



Welcome to the Easter 2022 edition of our e-newsletter.

www.oriy.org.uk

Dear Members,

Spring is finely in air and I know I say it every year but don't we need it! They say it's a sign of age when the winters seem to get longer!

For this issue I have decided to produce a number of articles on the feet. This is because even after doing Iyengar yoga for well over 25 years I still struggle with getting my feet to stretch and work as well as I'd like. As we know the feet are our foundation. They connect us to the earth. According to Suza Francina in her book, 'The New Yoga for People over 50', these two faithful servants will walk an estimated 115,000 miles – the equivalent of four and a half strolls around the planet. Every architect knows that the structure of a building depends on a solid foundation for its strength. When the foundation is weak or flawed, problems arise throughout the building. Likewise, many aches and pains, and even a cranky disposition can be traced to the body's foundation, the feet. The feet of course cannot be viewed in isolation over the last few decades a huge amount of knowledge and understanding has been gained in how the brain works and influences just about everything we do. I found a really interesting Blog from a Canadian Iyengar yoga practitioner about the relationship between the feet and the brain – reproduced later. It really provides food for thought. I've also included Gurji's instructions on standing in Tadasana. Finally, on the feet I thought you might like to hear some thoughts from Sarah Key (a renowned physiotherapist and author who uses Iyengar Yoga to help people alleviate pain and restore mobility, taken from her book The Body in Action) Also included is her 'dowling torture' an extremely uncomfortable but great exercise that mobilises the arches and all the joints in the feet. (Writing this has reminded me to get my piece of dowl out!) .

Tanya De Leersnyder our ORIY Rep has been in post now for a year – this time I have included her summary of the last Exec meeting as well as a few thoughts on how she is finding the job.

Our first face to face event since the pandemic began took place on Saturday 2nd April with the eminent Uday Bhosale – it was such a delight to meet together in person and catch up with old friends. A few photos are included so you can get a flavour of the day.

Finally, you should all have received an email from IY(UK) reminding you that your £15 ORIY subs are due at the end of March – with information on how to pay directly to IY(UK) using their website <https://iyengaryoga.org.uk/> If you need any help with this contact Julia our membership secretary at jhardy2406@gmail.com

Happy Easter

Love and best wishes - keep safe

Mary

ORIY Chair and Newsletter Editor Maryfitzpatrick10@icloud.com



Workshop with Uday Bhosale Saturday 2nd April

It was a real pleasure to finally get to a face to face ORIY event after a gap of well over two years. Uday focused on the even extension of the trunk and how this is achieved and maintained in a number of quite basic asanas including, Virasana, Adhomukha Svanasana, Uttanasana, Prasarita Padottanasana, Sirsasana, Sarvangasana and more. The great thing about these events is that you get the time to really explore and experiment with an asana – some thing that is not always possible in a regular class. Uday's direction helped us all to gain an even deeper understanding of Iyengar Yoga. A great day was had by all.

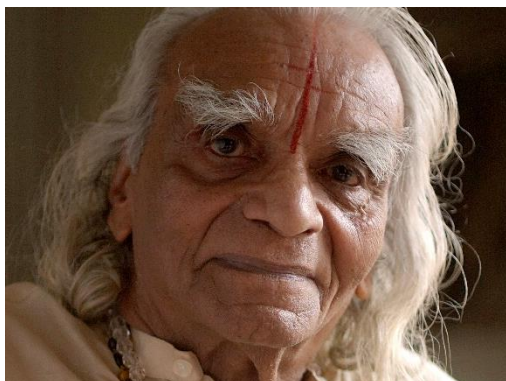




Guruji on the effects of Tadasana – from Light on Yoga by BKS Iyengar.

Tadasana (also called Samasthiti) One

Tada means mountain. Sama means upright, straight, unmoved. Sthiti is standing still, steadiness. Tadasana therefore implies a pose where one stands firm and erect as a mountain. This is the basic standing pose.



‘People do not pay attention to the correct method of standing. Some stand with the body weight thrown only on one leg, or with one leg turned completely sideways. Others bear all the weight on the heels, or on the inner or outer edges of the feet. This can be noticed by watching where the soles and the heels of the shoes wear out. Owing to our faulty method of standing and not distributing the body weight evenly on the feet, we acquire specific deformities which hamper spinal

elasticity. Even if the feet are kept apart, it is better to keep the heel and toe in a line parallel to the median plane and not at an angle. By this method, the hips are contracted, the abdomen is pulled in and the chest is brought forward. One feels light in the body and the mind acquires agility. If we stand with the body weight thrown only on the heels, we feel the gravity changing; the hips become loose, the abdomen protrudes, the body hangs back and the spine feels the strain and consequently we soon feel fatigued and the mind becomes dull. It is therefore essential to master the art of standing correctly.

Is there a foot in your brain?



The brain's proportional map of the body (a Blog written by an Iyengar yoga practitioner and Canadian academic)

Brain research in the last few decades has given us a whole lot to chew on when it comes to understanding how the brain works. Most of it is quite positive. Boiled down to the frankest quintessence, your brain is highly mouldable and can overcome many setbacks and challenges to triumph as a well-developed, ever-evolving being.

Since mind and body are intimately connected, the plasticity of the brain has critical implications for our physical health and well-being. In fact, your brain contains an interactive, 3-D map of your body. The image of a distorted human figure at the top of this post is the cortical homunculus (fairly literally “brain person”).

Each person's brain map is unique in the space it allots to each body part and how the neurons that populate the map interconnect and function with other neurons. The size, sophistication and

interconnectedness of the brain map for Miles Davis's fingers, for example, would make the average person's brain map blush with inadequacy. If we were to view Miles Davis's homunculus, we would no doubt see a larger, much more detailed representation for his playing fingers since he used them so deftly.

Brain maps not only differ from person to person, they actually vary in the same person from moment to moment, based on how she uses (or doesn't use) her body. If you were to take a dance class or practice yoga on a more regular basis, your brain map would devote more space, and stronger, more numerous, more interconnected neural pathways to your body map.

As you begin using your feet more, your brain adapts and your feet occupy a larger, more integrated and co-ordinated space in the brain. In contrast, as we age, our brain follows the "use it or lose it" principle and parts of the body that we don't exercise atrophy in the brain's body map. This is the downside of having a highly changeable brain. Disuse has the effect of shrinking the body map, or at least the parts that have gotten rusty.

You can see this effect in elderly people who trip and fall over small irregularities in their walking path. Without continually stimulating our body map, it shrinks and, in the case of our feet, we develop progressive balance problems. What were once fairly intelligent, sensitive appendages become dull, almost foreign-seeming objects. Wearing shoes contributes to this downward spiral by making the feet less perceptive to the subtle nuances of the ground beneath, its senses dulled by a relatively homogenous-feeling sole.

The good news is that nature's use it or lose it principal cuts both ways. If you start stimulating your body, you can turn the lights back on. For your feet, this means an increase in sensitivity and agility, and an improvement in balance. Taking off your shoes and walking around barefoot will rebuild your brain's body map for your feet.

Standing on a yoga mat and practicing asana will not only keep your brain map from deteriorating, it will actually rewire your brain, restore lost agility, and make your brain map years — even decades — younger. In doing so, yoga asana offers protection and insurance against the potential hazards of aging.

Building Your Brain From the Ground Up

Here's a simple exercise to increase your brain map for your feet. Sit on your mat (or on the lawn, a chair, or wherever you'd like), and separate your toes by interlocking them with the fingers of your opposite hand. This will help build the mind-body intelligence and make your feet much freer and open feeling. Try to progress to the point where you can have the webs of your toes plugged right into the webs of your fingers. This may take weeks, months, or even years and it can feel very intense at first, but with practice, your toes will get used to the stretch and feeling of being spread apart. You may never want to wear a pair of shoes again! As long as you give your feet regular stimulation, you will be building your brain's "foot-intelligence", if you will.

So, in answer to the title question of today's post, yes, there most certainly is a foot in your brain. The more important question for you is, how well-developed is it and what are you going to do about it?



THE BODY IN ACTION- CHAPTER 10 by SARAH KEY

YOUR FEET

There are three working arches of your foot that connect the three weight-bearing points: the heel, the base of the big toe and the base of the little toe. They help you with the very important roles of dispersing your body weight and propelling you forward with a spring in your step during the push-off phase of walking. Foot health is all about the vigour of your arches.

HOW DOES YOUR FOOT WORK

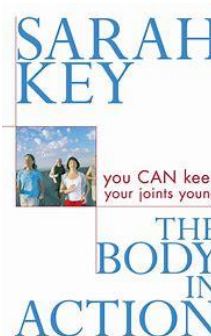
Your foot largely works because of your toes, those funny little projections off the front. Humans don't use them as much these days; now we wrap them up and push them into shoes. But if your toes work well, your feet work well.

The most obvious job of your toes is to grab the ground and push you forward and, let loose, they will do that very well. But they can do more. People without arms can manipulate objects with their feet almost as well as hands, which indicates how the toes are blessed with far greater reserves of function than you ever call upon them to use. Indeed, they have the same musculature as your hands and, though they have no opposing thumb, they are very effective if they have to be.

However potentially useful your feet might be, you usually only demand two jobs of them: weight distribution and locomotive push-off. Your toes contribute substantially to both these functions because your toes and your foot's arches are intimately related. The muscles which work your toes, making them claw the floor to push you forward, also help bow your arches upwards and stop them flattening under load.

WHAT ARE THE ACCESSORY MOVEMENTS OF YOUR FEET?

The important accessory freedom of your feet is the fine interplay between the small composite bones that make up the arch of your foot. The tension of the ligaments across the sole of your foot as well as the power of your muscles acting across the breach, offset the flattening effect of your body's weight bearing down on the top of the arch. With each step you take, the arch flattens slightly to absorb the shock. But as you start to push off, the arches are pinched together again by the muscles of your toes clawing the ground and by the elastic stirrup effect of your calf muscles working around your ankle. This means that during normal walking, the arch of your foot raises and lowers like the Sydney Harbour bridge, bowing up and flattening its famous arch. For this to happen there must be good mobility between all the bones of your foot, particularly the mid-foot.



Your bones must all be free to ride up and down independently of each other, rather like pontoons floating on a swell. Your bones must be free to open away from one another along the underside of the arch, forming V-shaped divots as the foot flattens. Internal mobility is also needed in a lateral spread across your foot so that the sole of your foot can mould itself to uneven surfaces on the ground in the same way that the palm of your hand can mould plasticine. The more mobile the foot the better. The more the individual bones can jostle and glide in relation to one another the more adaptable your foot will be. If accessory movement tightens up and your foot becomes semi-rigid, the dynamic arch qualities of your foot will suffer. As the arches collapse, a terrible saga can set in. The pain on walking, even standing, is an eternal lament.

Just as important is the effect this has on the rest of your body. If the arch is rigid, the shock absorption qualities of your foot will be impaired. The ramifications from this travel far afield. If your feet slap the ground and there is no gentle letting down of your body, your entire skeletal frame will be shocked. The juddering will be felt right throughout your body and every joint will jump. Your skeleton and its joints will be prematurely aged.



The dowling torture

This exercise is almost a bottled concentrate of sweet pain. Treading your feet incrementally forwards over a wooden pole mobilises the arches and gets into parts that nothing else can reach. It is not comfortable—you could say it is 'breathlessly painful'—but your feet will feel amazing afterwards. You will need a long stick such as a broomstick, a walking stick or a piece of dowling 1.5 centimetres thick. It's worth buying the piece of wood especially for this exercise.

- 1 Stand in front of a mantelpiece or a table or any surface you can lean on to take your weight. Have the stick on the floor in front of you.
- 2 Taking some of your weight through your arms, hook your toes over the stick and then incrementally creep forwards, walking over the dowling.



- 3 Take the smallest possible steps until you have passed right on over the dowling and stepped off the other side. Don't speed up when the dowling is under the painful parts of the foot.
- 4 Repeat twice.

Summary of January 2022 IY(UK) Exec Meeting and Update



Tanya De Leersnyder

Chair: It has been agreed that joint meetings with Member Groups would be a positive step forward *(since the EX Meeting, Emma Rattenbury has been in touch with the reps of member groups to arrange an online meeting to share perspectives, experiences and to work out how meetings can benefit the member groups).*

The AGM will be online once again this year and separate to the convention to allow for as many people as possible to attend. Issues around BLM and in general, issues of equity will be discussed during the AGM.

For any teachers who take insurance outside of Wellbeing, IY(UK)'s associated supplier, they may need to double check the indemnity cover required by the venues where they teach – some have a £7m requirement. The minimum requirement is agreed at £5m.

It was agreed that IYUK should become a member of CIMSPA (The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) – this could affect representation of Iyengar Yoga in gyms and to a degree, in schools too.

The CIMSPA working group will also research accreditation requirements of other bodies such as Ofqual or perhaps clinical/NHS settings.

The financial support policy has now been agreed.

The Rajvi Mehta convention was a success and the conventions team did a great job of organising it. Bookings are now open for Margaret Austin's convention in May and is selling very well.

People have been booking online events close to when they are due to take place which causes uncertainty and concern to organisers so it was suggested early bird rates be offered to encourage earlier sales.

Discussion was had around whether IY(UK) conventions should be open to members only and it was felt that a range of events should be on offer – some to members only and others to all.

It was agreed that EVERY attendee of an online event should purchase their own ticket rather than one ticket per household.

Secretary: There are still 3 vacancies (all board positions) – deputy Chair, deputy Secretary (formal role is taking minutes) and deputy Treasurer (ideally requiring a financial qualification to be able to support the Treasurer).

Archives standing committee: The committee needs more members, particularly from those interested in assisting with the digital archive and making it accessible through the website. It was suggested that an article in IYN could outline what material would be welcome from all members.

ATC: Assessments are hoped to take place towards the end of the year pending agreement on assessment fees at the EGM on 20Feb22. There was concern about trainees who started a few years ago suddenly having to most likely pay £900 for their assessment. *(Since the EX meeting, the EGM was held and the £900 fee was rejected. A revised proposal will be brought to the AGM being held on the 12th June. Assessments under the new system will now only be taking place in early 2023).*

Children, young adults and families: Workshops are currently taking place to support teachers to provide classes for children or teenagers and feedback has been excellent. The income from these workshops will help fund future projects.

Communications and PR: Several articles have been secured in the media and there is a steady growth in social media with regard to Iyengar yoga. The website will be undergoing an upgrade.

Savings from members opting for electronic copies of IYN have been approved for addition to the teachers' bursary fund for this year.

Equity: The equity committee will be working with Challenge Consultancy with regard to the Equity, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy to be adopted by IYUK.

Conventions: There will be a face-to-face convention in Harrogate in 2022 chosen as it can cater for a smaller convention but with an opportunity to increase the size if more booking arose without a financial penalty of booking a hall that is too large and having to downscale. Although it was suggested this should be online at the same time, it was decided there would be too much work and cost involved and it could lessen the overall experience for both parties.

Ethics and Appeals: Teacher professional development hours and first aid will be recorded but not required for 2022/23.

Membership: Teachers are to be made aware of the revised indemnity cover of £5m – teachers need to check with the venues where they teach to be sure this is enough. For teachers teaching children or vulnerable adults, it is recommended that they be registered with the update service to make the checking of DBS status much easier and it is a cheaper offer for the individual. DBS requirements vary across the country and the DBS link on the website has further details.

Research: The Long Covid study is still ongoing. The findings are being analysed and evaluated. The aim is to demonstrate the effectiveness of Iyengar Yoga which could enable access to funding such as community social prescribing for example.

My reflections on being a Member Rep on the IY Executive Committee

I have now been the Member Representative for ORIY on the IY Executive committee for about a year. Currently, we still have online Zoom executive meetings which run from 9am to 1pm. Each Rep submits a report with any news from their region such as workshops being run and any other points of interest. As member rep, it is my responsibility to liaise with Mary to find out all the latest news to include in my report. During the EX meetings, there are various votes to be taken on issues that arise.

It is hoped that the meetings will once again be face-to-face or possibly a combination of face-to-face and online in future. Exec meetings are held three times a year – in January, May and September. As a member of the EX committee, one has the opportunity to join some of the various sub-committees such as Research, Equity, Comms and PR when they are in need of more members.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far as I get to meet more of the people involved at the higher levels of the IYUK (albeit only online so far) and it is very interesting hearing about all the work that goes on in the background to keep our organisation running smoothly. There is a lot of enthusiasm and forward thinking which is really exciting.

Once the minutes of the meeting are sent, I write a summary as above for the newsletter.



Tabbouleh – a lovely fresh Middle Eastern grain salad.

I don't stick rigidly to the proportions below tend to just throw it all in together and taste as I go. I often make larger quantities as it is tastier on the second day

Ingredients (makes enough for 2)

50g bulgur wheat (use more if you want it to be more substantial)

50g flat-leaf parsley, chopped

50g mint, chopped



200g ripe tomatoes, deseeded and diced

3 spring onions, finely sliced

Juice of 1 lemon

3 tbsp olive oil

Method

1. Rinse the bulgur wheat in a sieve until the water runs clear. Drain well, then transfer to a bowl. Pour over 200ml of boiling water cover and leave to soak for 30 minutes or so while you prepare the rest of the ingredients.
2. Keeping the parsley in a bunch, chop the leaves roughly. Don't worry about the inclusion of some of the stalks; this all adds to the flavour. Do the same with the mint. Put the chopped herbs in a large bowl and add the tomato and spring onion.
3. Thoroughly drain the bulgur, then add to the herb mix, along with the lemon juice and olive oil. Mix thoroughly, season and serve. (Goes well with rich dishes)



Happy Easter to you all x