



Practicum Guidelines for Student-Teachers¹

Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan®

Level 1

Teaching from Day One: Keys to Success

Projection Is Everything

- Always introduces yourself and refer to Yogi Bhajan and his legacy.
- People want to know they are sitting in front of a yogi
- Confident
- Speak from the Navel Point; cultivate an uplifting, encouraging and elevating tone in your voice.
- Be sincere in your encouragement and keep it positive. Negative encouragement can come across as shaming.
- Be mindful – use humor. Watch and see how everyone is doing. Be a professional observer. See how different personality types, body types perform; see how they react. Empower them.
- Your job is to observe, uplift and correct, when necessary. It is not recommended that you do the exercises with the class.
- Teach what you know!
- “Holding the space” – Transmission. This is the subtle aspect to teaching. You have your own thing to give – what you have to offer is unique – You be You.

Preparation & Classroom Application

- Teach from your own notes when you can—keeps your presentation fresh and personally impersonal.
- Reference the posture sections; review the divine alignment and more thorough descriptions of each posture before teaching a kriya.
- Use a timer that allows you to silence the beeper. You want them waiting for your direction to inhale—not for the sound of the beeper.
- Share some of the benefits of the kriya.
- Do you get off your mat? It depends on the environment – generally no. Refrain from physically touching people.
- **Warm ups** – not always necessary. Try a pranayam or one or two poses to get the students in the room and in their bodies; Sun salutations are a good full body warm up; warm ups shouldn't take the place of a kriya. See pg 280 for guidelines; see page 58-61 for examples of good warm-up pranayams. You can also use a short Kriya as a warm up.
- Pacing—notice your students' ability and make adjustments; don't be afraid to push them.
- If you need to reduce the times associated with each exercise in a kriya, remember to reduce them by the same ratio; that is, if the sequence calls for 3 minutes, 6 minutes and 12 minutes,

¹ *Note: Successful Practicums are ideally 1 ½ hours; one hour for the practicum itself and half an hour for feedback.*

you would reduce the times proportionally; for example if you reduced it by half, then the times would be 1 ½ minutes, 3 minutes and 6 minutes, or if you reduced the times by two-thirds, then the times would be 1 minute, 2 minutes and 4 minutes, respectively. If an exercise is only 1 minute, you may not want to reduce the time.

- Don't forget to include resting time between the exercises, especially for beginners; up to two minutes between exercises can be appropriate depending on the intensity of the kriya.
- Don't reduce the relaxation time. Contemporary culture is always 'on': go, go, go! Learning to relax is one of the greatest gifts you can give your students. Lead them in and lead them out with a soothing voice and steady command. Relaxation is a key principle for vitality and consciousness in the Aquarian Age; you could say that relaxation is the most important part of any kriya. Deep relaxation – contribute within my own self. Connect with the class – providing a protective environment.
- Finish class with the Long Time Sun Song and a blessing or a prayer. Bowing at the close of the class teaches students to bow to themselves, to bow to the You within you; it's a salutation to your own inner teacher. As a teacher you bless, as a teacher you bow. Give your students this gift.

Music

Learn how to chant in monotone, *a capella*; it brings in an extra dimension to the class. Also, if you're going to use music, take the time to plan it out so that it is appropriate to the kriya; it will really make a difference.

Standard Kundalini Yoga Class Structure

Recommended Timing

Introduction & Tune-In	5 minutes
Warm-ups or Pranayam	5 minutes (if necessary)
Kriya	30 minutes
Relaxation	7-10 minutes
Meditation	3-11 minutes
Long Time Sun & Blessing	3-5 minutes

Total Time should equal **60 minutes**.

Remember: a good class starts on time and ends on time. The structure of the class is up to you. You don't always have to do a meditation – Kriya means a complete action—however, classes are typically structured in two different flows:

Kriya – meditation – relaxation
Kriya – relaxation – meditation

Note: some kriyas have meditations within them, if so, then the flow of the class would change and the relaxation would be last.

Sample Practicum: Spinal Energy Series

There are several ways to teach this kriya and your audience or intention will determine the approach: Beginners, extend the relaxations; Advanced, add in mulbandh and have the students count together; used as a warm up, decrease the number of repetitions.

Notice: the instructions call for a specific # of repetitions – how do you do this? There are two primary approaches: standardize the time or count aloud.

1. Standardize the time
 - a. Survey the class . Choose someone going at an average rate, observe for 15 seconds and then extrapolate the time period.
 - b. Or, practice yourself – see how long it takes you
2. Yogi Bhajan had students count together, aloud; very invigorating but takes a strong Navel Point!

Special features: Explain root lock and then have students practice prior to initiating the kriya in class.