

Ethical Guidelines for Yoga Teachers

davannayoga® Ethical Guidelines for Yoga Teachers:

As yoga teachers, we are examples of the yoga lifestyle to our students. We have a responsibility to them, to our teachers, and to ourselves to behave with values (Yamas and Niyamas).

As davannayoga celebrates traditional yoga teachings, our ethical guidelines also come from traditional sources: The yamas (behavior disciplines) and the niyamas (internal control) of Patanjali.

Yamas (regarding your relationship/behavior with others): Non-harming (Ahimsa); Truthfulness (Satya); Non-stealing (Asteya); Moderation of the senses (Brahmacarya); and Non-covetousness (Aparigraha).

Niyamas (regarding our daily routine/activities. Our own actions, words and thoughts and our physical appearance) : Purity/ Cleanliness (Saucha); Contentment (Santosha); Burning desire to study, practice, self-discipline (Tapas); Self-Study, mindfulness, studying yoga and the scriptures (Svadyaya); Devotion, willingness to serve (Ishvara Pranidhana).

All these are virtues that should be demonstrated to a superlative degree in the lives of yoga teachers at davannayoga®. Yoga teachers have a great responsibility toward their students and can be expected to clearly demonstrate the qualities one would associate with a well-trained yoga teacher. As practitioners and representatives of Yoga, the behavior of Yoga teachers is expected to reflect the high moral standards (the Yamas and Niyamas) espoused in Yoga.

Davannayoga® publishes these ethical guidelines as part of its effort to help preserve the traditional legacy of Yoga and improve the quality of Yoga teaching and practice in the modern world.

1. **Yoga Teachers** understand and appreciate that teaching Yoga is a noble and ennobling endeavor that aligns them with a long line of honorable teachers.
2. **Yoga Teachers** are committed to practicing Yoga as a way of life.
3. **Yoga Teachers** are committed to maintaining impeccable standards of professional competence and integrity.
4. **Yoga Teachers** dedicate themselves to a thorough and continuing study and practice of Yoga, in particular the theoretical and practical aspects of the branch or type of Yoga that they teach.
5. **Yoga Teachers** are committed to avoiding substance abuse, and if for some reason they succumb to chemical dependency will stop teaching until they are free again from drug and/or alcohol abuse. They will then do everything in their power to remain free, including being fully accountable to a support group.
6. **Yoga Teachers** especially embrace the ideal of truthfulness in dealing with students and others, including accurately representing their training and experience relevant to their teaching of Yoga.

7. **Yoga Teachers** are committed to promoting the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being of their students.
8. **Yoga Teachers** will abstain from giving medical advice or advice that could be interpreted as such, unless they have the necessary medical qualifications.
9. **Yoga Teachers** are open to instructing all students regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and social or financial status.
10. **Yoga Teachers** are willing to accept students with physical disabilities, providing they have the skill to teach those students properly.
11. **Yoga Teachers** will treat their students with respect, never yelling at them or using physical force. It is not acceptable for example to yell to the group or one person, “Hey, I didn’t tell you to do it that way!”
12. **Yoga Teachers** will never force their own opinions on students but rather will appreciate the fact that every individual is entitled to his or her worldview, ideas, and beliefs. If a student’s opinions seriously impede the process of communicating yogic teachings to him or her, then the Yoga teacher is free to decline to work with that individual and, if possible, find an amicable way of dissolving the teaching relationship.
13. **Yoga Teachers** will avoid any form of sexual harassment of students.
14. **Yoga Teachers** will make every effort to avoid exploiting the trust of students and teacher, and instead encourage them to find greater inner freedom.
15. **Yoga Teachers** acknowledge the importance of the proper context for teaching and agree to avoid teaching in a casual manner, which includes observing proper decorum inside and outside of the classroom.
16. **Yoga Teachers** will create clear boundaries between student and teacher to maintain our role of serving our students. If a consensual relationship should form between student/teacher, the teacher is obliged to keep the relationship “out of the yoga shala” or the student may be advised/helped to find a different yoga teacher.
17. **Yoga Teachers** will create and sustain both a sacred and safe environment for all students.
18. **Yoga Teachers** will honor and pay tribute to their past teachers and the sources of their knowledge and skill in classes.
19. **Yoga Teachers** will follow all civil laws and other legal codes of behavior in their state and country.
20. **Yoga Teachers** will use basic etiquette saying “Please” and using people’s names when speaking with them (versus “hey you in the green top... put your hands straight”); and will never put down a student or yell at a student in a manner such as “I didn’t tell you to do the pose that way!”
21. **Yoga Teachers** will acknowledge (salute with bowing Namaste) each student at the beginning or at the end of class. This shows humility.
22. **Yoga Teachers** will use humility. It’s ok to answer a question “I don’t know”. Be willing to research and return with the answer. Tell students that you are also a student. Remember your beginner days as you work with your students to foster the compassion for your beginner students.
23. **Yoga Teachers** will speak only positively about other yoga teachers, schools, and teaching traditions. This will help to cultivate harmony among davannayoga® and other schools and teachers by honoring each individual and their style/belief.

24. **Yoga Teachers** are encouraged to lead a vegetarian life-style. This follows the first limb of the eight limbs of yoga – Ahimsa (non-harming).
25. **Yoga Teachers** are encouraged to seek one form of Seva (selfless service) or Karma Yoga (Karma yoga focuses on the adherence to duty (dharma) while remaining detached from the reward.) annually in his/her community.

I agree to these ethical guidelines as a teacher or teacher apprentice applicant at davannayoga®

Name: _____

Date: _____