

## **Safe Teaching Guidelines 3: Key poses for beginners – observation guidelines for yoga class teaching and professional practice**



**Information re: key poses to look at beginner students in and points to think/talk about**

**Tadasana**- feet, alignment, head, neck and chin position, back of the waist, ribs, tail bone,

**Tree Pose** – re: balance and focus - state of mind, hip rotation, legs, heel stretching, ankles, core support

**Sun salute**- re: general mobility- ability to follow instructions - breathing

**Standing forward bend** - keeping spine long, folding to table from uttanasana and prasaritta padottanasana (legs wide apart) – re: spine and legs, shoulders

**All arm swings** – re: spine and shoulders, arms

**Squatting** – re: feet, ankles, leg muscles, knees, hips, lower back

**Standing twists** - also with foot on chair - re upper spine – feet - hips

**Kneeling** – re: feet, ankles, hips, pelvis, looking at spine (especially when in forward bend)

**All four positions** – re: wrists, spine, neck

**Dog pose** – re: spine, shoulders, hips, hamstrings, hands, arms

**Supine leg stretches** – re: spine, hips, hamstrings

**Sitting poses** – re: pelvis, hamstrings, hips, spine

**All twists** - keep spine **long** - keep these simple - re: spine- breathing-

**Sitting balances** – re: tummy muscles , hamstrings, iliopsoas muscles

**Inverteds** - head and shoulder balance prep with chair/wall and halasana/plough - both re: neck, jaw, shoulders, proportions fear, tension, upper back, spine,

hips, abdominal and back strength strength, lower back, understanding how to lengthen spine

**Half backarches** – feet – re: upper back pelvis – knees - breathing

**Hand balances** - using gravity in hands - understanding where centre of gravity falls - wrists, arms, shoulders

**Breathing**- start them in a position they are comfortable in - ie supine – kneel - sit on chair etc - help them become aware of letting go with the out breath and receiving the in breath- and keep it simple - introduce variations very slowly and build up to them - they are helpful as they focus the mind - but remember they can be confusing too

**Savasana** - talk through this as they settle - keep images pragmatic - focus on letting the body breathe - giving the weight away with the outbreath - leaving the back of the body heavy as the in breath comes in - inhaling passively - relaxing successive areas of the back of the body against the floor - awareness of how the muscles within respond to the action of the breath (nothing too dark, too anatomically detailed or too airy-fairy- one has to be very careful - remember terms and images that may not disturb you may disturb someone else)