CLOSE THE EYES. LISTEN TO YOUR BODY, AND RESPOND. SLOWLY MAKE ANY FINAL MOVEMENTS AS YOU SETTLE INTO SAVASANA..."

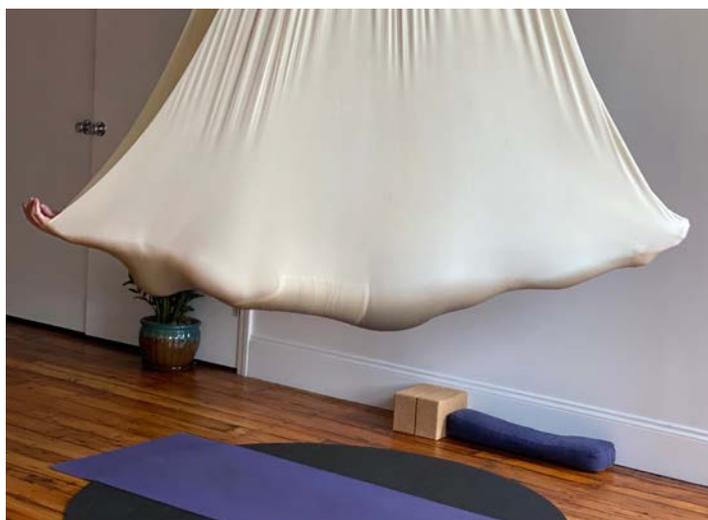


Every Yoga class should end with a 5-10 minute period for restoration, quiet, and reflection. I like to offer students an opportunity to stretch or move in any way their body is craving before they finally settle into their resting pose.

From here, you can ask them to close their eyes, relax their hands in their laps or by their sides, and dim the lights or close the shades. Bring their attention to their bodies, scanning from the feet towards the hips, spine, arms, and face. Allow them to focus on their breath or an intention for that day.

Playing music is optional. Some classes I play music, others I don't. Sometimes I do a little of both – play a song, then let them sit in silence for a few minutes. If you like to do a reading, you may do this as well.

As students come out of this resting state, bring them back with a soft voice, and encourage small movements in their hands and feet. Move to bigger movements in their knees and elbows, then hips and shoulders. Guide students to sitting up safely by grabbing the edges of the hammock and walk their feet through the bottom end of the fabric, gently pulling themselves up to a seated position.



You may end class with a word of Thanks, reflection on their mind and body, or any other closing that resonates with you and the class. Allow students to gently step out of the hammock and slowly stand to exit.

Aerial Yoga Sequences

Creating aerial yoga sequences are a fun challenge – but it's not always easy when you're first teaching. To help you become inspired and recognize a well-thought out lesson plan, I've included some examples of sequences I have used before in my own classes. Feel free to adjust these plans for the goal, style, and level of your class that you teach.

For over 30 aerial yoga sequences, with easy follow along cueing and demonstrations, [visit KamaFitTV.com](http://www.KamaFitTV.com). If you would like to join me weekly for 3 brand new classes a week, plus access to over 150 unique aerial yoga flows, [you can join me LIVE Here](#).

HIP OPENING SEQUENCE : BEGINNER

Warm Up (5-10 MIN):

Child's Pose with shoulder stretches
Cat and Cow with Spinal Twist
Pigeon with foot in hammock
Intense Up Dog

Workout (10-20 MIN):

Each Leg: Low Lunge (add hamstring stretch, wrist wraps optional)
Pigeon with foot in hammock
High Lunge to Triangle
Supported Three Legged Dog Pigeon on floor (no hammock, traditional pose)
Down Dog
Supported High Lunge
Down Dog
Supported Leg Stretch, side stretch
Supported Pigeon
Supported High Lunge
Supported Warrior II, add twist
Inverted Straddle to Pigeon (Royal Pigeon optional)
Forward Fold
Down Dog

Cool Down/Stretch (5-10 MIN):

Child 's Pose – arms in Eagle supported in hammock
Seated Twist – arms in hammock optional
Bridge with feet on floor
Legs Up Wall Supported
Savasana (5-10 minutes)



Aerial Yoga Sequences

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STRETCHING AND FLEXIBILITY : INTERMEDIATE

Warm Up (5-10 MIN):

Child's Pose with shoulder stretches

Child's Pose with Easy Back Bend

Seated Staff

Seated Butterfly

Seated Straddle

Workout (10-20 MIN):

Each Leg: Pigeon with foot in hammock

Low Lunge

Three-Legged Dog

Dancer's Pose

Supported Leg Stretch, add side stretch

Supported Goddess

Extended Chair

Supported Wheel

Twisted Extended Chair

Down Dog

Forward Fold

Three Legged Dog, add twist

Inverted Pigeon

Bird of Paradise (challenging)

Cool Down/Stretch (5-10 MIN):

Down Dog

Three Legged Dog, add twist

Forward Fold

Supported Wheel

Mermaid

Inverted Plow

Savasana (5-10 minutes)



Aerial Yoga Sequences

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CORE STRENGTHENING : INTERMEDIATE

Warm Up (5-10 MIN):

Child's Pose with shoulder stretches
Seated Staff with shoulder stretches
Cat and Cow

Workout (10-20 MIN):

Plank to Inverted Staff
Plank to Knee Tucks
Plank to Push Ups
Forward Fold
Down Dog
Three Legged Dog with Twist
Chair to Extended Chair
Hip Balance to Side Planks, both sides
Supported Warrior III
Supported Warrior II, add twist
Inverted Pigeon (3 times slow)
Inverted Straddle (3 times slow)
Forward Fold to Down Dog
Standing shoulder stretches

Conditioning:

Supported Wheel
Mermaid to Inverted Plow (3 times slow)
Inverted Plow Variations (if class appropriate)

Cool Down/Stretch (5-10 MIN):

Pose of Choice (1 minute)
Centering
Savasana (5-10 minutes)



Developing Your Own Aerial Yoga Program

Whether you are an aerial hobbyist or instructor, you may begin to crave stepping outside your normal movement and creating new flows, moves, and transitions. While the online world and social media provide an abundance of fun flows and moves, learning to create your own can be an enjoyable endeavor. It will also make your brain and body stronger in the aerial movement arena. Here are some of my best tips for creating new moves and sequences to play with.

What's Holding You? First, consider what body part is being held. Where the silk hammock is holding you in relation to your body begins the steps towards feeling out a new movement or pose. Also, consider what is in contact with the floor – if anything at all! You could have a knee hooked in the silk, while both hands hold on, and one foot on the ground. That verbal explanation could make you visualize several different poses. I was thinking of standing leg lunge – what did you think of? Try it again – in your mind, or on your own silk.

Pick a body part (knee, elbow, wrist, hand, ankle, foot, waist, seat, etc.) and put one in the fabric. Now, begin to experiment with the other body parts. Where are they in space? On the ground, on the silk, holding on, reaching out? What kinds of poses and movement did you come up with? It is likely you may begin with poses and moves that are familiar to you, that you have seen or done before. Close your eyes, turn on some music, and keep going. Where else does your body take you? The outcome can be limitless – move a body part, change the pose.

Pick a Pose Another way to be more creative with your movement on the aerial yoga hammock is a game I play (perhaps only in my own mind) called “Pick a Pose.” This is a great exercise to use when you wish to make a pose easier for a restorative class, or more challenging. Keep in mind that your body will be utilizing the floor and the hammock, and blocks can be used, as well. More restorative style poses will be likely grounded mainly, while more challenging variations will be completed from standing or flying.

Begin by choosing a yoga pose- for this example, let's use pigeon pose. Using the fabric and the floor, begin to recreate this pose. Begin on the ground mainly – perhaps lying on your back. Place a foot in the silk. Now, take your other foot and place it in a way that resembles reclining pigeon pose. **Look at the 3 variations of pigeon below - How many more can you create or think up?**



Developing Your Own Aerial Yoga Program

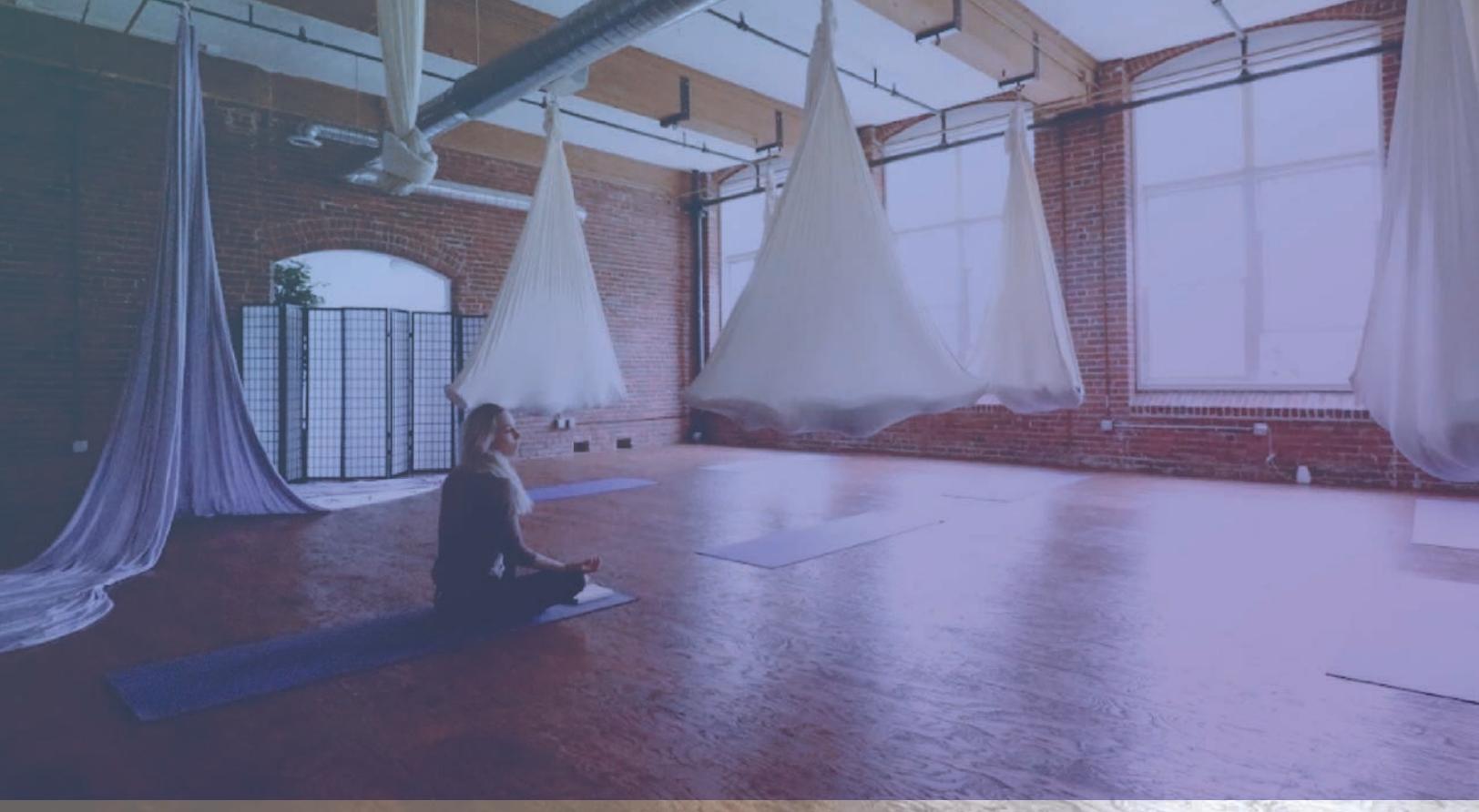
Take the time to pick a pose and play with all the variations you can regarding body position in relation to the ground and the silk, along with being held by the aerial hammock being thin or wide. One of my favorite sequences with this Pick a Pose game is inspired by “Wild Thing.” In this sequence, I used 6 different variations of this pose using the silk hammock. [You can view it here on KamaitTV.com.](http://KamaitTV.com)

Tricky Transitions Transitions are the hammer and nails of your aerial yoga sequence. Moving from one pose to another should flow smoothly. Getting the fabric from the knee to the foot is easy (it simply slides down) but getting your body from the ground to the air can sometimes be a bit more tricky. Finding ways to get the silk from one body part to another in order to safely access a new stretch or pose will take time to develop. There will be poses that flow seamlessly, and others where you will have to simply move the silk from the back of your body to the front. The complexity of your transitions will also have to be in tune with the level of the aerialist. Fancy, strength-based transitions may require more muscle and technique than a beginner student would be able to do.

To help you move from one pose to another in a safe and smooth way, practice by selecting two poses. One is your Point A, and the second is your Point B, where you wish to get to. Begin in your first pose. Consider what is being held, where it is being held, and where you wish to get to in your second pose. What body part needs to be held, where will it be held, and how can you move safely in that direction. This may seem obvious, but have you ever just entered a pose and tried to smoothly transfer your body to the next? It can sometimes be simple, but other times requires some more acrobatic work. Think of the level of student you are working with and find a way that makes sense for their experience and safety.

For more ideas in transitions, please visit KamaFitTV.com for many ideas in moving from pose to pose in over 30 aerial yoga sequence examples.





And so,
She did.

It is with my most sincere Gratitude to you, reader/ student / aerialist / yogi / friend, for trusting me with your Journey from the Ground, and into the Air.

I hope this 5th, and Final, Edition for the Kama Fitness Aerial Yoga Manual provides you with ideas, inspiration, and guidance as you Flow and Fly.

As you know, the last 6 years I have been in business, I have been inspired to tirelessly create and re-create tutorials and manuals for all those looking to Ground, through Yoga and use of spiritual tools, to Flowing using your Breath and Body, to Flying with the Aerial Yoga Hammock.

As the vocabulary of yoga, aerial, and spirituality continue to grow and evolve- it is my hope you will continue to re-visit the tools I have put together for you online.

Peace. Sat Name. Namaste. Om Shanti Om.
Thank You. *Karlene*

About Aerial Yoga Girl

Karlene has 15 years of experience in the fitness and educational world. She once shared her passion for teaching both in the classroom with a BS in Secondary Education, and at her aerial fitness studio, Kama Fitness. Karlene has an impressive background teaching fitness at Keene State College and the University of New Hampshire, along with giving seminars on women's self-defense all over the New Hampshire area. She is fully certified in Personal Training, a Nutrition Specialist, Pilates Instructor, Group Aerobics certified, Kickboxing certified, Women's Self Defense, CPR /AED, a 200-hour registered Yoga Teacher, a certified Aerial Silks instructor, and holds a Black Belt in the martial arts. In addition, she has studied dance and gymnastics since childhood. Her passion for movement extends into many different areas to create a program that is fun, unique, and intelligent. Today she studies Strala and Buti styles of Yoga, as well as Tai Chi, Qigong, Tarot, Astrology, and Past Life Healing.

Today she trains all over the Greater Boston area in acrobatics, yoga, and the aerial arts, including studying under NECCA and Cirque Body. She is also the creator of the fitness and nutrition blog, Kama Fitness & Nutrition, featuring advice, recipes, and workouts along with writing her first book on harnessing a mind-body connection to achieve your fitness goals.

As the owner and main instructor for Kama Fitness, Karlene brings her passion for making fitness fun and safe with an encouraging, non-competitive attitude. Since childhood she has had a passion for movement. In her late teens she began teaching fitness classes and personal training and studied almost every form of fitness genre to learn more. Along the way, she became certified in multiple areas of fitness and nutrition, so that she could master each one, and create a program that is both functional and intelligent. With her team of positive, encouraging Instructors, Kama Fitness creates a non-competitive environment that uses creativity and body intelligence to foster movement that is progressive for optimal results - while having fun!

Kama Fitness is created around the belief you should **Love Your Workout.**

Teacher's Resources

The previous versions of this manual held resources for Teachers that is continually evolving with each annual teacher training we hold at our studio. With this in mind, we ask that if you are looking for the course materials for yourself or your studio teachers, to please contact us directly via email: Karlene@KamaFitnessNH.com .

Thank You!

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It is recommended that you check with your doctor or healthcare provider before commencing any exercise. By purchasing and use of this manual, you are making an agreement that you understand the risks involved with aerial fitness and have investigated the risks involved with performing inversions.

Please Visit KamaFitTV.com for complete Aerial Yoga Sequences and Tutorials.

KAMA FIT TV