

A yoga class for seniors needs to be **Accessible** **Affordable** **Achievable**

This age group wants to maintain and improve health and flexibility. So simple moves that help keep joints supple and functioning well are really important.

It's OK for people to sit in a chair. For some people getting up and down from the floor may be a major exercise in itself. Plan to minimise these moves.

Be prepared to adapt an asana or sequence, eg Surya Namaskar, to give a little more support or a less severe forward bend .

Ageing can make balance less steady. Allow for supports to make this important part of the session comfortable and achievable. Improvement in balance has huge health dividends.

Health notes and cautions. It is needful to keep reminding people of the cautions for forward bends (especially bringing the head up last) and other moves. Be aware of the limitations of replaced hips and knees. Always, always, always encourage people to listen to the wisdom of their body.

Pranayama is very valuable here, both its physical benefits and the calming mental and emotional benefits.

Relaxation can be difficult for some , especially people with hearing impairment who may feel they will miss your instructions. Painful hips can make lying supine well nigh impossible. Keep people warm! Make this a special time, all ages find benefit.

Ensure that the class can hear you and see you as you lead and instruct. Choose your words with care to make instructions clear and encouraging. Allow for humour!

Encourage discussion and suggestions and participation, there is a lifetime of experience and thought out there!

Don't be afraid to introduce the meditative aspects of yoga or some of the teachings of the classical tradition. Older people respond to an opportunity for deeper thinking. An inspirational 'thought for the week' is well received.

And, always be prepared to change the programme if, or when , circumstances dictate.
DMM

Thoughts on aging

If I'd known I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself.

George Burns

My mind is thriving on the ruins of my body, like a plant on compost

Gigi Hirschfeld

First commandment for the old, don't think you are unique - there are one or two others like you

Gigi Hirschfeld

Youth is the time for adventures of the body, but age for the triumphs of the mind

L.Pearsall Smith

As you get older, it is easier to be positive, You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself as much, I've even earned the right to be wrong

I am tired of being the wise old lady, I would rather be young and foolish,

I have tried both and there is no comparison

Gigi Hirschfeld

The big shock on reaching middle age is that you keep on growing older, even after you're old enough

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple, with a red hat.....

To me, old age is always fifteen years older than I am

Bernard Baruch

The senility prayer

God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway,

The good fortune to run into the ones I do

And the eyesight to tell the difference

Age and experience beat youthful exuberance and naivety every time

Sir Michael Hardie Boys

No spring nor summer beauty hath such grace, As I have seen in one autumnal face

John Donne

The best thing about growing old is that all those things you couldn't have when you were younger, you no longer want.

R 70 Yoga for Seniors

IYTA Wellington Branch April 13 2008