

Yoga Women: Celebrating International Women's Day With 9 Famous Women Who Paved The Way



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[Women's Wellbeing](#)

Women Yoga practitioners make up the majority of those practicing Yoga, according to Data from the 2021 [Statista's Global Consumer Survey](#).

Throughout the years, **Yoga Women – Women Yoga practitioners and Women Yoga teachers have played a significant role in shaping the growth and evolution of Yoga into what it is today.**

In celebration of International Women's Day, we highlight and acknowledge the women Yoga practitioners and teachers who paved the way for us in the world of Yoga.

In this article, we'll **take a look at 9 famous Yoga women who have contributed to the evolution of Yoga, highlighting their contributions and achievements:**

#1: [Geeta Iyengar](#): Pioneering Women-Centred Yoga Practices

Geeta Iyengar, the daughter of B.K.S. Iyengar, is one of the most well-known female yoga teachers in the world.

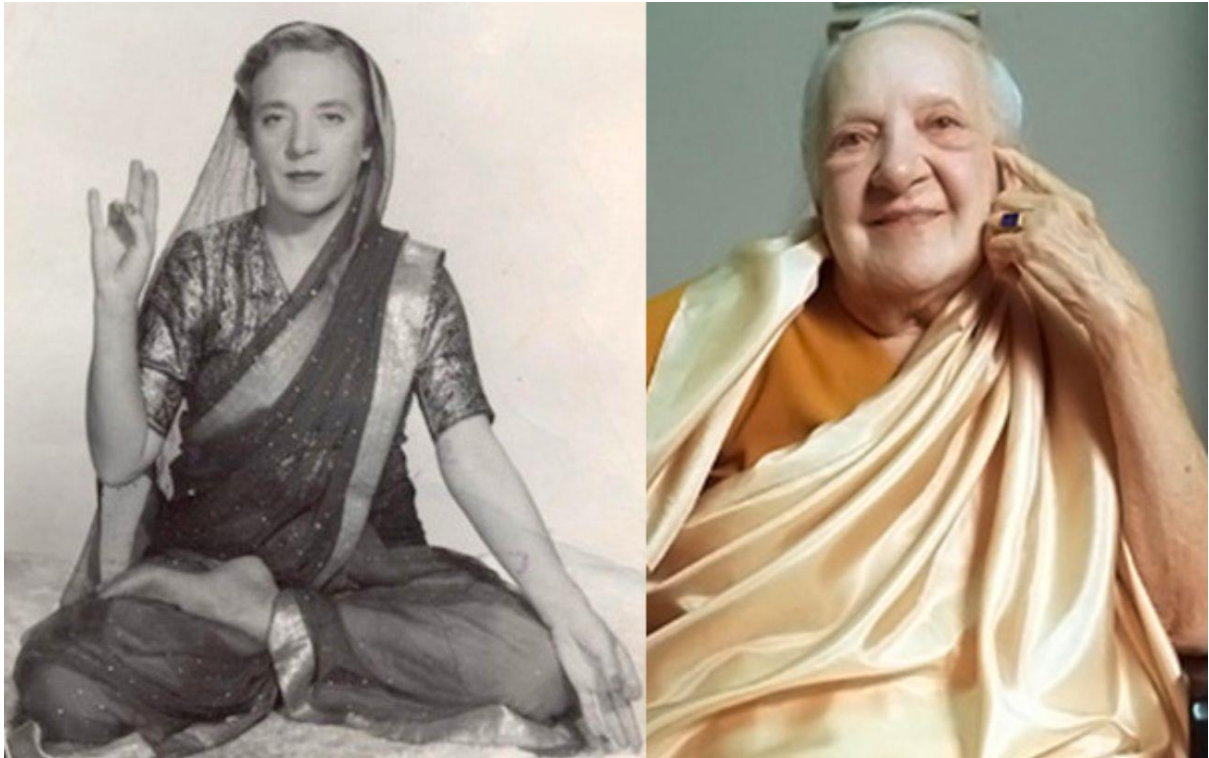
Geeta began her yoga practice at a young age and was a **most senior practitioner of [Iyengar Yoga](#)** before her passing. She went on to become a teacher and director at the [Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute](#), her father's institute in Pune, India.

Geeta played a significant role in the development of Iyengar Yoga. In particular, her highly-praised book, [Yoga: A Gem for Women](#), **pioneered the teaching of Yoga to women, and specific benefits of Yogic practices for women Yoga practitioners.**

She adapted her father's method of Yoga to the specific requirements of women, **helping to provide specific poses, breath work, and sequences given for the different stages in a woman's life including menstruation, pregnancy, postpartum, and [menopause](#).**

Geeta's contributions to the practice continue to influence Yoga Women who are teachers and students all over the world.

#2: Indra Devi: The 'First Lady Of Yoga'.



Indra was a student of [Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya](#), who is often referred to as the “father of modern yoga.” and widely recognized as **one of the first women to introduce yoga to the West.**

In 1937, when Krishnamacharya admitted her into his school, **Indra became the first woman yoga student and the first Western woman ever at an Indian ashram.**

Indra later went on to open her own yoga studio in Hollywood in the 1940s, where she taught celebrities and Hollywood stars, including Gloria Swanson and Greta Garbo. Known to her follower’s as Mataji, or ‘mother’, she taught a style of yoga accessible to westerners that was characterized by her gentleness.

Over the course of her life, Indra taught and diffused yoga in China, India, Russia, the United States, Mexico, and beyond. Her influence on the yoga world is immeasurable, and her teachings continue to inspire many to this day.

Maty Ezraty: Making Yoga Mainstream

Maty Ezraty was the **co-founder of YogaWorks**— a Yoga studio with over 40 locations in the United States and an internationally celebrated and adored yoga teacher.

Maty is well-known for becoming **one of the first women yoga practitioners to practice the third and fourth series of the [Ashtanga Yoga](#) practice.**

Maty and YogaWorks were influential in making Yoga mainstream. [The New York Times](#) says it's not an overstatement that if you've taken a Yoga class in the United States, Maty influenced the Yoga you practiced.

Maty also merged Ashtanga Yoga and Iyengar Yoga into her practice, making them less dogmatic. Many believe **Maty to be a key influence that led to the [Vinyasa Flow Yoga](#) practice that is popular worldwide today.** Maty passed away in July of 2019 at the age of 55, this loss was mourned by her students and beloved yoga community.

Jessamyn Stanley: Inspiring Body-Positive Yoga Women



Describing herself as 'yoga enthusiast and fat femme', **plus-sized Yogini Jessamyn Stanley is much more: she is a body positivity advocate, writer, podcaster, unapologetic weed smoker and author of [Every Body Yoga](#).**

Jessamyn empowers her audience of over 550,000 on Instagram to break down societal and self-limiting barriers through energetic Vinyasa Yoga.

As the voice and face of an underrepresented demographic, Jessamyn is a leading voice on intersectional identity and 21st-century yoga. Along with producing her own content on social media, she also advocates for body positivity, female empowerment as well as African American and LGBTQ inclusion.

Jessamyn's work is pivotal in supporting women of all shapes, sizes, and races on their journey of self-acceptance and finding their power as yoga women.

Judith Hanson Lasater: Championing Restorative Yoga

Judith Hanson Lasater is a well-known yoga teacher and published author who has been teaching since the 1970s. She **helped to found The California Yoga Teachers Association, the Iyengar Yoga Institute in San Francisco, and Yoga Journal magazine.**

Judith has written several influential books on the practice of Yoga including [Yoga Myths](#), [Living your Yoga](#), [A Year of Living your Yoga](#), and [Yogabody: Anatomy, Kinesiology, and Asana](#).

One of the most influential books she's written was [Rest and Renew](#), which teaches the principles of [Restorative Yoga](#), the style of Yoga she is now most known for teaching.

Lasater's focus on the therapeutic aspects of Yoga has been particularly influential, and her teachings have helped many people find healing and relief through the practice. Her magazine Yoga Journal has become a household name and many people's first introductions to Yoga.

Uma Dinsmore-Tuli: Calling Out Abuse Of Women In Yoga



[Uma Dinsmore-Tuli](#) is a writer, visionary, radical yogini, Total [Yoga Nidra](#) advocate and eco-feminist activist.

Uma works internationally, sharing women's yoga retreats, trainings and empowerments that support the natural arising of prana shakti: the power of life. **She trains specialist teachers in Total Yoga Nidra and Yoni Shakti Well Woman Yoga Therapy for menstrual and menopausal health, pregnancy, birth, and postnatal recovery.**

Aside from being known for leading women-centric and Yoga nidra trainings, retreats and workshops, **Uma is the force behind [Yoni Shakti: The Movement](#)**, an education and awareness campaign, founded in March 2020.

Its aim is to **eradicate the abuse of Women in Yoga by naming Yoga schools and organizations where perpetrators of such acts engage, which Uma does through her book, [Yoni Shakti](#).**

Uma's aim is to reclaim Yoga as a Tool for Healing and Justice – which involves sharing warning signals, creating book clubs, distributing educational materials, and supporting educators. Her work helps ensure Yoga women are safe to practice Yoga free from abuse.

Adrienne Mischler – Ambassador Of Yoga For All

A household name, [Adrienne Mischler](#) is well-known for her YouTube yoga channel, [Yoga with Adrienne](#), which supported millions of people worldwide to discover and practice Yoga.

Adrienne's YouTube channel became a lifeline for many as they turned to practice Yoga at home to navigate the challenges of being isolated as the pandemic broke out in 2020.

Adrienne's online classes feature Yoga for people of all levels, and she has a huge online following of 11.8 million on her YouTube channel (at the time of writing). Yoga with Adrienne was recognized by Google as the most searched workout of 2015, featured by The Wall Street Journal, and awarded a Streamy in Health and Wellness in 2016.

Adrienne's mission is to connect as many people as possible through high-quality free yoga videos, and convey the message that Yoga is really for everyone: all levels, all bodies, all genders, all souls are welcome!

Her mantra "Find What Feels Good", which embodies the core of her yoga brand, has inspired thousands to find what feels good for them, truly bringing the essence of yoga from the inside out.

Seane Corn – Yoga For Social Change

Seane Corn is an internationally-acclaimed yoga teacher and public figure and social activist. Many know Sean for her impassioned style of teaching, and raw, honest and inspired self-expression.

Over her teaching career, Seane has created many instructional DVDs, including The Yoga of Awakening, and authored books such as [Revolution of the Soul: Awaken to Love Through Raw Truth, Radical Healing, and Conscious Action](#).

Seane used her power as a public figure to raise awareness on global issues including social justice, sex trafficking, HIV/AIDS awareness, generational poverty, and animal rights.

She was named “National Yoga Ambassador” for YouthAIDS in 2005, and received both the Global Green International Environmental Leadership Award and the Humanitarian Award by the Smithsonian Institute in 2015.

Seane also co-founded the organization Off the Mat, Into the World® in 2007 to empower and train leaders of activism. Later, Seane also co-founded the **Global Seva Challenge, which has raised over \$3.5 million by activating communities of Yoga and wellness in fund and awareness raising efforts.**

The way Seane uses Yoga as a tool for Social Change and her philanthropic efforts have transformed the lives of thousands worldwide.

Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams: Meditation For Social Change



Meditation lies at the heart of Yoga. And one of the leading voices in the field of [Meditation and Mindfulness](#) is [Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams](#).

The author of [Being Black: Zen and the Art of Living With Fearlessness and Grace](#) and coauthor of [Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love & Liberation](#), Angel has been called “one of our wisest voices on social evolution” by Krista Tippett and “the most intriguing African-American Buddhist” by Library Journal.

Angel is the second black woman recognized as a teacher in the Japanese Zen lineage.

She is known for her half/day meditation sits, Dharma & Meditation Retreats and Radical Dharma Circles where she **shares wisdom**

teachings and embodied practice to social issues at the intersections of race, climate, and economic justice.

As a speaker, trainer and coach, Angel leverages practices from time-tested ancient wisdom and embodied cognition with twenty-five years of real-world business experience.

She has helped thousands of leaders across a wide variety of sectors take practical, accessible steps to achieve Lifevity: less stress, more resilience, and great higher embodied social intelligence.

Her work has transformed communities, organizations and companies worldwide.

Yoga Women: Celebrating Their Contributions

From Indra Devi to Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams, these Yoga women have made significant contributions to the world of yoga and have paved the way for generations of women to come.

Their work helped to shape the practice into what it is today, and their influence continues to inspire and guide us. They have inspired countless students and teachers around the world and have helped to make Yoga more accessible and inclusive for all.

As we celebrate International Women's Day by acknowledging the contributions of these Yoga women, we also honor the countless Yoga women who are teaching and practicing Yoga around the globe today.

They remind us how important it is to celebrate the diversity of the Yoga community and work towards making yoga accessible to all, regardless of age, gender, race or ability.



Wenlin Tan

Wenlin is a Women's Well-being Coach, Qigong and Yoga specialist for women and Red School Menstruality Mentor who is passionate about empowering working women to overcome overwhelm to find flow, ease and joy in their life. Wenlin brings with her over 15 years experience working at the intersection of mindfulness, creativity, psychology and wellness, with over 3,000 hours of training and 8 years of experience supporting women across Asia, Europe and the USA. If you want to learn how to find more flow and ease in your life, Wenlin is here to support you.