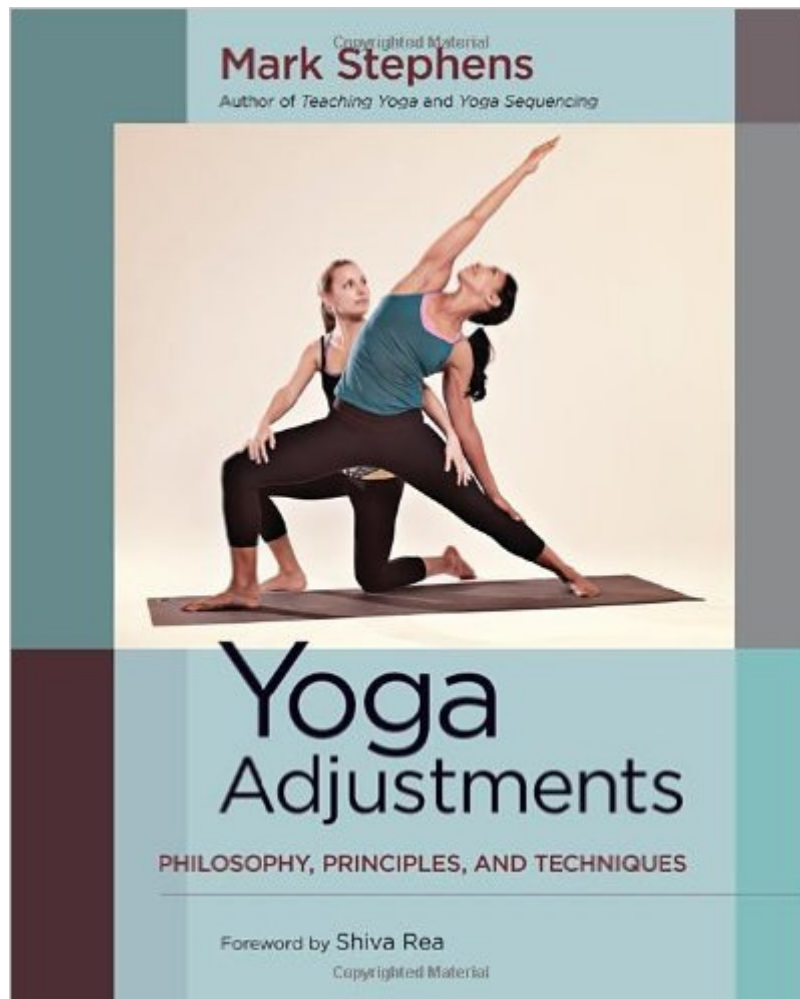


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# Yoga Adjustments: Philosophy, Principles, And Techniques



## Synopsis

The quintessential guide to yoga assisting and hands-on teaching, *Yoga Adjustments* introduces the art and practice of providing yoga assists to yoga students. Addressing one of the most important topics in the yoga field, expert yoga instructor and best-selling author Mark Stephens covers the philosophy of yoga practice, the sensibilities of touch in teaching yoga and improving alignment, the seven principles of hands-on yoga teaching, and the twenty-five most effective methods of tactile cueing. An invaluable resource for all yoga teachers, teacher trainers, and serious yoga students, this book includes a foreword by yoga star Shiva Rea as well as over 850 unique instructional photos and explanatory captions demonstrating precise ways of guiding a variety of flowing sequences. Opening with an in-depth discussion of the philosophy of yoga assisting, Part I--Foundations describes the methods and techniques of giving yoga assistance, with detailed discussions of all of the elements of yoga assisting including communicating with students, qualities of touch, the five basic steps of providing hands-on cues, hands-on positioning and stance. Part II--Applications demonstrates how to assist students in each of over 100 postures in the seven families of asanas (poses). Each chapter begins with background on an asana family and close consideration of its foundation asana. Each asana is presented in a two-page spread with photos that show how to give students effective guidance and support. Part III--Evolution offers thoughts on the further development of yoga in the twenty-first century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mark Stephens has given the yoga world another excellent resource. *Yoga Adjustments* addresses the subject of hands-on instruction, specifically, how to use touch to encourage improved alignment, provide support and guidance, and clarify instructions. As always, Mr Stephens'™ approach is student-focused and sensitive. Ask permission before touching. Respect personal boundaries and know that these can change during a session. Teach to the abilities of the person in front of you. Guide the student toward developing awareness and awakening through the asanas. The scope of the book covers everything from the purposes of touch to where and how (and how not) to touch. Stephens begins with the seven basic principles of hands-on teaching: "teaching what you know, asking permission, clear intention, move and breathe with the student, staying safe, teaching the essential asana elements, and supporting stable foundations. From here, he moves on to defining the various responses we hope to elicit, from elongation and activation to stabilization and relaxation. He also is clear about types of touch that can confuse, injure, or cross personal boundaries. His five basic steps to giving hands-on cues and assistance include setting up the asana with a stable base, eliciting elongation and then motion of the spine, followed by refinement and deepening the asana. He outlines nine stances for positioning yourself to maximize stability, comfort, and safety, and nine different hand positions and motions for cueing. Then the fun begins. Stephens devotes seven chapters, one for each asana family, to a detailed application of these techniques to 99 asanas, showing specific hand placements for encouraging proper alignment and refinement.

I purchased this book from after reviewing it extensively at a local bookstore. As a new yoga instructor, it looked like something that could be beneficial to me in further developing my skills for hands-on assists in class. (Because I work full-time as a psychologist, I currently teach 1 yoga class/week, a beginners class.) Author Mark Stephens has created a comprehensive, thorough guide for performing yoga adjustments. Of course, it is difficult to learn this from a book, but still, Stephens has put together a manual that offers very detailed instructions to build on what most teachers have (hopefully) learned in their teacher training programs. Stephens is clearly extremely knowledgeable, and the book is well-organized, first describing basis for hands-on teaching and then going on to provide both photos and step-by-step guidelines for individual postures, broken down by asana category (e.g., Standing Asanas, Back Bends, etc.). So given all of the above, I couldn't figure out why this book was not more helpful to me. Finally, the realization dawned on me--it is because all of the models performing the postures in the book are PERFECT! None of the models in the book looks at all like any of my students; they don't even appear to be in NEED of any

type of adjustment. To the best of my knowledge, most of the adjustments described by Stephens are to assist students WHO ALREADY HAVE GOOD ALIGNMENT with getting deeper into the pose. In my beginners classes, however, I want to give my students assists so that they have better alignment, can achieve greater comfort in the pose, can do the posture in a way that is safe for their joints, etc.

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