



Yoga for Teens, ages 13 - 19

with *Koren Paalman*

Tuesdays, 4:30 - 5:30pm

Single Class \$10

5 Class Series \$45

10 Class Series \$80



- Yoga reduces stress & anxiety & improves your mood!
- Yoga makes you feel better about your body!
- Bring a friend along or come alone!

Come stretch, strengthen & balance your body & mind with other teens!

Find out how yoga can help you with grades, tests, homework, teachers, parents & friends.

Take this class to get more flexibility and strength for athletics or just for fun.

You may get credit for this class, ask your counselor. How cool is that?

Koren is a Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher with a BA in Psychology from UCLA and an MS in Education from USC. In 1998 Koren created the first yoga program for credit in the Los Angeles Unified School District where she also taught psychology and health to at-risk inner city teens.

Since 2002 Koren has visited India every other year to study with BKS Iyengar and his daughter Geeta Iyengar.

The LA Weekly described Koren as: "strict but funny and soothingly coaxing"(9/4/03-Considerable People). She teaches yoga throughout Los Angeles and at her own yoga studio in Venice. For more information about Koren, check the back-side of the flyer.

A consent waiver card (available at the Institute) must be signed by a parent for all students under 18.

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The B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association and IYILA are dedicated to the study, teaching and dissemination of the art, science and philosophy of Yoga according to the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar.

All teachers at the Institute are certified in accordance with the assessment process set forth by B.K.S. Iyengar. IYILA is a not-for-profit institution.

2011 Specialty Courses: Yoga for Teens

Single Class (\$10) _____

5 Class Series (\$45) _____

10 Class Series (\$80) _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Cash: Check: Visa: M/C: Amex: Discover: Card #: _____ Exp: _____

TOTAL: _____
Make checks payable to "IYILA"

office use: date rec'd: approval code: check number:

STILTS that Serve

By JULIE ADLER

As I was parking at AnnaDeLuia's house for the IYASC Spring Fling party several months ago, I saw a pair of stilts up the road, next to a dark blue VW van parked curbside. On these stilts was a slight gal with dark blond ponytails and butterfly wings. Enter Koren Paalman, guest, yoga student and teacher – and stiltwalker.

Koren's stilts are special. They are about defying fear, walking tall, and maintaining balance. They are about cultivating joy as well as giving it, and finding freedom up yonder. Koren's stilts define the tread of an aspiring yogi.

LA Weekly recently featured a 'Considerable People' column on Koren. Why? Because she started the yoga program at Belmont High – the infamous school in the heart of inner Los Angeles.

A So Cal girl, Koren majored in psychology at UCLA in the 80s, then went off to Thailand with the Peace Corps. In 1991 she encountered India and yoga. On returning to California in 2000, Koren wrote her masters thesis on how to use yoga to teach ESL. First yoga is used to calm, center and focus. Then it is used as a form of Total Physical Response (TPR) – a method which links body movement with language acquisition. Instead of performing 'open the door' and 'shut the door' to teach action verbs, Koren teaches *tadasana* – 'put your feet together.'

Right out of the gate, Koren got a job teaching ESL at Belmont High. In her classes, she would slip in 15 minutes of Iyengar yoga. This proved so popular with the kids that by 1997, the principal accepted Koren's proposal to run a yoga program for PE credit. Though yoga was deemed an elective because according to the PE department, "it wasn't a sport," Koren's classes were always full. Today she teaches health education in the mornings and yoga two periods per day. Five days a week, an average of 40 students, Latinos, Asians and African Americans, jam into Koren's classroom – the auditorium – to practice poses straight from Intro I and II.

Now up on stilts, how does the yoga program 'walk'? Each semester, Koren



SURESH RAJAGOPALAN

Koren Paalman walks tall with Jonathan and Ryan Dielhenn

speaks to all incoming students, handing each a syllabus because they will be graded. She requires effort, meaning attendance, and openness – do they give attitude or show up ready to practice? Plus she requires appropriate attire: specifically, will they take off their socks?

It's an issue. Some kids believe that feet are nasty. In the Latino community, bare feet – dry, cracked, or dirty feet – are a sign of poverty. Kids grow up with this stigma so it can be a struggle to convince them it's better to practice sans socks.

Monday through Thursday, Koren teaches from the syllabus; on Fridays, she mixes it up with partner yoga, restoratives

and sometimes even a game of *Twister*. The kids learn some anatomy. There are optional readings – *Yoga Journal*, *Babar's Yoga for Elephants*, *Light on Yoga*. There are blocks, belts and mats. Girls on their periods learn how to honor themselves; Koren calls them the "mooncyde sisters."

Koren's greatest joy is seeing students develop. Shy kids become social; the fearful get braver. Grades go up. One student, age 15, studied for a year despite friends' ridicule. After one semester, – balancing poses helped – her C average became a B; she became optimistic and her stress level dropped. This student wanted to tell Mr. Iyengar how yoga had changed her life. She decided to ask if she could visit India – with the aspiration of someday teaching in the Latino community.

And then there are the special ED kids... The student who stayed with Koren for 2 1/2 years who had Fragile X Syndrome (he was born with two X chromosomes and one Y). Constantly jittery, nervous and fearful, he was on meds. Soon his mother was calling Koren periodically. He loved yoga, he was doing it at home. Eventually he reduced his meds.

Bringing yoga to inner city schools is an enormous accomplishment. These kids need it. Some come from single parent families; some from gangs. There isn't a lot of joy at home and they don't know how to care for their bodies. Some don't know how to recognize an injury, unless it's from a flying bullet.

For these kids, yoga is like walking on stilts. It is precarious but provides a new view.

Maybe these kids can become yoga teachers themselves, as Koren hopes. Meanwhile, she's taken her experiences all the way to Pune. Guruji is very enthusiastic. He wants all high schools to have yoga, with good teachers.

For Koren it's stilts today, assessment tomorrow. She goes up for Intro I in 2004 and goes back to Pune even sooner! ■

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Julie Adler is a certified Iyengar teacher. She is also a performing artist, composer and writer.