Greetings dear fellow yogis of the Southeast region!

I hope you have started your year off right.

I am humbled and honored to be the President of IYASE in 2020.

In this role, I commit to serve our beautiful community by facilitating the learning and teachings of Iyengar Yoga following the mission of IYNAUS.

We will continue our collective efforts to improve membership benefits to make them even more tangible and relevant.

I would like to thank the members of the board who are finishing their terms after 4 years of dedication and hard work to make this community stronger, they are Leanne Roque, Inger Mula Myllerup Brookhuis and Sam Cooper. Your efforts will be missed.

If you are interested in being a part of the new board or if you have any questions, comments or suggestions you can reach me at president.iyase@gmail.com

Much love and Namaste,

Mariana Scotti
President IYASE
CIYT

Prop Corner

*Developing Dhanurasana: Use of a Bolster*
Susanne Bulington, Intermediate Jr 1 CIYT, RYT–500
Owner, Meadville Yoga, Meadville, MS

*Yoga: A Gem for Women*, Plate 136
In the above image, Plate 136 from *Yoga: A Gem for Women*, we see a *Dhanurasana* that is characterized by a lifted and expansive chest, externally rotated shoulders, lengthening anterior and lumbar spine, well lifted knees with lengthening front thighs and inner groins, and a state of balance on the lower abdominal area.

*Dhanurasana – Before*

When practicing prone backbends, my first attempts at *Dhanurasana* are often lacking in these essential elements of the pose. I’ve found that a bolster incorporated in a variety of ways helps me create a fuller expression of the pose.

**BOLSTER PLACEMENT: UNDER THE LOWER RIBCAGE/ABDOMEN**

I begin with the bolster positioned under the lower ribcage/abdomen. With my legs straight, I turn the back thighs out to broaden the hamstrings and alternately lift and lengthen the legs. Before bending the legs to take the feet in the hands, I press my hands down into the bolster to lift my front body up and create anterior spine length by extending forward from the naval to the sternum. The support of the bolster under the lower ribcage/abdomen helps me maintain that anterior length as I bend my legs and take the ankles with my hands. With the center of gravity shifted away from the upper body, the lift created by the bolster in this position generates more ease to move the low back ribs toward the head and the buttocks toward the back knees lengthening the lumbar spine.

**BOLSTER PLACEMENT: UNDER THE CHEST**

Next, I position the bolster under the chest. I want to recreate maximal length in
the anterior spine. Similar to the last variation, I place my hands behind the bolster, lift the front body up and lengthen forward from the naval to the sternum. Once I am holding my ankles, the bolster positioned in this fashion gives lovely support for freedom in the upper body elements of the pose: external rotation of the shoulders and backward reaching of the arms, broadening of the collarbones, and lift and expansion of the chest.

**BOLSTER PLACEMENT: UNDER THE LOWER PELVIS/UPPER THIGH**

![Bolster Placement](image)

In a third variation, I position the bolster under the lower pelvis and upper thigh. This has multiple effects. The thighs and knees are lifted by the bolster which lessens the impact of gravity on the lower body. Reducing the burden of gravity, I find more ease as I use my hands to lift my feet. As I lift my feet higher, I feel increased front thigh and inner groin lengthening. With the bolster elevating the lower body in this variation, the center of gravity is shifted onto the abdomen similar to the classic pose.

![Dhanurasana - After](image)

Finally, I practice the pose several times without the bolster. As intended, the bolster leaves imprints that hold my attention as I work to recreate those enhanced elements of the pose without the aid of the prop. The investigation continues.

“Everyday practice has to be accompanied by a spirit of research so that the intellect may penetrate deeper and deeper.”

*Yoga: A Gem for Women*

Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar

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**Upcoming Events & Workshops**

January has multiple workshops by our senior teachers John Schumacher, Bobby Clennell, Dr. Jarvis Chen and Colleen Gallagher:

[VIEW / DOWNLOAD FULL ARTICLE]
Does your studio have a workshop or special event you would like to advertise?

Submit Your Workshop

Studio Spotlight

Aretha McKinney, Owner
Chestnut Hill Yoga, Nashville, TN

Chestnut Hill Yoga is the new, dedicated home of the Iyengar Yoga Center of Nashville; it is also the new home for the Center's owner, our dedicated teacher Aretha McKinney (CIYT—Senior Intermediate I), and it is a space dedicated to our beloved Geetaji.

The studio ... hosted a three-day workshop conducted by Aretha's teacher--senior Iyengar teacher Patricia Walden. At the beginning of one of our evening sessions with Patricia, she had all the attendees gather around as she played a recording of Geeta Iyengar chanting the second pada of the Yoga Sutras and we all chanted back in call-and-response fashion. It was a magical moment as the room was filled with Geeta's voice-- it was as if she were there with us. Geeta was definitely with us in spirit, and soon when students enter the studio, they will be greeted by a lovely picture of Geeta along with a statement from Aretha dedicating the studio in loving memory to Geeta. In this dedication, Aretha mentions Geeta's focus on giving to your community, and Aretha expresses her gratitude for the support of a community. From a crowdfunding campaign to a ceremonial blessing of the new space, a community of studio supporters showed up to help build this home in so many meaningful ways.
Aretha is a compassionate and generous teacher, and her beautiful spirit, lovely practice, humor, grace, and humility inspire all who visit the studio. A home is only as strong as the foundation upon which it is built, and Chestnut Hill Yoga is built on the solid foundation of the Iyengars, who have dedicated their lives to the practice and teaching of Yoga, and of the other devoted Iyengar Yoga teachers with whom Aretha has studied. And added to that mix we have Aretha's devoted practice, her skilled teaching, and a loving community of students and teachers that Aretha has nurtured. Chestnut Hill Yoga has the firmest of foundations; it is the most dedicated of homes; its doors are wide open and welcome all.

"It is one of the beauties of Yoga that it keeps its doors open to all." -- Geeta Iyengar (from Yoga: A Gem For Women). "I love those who come to learn from me, I love them from my heart and that is a lesson that I have learnt from Guruji." -- Geeta Iyengar (from "Chit chatting with Geetaji on her birthday," Yoga Rahasya, Vol. 26 No. 1; 2019).

"I'm so grateful for everyone that has helped get our doors open. It has been an epic group effort and I am humbled by the show of support. A heartfelt thank you..."

  – Aretha McKinney

READ FULL STORY

Attention All IYNAUS and IYASE members: Don't forget to keep your online profile up-to-date so you will not miss important communications.

UPDATE YOUR PROFILE

If you have NEWS TO SHARE or SUGGESTIONS for content Please let us know:

EMAIL NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Hey Newsletter Reader, please don't forget to LIKE & FOLLOW us on social media