



Video Transcript

Learn To Use Basic Yoga Props

Hi, welcome. I'm Amanda, and I want to go over a few basics with you. A lot of times when we're in a class, there's a few poses that might be a little unreachable at the time. Every day is different. So the question is to prop or not to prop. There's a few instances where I might have given some cues and instruction on how to attain or approximate a pose without a prop. An approximation is doing the best that you can approximately to reach or attain the full expression of that vinyasa or that asana. There's a few differences between a modification, a variation, and an approximation. A modification is going to be something that is altered, maybe so that you can start to get a little bit closer to the full expression of that asana. For instance, If we can't quite reach our toes, there's a few ways that we can modify that, and then there's some total variations of what that pose might be. Some of the props that you want to have close by are some blocks, like I have right here. This is just your regular foam block. You can get it in a lot of different places.

And I love having the foam. It's lightweight. It has the beveled edges, so nothing too sharp. Easy to take with you on the go and easy to store anywhere, anyplace. The next prop that you want to have handy is a strap. This is a really nice canvas strap. It has a metal buckle or D-ring that you can find. And it's pretty long, so you're going to find that it's much longer than I am. So I have a lot to work with. And then, of course, the yoga mat.

There's so many out there these days, but you want a good quality yoga mat and one that's going to last. So you can sort of think of it as your magic carpet. It's yours. It's your little sacred space. And you want something that's going to help you not slip around too much as you're starting to build up the strength in poses like downward facing dog or your standing warrior pose.

a little bit of padding but not a really thick type of padding that's for different types of practices where you might be down on your knees and and on your back and hips a little bit more but in yoga a lot of times you're going up and down so you want to be able to have the sturdiness and

yet a little bit of padding and then we have blankets the blankets are really great for restorative practices yoga nidra

or when you're down on your knees doing a few things and your knees are a little tender you can always place a blanket underneath your knees and i'm going to go over some instances where you're going to use these props and what it will look like the biggest thing that we want to do is create a foundation something that's stable something that allows you to feel a little more confident and comfortable as you're working sometimes in a very challenging situation or pose So the first thing that I'm going to show is just basically if you were standing at the top of your mat, you want to have them handy so that you're not moving around away from the pose, distracted, trying to fumble through, you know, your closet, trying to find something for you to have. You want to have it close by. So if this was the top of your mat, you can place your blocks on either side so that you can grab them.

Right? And then there'll be instances where if you turn to the side, you can just grab them and have them there. A lot of times we'll instruct you, you may need a block for this. Go ahead and have it handy so you don't have to come out of the asana and then come back into it. So if you're starting at the top of your mat and you have your blocks, just have them right there, one on each side. But you want to have room for your feet if you go a little bit wider. You can just grab them if you need them.

For instance, standing in samasthiti, equal standing pose. Inhale, I reach my arms up. Exhale, I'm going to bring my arms down. If I can't quite reach without having to round my spine, I can just grab my blocks, bring them where my hands would eventually go. Once through time, I can build strength and flexibility. And I can take my hands to the blocks and allow myself to come down. What we don't want to do...

is just hang here and hope that someday I'm going to be able to reach for the floor. When you have something that can root you and ground you, the chances are is that your body will start working for you to get you a lot closer to that full expression of forward fold, uttanasana. Half lift, you can even use the blocks there.

so you're still making contact with the earth or the ground or something that's grounding you. Eventually, you'll be able to go all the way down, keep the fingers on the floor, and still be able to walk back into your next pose. So having the blocks handy for something like that is really good, and you're still going to be able to continue on your flow. Going down onto the knees, if your knees are a little bit tender, go ahead and grab a blanket.

Make sure it's pretty smooth because sometimes we're going to be walking and stepping backwards and you don't want to have it all wrinkled up where you're stepping over it and maybe possibly tripping. So just take the time to make sure that it's nice and smooth. I like to think this as the mise en place of your props, which means everything in its place. So for you chefs out there, you know what I'm talking about. So the knees come onto the blanket.

and just move this here so you can see so that you have a little extra padding underneath the knees especially if you know some of that padding naturally is just starting to wear out and you can go through your flow just as you would so you can focus on the part of the body that needs to receive the benefits like the spine any kneeling seated positions where the knees might be a little tender you can always use a blanket

If you're in a seated position like I was during some of our talks earlier today, I went ahead and opened up the blanket a little wider so that it's covering the entirety of my foundation. And then I use the block for hero's pose. Hero's pose is really challenging where traditionally, I'm just going to turn around so you can see, we don't sit like this. We actually take the block.

in between and sit on the block. So now I'm supported and it takes some pressure out of my knees. So if I was going to be in another kneeling variation like child's pose, maybe my knees are a little tender, my feet are a little tender. In child's pose, we do sit back a little bit closer towards the heels. The toes are pointed but not crossed.

Opening the knees, this allows for my chest to come down. But if this was about my range and I'm trying to allow myself to find some relaxation and I can't quite reach the block, then the block might be a good option for me so that my head can touch and I can relax my neck. So your block can be used like that, okay? Coming from the knees position.

maybe getting into some lunges during some of the flows that I went through earlier there's a lot of low lunges and so it's okay to have a little blanket close by but also having the blocks so that you can easily step forward so I'm stepping my foot just next to the block and then allowing the hips to open up slowly, I have the blocks there. So you're not teetering around on that back knee or the foot, but you have something to help give you more of a foundation. In the half splits, being able to reach all the way to the floor takes some time and a lot of patience. So having the blocks underneath your hands as a way to bring the earth up to you rather than you having to force yourself to go lower.

So in this way, the blocks are very, very handy. One other standing, lunging position with the blocks that I find incredibly helpful is something like a side angle or a triangle pose. So Parsvokanasana, Utthita Hasta Parsvokanasana. This is a very close expression of the pose in its entirety.

Someday I'll be able to turn the block down and I'm a little bit closer. And then eventually I'll be able to go all the way down without losing the integrity of the rest of the body. Same with triangle pose. In this variation with the block, I'm turning the block up really high. So I'm always going for some variation.

That's going to bring me closer to the pose, but with the most amount of support that I can get from this prop. If you need to come even higher, you wouldn't want to take the blocks and stack them like a tee. You want the foundation closest to the ground. So it's just a matter of putting the bigger, broader base on the bottom and stacking up from there. So you have a really good stable position here. And lastly,

the strap so in some of the balancing poses it's already challenging enough just to stand on one leg but then trying to hold on to a toe or a foot and work on that flexibility is a whole another ball game so there's one pose in particular that you know you might want to use a strap you can just make it really easy

Make sure that maybe you have something close by, a wall or a pillar or a sturdy chair. But in utthita hastaparangustasana, it's an intense standing big toe balancing stretch. Eventually I'd want to reach down for the big toe. And this is one way of practicing it right here, no props. But if I want to be able to kick my leg out and I'm not quite feeling that flexible that day, I can take the strap around the foot.

keep some tension, stand up tall, which is very important, start to push into the strap, and my arms are extended. This is as close as you can get to the full expression of the pose. I'm almost there. Eventually, I'm going to be able to shorten the distance on the strap and hold on to my big toe. So those are just some of the ways that you can start to use the props.

we use that strap right there without taking it into any type of loop. Every strap is a little bit different, but you want to be able to take the end tail of the strap and put it into whatever type of buckle system it has, thread it through, and then pull it towards the desired loop position.

one of the poses that I practiced just the other day, dancer's pose, Natarajasana, you would take it down here, go ahead and get grounded, take the strap over your shoulder, and then start to work your way into this beautiful, beautiful pose, dancer's pose. Let the foot slide down, and there you go.

There's props basics for you have fun be safe and give it a try