

reviews

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DEAF YOGA FOR BEGINNERS

With Lila Lolling
DVD, 60 Minutes,
2006, \$19.95,
www.deafyoga.com

You may remember that a few months back, Yoga International ran a moving story about a Sivananda hatha teacher who is teaching yoga to deaf people in their native tongue: American Sign Language (ASL). Now, she has produced the first-ever deaf-friendly yoga video.

The DVD leads students through a 60-minute Sivananda hatha yoga routine. Lolling and Bonnie Ramsey, a Deaf Yoga student, alternately demonstrate the poses. Lolling gives instructions in ASL (sometimes in a window box that materializes below the yoga demonstration). A system of symbols is superimposed onto the video (and explained in a section called “How to Use This

DVD”) to clarify the details of each pose, including proper alignment, where and when to breathe, which muscles to relax and which ones to actively stretch. Other visual cues include periodic white screens, which signal to yoga students that the teacher is moving on to another pose.

To create the DVD, Lolling (who has normal hearing) worked with a deaf producer and consulted with five of her deaf friends to make the video as user-friendly as possible. Although it is geared toward deaf students, the DVD is also “hearing-friendly.” If you’re an ASL interpreter or yoga teacher who would like to learn some basic yoga signs to help a deaf student in your class, you can turn on English subtitles and read a translation of the instructions. *Deaf Yoga for Beginners* is a groundbreaking video that will help deaf people gain equal access to the richness of the yoga tradition. (And their hearing friends can benefit, too.) ●

—Shannon Sexton