

Welcome back everyone. Diane here. We're gonna dive into one of my favorite things in the entire world, which is progressive teaching. I was first exposed to progressive teaching as an Anusara devotee back in the day before it went sideways. We were taught very much about progressive teaching, teaching to an apex pose or a pinnacle pose, which some people feel is a little too much, but I think it's kind of fun to give us a direction on where to go, and that we're not necessarily trying to achieve that pinnacle pose, but it gives us steps to do that.

And those people who want to do that pose can and those of us who maybe aren't ready or aren't able have all kinds of different things to work on or things to explore in our bodies. I really love the idea of progressive teaching. I'm going to share with you what I've learned over the years. I think this picture's kind of funny. I think it's maybe 2015. I don't really know what we're doing in this moment. That's one of those candid photos. I don't know what I'm doing with my hands here, but this is a picture for a shoot we did like a long time ago.

I'm reminiscing, and I just thought it was a great picture because there's a lot of different representation here, even though you might not totally see it. All right, let's get into it. What I love about the bus stop method is we are building slowly from stop to stop, and everybody can relate to being on a bus or a train. We don't all necessarily get on at the same stop and we don't necessarily get off at the same stop. It's a progression down, a linear line sometimes, but sometimes it doesn't have to be linear. You can take all kinds of different approaches to the bus stop method.

What I do wanna emphasize is the bus stop method is not a hierarchical method. Bus stop one isn't necessarily easier or better or less than bus stop six. They're just whatever bus stop you're getting off at. Some of us are going to work. Some of us are going to the mall. Some of us are visiting friends. And we're all just getting on and off the bus, or the train, at a different stop. That's what's happening when we're teaching progressively. We're giving people opportunities to find where this feels okay in their body and then stay there.

Or if they're feeling ready to move on because we've been teaching progressively or this progression for a long time, they might get off at the next stop. What I love about the bus stop method is, if you're creating a workshop or if you're creating a series, like if you're doing an intro series, it's very buildable. So, you can decide over the course of six bus stops for this series, this is where we're going to get to and it may not always work out in the way that you think, but you can continue to take the bus on this particular journey, and maybe eventually, you might get to dispose and maybe you won't, but it doesn't actually matter.

It's the journey, right? It's the journey on the bus. It's something that I really love to do. You can see a really good example of this on my yoga international content, when I do the road to wheel, which I thought it was really funny, right? Wheel, road. But yeah, this is a very progressive way to move to wheel pose, but we do some really big poses that if you never get to wheel, that's okay. We explore camel, we explore bridge in a myriad of ways. We explore standup backbend, standing backbend. So, there's a lot of progression that happens to wheel, and there's a lot of things we can do to get to wheel.

If you happen to have a wheel in your yoga practice, those wheels that were popular a few years ago, that's one way. If you happen to have a ball, that's another way. There's lots of opportunities to engage in this particular journey. Keeping that in mind. The bus stop is a really great way to offer the shapes that we want to get to. In the road to wheel, like I said, we did sitting backbends. We did standing backbends. We did a lunge with a backbend. So, they were progressively deeper backbends until we got to the grande dame or the grand master of backbends, that whole, I like to think of it as in a parade.

Remember, there's like a grand master in a parade. That kind of thing, that when we get to the biggest pose, we've had an opportunity to go through all the steps up into that pose. It's a great way for making

poses accessible, unique and fun. You can use walls, you can use blocks, you can use all kinds of things to get people to feel the pose in their body. The bus stop method requires some planning. So, if you are choosing to do a bus stop method, you want to think about where are you're headed on your journey. For example, I might try a bus stop method moving toward half moon.

This is like my favorite transition to do. We start maybe in ... Half moon, I would even say to chapasana. So, we'll start on our hands and knees. We'll do a spinal balance. Then we'll do a side, almost a variation of Vasisthasana, where you're stacking your hip side over side, and maybe the toes are on the floor, or you're lifting one leg out. We're doing that particular progression that shape of the pose on our hands and knees. Then I might do a little bit of twisting in the body so people are ready.

We know that in a half moon pose, we are standing on one leg. We know we're doing an external rotation in the hip. We know that we have one hand on the floor. We know that we're rotating our whole body in one direction. What are all the things that I can do in the warmup that can prep people for that? Then once we get to the place where we might attempt the half moon pose, what are some similar shapes that we can explore if we're not ready? Triangle, extended side angle, doing it on our knee, right? That shape of the pose with one hand down, one knee down, one leg extended back behind you, maybe toe on the floor, maybe arm to the sky, maybe a bind there.

So, there's a lot of opportunity to play no matter who you are. Maybe we try it at the wall, maybe we place our foot on the wall, maybe you lean back against the wall in that pose. I've just given you five or six examples of how that can be progressively taught so that people who are either afraid or might not have great balance, or might not have internal, the external rotation in their hip, there's lots of opportunities for them to build to that or for them to explore the stops along the way. To explore the stops along the way.

Some quick tips for being successful with the bus stop method is group all standing poses together that are in a similar shape and a similar orientation. If we're again using the Ardha Chandrasana or half moon example, we're looking at warrior two, wide-legged forward fold, goddess pose, extended side angle pose, triangle pose. Any kind of variation of Vasisthasana or side plank. Anything like that. Then of course, moving to Ardha Chandrasana, half moon pose or chapasana.

I just gave you eight different progressions that will get you to that pose, eight. Quite technically, your whole standing sequence could be your entire class, because I just gave you eight different ways to get there. So, try to have two to three options for your students to try. So, at the end, we can do kneeling, kneeling with the one leg up. We could do it against the wall with either our back against the wall, and in our Ardha Chandrasana or half moon pose, or we could do it with our leg against the wall, right? So, there's a whole bunch of ways to play with that. We could also do it on the floor.

Those are four different ways to explore that pose. You only need two or three, but you can look out in the room and see where your students are at and just decide whether this is going to be something that works for them. I introduce props right away. So, if I'm going to be teaching a artage Ardha Chandrasana, right away, I'm going to have people using a block, because me with my short arms, I have much more success in that particular shape of that pose, if I'm using a block, than if I have to lean all the way to the floor, because my arms are a little bit shorter and I own that.

So, reducing the ups and downs. I gave you eight poses that were all standing. So, in order to avoid, maybe moving into down dog, forward to blank, or lowering down, which might be too much for some of your folks, you can pick bit on your feet from side to side. These are all ... A lot of them are lateral facing poses. You can pivot side to side. You can do your warrior one on one side. You can pivot to the middle, do a forward fold, wide leg forward fold. You could pivot to the other side and do your warrior two.

From there, you could do a peaceful back to warrior two, back to extended side angle, back to wide legged forward fold, and then repeat on the second side. Then once you come back to the wide legged forward fold, which will be your transition, you can heel-toe your feet together, come to the top of your mat, and if so inclined, do all your forward facing poses could start in tadasana, move into a chair pose, do a chair twist step back to a low lunge, either Anjaneyasana with the knee down, or a high lunge, a variation of Ardha Chandrasana one, then you could possibly move to a standing balance depending on whether your knee is down or your knee is up.

If your knee is down, maybe you move into Hanumanasana prep, which is your splits prep. Or if your knee is up, maybe you move into a one's leg standing balance, whether that is standing split, which I didn't mention as a possibility for one of the seven poses that you towards. So, you could do a standing balance, a standing balance, either standing split or Virabhadrasana three. You know what? There's lots of things you can do here. You could do a tree pose if you wanted to, you could do a dancer pose if you wanted to. If you added dancer to the mix, it gives you that opportunity for a bind. So, if you are core poses or your pinnacle poses or your apex pose is half moon, and maybe you wanna take your students to Ardha Chandrasana, which is ...

Chapasana I should say, Ardha Chapasana, then you're taking the bind, that sugarcane. Then you're taking the bind so you can do that on the floor. There's lots of ways that you can move to those poses and those shapes, but what you have to be okay with seeing is that everybody is going to be doing something slightly different and that's okay, because it's not dance class. The choreography isn't for a dance number that we're all going to perform at the end of class. This is an opportunity to explore how your body moves in asana, and to figure out, do I feel like half moon pose? Do I feel like sugarcane pose? Do I want to do a standing split? Do I want to come to the wall, and either place my foot on the wall or lean up against the wall for support?

Right there, I have four or five opportunities for people to explore that. That's one way that you can help your folks and your students to feel successful in your class, right? Create functional movement sequence for bodies that may need more help. So, here's another way that you could create or build a whole class around stepping up and stepping down. You can do a lot of one leg of balances, like a whole class around balance. Balance is something we wanna work on, especially as we get older, so that we can start to avoid accidental falls or unexpected falls.

There's a whole class that can be done standing based on balance that can be done standing next to a wall, using a chair as an opportunity for folks. Being able to be absolutely in a corner so that you can place your hands on the wall. All of these things are ways to build within a progressive sequence. Let's try it on the floor. Let's try it with the chair. Let's try it on the wall. Let's try it close to the wall and see how much balance we've developed. You can figure out, what are some of the core functions that we need to do as human beings? And build an entire class around that progressively.

We climb stairs, we get up and down off the couch, we pick up things off the floor. We reach for things very high. We carry groceries. We carry laundry. What are some of the poses that mimic those types of actions so that folks can do those in a repetitious manner within a flow of an asana class, so that when they leave your class and they move out into the world, these types of movements become familiar. They're not losing their proprioception, right? When you start to see older folks shuffling when they're walking, that's a loss of proprioception.

The great thing about yoga is we step forward, we to the side, we step to the back. We do forward facing movement. We do sagittal, which is to the side. We do rear movement. So, we really want to make sure that if we're going to be creating something that's progressive and something that is functional for our everyday students, these are the things that we can do, and we can incorporate them

with fun ways, we can find fun music, but we can use modern postural yoga to help our students move through the world with more ease.

This also helps if you're working with somebody who is practicing with a disability. I've had the absolute honor and pleasure of working with a friend of mine named Christine who has very limited access to movement in her upper body and works in a chair. She's in a chair so she can't walk, but she does have the ability to have a little bit of movement in her legs. So, I was creating sequences with her physiotherapist and her massage therapist that we could do in yoga that would mimic those things that she was doing in those other modalities and create opportunities for her to move in her body in a way that feels good, and that's really important.

And to progress into these different postures and to have the other team members in her wellness team, or her well-being team, also mimic those shapes in massage therapy and in physiotherapy, and they become more functional. When she built this progressive practice in her body and it was reinforced with the other modalities that she did, she felt more powerful and she started to ride a bike with her hands. She started to drive a car. She had more mobility that made her more successful in life. So, there's a lot of confidence that can be built in your students and confidence that can be built in your teaching when you progressively put things together that makes sense for your students.

Often, when I'm talking to my students around these progressive classes that we are doing, I say to them, we do these poses so that we can pick up laundry off the floor or pick up groceries or children or pets or whatever it is that requires us to bend down, pick something up, and get back up again. Because we know, as we age, these types of activities get harder and harder, but if we can train the body through our modern postal yoga practice to be able to do these things, there's an opportunity for your students to be more independent for longer, or a possibility for your students who may be practicing with disabilities to find new ways to do things right, which is really great for your brain development.

Here's what it looks like when I group like poses together. This is what it looks like. Seated poses, Baddha Konasana, butterfly. Janu Sirsasana, head to knee pose. Paschimottanasana, seated forward fold, Upavistha Konasana, wide legged forward fold. So, we've gone from butterfly, or cobbler's pose to one leg out into Janu Sirsasana, to both legs straight out in front of us in seated forward fold, to legs wide apart. That's how we'll sequence just sitting on the floor. And you can add other things. You could add a twist to this, right? You could add a kneeling pose to this.

This can be the first part of your sequence, then you could go to kneeling, then you could go to standing. In our second one, Trikonasana, or triangle, we're in triangle, we can go to extended side angle pose. You could do a wide legged forward fold pose and you can move to Virabhadrasana. Those are four poses in a sequence of standing poses. Think about what other poses you could offer and how you would transition to those poses. Whenever I'm doing something that's wide-legged, I have people heel to their feet together because I think that's something that helps build strength in the ankles, challenges your balance, all kinds of great things.

Then you could be in the center of your mat and do a whole standing balance series if you wanted. You could go from tree to Eagle, to standing pigeon, to dancer pose, to warrior three poses. You could really play with a lot of different kinds of things. And there you go from four poses to eight poses or 10 poses. If you're repetitious and you want to create that repetition so people feel comfortable in their bodies, also you can play back and forth with this sequence. You could do it forward all these ways and then you could go from back to front.

You could start at Virabhadrasana and then move to wide legged forward fold, and then move to extended side angle, and then move to triangle, and go back and forth, maybe adding in two more poses here. Then you have a whole sequence that you can build out from those four poses. Then we come to

standing forward poses. So, when we heel to our feet together, we come to mountain, we can come to Virabhadrasana one or Anjaneyasana. We can come to standing split. We can come to skater pose, which is when you're standing on one leg and you bring the knee behind the other leg.

This is a new pose for me too. I've never heard it as skater. Sometimes I call it grasshopper. So, you're standing on one leg, you hinge forward, and you bring the other knee behind the knees. So, the knees are together and maybe your back foot is pressing out. I mean, there's all kinds of things that you could do. If you're a person that does Utita Hasta Padangusthasana, you can move to there, and maybe that's, from your standing, forward facing poses. Maybe that is what is your pinnacle pose. These are things that you can work on. These are things that you can explore.

All right, here's the bus up method in action. I've given you lots of examples of that already. Mountain pose can be either the pinnacle pose or where you start, and we're moving toward, what are we doing that's facing the same way as mountain? We've got Eagle and pigeon, standing pigeon. We've got a lunge and a lunge twist. From there, we can step our feet together to forward fold. Then because we're in forward fold at the top of your mat, you can come back to Trikonasana, and then transition into your lateral facing poses.

What you're looking at here is all the ways you can build out that progression. For a seated pose, how many different places could you go from a seated pose? From seated poses, you could do a seated twist. Then you move onto your hands and knees for cat cow. From cat cow, you can go to spinal balance. You can do all kinds of different things, knee to chest, and you could even step through from cat cow to low lunge. And then that gives you a whole new series. You've got a lunge twist. You can pivot to a wide-legged forward fold.

You can work a warrior two or a triangle. You could even do a whole kneeling sequence if people's knees are okay, if your student's knees are able to do this, you can move into camel, you can move into lunge with a backbend. You could really do a warrior two from kneeling, where you'd kickstand out the back leg. So, if your left leg is forward and knee's bent over ankle, and you're kneeling on your back leg, you could kick the back leg out like a kickstand, and then bring your arms out into T. You move into triangle, extended side angle. You could keep the whole thing on the knees or on the floor if you wanted to.

That's a really great sequence if your students can kneel and they can have a padded surface to kneel on, but if they're not able to kneel, or a majority of your students are able to kneel, you might want to try these poses completely standing next to a wall, or look at creating an entire sequence that's seated and reclining. I would call it a Supta sequence where we're all upward facing doing all kinds of different poses without actually getting up off the floor. Here's your two or three variations that we talked about. So, take the time to break down each pose.

Look at the component parts like we talked about in Ardha Chandrasana, where we're talking about external hip rotation, standing on one leg. One leg and one hand on the floor opening to one side. So, you look at all those components and figure out, what are other poses with those similar components that we can build up from? We talked about doing that kneeling Ardha Chandrasana. Here's an example. When I teach, if people can't or are unable to do down dog for wrist injuries or shoulder injuries, or maybe they just don't like it, maybe they have glaucoma, whatever keeps them from doing down dog, all the different variations from down dog, we can do a table pose.

So, they're not placing a lot of weight in their hands. We could do a table pose on our forearms on top of blocks on their medium setting or on top of two blocks on their flatter setting. We can come to the wall and do a wall dog. That way, the majority of the weight in downward facing dog is in their feet. We can do a dog on a chair using the seat of the chair for that, or if people are able, they can take a puppy pose,

which is taking the knees really wide, butt is in the air. So, there's not a lot of pressing back into the knee joint and stretching the arms forward.

That are all the different variations. Those are three different variations or three different poses that can replace a down dog if people don't feel comfortable doing down dog, if we have risk injuries during down dog, if people need a little bit more support. These are places we can plan for and places we can go. Here's how I structure a class. To keep a class going continuously while maintain accessibility, first thing we want to minimize, step one, minimize the ups and downs. Step two, group like poses together. Step three, slow down.

If you want to make it still challenging and slow the flow down, work on muscle, energy, or muscle synergy. Back when I was an Anusara teacher, we used to call it muscle energy, hugging the muscles to the bone, hugging the skin to the muscles and the muscles to the bone. So, it's almost like flexing in your poses, or if you're standing in Tadasana, and you'll hear it in the videos where we show you asana, pushing down through your feet and pressing your feet wide apart is firing up that energy. We're not actually moving our feet, we're pushing down and we're asymmetrically pushing out or in.

That gives that muscle energy. So, your muscles start to activate your muscles hugging to your bones. That creates a whole nother feeling of power and strength in the pose. It builds muscle energy. It's supportive on your bones. It keeps you from kind of hanging out on your joints. And you can slow your postures down and use muscle energy as an opportunity to create a little bit more texture to the pose or intensity to the pose for your students in class who are finding maybe the simpler pose is not as challenging. You start to change that whole way that we feel that pose.

We focus on the breath, bringing people back to the breath, having people squeeze or muscles, having people explore what they can do, because if you give people an opportunity to explore the feeling in their body, that's another texture or another element to the pose. At the beginning of the class, you're grouping and you're creating a centering, and grouping all seated warmup poses together, whether you're doing seated on your back, reclining or Supta, or kneeling. That's all going to happen in the beginning of class. This is the progression up to standing and then the progression down to seated.

Then we'll do the body of the class where I usually would do all standing poses. I don't spend a lot of time doing that Vinyasa up and down, depending on who's in my class and how I want to explore accessibility. Then the end of the class, which is the cool down, we come back to seated, do our seated poses like Janu Sirsasana, Upavistha Konasana, butterfly or Baddha Konasana. Janu Sirsasana, which is hand to big toe pose. Baddha Konasana, which is your butterfly pose, Upavistha Konasana, which is your wide-legged forward fold, that you can come on your back and do a hamstring stretch, do a reclining stretch of any kind.

In that second seated pose, you could move into perhaps versions of pigeon. I do a seated version of pigeon where we're sitting crossing our right ankle over our left knee, then we can move to reclining pigeon, or you can invite people to take a pigeon of their choice. Right then and there, there's four opportunities to move through all four versions of pigeon and invite your students to stay in the version that makes sense for them. We'll start here. If you love it here, stay here. We'll move here, and if you love it here, stay here. You know what I mean?

You give people the opportunity to be in their own bodies in their own way. You can also incorporate some yin poses in there. So, if you're not doing pigeon, maybe you're doing swan. So, giving yourselves an opportunity to just play. It doesn't have to be so, so structured. Unless you are doing a set sequence, like a Sivananda sequence or an Ashtanga sequence, then maybe you want to have those specific poses in that sequence with other poses that are similar in shape so people feel included. There's a person on

Instagram who is a yoga for all graduate, who's really great at creating this kind of content for people who are Ashtanga inclined.

So, she's an Ashtanga teacher who took the yoga for all training, and has put together the primary series as a more accessible series. Her name is Shanna Small, she's the wellness Yogini, and you can check her out. Great work on diversity, on fighting racism in yoga, and doing asana in a way that is a lot more accessible. So, she's a really great resource for those of you who are Ashtanga based. Okay. Making progress. So, we already talked about this, and this is just breaking it down even further for class structure. So, showing you Shavasana and all the ways that you can do your centering, making yourself ... Then taking yourself up to seated and then onto knees.

Then you can see the progression here. So, this is just giving you some concrete examples of how to build a progressive class so that your students are more successful when they get to that apex pose if that's what you're teaching to, or an apex sequence if that's what you're teaching to. I prefer an apex sequence that has three poses that people can play with. We've already talked about what those could be, standing split, half moon, and then sugarcane pose. There's a sequence of three poses that anybody can choose any one of those poses to play with or kneeling versions of those poses, or versions of those poses at the wall.

Okay. So, bringing it all together, how to make yoga awesome, more equitable. So, we just talked about progressive teaching. You're going to learn about adapting poses. We've talked about using the appropriate language and communication. We've talked about creating variations, and then introducing different elements, like creating a class at the wall, learning what poses group together. We talked about the bus stop method and how that could look in your teaching. Now it's important to use what you have learned. Not to be afraid. Yoga asana has been evolving forever.

Our initial understanding of yoga is not asana. It's the philosophy. It's the upanishads, it is the Vedas, it is the yoga Sutras, it is the eight limbs of yoga. Those are things that we want to stay present for, and those are things that we need to apply to our life to be successful as the bigger understanding of yoga. There's yoga with a small Y, and I consider that the asana, us rolling around on the mat, doing all that. And there's yoga with the big Y, which incorporates all the lessons we learn from all those critical and historical texts, the Gita, all those things that teach us how to show up in the world as better people, how to be more connected in a world that is becoming increasingly more polarized and individualized.

I would even say, almost more so than in any other time in the world, we have all these factions, we have all these feelings. So, I think it's really important that we use those tools that yoga gives us to bring us closer together. The asana practice, small Y, in of itself is fun, creates community, but it only creates community and is fun if everybody's included. So, you really wanna make sure that you're using these tips and you're using these opportunities to create equity in your classes. When you look at people, you want to see people engaged with the practice. You don't want to see people sitting and looking at you because they have no idea what's going on, or they're not able to do any asana and you haven't given them any opportunities.

When you create two or three different two or three different opportunities to play with shapes or poses that are similar, remember this, this is how we wanna include everybody. You do not want to go to a yoga class and watch flexible people practice yoga. That's not what you came for. You came for your own personal healing. You came for your own experience of movement, and watching other people do poses and be flexible in class doesn't feel good. Teachers, if you're telling people, oh, if you can't do the pose, there's always child's pose. That's lazy. That's lazy because people can't always do child's pose.

Child's pose isn't the be all end all for a lot of people. So, think of other things people can be doing if the pose that you are showing isn't accessible, and make sure that you're paying attention to your students

so that you're not going from one inaccessible pose to another inaccessible pose, so that people don't feel defeated. We want to look out and we want to see people connecting with their breath, connecting with their bodies, and in some cases, connecting with each other depending on the kind of class that you teach. Okay? So, it's lazy to say, just go to child's pose.

I've given you all kinds of examples and all kinds of ways where you don't have to default to that. If you want to give people a rest, invite them to take the pose that makes them feel good. Come to seated, come to lying down, come to kneeling. Let them choose what the pose is. But these blanket defaults of going child's pose is lazy work, and we can do better as yoga teachers to make sure that we are creating opportunities for people to build respect and acceptance for their bodies to see that they can be included in a class, and that this is for them. Make sure you prepare your class before you come, always come prepared.

This is an interesting quote from Confucius. I just thought it was kind of fine. When it's obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps. I look at that it's gonna be difficult for somebody to get to Ardha Chandrasana. So, the action steps are to take it to kneeling or to teach them how to open their shoulders. It's really important that we look at the steps leading up to something and create those actions that help people feel more accessible, or successful is the word I'm looking for.

Remember, Ardha Chandrasana can happen on a chair. Triangle can happen on a chair. Wheel can happen on a chair. Camel can happen on a chair. If we want to bring a chair into the series for when we get to that pinnacle series, that's another way to bring progression and accessibility to your classes. So, be creative, be innovative, be thoughtful, develop your critical thinking skills around, how can I adjust this posture to fit the person in this particular body? And how do I share that with the entire class without centering people out? Be smart about teaching your yoga practice.

You're already being smart by being here, because this helps you start to think about how I want to share my yoga and not being so caught up in that? There's only one way to do something. One thing I always incorporate into to my classes, especially when they're progressive classes, is what I call student playtime. I used to call it Yogi playtime, practitioner playtime. You can call it whatever you want, whatever speaks to you, whatever works for your audience. You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation. So true.

One of the very first ways we learn anything is through the act of play. We really want to encourage our students to move and just have some fun. Sometimes I do a dance party. Sometimes we just play. So, I give people five or six minutes to play. I usually do it at the halfway point of a class. So, if I'm doing like a 75 minute class, I might come into our play class around 35 to 40 minutes. If I'm doing a 90 minute class, we might do a little play time at an hour, either halfway or two thirds of the way through the class where you're completely warmed up. Maybe you've already accessed your pinnacle pose.

Now you give your students five or six minutes to play. People have asked me, do people get irritated by playtime? The opposite is true. I've often, every single time I've offered up playtime, at least one or two of my students comes to me at the end of class and says to me, "Thank you for giving me an opportunity to play. I have been working on this pose and I was able to get some time to play in it." The last class that I taught when I instituted student play time, I had an opportunity to guide a student through headstand pose who was working on that pose, and she was able to get up into headstand because she had a few minutes to play.

And post COVID, I would kind of walk, or pre-COVID, I would walk around the room. During COVID, where we are right now at this particular moment in time, I put on my mask and I stand in within that two meters, six feet window, and give a little bit more instruction in the pose so people can access more



instruction. If people are concerned or confused about what they should be doing during Yogi play time. I say to them, or through student play time, practitioner playtime, whatever language resonates with your audience or you, I invite them to either take an extra long Shavasana or sit in a version of pigeon, or I'll introduce a yin posture at that particular time.

If people want to do something a little less involved, and they're looking to maybe dial down their intensity, then I invite them to take a seated Baddha Konasana or a butterfly pose, or maybe they take a swan pose, or maybe they come into happy baby, or maybe they take a brief Shavasana at this time. There are lots of practices like Sivananda and Modo practices, the Modo flow, in the school of hot yoga. Where we take a, partway through the class, we take an actual rest break. So, you can also offer that because they're going to rest before we come down onto the floor. If people are already on the floor, then you can progress into your cool down, your contemplation time, your meditation time.

You can also encourage people to meditate during this time. If they're not interested in participating in student play time, and I've yet to have anybody not be interested. What to do if there's no props. This is time to use your ingenuity. Now that we are in the time of a pandemic and the world is forever changed around that, a lot of yoga studios have packaged up their props and sold individual personalized prop kits. So, if you're in a yoga studio and you don't feel safe to manage those props in the time of mass passing around an infection, perhaps you create prop kits and you sell them.

I noticed a lot of that going on at the beginning of the pandemic when people were practicing from home over Zoom, that studios were sharing their prop kits or selling their prop kits. If you're in a yoga studio situation and you maybe don't wanna carry props, just as an extra caution, maybe you sell prop kits, you put things together, you sell them at a bit of a discount because they're used. You disinfect them and people can do a curbside pickup or pick up.

That way gives people access to props at a discounted price, or start to use your ingenuity. Look around your house and figure out, what are some things that you could use as props or invite your students to bring to class as props. Sharing tools is a new space, because you're going to have to spend some time disinfecting those tools before the next class, and maybe we don't have time to do those things, or we can't do those things adequately, which is when building a prop kit for your students comes into play. Look around the room or around the space and see if there's things there that you could already use as props. So, if you're teaching in a studio that doesn't have any props, maybe you teach at the wall, maybe you do your entire flow, as we spoke about earlier, seated or laying down, or putting together your flow where you may not need to use props.

If you're teaching a forward fold and people are having a hard time, maybe bringing their fingertips to the floor, maybe you teach forward fold where they rest their elbows on their thighs, or maybe you do, instead of that, you do rag doll where people aren't required to touch the floor. One thing I do for people who aren't going to be using blocks and can't touch the floor, when we do a forward fold, I have them bring their hands behind their back, or if they're able to lace their fingertips together and let their arms fall forward, or I have them bring their hands to their waist. So, I look for ways to adjust the pose that doesn't need a prop, or I use whatever's in the room, whether that might be a bench or a wall or a ball, and I start to get creative.

Another thing you can do is what can you look around and find in the house as props? When I'm just looking at my desk here, I have a big water bottle. So, I can use this as a prop. What I like about this water bottle is I broke the thing that keeps this closed. This thing keeps this water bottle from rolling away from me. So, you can use water bottles, sometimes for blocks. I will tape a Kleenex box with duct tape, and I will either keep the Kleenex in it or fill it with socks or whatever, to make it a little bit more head. And then I'll tape it. If you have containers, plastic containers, whether they're maybe makeup

wipe containers or diaper wipe containers, you can tape them with duct tape and they make great blocks.

What else do I have around my desk? Oh, this is a good one. Whenever I go to the dollar store around Christmas time, or even now, they sell these tins, like they're usually two for a dollar. So, I'll encourage people, if they don't have blocks, they can buy these tins for a dollar. You can fill them with sand or dirt, or just anything heavy. And then I've got stuff in here, and then you can tape the top of the lid down, and this makes a great prop. You can get one that's slightly bigger. This can be a great substitution for a block.

If you have been buying a lot of stuff at Amazon, I'm ashamed to say that I have, but this is what was available to us during a pandemic. If you can get some of those heavier cardboard boxes and you can reinforce them with duct tape or with tape, you can also fill them with sand or a flaxseed or stuff them with ... I usually just stuff them full of leggings and tape them shut, and that also works really well as block. You can use books, if people are okay with putting books on the floor. One thing that I've been using for a strap lately is, if you have a pair of leggings that you're no longer using, this really works well as a strap for stretching.

I also convert these into bolsters. Pranayama bolsters, the long, thin bolsters. I'll cut on off the leg, sew the leg shut, or I'll use hem tape and an iron to seal off the edges, and then I'll fill these with either towels or flaxseed, or lentils, and I'll make a long, thin bolster that I can use for a lot of different things. I try to get really creative of with things. If I have leftover clothing, how can I stuff that clothing and make pillows and interesting shape bolsters out of things? That's what I do and I encourage my students. I had an online class, I think on yoga international, where that's what we did, we made props.

We spent a half an hour making props from house old items, and that way, if people can't get props or you don't have props, these are things you can ask people to bring to class with them to make their practice a little bit more accessible. I'm trying to think if there's anything else. Always pillows from your bed. Big cushions from your couch make wonderful bolsters by taking in that whole seat cushion out because it's dense. Blankets, you can use beach towels. Whenever I go anywhere that has a sale on beach towels, I try to buy a whole bunch of them. I remember, I think Walgreens at one point, when I was at Walgreens had beach towels two for \$5.

So, I pick up beach towels because they all make a great substitute for blankets, for neck rolls, for kneeling on in the beginning of a season, and unless you live in a climate that's warm all year round, you can get pool noodles at the dollar store that you can cut into three sections and they make a great block, or they make it a great prop for propping up under your hip if you're doing, say pigeon pose. You also buy those gardening knee pads. You can either strap them onto your knees. Makes me feel like a dancer when I do that, or you can get the square kneeling pads that you can kneel on for when we're doing anything on our knees, and I think those are really great to have.

So, just get really creative, especially now that we are in COVID. Here's some more opportunities for things that you could use. One of them is small beach balls. I often get them for a dollar at the Dollar store, or soccer balls, anything like that. When you're looking a strap, you can do skipping ropes, dog leashes, the tie off your robe. So, don't be scared. Get really creative. Back in the day when I had my yoga studio, I didn't have a lot of money to outfit my yoga studio. I used to go to the thrift store and buy neck ties because there's a lot of really ugly neck ties in the world and they make great straps.

So, I would grab a bunch. I think I would get 10 for a dollar, and if I ran out of straps, people could use neck ties for that. So, just get creative. Don't be afraid to get creative and start thinking about creating a class if you only had one prop. That's something that I would recommend in testing your ingenuity and your innovation skills. All right. What are some items you might have around your house right now and

some of the things you can think about? If there are absolutely no props available, try doing a hands free Vinyasa, where we do all standing poses, maybe close to a wall, or you can do an entire floor practice.

If you have one prop like a chair, you could do an entire chair practice as your singular prop. You could try, I had in my 200 hour teacher training, I asked everybody to find one prop, either one block, or a strap, or a blanket and create a whole restorative practice using one prop. Because sometimes that's all you have. Maybe you can invite people to bring a blanket and do a whole class based on how, with a blanket, and I've seen a whole restorative practice done with a blanket. That was one of the final exams for one of the students.

They were at home, they forgot their props in the studio. They only had a blanket. So, how do I create a whole restorative practice with a blanket? And it was pretty brilliant. That's something that you can consider. Using your ingenuity is important. I have a challenge for you if you choose to accept it. Create a class, any class, it could be restorative, it could be active, it could be a hot to class, using one prop only.

So, create an accessible class with a single prop. So, you only have one block. You only have one strap. You don't have a series of props. You only have one thing. How do you create an entire room accessible practice with just one block, or just a blanket, or just a bolster? That is my challenge to you. If you want to share it in the Facebook group and tag Amber and myself in it, I would love to see what you come up with. That's how we learn, is collectively and collaboratively.

Let's open up the door to figuring out how we can encourage people to figure out students and teachers how to adapt in a situation where they don't have props. We've had to learn, over the past few years, how to adapt with living with an infectious disease. So, let's figure out how we adapt. That's how we survive. That's how yoga keeps growing. That's how things keep moving forward, is we learn to adapt. Let's figure out how we can adapt household items into props. That's your challenge if you choose to accept it. It's not something you're going to be marked on. It's just something you want to be able to have in your tool belt.

If you're looking for feedback from the group, you can post in the Facebook group, record it on your phone, maybe do a 10, 15, or 20 minute practice using one prop, and share it in the Facebook group. Let's get the ideas bubbling. All right, everybody, thank you for sharing your time with me, and I will see you in the next video.