



Grow Your Own Green Yoga Sanhga Program

offered by The Green Yoga Association

www.greenyoga.org



'GROW YOUR OWN' GREEN YOGA SANGHA PROGRAM

WHAT:

As more Yogis around the globe grow committed to a sustainable lifestyle that will benefit the planet and support the human species, it is imperative for such like-minded Yogis to find ways to share visions, information, practices, and off-the-mat actions. In this spirit, the Green Yoga Association is committed to supporting you to Grow your own Green Yoga Sangha (Community).

Just as The Green Yoga Association is a diverse and multi-cultural group, each Green Yoga Sangha will have its own ideas, languages, and approaches to these practices. However, we hope to inspire a shared vision; connect people through Yoga; and raise reverence for and action on behalf of the Earth.

We envision that Green Yoga Sanghas gather at least once per month with a Sadhana (practice), discussion time, and call to action. We encourage you to support the growth of the Green Yoga vision with various forms of outreach. The Green Yoga Association in turn will support the growth of your Sangha with resources, class ideas, and international community outreach.

What to do At-A-Glance

(these steps are detailed in the document)

1. Be inspired - think about why you're inspired and how you can communicate that to other people in your community.
2. Read this entire packet to organize your plan.
3. Pick a date, time, and location for your first Sangha Gathering.
4. Post the information everywhere on the Internet (your website, Facebook, etc.) and visit other gatherings to invite people to participate.
5. If necessary and appropriate, create a flier and print them on recycled paper (1/2 or 1/4 sheets!).
6. Hit the pavement! Post the fliers at selected locations (and always have a few with you whenever you leave home).
7. Send an email to info@greenyoga.org so we can publicize your event on our website and Prana, our international news letter.
7. Outline the first gathering to include a Yoga practice, group discussion, action steps, and closure.
8. The first meeting can also focus on delegating roles and leadership positions (outreach coordinator, sadhana organizer, accountant, GYA contact, etc.).
9. Collect email addresses from everyone present and create an email list.
10. Follow up via email and plan the next gathering!
11. Stay connected to and update the Green Yoga Association regularly.

WHO

can create a Green Yoga Sangha (community)? You!

This program is open to leaders, teachers, and practitioners of all forms of Yoga. The Green Yoga Association encourages each Sangha to have leaders who will assume the responsibility to organize and sustain the Sangha's integrity. To encourage you, the Green Yoga Association offers two levels of programming support. You choose the program or combination of programs that works best for you and your community.

The Agreements of being a leader are:

- You are a member of the Green Yoga Association.
- Your Sangha is directed towards topics of ecological healing and sustainability.
- Your Sangha is not for profit.

There are 2 different levels of Sangha Leadership:

Plan #1 "Sangha Secrets - Self-Generated"

The information shared in this document will point you towards establishing a successful Green Yoga Sangha in your community that you implement and organize on your own. Please use this information to get started on your own and share with us what you are doing.

Plan #2 "Sangha Secrets - Supported"

Using the information in this document you can start your own community and then maintain contact with the Green Yoga Association to be supported in the process. With this plan, we you will receive input from Green Yoga Association Council Members who will provide monthly phone-in Think Tank Meetings and provide on-going ideas and support for your program to run more smoothly, to add interest, resources, ideas and encourage cross-pollination.

These calls are voluntary, but we request your ongoing commitment to facilitate the communal spirit.

To participate in these calls, we require that the Sangha Leader be a paid member of the Green Yoga Association. Membership information is available at www.greenyoga.org .

****This program will begin in September 2009:. Please email david@greenyoga.org for participation.****

WHEN

Pick a date, time and location for your first Sangha Gathering.

This is an important process and requires your attention to details so that your first meeting is a success.

Some things to consider when choosing the date and time:

- What cultural/society events might conflict with the proposed times?
- What national/religious holidays need to be considered?
- Are there other Yoga-related events happening?
- Does it allow time for people with regular business hours to attend?
- Consider having your gathering after a popular yoga class. If it's one you teach, great! If you don't teach, contact a local teacher and collaborate with her or him.

Some things to consider when choosing the location:

- Nature! Ideally an outdoor location when possible, or a place that has a strong connection to the natural world. It is nice if some part of the gathering takes place outside.
- What characteristics of the environment would prevent someone from attending (e.g., traffic and parking)?
- Is it accessible to public transportation?
- Do you need to have a permit?
- If it is outside, is there shade from the sun and protection from rain?
- What are the outside noise factors?

GO FIND THE PEOPLE!

Sangha Members / The Community:

Green Yoga Sanghas are open to a variety of participants regardless of Yoga lineage. Yoga is the common thread and they are intended to support all yogi's in discovering and deepening our reverence for the Earth and support of the human species. Here are some steps to grow your Sangha.

- Visit Yoga classes, workshops, environmental gatherings and existing community groups to announce the gathering in person.
- Post the information on the Internet (your website, Facebook, Craig's List, etc.)
 - Email info@greenyoga.org with the information so we can publish it on our website and potentially our newsletter.
 - Create / Add a Green Yoga page to your own website
 - Create a 'Facebook Group' for free and join with our Global Green Yoga Sanghas Group which already exists
 - Find free places to post your information such as Yogamates.com
 - Countless other social networking and/or BLOG sites

-Create a flier and print them on recycled paper (1/2 or ¼ sheets!)

Be sure to include the important details of the meeting:

- exact location with transport information if available
- what time it starts and ends
- what to bring (yoga mat, food for potluck? Poems?)
- suggested donation amount?
- contact information
- the Green Yoga website: www.greenyoga.org
- what you plan to do together (content of the event)
- the benefits (why would people want to come?)
- include an image if possible.

- Hit the pavement! Post the fliers at selected locations (and always have a few with you whenever you leave home). Think Local!

- Any and all Yoga Studios
- Yoga teachers and teacher associations
- Health food stores and farmer's markets
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Garden shops
- 'Non-Yoga' spiritual Centers and gathering places (Zen centers, Churches, Community Centers, Artist collectives, Libraries, Bike Shops, etc.)

- Schools of all ages and types (University, High, Grade school)
- Elementary, Middle, High Schools, encourage interest with/thru Science and Home Economics teachers.
- Other Green Yoga business members
- Other environmental groups with regional chapters (Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, etc.)
- Vegetarian Restaurants
- Bookstores
- Unlikely places for added outreach and inclusiveness! (hardware stores, popular grocery stores, outdoor gear shops)

HOW

Make an outline for the first gathering to include some kind of Yoga Practice, some group discussion time, action steps, and closure.

Personalize the first practice by choosing a theme that embraces your passion/hobby, something you would like to see in the community, and what you feel your community needs.

We hope that every Sangha will be unique and creative in their approach and meetings and offer this simple guideline for reference:

1. Welcome circle to introduce each other and intention for the gathering.
2. Sadhana: asana/pranayama/dharana etc.
- 3, Speaker/theme presentation
4. Guided discussion/questions/social time
5. Call to Action with specific steps and suggestions
6. Closing circle with experience sharing time

The following is a beginning list of ideas for making your Yoga experience a 'Green Yoga' experience. We are always gathering ideas and class outlines and would love to hear from you with your teachings to share them with Sanghas around the globe. Visit the Green Yoga website for an evolving list of sadhana ideas and email your classes to david@greenyoga.org and have them included in this document.

Sadhana Ideas (Sadhana is the Sanskrit word for 'practice'):

1. The Elements in Asana: Guide a class through the five elements (or one specifically) with asanas and pranayamas that represent each one (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space).
2. Extensions of Natural Forms: Invite students to touch some natural being (a rock, tree, plant, flower) and feel the essence of it. Sound a chime / bell and have them move their bodies into a physical extension of that being and

hold the shape. Repeat this several times and they can move around and change 'being's between cycles.

3. The five senses: Guide a class focusing on the senses and our perception to the natural world through them. (Smell, Taste, Sight, Touch, Hearing)

4. Animals! Make an entire yoga class using poses that are named / represent animals. Try and make a class based on the animals you observe in your local area!

5. Blindfold: Guide a Yoga Journey with the students blindfolded and open to the natural world through other senses.

6. Silent Nature Walk: Guide a walking meditation in which every step is a prayer to the Earth.

7. Vayus: Lead a journey through the 'inner winds' and their physical effects on the body. (Prāna, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna, and Samāna)

8. Chakras: Connect students to their energy centers.

9. Eco Yamas & Niyamas: Integrate these principles into an applied practice with an environmental approach to living them in daily life.

10. Lead a Circle Dance with an Earth song or Mantra.

11. Sun and Moon: Guide a class around the theme of luminosity with asana and meditations

12. Four directions: Guide the opening of a class or workshop with devotions/mantras and movement honoring the four directions (especially profound when first arriving or moving into a new location)

13. Trees: Guide a class with asana of insects, birds, and other connections to trees

14. Surrender: Offer the experience of letting go with meditation and restorative asana supporting the space with silence and few words.

15. Orient all the poses around the human body being a conduit for energy and communication between the earth and the heavens. Drawing earth energy up through the feet, drawing cosmic energy down from the heavens, they meet in the heart chakra.

16. A class of gratitude practice for the earth's body and our human body.

17. Relating to gravity, the connection between our body and the earth.

Programming Ideas

In addition to Green Yoga Sadhana / Practice, we encourage you to partner with local environmental groups to educate yourselves on local issues and be active in supporting problem-solving. Here are some ideas to get you started, and we welcome any suggestions to supplement our list:

1. Partner with a local environmental organization to learn about local issues and take action.
2. Permaculture Centers: invite local teachers/master gardeners.
3. Partner with other Spiritual Practices that embrace connection to nature: Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese (chi-gong), etc.
4. Find ecological programs at the local college and invite teachers to speak and ask them to invite their students (for a credit-grade).
5. Bring the Bike Mechanic for a Bike Fix-It Class.
6. Find a Solar Panel Specialist who can come and talk about his or her work.
7. Take a tour of your local recycling plant to see what actually happens there.
8. Clean-Up Days / Recycle Collection Days.
9. Yard-Sale, "Recycle What You Don't Need" – and remember to teach Reduce and Reuse as well
10. Eco-Activities with Kids
11. Read excerpts from Georg Feuerstien's Green Yoga
12. Save Your Trash (step by step on how to save, sort and show one month's worth of waste here: <http://www.saveyourtrash.typepad.com/>).
13. Invite activists to come and speak about their causes.
14. Ask your local Chamber of Commerce about Greening Programs offered by the city. Invite a speaker from each concentration to speak.

Call to Action

Many yogis are filled with positive intentions for a sustainable lifestyle and are looking for support to bring them into action. With group support and accountability, your Green Yoga Sangha can have a tangible impact on your

local ecological needs. Let the group be a vehicle and catalyst for making a difference.

This aspect of the Green Yoga Sangha is important because it invites the practitioners who have had an integrating experience to bring intentions into actions in a positive way and to create partnerships and alliances with local environmental organizations.

Whatever your theme, topic or ideas were for the program, find a way to integrate them into daily life. There is great potential here for individuals to make personal commitments (i.e.: disposable plastic free week, vegetarian for a month, ride a bike to work 2X week, etc.) and for the Sangha to make a group commitment to help with environmental consciousness. Perhaps the group can volunteer to clean by a river or park or support environmental groups with communication or other work. The possibilities are endless and there is a lot of work to be done.

KEEPING IN TOUCH.

Stay connected to the Green Yoga Association.

-One way to participate in this program is with a monthly conference call with other Sangha leaders and Green Yoga Council Members to stimulate your creativity and appeal to a broad spectrum of Yogis. This option is open to current Green Yoga members only.

- Share with other Sanghas to share topics and class ideas.

- Find support with any "subjects of concern" prior to your next gathering or conference-call-meeting through email and phone calls with Green Yoga Council members and other Sangha leaders.

-Receive tips on how to organize and motivate people to support and expand your Sangha.

-Receive .pdf or .doc files that have the Green Yoga logo and email sign up lists to help your cause be 'official.'

-Participate in Green Yoga Conferences and Teacher Leadership programs.

The Practice of DANA – Generosity and Giving

We are honored to share these ideas and inspirations with you and hope that it generates motivation for you get started with your Green Yoga Community. We offer these ideas with open hearts and invite you and your Green Yoga

Sangha to consider offering back to The Green Yoga Association through donations and memberships. This practice is known in Sanskrit as Dana, generosity or giving.

As your community grows, consider putting out a donation basket and inviting people to offer financial contributions. Be sure to pay for any expenses you incur in marketing and other costs and then share what you can to the Green Yoga Association through donations and memberships. Donations can be made through paypal at www.greenyoga.org