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Questions have been raised recently about the safety of yoga practice and the merits of the qualifications of those offering themselves as yoga teachers. A book by William J Broad called 'The Science of Yoga: The Risks and Rewards' looks at the potential dangers, and some of the facts and figures. What is not clear to the public, however, is how to find a suitably qualified teacher and what to expect of them.

A yoga teacher should be able to produce a certificate of competence and evidence of their membership of a professional organisation, along with appropriate insurance cover. This means that the professional organisation and their insurers have put in place a teacher training structure and professional development plan which develops the trainee teachers' ability to teach students safely and without injury over a period of time. The teacher may also have a current First Aid certificate.



All teachers of **lyengar yoga** are trained to very high standards and fully insured. This is part of the reason that lyengar yoga is one of the most widely-performed methods of yoga worldwide. The lyengar method of yoga is named after Yogacharya Sri B.K.S. lyengar, now 93 years old, and from whose institute in Pune, India, all lyengar yoga activities worldwide are governed.

lyengar yoga teaching helps you focus on correct alignment of the body in poses, ensuring you're working safely, with maximum benefit to your flexibility, strength and wellbeing. Classes generally start with simple poses and gradually move

towards more advanced poses, ending with a period of relaxation and sometimes incorporating breathing techniques.

The postures are very precise and you will be guided through them by experienced teachers who are trained to make appropriate adjustments for different physiques and for people with specific problems. The classes can be hard work, as the poses involve intense stretching; however, you will leave the class feeling lighter and calmer. The immediate benefits of Yoga are greater flexibility and strength, and better physical health. As you continue with your practice, psychological and spiritual benefits begin to appear.

Be sure to tell your teacher if there is anything they should know about such as a bad back, stiff shoulders, sore knees etc. All poses can be modified for these conditions and may well help relieve them. Props, such as blocks and belts, are sometimes used in class to allow those with less strength or flexibility to work correctly and achieve their full potential.



When you see the Iyengar Yoga Certification Mark it means an **Introductory** teacher has completed a minimum of five years study and practice, and has successfully passed a rigorous assessment. **Intermediate** and **Senior** teachers have been practising and training for many more years and have passed a series of further assessments.

The Iyengar Yoga Certification Mark is a guarantee of excellence, clarity and depth of understanding. All Iyengar teachers are required to maintain their professional development each year to qualify for continued use of the Certification Mark. There are thousands of Iyengar Yoga classes around the country. Simply visit www.iyengaryoga.org.uk to find your nearest teacher in the UK and Ireland.



For Iyengar Yoga classes in Bridport and Lyme Regis in West Dorset, and Yoga Holidays in the UK and abroad please contact **Hannah Lovegrove**. Telephone: 01297 678600
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