

# KEY ANATOMICAL CONCEPTS FOR YOGA

WITH CHRISTOPHER TOTARO

## I. Rationale:

The purpose of the course is to provide yogis — regardless of their current level of experience — with a stronger anatomical understanding from which to practice yoga. Students will be able to directly apply this course material while executing the postures during yoga class.

## II. Course Aims and Outcomes:

Get a glimpse of what's happening beneath the surface. Grasping the inner-workings of the human body and ensuring the proper approach to the postures allows students to transform their yoga practice in ways they've never imagined. A stronger understanding of the biomechanics of the body inspires students and instills enthusiasm to continually explore new possibilities.

### Specific Learning Outcomes:

*There is absolutely no expectation for students to memorize complicated terminology.*

By the end of the course, students will:

- acquire a more cohesive vocabulary for understanding the language used by their yoga teachers
- feel a greater sense of confidence when approaching yoga postures
- have gained a level of clarity well beyond what they currently grasp
- have the ability to intelligently articulate specific postural concepts with their yoga teachers before and after class

## III. Format:

The course is formatted primarily as a lecture including slides, diagrams, videos, models, and in-person human demonstration. A handout that outlines terms and definitions will be provided and further note-taking is encouraged. Employing an innovative story-telling approach, the course effectively condenses a dauntingly vast range of material in a dynamic and compelling manner.



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## Story #1:

### DAY 1

The Shoulder Joint Complex —  
axial & appendicular skeletons, planes of section, plum line, rotator cuff,  
scapular stabilization, scapulohumeral rhythm, tendinitis, bursitis, scoliosis

## Story #2:

The Knee Joint —  
types of cartilage, tendons & ligaments, quadriceps, patella, knee joint as a  
hinge, ligamental attachments, meniscus, synovial fluid, fascia, scar tissue,  
patellar tracking disorder

### DAY 2

## Story #3:

The Spine —  
vertebral column, stages of disc herniation, ribcage, nerve bundles, bony  
relationships, biotensegrity structure

## Story #4:

Breathing —  
core, muscle actions, attachments, fiber direction, respiration, intra-  
abdominal pressure, thoracic diaphragm

## Story #5:

### DAY 3

Muscle Functionality —  
types of joints, joint articulation, types of muscle contraction, muscle  
receptors, reciprocal inhibitory reflex, posterior chain, mechanical advantage,  
hamstrings, sacroiliac joint, psoas major

## Story #6:

Homeostasis —  
blood sugar, body temperature, heat acclimatization, arteries & veins,  
recovery heart rate, directional flow of blood through the heart, skeletal  
muscle pump, autonomic nervous system response, human stress response

