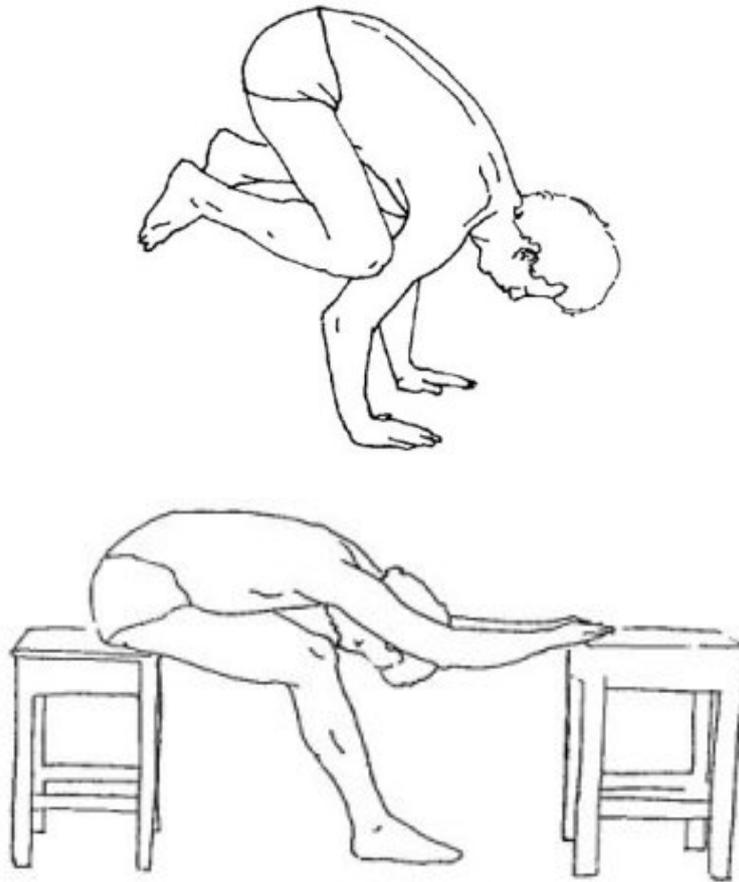


It is interesting that in this current boom of Yoga Vogueing there are two distinct camps emerging.



That of Yoga within the field of extreme fitness and at the other end of the spectrum that of Yoga within the field of therapy or Yoga Tx.

The former is evident through the agenda and primary foci within the modern phenomena of Yoga Studios and Yoga Teachers competing to fill their many Warrior Athlete style Āsana classes with Exotic Sport names such as Hot Yoga, Power Yoga, Hot Power Yoga, Boot Camp Yoga, Extreme Yoga, Fitness Yoga, Fitness Fusion Yoga, Crossfit Yoga, Pilates Yoga, Booty Ballet Yoga, Yoga Burn, Yoga Bums and Tums, et al.

These multifarious Exotic Sport Yoga options are often promoted by studios offering 'as many as you can eat in a month' style discounts and modern Yoga mat style cut 'em thin so you can pack 'em in facilities. Though these marketing strategies can also mean that its increasingly difficult to develop a continuity of student profiling or a systematic developmental pedagogy, but what the heck its all Yoga.

On the other side we have the aspirations of Yoga Therapy, with becoming a Yoga Therapist an increasingly attractive Yoga career choice or an add-on skill supplement in what is becoming an oversaturated general Yoga group marketplace.

Personally I am not comfortable with the label of Yoga Therapy and especially Yoga Therapist as I feel it can separate a burgeoning Yoga Therapist (and Yoga Therapy Marketplace) from an existing Yoga Teacher (and Yoga Teaching Marketplace) in an unhelpful way and often support a hierarchical Yoga categorisation.

I would choose to see it as an aspect of our work as a Yoga teacher where we can employ a particular skill base in the ability to use Yoga as a Therapy alongside other dimensions of our 'Yoga as' teaching work.

Personally I find being a Yoga teacher more demanding and less easily measurable or symptomatically definable than being in a situation where Yoga as a Therapy is my primary focus with the student. In other words where do we go with the well student, especially one who is not so interested in the 'Exotic Yoga' or 'Spiritual Sports' pursuits so popularised today?

This, aside from and other concerns around becoming a 'Yoga Therapist', such as the increasingly medicalised Yoga Therapy regulatory clinician training hoops and educationalised assessment requirements that are emerging in the US and UK, brings me to, what I feel is, an increasing misperception of the work of TKV Desikachar in the West today.

Let me preface this with an example that illustrates what is a popular perception of 'viniyoga' in that there is a Yoga Studio near to me that, when encountering a student with limiting possibilities with such as back pain, would say go to the 'viniyoga' Yoga centre, they are Yoga Therapists.

This attitude is also within a variety of both media or public perceptions, or even amongst students supposedly trained in this methodology, of Desikachar's teaching on Yoga as:

"Meditation for the extremely tired"

"Miniyoga"

"I teach viniyoga when students aren't able to....."

"The Yoga that prepares you for the real Yoga"

"I run a viniyoga class for beginners alongside my stronger classes for continuers."

"Only therapeutic Yoga", etc

This is really not the way I was taught over 25 years or the way I have always taught. As a pupil of Desikachar I was trained to teach Yoga - whatever the short term or long term request or process within the relationship of teacher and student.

The articles from the previous few days on [Yoga as Power](#), [Yoga as Reflection and Discovery](#) and [Yoga as Rejuvenation and Prevention](#) are illustrations of the extent of this training firstly as a student, though with occasional health blips, then as a teacher of others.

Here, firstly of students without restrictions, through to students with no health issues but lifestyle limitations of work, family etc, through to students with chronic or acute, short term or long term health limitations. All of whom are seen as being within a similar developmental potential Yoga map but with different vehicles or journey times.

However I feel that this popular perception of Desikachar's work is also partially reinforced from within the 'viniyoga community' around the world by the Yoga as a Therapy, or always adapting Yoga to the student (there are times when the student needs to adapt to the needs of Yoga) skill dominating the priorities of students learning, teaching and even personal practice.

This feeling on how the personal practice element is increasingly pursued is reflected by a recent [quote](#) in my blog journal:

"A short term strength of the viniyoga of Yoga methodology is, that you can have a personal practice session designed for only 25'.

A long term weakness of the viniyoga of Yoga methodology is, that you only have a personal practice session designed for 25'."

My feeling around all this is that we need to embrace being a Yoga teacher whatever the situation, after all this is the true intent within the concept of the viniyoga or application of Yoga according to the individual and their situation.

Thus the viniyoga of Yoga is not just limited to individuals with health problems.

This is the spirit of the viniyoga of Yoga whether teaching for any level or style of fitness or physical pursuit, or as a lifestyle support according to age and stage, or as a means of recovery or support within a chronic or acute health issue.