

Chapter Review Answers

Chapter 1

1. Q: Approximately how old is yoga?
A: Five thousand years or older
2. Q: Define yoga in a few sentences.
A: Yoga is a discipline without dogma. It is any path that unites or connects you to your spiritual realizations. There are infinite types of yoga, but it is most often discovered or known in modern Western society as a mind-body exercise (in the form of asanas and pranayama).
3. Q: What four types of yoga are typically practiced, and of which type is hatha yoga?
A: Karma, bhakti, jnana, and raja. Hatha yoga is included in the category of raja, which is often considered to be the true Ashtanga.
4. Q: What is Ashtanga yoga?
A: *Ashtanga* means “eight limbs” and refers to the eight limbs of yoga as outlined in the *Yoga Sutras*. There is also a style of hatha yoga, as taught by Pattabhi Jois, that is referred to as Ashtanga or as the Ashtanga series.
5. Q: How did Patanjali codify yoga practice?
A: He compiled the *Yoga Sutras*.
6. Q: What well-known type of hatha yoga focuses on alignment, form, and the use of props?
A: Iyengar
7. Q: Identify some popular styles of hatha yoga practiced today.
A: Classical-eclectic hatha (including vinyasa flows), Iyengar, Ashtanga series, Bikram, restorative, Kundalini, and prenatal, to name a few.

8. Q: Describe some concerns facing modern yoga practitioners and some of the ways in which the needs of today's yoga students and teachers are being met.

A: Hatha yoga alone is so vast and relative that it is challenging to create standards for teachers that allow the uninformed public, as well as instructors, to find a consistent level of education. Hot topics in the field today include safety concerns, ethics, career options, and the history and future of yoga.

9. Q: What are the five categories of yoga teacher training outlined by the Yoga Alliance?

A: (1) Techniques, training, and practice; (2) teaching methodology; (3) anatomy and physiology; (4) yoga philosophy, lifestyle, and ethics; and (5) practicum.

10. Explain the meanings of the words *yamas* and *niyamas*.

A: *Yamas* are guidelines for ethical standards and moral conduct: *ahimsa* (non-violence, doing no harm), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (not stealing), *brahmacharya* (moderation), *aparigraha* (not coveting and nonattachment).

A: *Niyamas* are observances and disciplines: *saucha* (cleanliness), *santosha* (contentment or equanimity), *tapas* (austerities), *svadhyaya* (study of spiritual scriptures), *ishvara pranidhana* (practice of awareness and surrender).

Chapter 2

1. Q: What are the four Cs of teaching yoga?

A: Connection, compassion, confidence, and commitment

2. Q: What are the three basic learning styles?
A: Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic
3. Q: Which dosha is associated with the fluidity of air?
A: Vata
4. Q: Which type of student often has trouble staying motivated?
A: Kapha
5. Q: List two things that students typically like in a yoga instructor and two things that they typically dislike.
A: Students like teachers who can motivate and connect with them. Students dislike instructors who are focused on themselves or express any negative comments at all. For more examples, see table 2.1 in chapter 2.
6. Q: How is the word *asana* used as an acronym for teaching yoga?
A: A = *ahimsa* (and ask), S = suggest, A = align, N = nurture, and A = assess.
7. Q: True or False: There is a very strict code of ethics that you are legally required to abide by as a professional yoga teacher.
A: False
8. Q: What aspects of your personal yoga practice will make you a better teacher?
A: It is all relative. The key is that you are engaged in a personal yoga practice. For more information or to gain perspective about your answer, review the self-inquiry questionnaire presented in appendix C.
9. Q: Define *ahimsa*.
A: First and foremost, it is an aspect of the eight limbs of yoga; it also means “causing no harm.”

Chapter 3

1. Q: Why would yoga practitioners choose to wear white cotton or other natural fibers?
A: To foster the electromagnetic field surrounding them during practice.
2. Q: Name three indispensable items used when practicing yoga.
A: Bare feet, comfortable clothing, and a proper yoga mat.

3. Q: How can blocks be used?
A: Blocks are generally used during standing postures to extend the reach of the arms toward the ground without causing undue strain in the hamstrings or back. They may also be used in place of bolsters or blankets to provide more stable elevation when needed.
4. Q: What is the most important concern when physically adjusting your students?
A: Respect each student’s body as if it were your own.
5. Q: How long should the average person wait after a meal before practicing yoga? Why?
A: Two or three hours should pass before starting a yoga practice after a large meal, because the circulation and energy used for digestion are needed for the practice; in addition, a full stomach is uncomfortable when practicing.
6. Q: Describe an ideal setting for a yoga class.
A: A spacious, comfortable area that is free from outside distractions and provides good ventilation and adequate lighting
7. Q: What temperature range is generally considered ideal for most yoga styles?
A: Between 70 and 76 degrees Fahrenheit (about 21 and 24 degrees Celsius)
8. Q: What are some pros and cons of using music while teaching yoga?
A: Pros include drowning out audible distractions and setting a helpful mood. Cons include the fact that music can be distracting in itself; in addition, students may become dependent on it.

Chapter 4

1. Q: Identify an epidemic habit in modern society that contributes to the stress and high anxiety suffered by many people.
A: Poor breathing
2. Q: How can a student bypass the chatter in his or her mind and ego?
A: By focusing on the breath

3. Q: _____ can be triggered either negatively through shallow, labored breathing or positively through smooth, flowing breaths that stabilize thoughts and allow relaxation to set in.
A: Emotions
4. Q: Choppy, shallow breathing is associated with which nervous system?
A: The sympathetic nervous system, which activates the body for the fight-flight-freeze response
5. Q: What type of breathing was mentioned in a National Institutes of Health report as a way to improve physical endurance?
A: Deep, slow breathing through the nose
6. Q: How many breaths per minute does the average human take?
A: 16 to 20
7. Q: What are the three most common pranayama techniques taught in asana classes?
A: Deep abdominal, complete yogic, and *ujjayi*
8. Q: What is *nadi shodhana*, and what effect does it have on the brain hemispheres?
A: Alternate-nostril breathing can activate and balance both hemispheres of the brain and therefore increase learning as much as fivefold.
9. Q: Which is generally better while entering Uttanasana (Intense Forward Bend)—inhaling or exhaling?
A: Exhaling

Chapter 5

1. Q: Define safe yoga instruction.
A: Safe instruction occurs when any touch or word from the teacher encourages the most accurate awareness in students' minds to move energy, muscles, or bones in ways that do not result in injury.
2. Q: What is a nadi?
A: *Nadi* is an Ayurvedic term for an energy channel of the human body. Ayurveda is a sister science of yoga. The body is full of these energy channels, which are connected to the chakras. Like the physical body, nadis are affected during yoga.

3. Q: What is mula bandha, and with which chakra is it associated?
A: Mula bandha, which is associated with the Muladhara chakra, is the root lock and resembles a Kegel exercise. It strengthens the pelvic floor and the supporting structures of the urinary and genital systems. It also prevents energy leakage and imbalance, thus enabling the practitioner to have greater endurance.
4. Q: Is it advisable for a woman to practice yoga while menstruating?
A: In some styles of hatha yoga, the inversions are contraindicated during menstruation, for physical and energetic reasons. On the other hand, some asanas can help alleviate monthly discomfort.
5. Q: Which anatomical plane does Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle) move the majority of the body through?
A: The frontal plane
6. Q: What are the six directions in which the spine should move in a balanced session?
A: Forward, backward, twisting to right, twisting to left, side bend to right, and side bend to left
7. Q: Identify a few asanas that stimulate osteogenesis and contribute to joint stability.
A: Any weight-bearing posture promotes bone strength. The standing poses, and especially the balancing poses, create and maintain joint stability in the hips, knees, and ankles. Asanas that demand work by the arms, such as Adho Mukha Shvanasana (Downward-Facing Dog) and variations of plank poses, can build stability in the shoulder joints. Twists and inversions keep the spine strong and in alignment.
8. Q: What does it mean to “lift the kneecaps”? Why, when, and how would you teach this action?
A: Contraction of the quadriceps raises the patella. This contraction is performed to engage the leg muscles and energy more effectively for standing ability. The best way to teach this technique verbally is to say, “Lightly lift your kneecaps” or “Flex your quads (your front upper legs) without hyperextending your knees.” For

a great hands-on adjustment, very gently hold the sides of the student's kneecap and wiggle it (which can be done only if it is loose and therefore not lifted), then tap the student's quads.

9. Q: Which muscles in the torso are used to move into a standing forward bend, and what type of contraction is used? What about when entering into a standing backbend?

A: The spinal muscles, along with the hip extensors, use an eccentric contraction to move into a standing forward bend. The abdominal muscles contract eccentrically to move into a standing backbend.

10. Q: What type of contraction occurs during the holding of most asanas?

A: When holding an asana, the muscles are often actively engaged in an isometric contraction.

11. Q: How long should asanas be held?

A: In general, wait until 20 percent of your students have come out of the asana, then begin to bring the class out of the posture and move on. When working one on one with a student, you can use a scale of 1 to 10 and encourage the student to work in the 5 to 8 range of endurance with focus on good alignment, strength, and steady breathing.

12. Q: What makes a yoga student advanced?

A: When students find that they are happy in a posture that they initially did not like, this is a far more profound achievement than improved flexibility. Rather than striving for what they think a pose should look like, it is far more important for students to be able to recognize areas of tension and weakness in the body so that they can tailor an asana to meet their own needs.