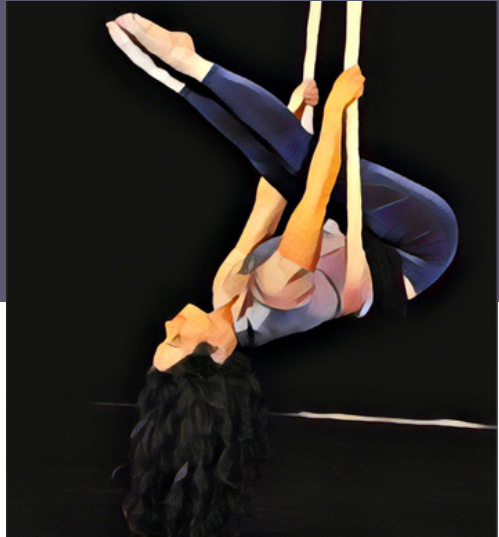


SATELLITE DANCE



AERIAL SLING

TEACHER TRAINING

LEVEL 1

By Sarah Atenhan for Satellite Dance



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OVERVIEW

Aerial Sling Teacher Training: Level 1

An integrative and collaborative approach for Movement Professionals.

Our 30-hour* introductory training program will deepen your understanding of aerial and prepare you to teach successfully. By integrating three Sling disciplines with your existing knowledge, you'll provide your students with a class experience that is supportive, creative, and challenging.

This Teacher Training is for Movement Professionals with

- basic knowledge of pedagogy, anatomy, and class structure.
- a desire to expand their movement practice.
- a passion for creative class planning.
- an interest in a collaborative environment.

Teachers will walk away with

- tools to safely teach Introductory Aerial Fitness, Yoga, and Dance with the Aerial Sling.
- techniques to teach across ages and ability levels.
- cueing and music best practices.
- resources for continuing education.
- a community fostering support and knowledge sharing.

*Certification of completion is issued upon completion of the 3-day training (24 hours), independent study (4 hours), open-book test (1 hour), and teaching practical (1 hour).

WHY SLING?

The Aerial Sling (also known as the Hammock) is a beginner-friendly, multi-functional apparatus. With body wraps and various conditioning exercises, the Sling can be a safe and adaptable introduction to Aerial Dance or an enhancement of Fitness and Yoga.

With the Sling, you can use the floor for support and move in various directions with relative ease. The lower ceiling height requirements provide a more accessible and affordable aerial practice compared to other similar apparatuses.

INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

Aerial Fitness, Yoga, or Dance, we believe all formats are created equal. Aerial Fitness harnesses the power of weight and gravity for stability training. Aerial Yoga elevates an existing practice while introducing Sling poses and transitions. Aerial Dance cultivates the strength and coordination from these disciplines and adds artistic expression.

Understanding how a practitioner can engage in these formats independently or together will result in a supportive, creative, and challenging experience for you and your students.



INTEGRATIVE APPROACH EXAMPLE

Three guiding questions of practice

1. What is the **Intention** of the movement?
2. What are the Point(s) of **Connection**?
3. What are the **Dynamics**?



Fitness

“Core Hold”

Mid-Back

Static

Yoga

“Staff Pose”

Mid-Back

Static

Dance

“Pike”

Mid-Back

Spin

Integrative Relationship

While visually the same, one pose is experienced and labeled differently depending on the Intention of the practice—a “Core Hold” during Aerial Fitness conditions the body for stability. Re-orienting “Staff Pose” is a challenging Variation of a Grounded Asana. It can also gently introduce a “Pike” position for Aerial Dance, thus providing baseline knowledge and an opportunity to expand the pose into a spin. Designing your class with the specificity of Intention, Point of Connection on the body, and the Dynamics of the pose will promote an informed, inclusive, and accessible aerial practice.

SCHEDULE

Day 1 Theme: Prepare & Condition

FRIDAY (9:00 – 5:00 P.M.)

- 9:00 am: Introductions & Class Agreement
- 9:30 am: Aerial Fitness Class
- 10:20 am: Break
- 10:30 am: Aerial Fitness Class Format
- 12:00 pm: Break
- 12:45 pm: Lecture: Welcome to Class, Cueing
- 1:30 pm: Mini Class Workshop Pt. 1
- 2:45 pm: Break
- 3:00 pm: Mini Class Workshop Pt. 2
- 4:15 pm: Lecture: Class Rhythm

Day 2 Theme: Intention Setting

SATURDAY (8:00 – 4:00 P.M.)

- 8:00 am: Aerial Yoga Class
- 9:00 am: Break
- 9:10 am: Aerial Yoga Class Format
- 11:00 am: Break
- 11:45 am: Lecture: Yoga Principles, Creative Planning
- 12:30 pm: Mini Class Workshop Pt. 1
- 1:45 pm: Break
- 2:00 pm: Mini Class Workshop Pt. 2
- 3:15 pm: Lecture: Environment, Safety, and Risk

Day 3 Theme: Integration & Beyond

SUNDAY (10:00 – 6:00 P.M.)

- 10:00 am: Aerial Dance Class
- 11:00 am: Break
- 11:10 am: Aerial Dance Class Format
- 1:00 pm: Break
- 1:45 pm: Lecture: Class Levels, Kids and Adults
- 2:30 pm: Mini Class Workshop Pt. 1
- 3:45 pm: Break
- 4:00 pm: Mini Class Workshop Pt. 2
- 5:15 pm: Lecture: Integration, Next Steps

TERMINOLOGY

Apparatus Terms

- **Fabric:** the nylon tricot 'silks' material used in aerial.
- **Apparatus:** a general term to describe the type of aerial tool and its associated rigging structure.
- **Plum Line:** a line directed to the center of gravity of the earth: a vertical line.
- **Rig Point:** a visual reference to aid in identifying a Plum Line.
- **Hammock:** aerial silks looped at the base of the apparatus. This term is commonly used in Aerial Yoga and Aerial Fitness.
- **Sling:** same as the Hammock. This term is commonly used in Aerial Dance or Circus.

Class Sections

- **Warm Up** contains three subsections (Scherb, 2018):
 - **Raise** – increase muscle and core temperature, blood flow, muscle elasticity, and neutral activation.
 - **Mobilize** – movement patterns that are used in discipline-specific training.
 - **Potentiate** – gradually increase the stress on the body in preparation for the demands of the training session.
- **Grounded:** at least one body point is in connection with the ground.
- **Flying:** no body points are in connection with the ground.
- **Floating:** movement in an open fabric.
- **Cool Down:** physiological activity returning to normal.
- **Peak Pose:** the most challenging pose or posture in Aerial Yoga.
- *All classes require a Warm Up, a Cool Down, and at least one additional section. Aerial Yoga requires all sections.*

Introductory Sling Vocabulary – used across disciplines

- **Backpack Wrap:** fabric behind the back, like a backpack.
- **Tight Hold:** a maintained pull-up position.
- **Straight-Arm Hang:** hanging by the hands with straight arms.
- **Open Grip:** holding onto the fabric with thumbs up, no wraps.
- **Inverted Grip:** holding onto the fabric with thumbs down.
- **Flamenco Grip:** transitional wrapped grip used briefly.

TERMINOLOGY

Introductory Sling Vocabulary – continued

- **Wrist Wrap:** wrapping the wrist around the fabric to aid in practice.
- **Ankle Wrap:** wrapping the ankle(s) around the fabric to aid in practice.
- **Hollow Body:** a full-body scooped position to maintain stability.
- **Arched Body:** the opposite of a hollow body, where the spine is extended.
- **Inversion:** drawing the hips over the shoulders (going upside down).
- **Straddle:** legs are spread apart into a wide V.
- **Crochet:** hooking or wrapping a limb around the fabric.
- **Hangs:** hanging at a body point in the fabric (hip, knee, ankle).
- **Tuck:** compressed position in which knees and hips are fully bent to the chest.
- **Pike:** legs and chest are brought toward each other by flexing at the hips.
- **Hip Key:** variation of Pike position with one hip stacked on top of the other and a greater engagement of the upper and lower body to create a narrow V.

Sling Orientations & Directions

- **Fabric Poles:** fabric above the hips.
- **Fabric Tail or Base:** fabric below the hips.
- **Front-Facing Fabric:** the person is behind the fabric.
- **Back-Facing Fabric:** the person is in front of the fabric.
- **Near Fabric:** fabric pole closest to the person's head.
- **Far Fabric:** fabric pole most distant from the person's head.
- **Spin:** rotating under the Plum Line.
- **Swing:** traveling side-to-side, passing under the Plum Line.
- **Orbit:** circling the Plum Line, not passing under it.

Sanskrit Vocabulary

- **Tadasana:** Mountain
- **Balāsana:** Child's Pose
- **Sukhasana:** Easy Pose
- **Bharman:** Table Top
- **Vakra:** Twist
- **Marjaryāsana/Bitilāsana:** Cat / Cow
- **Adho Mukha Svanāsana:** Downward Facing Dog

TERMINOLOGY

Sanskrit Terms – Continued

- **Virabhadrasana I, II, III:** Warrior I, II, III
- **Viparita Virabhadrasana:** Reverse Warrior
- **Utthita Parsvakonasana:** Extended Side Angle
- **Anjaneyasana:** Low Lunge
- **Ardha Hanumanasana:** Half Monkey
- **Malasana:** Deep Squat
- **Utkata Konasana:** Goddess
- **Utkatasana:** Chair
- **Parivrtta Anjaneyasana:** Revolved Low Lunge
- **Utthan Pristhasana:** Lizard
- **Kapotasana:** Pigeon
- **Eka Pada Utkatasana:** Figure 4
- **Vrikshasana:** Tree Pose
- **Paripurna Navasana:** Boat Pose
- **Phalakasana:** Plank
- **Bhujangasana:** Cobra Pose
- **Baddha Konasana:** Butterfly
- **Upavistha Konasana:** Seated Straddle
- **Ardha Matsyendrasana:** Seated Twist
- **Savasana:** Corpse Pose
- **Pranamasana:** Hands to Heart (or Prayer)
- **Namaste:** The light within me honors the light within you.
- **Asana:** a posture

Note: The list of terms was introduced during the training weekend and is not comprehensive of all format vocabulary. These terms will be reinforced throughout the training weekend; there is no pressure to commit them to memory at this time. Pick 2-3 words to focus on when teaching your first classes. Confidence will build over time!

SATELLITE PHILOSOPHY

Aerial. Fitness. Yoga. Dance. We view all formats equally and honor their cultural origins.

Adaptable. We believe in Universal Design for Learning. We teach with Primer Exercise, Primary Exercise, and then Advancement cues, with the option to opt out at any time.

Shared. We invite students and instructors to engage with our community beyond classes.

With Care. We honor the instructor and student's unique history, needs, and goals.

CLASS AGREEMENT

This agreement is a collaboratively created framework for expectations in the training. Participants and the Facilitator will work together to design an agreement for classroom norms, rules, and consequences.



AERIAL FITNESS

DEFINITION

Aerial Fitness uses the Aerial Sling (a.k.a Hammock) to provide low-impact, creative exercises for a full-body workout.

BRIEF HISTORY

Aerial Fitness was created in the mid-00s when Michelle Dortignac developed exercises with the Hammock. Aerial Fitness exercises draw from various disciplines, including but not limited to TRX, Pilates, Barre Fitness, Dance, and more.

BENEFITS

Aerial Fitness is a great method to strengthen the muscles of the core and stabilize joints. Balance, coordination, spatial awareness, and flexibility are also improved with regular practice.

RISKS

Aerial Fitness can involve inversions, balance challenges, and elevated exercises. Mats are required, and people with pre-existing conditions need to consult with their doctor prior to participating. Pregnant people should practice extra caution and avoid certain exercises altogether.

CLASS FORMAT

Aerial Fitness is considered a full-body workout. Each class has the following **sections**:

- Warm Up/Cardio
 - Mobilize the head/neck/spine in (6) directions.
 - Raise the heart rate and body temperature.
 - Potentiate, i.e., gradually increasing stress on the body.
- Upper Body/Inversion Practice
 - Condition the arms, shoulder girdle, trapezius, and latissimus dorsi.
 - Condition the body for Inversions.
- Core/Inversion Practice
 - Activating ab and back muscle groups.
- Lower Body
 - Exercising quad, hamstring, and calves.
- Planks & Bridges
 - Planks focus on the whole body with moments for focus (e.g., adductors)
 - Bridges can strengthen the lower back, glutes, and hamstrings. Swing the Bridge with hips on the ground, you have a restorative moment!
- Peak Pose
 - The mind and body are now conditioned to try a challenging pose! Great moment for pictures.
- Cool Down
 - Deeper, longer stretches can occur here.
 - Option to repeat moments from Warm Up.

Each exercise can serve several muscle groups. A Tuck during the Upper Body section can condition the hip flexors, lower abs, grip, and more! Pelvic Tilts focuses on core strengths, leading to stronger Inversions—mix and match exercises with intentional transitions. Cardio breaks are welcome between sections; ensure to stabilize heart rates before Inversions.

CLASS FORMAT

An Integrative Approach

As the weekend progresses, note how you can adapt and incorporate Aerial Fitness into your other class formats. Note how Aerial Fitness borrows from those formats, too!

Acknowledge and promote those formats so participants feel empowered to experience other classes. For example, “If you enjoyed Mountain to Mermaid tonight, join us on Sunday for Aerial Dance, where we will focus on those poses – and more!” Or, “If you enjoyed these restorative moments, join us Friday for Aerial Yoga and enjoy more time devoted to them!”



Try it: State Exercise. 1-3 steps. Correct. Countdown.

Remind participants to take restorative moments throughout class.



SHOULDER CIRCLE



SHOULDER GLIDE



NECK MOBILITY

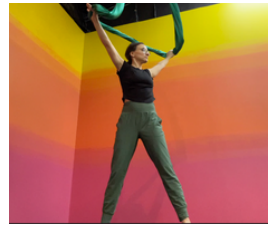
Place hand in the base of the fabric. Gentle plank forward. Circle shoulder. With hand on hip, glide the arm left and right. Return center, Wrist Wrap, and begin a neck circle.



CAT/COW



LATERAL SWING

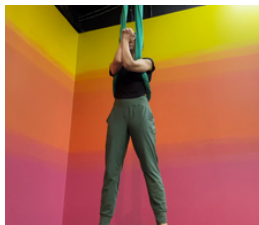


TWIST

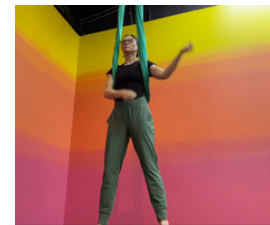
Return neck to neutral. Arch spine, and roll down. Curl the spine and roll up. Breathe. Return to vertical. Flat back over and swing side to side. Bring arms overhead and twist.



WRIST CIRCLE



SHAMPOO



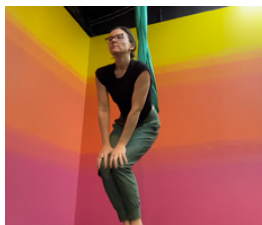
ELBOW CIRCLE

Take a Backpack wrap. With elbows at the side, circle the wrists. Clasp hands together and roll the wrists. Release, and with elbows still at the side, take alternating circles.

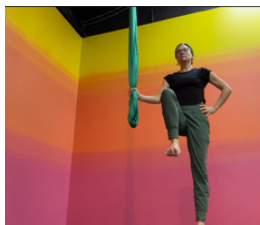
WARM UP

Try it: State Exercise. 1-3 steps. Correct. Countdown.

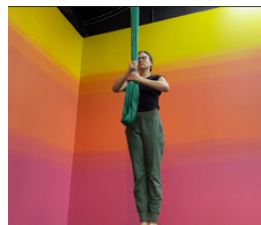
What other Variations can you cue here?



KNEE CIRCLE



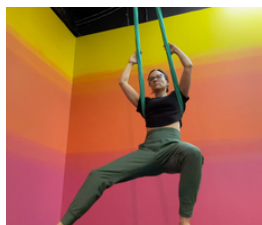
ANKLE CIRCLE



GRIP ACTIVATE

WARM UP

Step out of Backpack. Bring feet together, bend knees, place hands on knees. Circle right 'x' times and left. Step next to the fabric, hold on, and circle ankle both directions. Step behind the fabric and warm up the grip before ankle wrap on the other side.



HIP CIRCLE



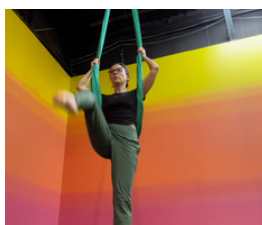
TOE TOUCH S/S



TOE TOUCH F/B

CARDIO

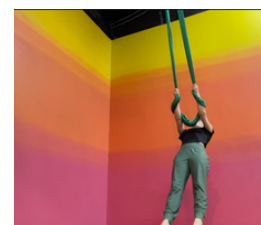
Return to Backpack. Reverse plank and walk under the rig point to chair. Circle hips 'x' times to the right, then left. Step in front of the fabric and touch side to side. Now, front to back.



LEG SWING



FRONT PLANK



PULL UP

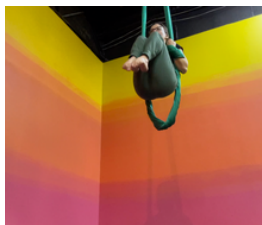
UPPER BODY

Return to Backpack, find a lunge. Reach up high and pull down as the leg swings to the front, then return to lunge. Bring fabric over head and bend the elbows to 90 degrees. Plank forward. Breathe. Return to vertical, hold arms tight, and gently straighten while leaning back. Pull up quickly to vertical.

Try it: State Exercise. 1-3 steps. Correct. Countdown.

With dynamics, cue, "Quick up! slow down."

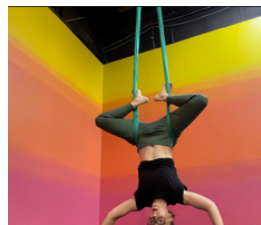
CORE



TUCK JUMP

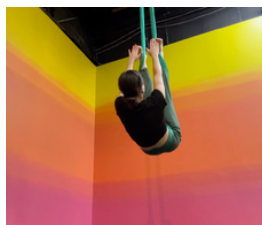


PELVIC TILT



INVERTED CROCHET

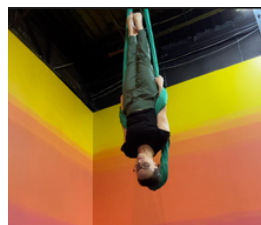
Bring the fabric overhead to backpack. Reach up high. Jump, connecting hands to shoulders, knees to chest. Return to chair, press into the fabric, curl the spine, lift the knees. Tilt to bring hips over shoulders, legs straddle, feet circle, flex, and hook in front.



INVERTED SIT-UP



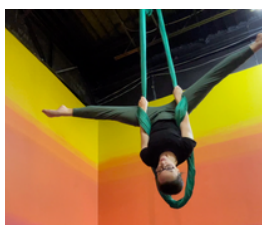
SIDE BALANCE



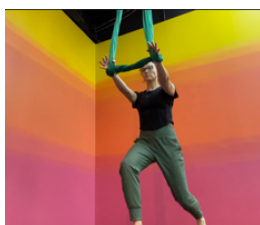
CANDLESTICK

CORE & INVERSIONS

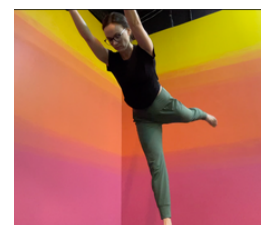
Stretch the legs and squeeze together. Curl the spine to a full sit-up. Return to standing. Tuck into seated position. Side balance right, left arm grips high. Go to other side. Find Backpack. Hands to shoulders, hips, and toes to sky. Come down slowly.



INVERTED STRADDLE



LUNGE



HAMSTRING LIFT

LOWER BODY

Return to standing. Hands to shoulders, hips to sky, connect inner thighs to fabric Poles. Return to standing. Bring fabric to front Wrist Wrap. Take left leg back and lunge. Shift weight forward to lift back leg for Hamstring Lifts.

Try it: State Exercise. 1-3 steps. Correct. Countdown.

What breath or restorative moments can we do between exercises??

LOWER BODY



HYDRANT

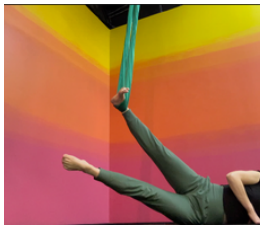


GODDESS



PLANK

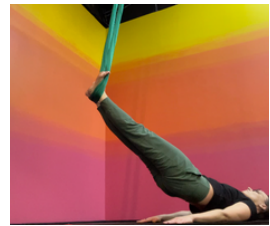
Return to vertical, bend one leg, lift, and lower to the side. Step out, externally rotate, bend knees over toes, raise and lower. Bring ankle in base of fabric and send the leg behind. Lower down to 3-legged plank.



THIGH LIFT



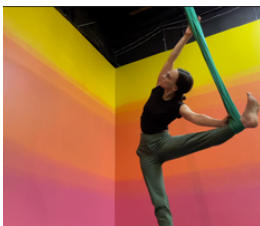
SIDE PLANK



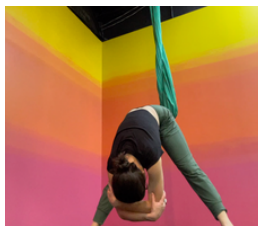
BRIDGE

PLANKS & BRIDGES

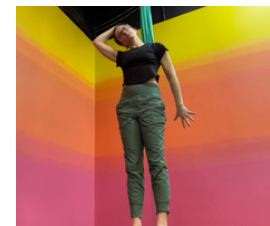
Sit on the side and lay down. With top leg in the peripheral vision, raise and lower bottom leg. Ground bottom foot, lift and hold hips. Sit, roll to back, put both feet in fabric. Raise and lower hips.



SIDE STRETCH



FORWARD FOLD



NECK MOBILITY

COOL DOWN

Find standing. Insert left ankle and Side Stretch. Release from fabric, and with a wide standing, Forward Fold. Slowly roll up, find parallel. Bring one ear towards shoulder, add a hand to head, press other hand back. Gently release and return to vertical.

Try it: State Exercise. 1-3 steps. Correct. Countdown.

Can you use any of these steps as a primer exercise during class?



STEP UP



ANKLE WRAP 1



ANKLE WRAP 2

With a Front-Facing fabric, reach high, pull up, and bring knee through the center. Kick the foot forward and wrap the ankle. Repeat other side.



STAND TALL



MARCH



MOUNTAIN

Flex body and stand tall—grip high, booty back, and march feet apart. Bring hands to shoulders and hold the 'A' shape. March feet down to stand tall. Unwrap one ankle at a time and reverse Step Up to a standing position.

Always cue how to exit an exercise and include the importance of holding on.

When studying independently, use the accompanying video to inform Primers, Advancements, and Transitions. The video does not contain the suggested number of reps, but guides class structure, form, and technique.

DAY 1 LECTURES

WELCOME TO CLASS 01.

- Introductions
- Safety Disclaimers
- Expectations Setting



CUEING 02.

- Universal Design for Learning
- Timing of Cues
- Your Role in the Sling

CLASS RHYTHM 03.

- Music
- Transitions

WELCOME TO CLASS

Arriving to any group class can be intimidating, especially aerial. From greetings to setting expectations, making a participant feel comfortable and empowered quickly will help ensure a successful class. Greet each person as they arrive—say their name. Thank them for coming, confirm they've completed the paperwork, address any questions or pre-existing health concerns, and confirm they're not wearing sharp jewelry, zippers, or chewing gum. Provide them with options while waiting for class to begin. (Stretch, bathroom, water, rest, etc.)

Once everyone has arrived, give an introduction with the following:

- Your Name.
- Have everyone introduce themselves and share one thing.
- A Class Description, i.e., What to Expect
 - Reconfirm apparel and accessory safety disclaimers
 - How to ask for help or exercise variations.
 - Reinforce participant choice, including opting out of the activity.

WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

CUEING

Cueing is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching. Keeping a class progressing while providing succinct and explicit instruction is always a work in progress, especially if it's a mixed-level class. Stay curious and experiment with different cues.

While there are several schools of thought, taking the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach will help participants conceptualize exercises and empower them to advance at their own pace. According to the National Education Association,

UDL is about designing curriculum and instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students in the classroom—a microcosm of our diverse society, for which architectural UD was first envisioned. As educators, we must anticipate diversity in the classroom, which is today's norm, instead of searching for and adding instructional elements and options after the lesson or unit of study has been developed. Both frameworks address physical accessibility in education by offering options for perception. (Schultz, 2023)

Example of a scaffolding approach to an Exercise that reinforces UDL:

Stage I: Primer or Grounded Exercise – 10% of time dedicated
“Stay here, rest, or continue.”

Stage II: Primary Exercise – 70% of time dedicated
“Stay here, rest, or try this!” or “If you know a Variation, go for it!”

Stage III: Advancement or Variations – 20% of time dedicated

CUEING

The Primer Exercise gently activates the targeted muscle group(s)—participants can check in and assess their performance. They can always return to the Primer if the subsequent progressions do not serve their practice.

The Primary Exercise is an accessible movement goal for the group. Examples of goals are conditioning a muscle group, practicing a pose, or a sequence. Only if participants are successful with the Primary Exercise, should you provide 1-2 Advancements or Variations.

Each Exercise has two moments when participants can decide whether to keep going, rest, or advance. By providing choices in their practice, we reinforce their sense of agency. By progressing exercises, we also remove opportunities for negative teaching language, such as “If you can’t do this, do that...”

It is important to note the term “Primer” and not “Modification.” While each instructor can choose terminology, “Primer” indicates we are preparing the body for the exercise. Therefore, we encourage everyone to participate and not prematurely progress to the next exercise. Additionally, “Modification” is subjective; the Modification exercise might be someone’s ‘Everest’! Additional words to promote a judgment-free environment are Options, Versions, Variations, or Translations.



CUEING

Timing of Cueing

Developing a rhythm and standard outline for cueing will ensure your class progresses at an even, predictable pace.

- Demo Primer, then Primary
 - “Rest and watch!” or introduce Primer “Option 1...”
 - Introduce Primary “Option 2...”
 - *Walk away from your Sling.*
- Continue Primary and Repeat Instructions
- Provide 1-3 Comments (Corrections, Encouragements)
- Demo Progression
 - “Stay here, Rest, or Try Option 3...”
- Countdown to completion of the exercise.

Continue to encourage participants in the room by name. Speak slowly, loudly, and clearly, and use standard terms. Practice a ‘Simon Says’ or ‘Twister’ for clear direction. **Start simple, then give corrections or details.**

Your Role in the Sling

You can lead an entire class without leaving your Sling in an intermediate or advanced class with frequent participants. More often, you’re only on the Sling to demonstrate. Practice demonstrating on the Sling, then walk around and cue by your voice or grounded demonstrations. Walking around the room will make each participant feel safe and supported, and you’ll be quick to help with last-minute accommodations or spotting.



CUEING

Your Voice in the Class

Each teacher develops a unique cadence, personality, and cueing, i.e., Voice. Participants continue to attend your classes because of the Voice you have developed through practice and reflection.

Please be aware of the patterns that can develop as you become comfortable with your Voice. For example, adding filler phrases such as “We’re going to,” or repetitive comments that don’t inform the practice or address a specific person, such as “OK.”

Every teacher has their habits, and it’s fine! Be mindful of your habits and develop a plan to address them during class. It might be as straightforward as taking a nice inhale before you speak.

Cueing habits can also reveal unconscious bias (an implicit bias or stereotype that lies outside one’s awareness) or judgment. When acknowledging an individual, use their name and provide neutral praise or feedback. A judgmental comment would be, “Your legs have looked so good since coming to class, Tom.” While you’re aiming to compliment Tom, you’re informing Tom and the class that you have a bias towards the shape of a person. With our teaching Voice, we aim to remove personal judgment for the benefit of the community. A neutral example would be, “Great form and activation, Tom!”

An additional note to reinforce neutrality: during class planning, decide how to address your participants as a group—the more gender neutral, the better. Some examples include Artists, Friends, or Dancers. Aim to avoid labels like, “Girls, Ladies, Guys,” etc.



CLASS RHYTHM

Music

Music is an integral part of a fitness class. It sets the tone and allows you to demonstrate your personality and taste!

Below are suggestions for curating your music:

- Match the energy level with the section of the class, e.g., Warm-Up and Cardio will have a higher energy level compared to Cool Down.
- Pay special attention to your audience and environment. Choose a different song if you're questioning if a song is appropriate.
- Avoid lyrics with potentially triggering language altogether. Beware of song elements that can be distracting (yelling, sound effects, etc.)
- Maintain the same tempo (or bpm) throughout the exercise section.
- Playlists tell the 'story' of your class plan and help track timing. When prepping, try running the playlist from start to finish.
- Are you feeling stuck? Use Spotify to search playlists or focus on themes like "the 90s" or "Tribute to Boy Bands."

Transitions

Transitions will make or break any class experience. Transitioning smoothly between exercises, sections, and music will provide a safe and low-stress experience for yourself and the practitioner.

CLASS RHYTHM

Exercise Transitions

When transitioning from one exercise to another, consider the point of contact the fabric has with the body and how to continue smoothly to the next exercise. For example, a supine Bridge (ankles are the point of contact) transitioning to a Step Up (hands are the point of contact) is not a smooth transition at first glance. However, if you transition with a Rope Climb Variation, we've seamlessly connected the two Exercises.

Additionally, transitions might work on paper or in your living room. Practice your transitions on the Sling before teaching the class and adjust them as needed.

Section Transitions

While we have a suggested outline for class sections, mixing and matching units can be a fun way to shake things up as long as it's planned intentionally. For example, passive stretching should be practiced during Cool Down, as passive stretching requires warm muscles. However, you can start Aerial Yoga with Floating Asanas before Grounded Asanas as long as Intention, Points of Connection, and Dynamics are considered.

Music Transitions

Consider how music influences your overall 'story' of class. Music transitions can reinforce the energy you want the class to feel during a specific section, and it's OK to shake up the mood! Aim to maintain a consistent genre throughout class, and note direct or indirect participant feedback. For example, note your music volume—can you see your participants struggling to hear you? If so, consider sacrificing the 'energy' that loud music can generate for the sake of class inclusivity and communication.



AERIAL YOGA

DEFINITION

(Hatha) Yoga in a Western context focuses on a posture-based approach (called 'Asanas') designed to promote stress relief and physical fitness. This yogic branch uses physical techniques to preserve and channel the vital force or energy. Vinyasa focuses on the smooth transition of one Asana to the next, typically paired with breathing techniques or Pranayama. Dhyana is the contemplative state achieved at the end of practice. (Kaivalya, 2021)

BRIEF HISTORY

Yoga's history can be traced back ~5,000 years, with the first reference in the ancient sacred text Riga Veda. Yoga as an exercise was popularized in the 20th century by Swami Kuvalayandanda and Tirumalai Krishnamacharya. They focused more on the physical aspects of Hatha Yoga and less on the spiritual goals. Carmen Curtis is credited with using the Hammock as a yoga prop as early as 2004.

BENEFITS

Aerial Yoga can be both a gentle and challenging practice to expand upon existing Asanas and Yogic principles. Practitioners gain strength, coordination, and flexibility while decreasing stress levels.

RISKS

Please see Aerial Fitness for physical risks. When instructing Aerial Yoga, one should regularly pursue further education to deepen their understanding of the differences between cultural appreciation and appropriation.

CLASS FORMAT

The Five Sections of Class

Here are the five sections of Aerial Yoga, with the asanas commonly occurring in each section, generally following the Vinyasa format. (Kirk, 2016)

Warm Up:

- Class Intention
- Mobilize the spine in (6) directions
- Generate heat in the body
- Introduce concepts or vocabulary

Grounded:

- Downward Facing Dog
- Warrior I, II, III, Lunges
- Goddess
- Forward Folds or Backbends

Flying:

- Tree Pose
- Inverted Pigeon
- Alternative Versions of Warrior
- Peak Pose

Floating:

- Boat Balances and Core Activations
- Spine Mobilizers
- Backbends
- Savasana

Cool Down:

- Pigeon
- Side Stretches
- Upper Body Stretches
- Dhyana

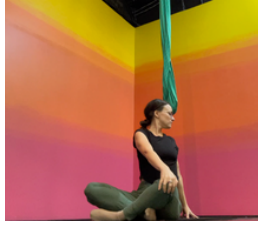


Try it: Inhale – initiate, Exhale – execute.

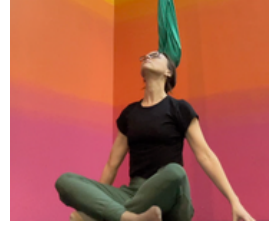
What has inspired your class intention? A pose? A quote? An idea?



SIDE STRETCH

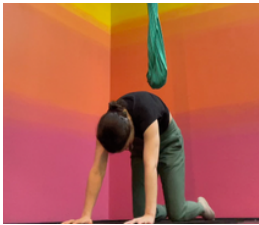


SEATED TWIST

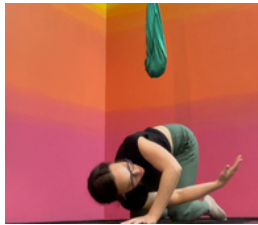


NECK MOBILITY

Find Easy Pose. Inhale arms overhead, exhale side stretch. Hold here and breathe for two cycles. Inhale return to neutral, exhale. Inhale arms overhead, exhale side stretch other side. Hold here for two breath cycles. Inhale return to neutral, exhale. (Side Stretch)



CAT/COW



DEEP TWIST



DOWN DOG

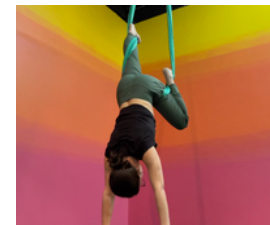
Pass through Easy Pose to Table Top. Establish a neutral spine. Inhale, extend the spine and shine the face and chest to the sky. Exhale to draw the belly button to the sky, the gaze inward. Repeat 'x' times. Return to neutral spine. (Cat/Cow)



FLY DOWN DOG



VARIATION



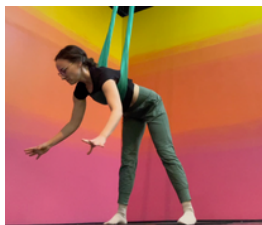
HANDSTAND

Stand under the Plum Line, bring the upper body through the center of the fabric. Press the base of the fabric into the hips as you Forward Fold. Give weight into the fabric, adjust as needed. Ground hands, let the legs hover in an active Pike. (Fly Down Dog)

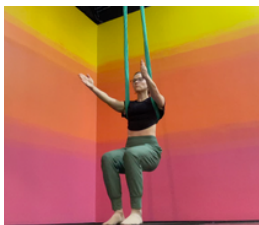
WARM UP

Try it: Inhale – initiate, Exhale – execute

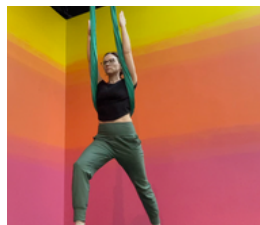
Using Points of Connection, find all the Variations of Warrior poses.



FINGER FLICKS



CHAIR POSE

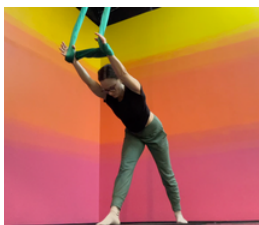


WARRIOR I

Find Backpack. Inhale, send the left leg behind, arms overhead. Exhale and hold. Align front foot over ankle, ground edge of back foot into the Earth. Draw tailbone under. (Warrior I)



WARRIOR III



PYRAMID



CHAIR

Inhale, raise arms into a big 'T,' and shift weight to the front foot with the back leg extended. Exhale and hold. Inhale, return to Warrior I, exhale, and raise arms overhead to Wrist Wrap. (Warrior III, prep into Pyramid)



CHAIR TWIST



WARRIOR II



REVERSE WARRIOR

Send the left foot into the fabric. Open the fabric and draw the fabric from ankle to hamstring. Flex the flying foot and bend the knee. Hold on and shift weight forward, flying ankle aligned with the grounded foot. If comfortable, take arms to a big 'T.' Hold here and breathe.

GRUNDED

Try it: Inhale – initiate, Exhale – execute

Are there any Aerial Fitness opportunities to integrate?



EXT. SIDE ANGLE

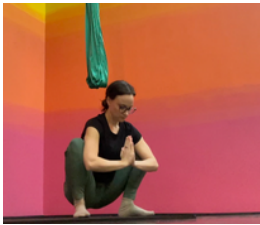


GODDESS



SIDE LUNGE

Hold onto the fabric for support. Separate the feet farther than the hips. From the hip, externally rotate knees and feet. Bend knees over the first two toes. Back straight, drawing tailbone under. (Goddess)



DEEP SQUAT



LOW LUNGE



HALF MONKEY

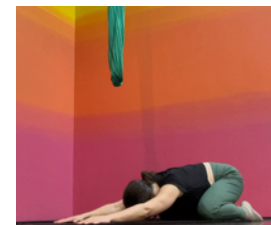
Stand on knees and find a Wrist Wrap. Send right foot forward, bend knee over ankle. Keep arms straight, shoulders away from ears. Stay here or continue to deepen the stretch. (Low Lunge)



REVOLVED LOW LUNGE



LIZARD



CHILD'S POSE

From Low Lunge, place the left hand on the ground while twisting to the right. Stay here or bend the back leg. Hold here and breathe. Press shoulders away from ears, and draw belly button to spine. (Revolved Low Lunge)

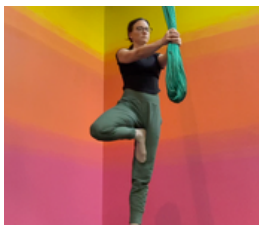
GRUNDED

Try it: Inhale – initiate, Exhale – execute

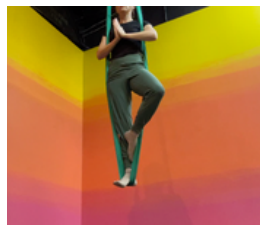
What corrections can you provide in most poses? Can you introduce imagery?



FIG. 4



TREE POSE



FLYING TREE

FLYING

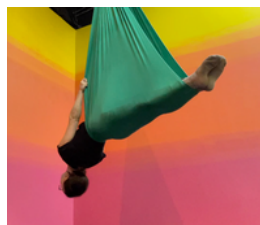
Find a Seated Chair. Inhale, lift the right ankle, exhale, place the ankle on the opposite knee, and open the hip. Hold here and breathe. Inhale, reach high and grip the fabric, exhale, and pull up to Mountain. (Figure 4 into Mountain)



BOAT POSE



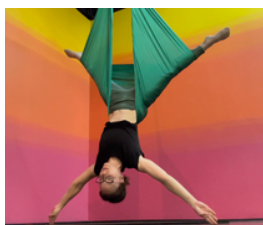
COCOON



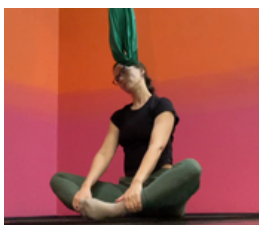
REVERSE COBRA

FLOATING

Shake the fabric open and stand in front of the Hammock. Grab five fist fulls of fabric and slide under the seat. Send hips into the fabric, sit, and open the fabric around the body. (Cocoon)



STAR



BUTTERFLY



SHOULDER STRETCH

COOL DOWN

From Cocoon, draw arms over head and sit up. Hold onto the Near fabric and begin Straddling the legs. As the legs open, lean back and allow the lower body to tip into an inverted position. Reach up and hold onto the Near fabric. Bring the legs together and pull up. (Star entry and exit)

Try it: Inhale – initiate, Exhale – execute

Prompt the transition to Dhyanana in a way that's organic to you!



SEATED STRADDLE



SEATED TWIST



NECK MOBILITY

Find a Seated Straddle. Take the right hand and place it into the base of the fabric. Forward fold and actively swing the hand side to side. (Seated Straddle with Lateral Swing)



CORPSE



HANDS TO HEART

Find a comfortable rest position. Take five breath cycles, and relax. Allow the mind to wander and the body to release from practice.

(After 5-10 minutes)

Start introducing small movements into the body. Roll over to one side in the fetal position. Gently find Easy Pose. Eyes can stay open or closed. Inhale arms overhead, exhale Hands to Heart.

The light within me honors the light within you.
(Dhyana Option)

DAY 2 LECTURES



CLASS FORMAT CONT.

01.

- Yoga Principles
- Creative Planning
- The Fabric Serves You

ENVIRONMENT

02.

- Importance of Primers
- Accessibility & Accommodations
- Understanding Your Role in the Class Environment

SAFETY AND RISK

03.

- Spotting
- Rigging
- Engaging in Risk

CLASS FORMAT

Peak Pose

The Peak Pose is typically the most challenging moment in class – build your class accordingly. For example, if the Peak Pose is Mermaid from Ankle Wrap, focus class on heating, mobilizing, and potentiating the spine and shoulders.

Savasana (or Corpse Pose)

Traditionally, yoga cannot be ‘realized’ without a moment for meditation. Dedicate 5-10 minutes at the end of Cool Down for contemplation. Ensure everyone is comfortable, keep the music quiet or off, and offer an optional prompt for practitioners to explore. Gently guide participants out of meditation to finish the class.

Sequencing the Asanas

Below are general guidelines for sequencing an Aerial Yoga class with Vinyasa influence:

- Warm Up – build heat (tapas), spine focus
- Standing Series – simple asanas with fluid transitions (Grounded)
- Peak Pose – sequencing leads to this pose (Flying)
- Forward Folds – do not mix with backbends
- Backbends – focus on gradual progressions (Floating)
- Cool Down – can include leg and hip stretches, Savasana

When sequencing, insert spine neutralizers between Forward Folds and Backbends (such as Child’s Pose, Butterfly, and Cat/Cow). Do not mix open and closed positions. For example, do not sequence Warrior I, Pyramid, and Warrior II together. Note that Aerial Yoga translates the Vinyasa practice into the Sling; therefore, practice is not a 1:1 reflection of grounded yoga. (Kaivalya, 2021)

CLASS FORMAT

Breath in Aerial Yoga (Pranayama)

In Vinyasa practice, one pairs breath with movement: Inhale, initiate, exhale, execute. Each pose is held for five breath cycles before advancement. While providing breath cues for every asana is ideal, it's unlikely in Aerial Yoga. For example, we insert frequent pauses or 'Workshop Moments' to guide the practitioner into a multi-step series. We forgo the breath rhythm in favor of the safe execution of the series. By demonstrating breathing rhythms, you can direct breathing without verbal cues. Let's discuss breath examples and their applications: Simple, Box, and Ujaji.

Ideas for Creative Class Planning

There are many ways to add creativity to your asanas and class planning. Consider the following:

- Intention & Points of Connection
- Start Warm-Up in Floating
- "Candlelight" yoga
- Repeat a Standing Series in silence
- Read quotes to set an intention
- Visualization techniques and cues

The Fabric Serves the Practitioner

Aerial Yoga is an ideal space to promote agency, choice, and the relationship with the Fabric. Let's explore how:

- The Anaconda Analogy
- Props in Aerial Yoga
- Reject the Fabric

Lessons of Aerial Yoga – Integrative Approach

Yoga is an ancient and studied practice, and there is boundless wisdom to inspire how you plan any class. Intention setting, thoughtful sequencing, Peak Poses, Breath, Variation, and acknowledging the 'light' in others are just a few ways yoga can serve your teaching journey with other formats.

ENVIRONMENT

When teaching a beginner-level class, anticipate that most students will not progress to Variations or Advancements—they will likely remain in the Primer or Primary stages of the exercise. Primer Exercises serve the instructor as well. By starting each exercise with a Primer, you can assess the student's capabilities and adjust the class as needed. Sometimes, a student will progress before they're ready. They'll do this for several reasons (self-consciousness, lack of awareness, fear of being 'other').

Signs include:

- Focusing on others
- Lack of balance
- Lack of confidence (looking downward or appearing sad)
- Not stopping to watch during the initial demonstration

When this happens, walk over to the participant and encourage them to return to the Primer or take a break. Suggested cues, "Go back to Option 1, Tom, save your energy," or "Hold on to your Sling, and put your feet on the ground."

Balancing your attention across aerial participants can be challenging. Plan your classes to exercises you're 100% comfortable with cueing. Do not rely on other participants to teach each other.



ENVIRONMENT

Accessibility

With UDL, we aim to provide options for most skill levels during aerial practice. However, some exercises or poses can be extra challenging for specific populations. When designing a class, assume no exercise is universally accessible. Celebrate the progress of the exercise, which will look and feel completely different from one individual to the next. If someone is struggling, walk over and ask, "Where are you feeling the block?" Be ready to provide Variations or props to make the practitioner more comfortable. Never force a person into a position or exercise that they are clearly not comfortable with.

Considering accessibility, we also must acknowledge the potential for discrimination that may occur during practice. For example, one might assume that a participant cannot perform an exercise based on their size, and the participants might feel that way themselves. Our primary marker for success is providing a sense of belonging for our practitioners.

Here are considerations for an inclusive environment:

- Use UDL to scaffold the practice and support the participant's journey of discovery.
- Promote curiosity with your class. If a participant is curious about a new pose you demonstrated, encourage them to 'dip their toe in the water and see if it's warm.' In other words, use gentle, encouraging language to support their informed risk-taking choices.
- Remind the group that opting out is an acceptable Option for any exercise.
- Reinforce the safety of the equipment during Warm Up. "In Backpack Wrap, put your weight into the fabric. Notice how it can support you during times of rest and moments of risk. Just shout if you need me!"

ENVIRONMENT



Above all, never assume a person's ability based on their appearance. However, there are inevitable moments in aerial practice that will be inaccessible to populations (temporary or permanent). For example, joint hangs might not be possible for people with hypermobility, injuries, pregnancy, or sensitive skin.

The following are suggestions to support participants during inaccessible moments:

- Say loudly, "Flag me down if you need support or a Variation!"
- Provide props or Grounded, non-aerial Options. Props can be:
 - Ballet barre or second fabric
 - Yoga blocks
 - Retired fabrics for grounded exploration
- Encourage rest, observation, and follow-up.
- Provide words of encouragement, such as, "Awesome, way to listen to your body!"

You can also request apparatus height adjustments from your studio to accommodate more practitioners.

Finally, it is OK not to have answers in the moment. Say, "Rest and observe this section. Let me think about this moment and follow up after class."

ENVIRONMENT

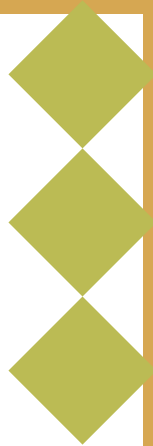
Your Role in the Class Environment and What Is Not

As the instructor, there are boundaries to your responsibility. Here is a list of what you're responsible for in class.

- Responsive instruction of the class and understanding of a participant's goals.
- Providing a line of two-way communication.
- Keeping others safe within the classroom framework.
- Keeping yourself safe.
- Use neutral or positive language about yourself and others, i.e., demonstrate kindness.
- Reporting incidents or rigging issues to your manager.

While you carry responsibility and qualifications, acknowledge what you are not responsible for:

- Providing medical advice.
- Making or suggesting diagnoses.
- Lecturing outside your 'wheelhouse,' including teaching exercises or poses you are uncomfortable with.
- After-class tutorials (especially moves from the internet).
- Enforcing your values or beliefs that are not pertinent to the class.
- Unauthorized aerial rigging changes.



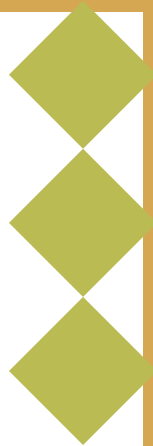
ENVIRONMENT

Your Role as a Teacher Cont.

The participant arrives at class with a hidden support system, including doctors, therapists, friends, and family. If a participant requests your medical opinion, please advise them to seek professional advice from the relevant specialist.

The studio's job is to ensure that people arrive at class with the proper safety disclaimers—the person is participating at their own, informed risk. Your job is to help manage the risk and lead a fun class!

Note that individual studios have various comfort levels for working with people with multiple ability levels, neurodivergence, trauma, and more. To ensure everyone's safety, confirm with your organization what the protocols are for creating and maintaining an inclusive environment.



SAFETY & RISK

Spotting

Spotting, or physically guiding a person through an activity, is necessary for teaching aerial.

Reasons to spot a participant might include:

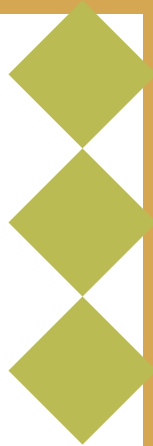
- Apprehension of the skill prompts the participant to request support.
- Incorrect position of the fabric in relation to the body.
- Loss of balance.
- Adjustment of an uncomfortable fabric point on the body.

In theory, you will only need to verbally reassure the apprehensive participant, as UDL and re-cueing will prevent mistakes or premature advancement leading to a spot requirement. Should a person require non-urgent hands-on assistance, **ask if they would like a spot. Use your body and your words to get them to safety.** In an urgent scenario, verbally inform them that you're coming to help and provide hands-on help. Do not assist further if your safety is at risk.

Let's practice common spotting scenarios:

- Inversions (straddle, crochet, candlestick)
- Grounded Ankle Wrap
- Step-Ups
- Spinning
- Getting stuck

SAFETY & RISK



When spotting, clearly communicate the next steps. For example, “When I count to three, pull up, and I will untie your foot.” Use your core and lower body to support their weight, and use your arms to guide the participant’s body; avoid grabbing body parts or forcing someone into position. If dynamic movement is involved, ensure your body is not in the pathway—especially your head, neck, and face. While some people might need a ‘boost’ to get into a position, this boost should be minimal, as the practitioner should bear 90% of the effort.

If you find yourself spotting regularly and with great effort, that is a sign that you need to reassess class plans and provide level-appropriate exercises.

Rigging Considerations

Rigging is a skill and expertise beyond the scope of aerial teacher training. However, it’s essential to understand the primary function and anatomy of your studio’s rigging so you can spot damage and report it to the studio.

Let’s take a look at a rigging pathway:

- Roundslings (wrapped, not frayed) to
- Carabiner or Shackle (locked or moused) to
- Swivel (spins smoothly) to
- Delta Link (gate is closed) to
- Carabiners or Daisy Chains (gates closed, loops not overloaded) to
- Fabric (smells tolerable, no tears at any point, slipknots in place)

SAFETY & RISK

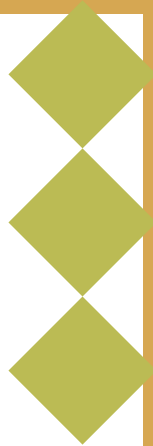
Do not attempt to adjust or fix rigging unless you are trained to do so. When in doubt, change your class plan to avoid a dangerous situation and inform the studio immediately of any potential hazards.

Risky Activity Considerations

When the studio provides safety waivers and disclaimers, we address the potential negative impacts aerial can have on a participant. You and the studio should regularly assess class plans and identify opportunities to mitigate risk.

Engaging in a risky activity like aerial can also bring benefits to the participant. Learning self-awareness, developing good judgment, building coordination, learning how to use tools (e.g. aerial apparatuses), harnessing resources, understanding consequences, and building confidence are all worthwhile benefits of experiencing adventure in a controlled environment. (Children's Museum of Sonoma County, 2020)

Additionally, partaking in a group activity is crucial for the psychological, physical, and emotional well-being of an individual—especially after a long period of isolation, as many of us recently experienced with COVID-19.



SAFETY & RISK

Pregnancy

The pregnant participant is responsible for informing the instructor of their pregnancy and providing a doctor's note that clears them for activities involving inversions, stretching, and increased heart rate. (Bellefonds, 2021)

Generally speaking, pregnant people should not perform exercises that involve:

- Twisting
- Potential for falling
- Lying supine
- Hot environments
- Backbends
- Jumping or bouncing
- Breath holding

Encourage the pregnant participant to stay in Grounded positions throughout the class, take frequent breaks, and be mindful about stretching as ligaments are looser during this time. Keep a ballet barre nearby in case they need balance support.



AERIAL DANCE

DEFINITION

Aerial Dance is a performance art integrating aerial acrobatics/circus and (primarily) Western dance (ballet, modern, postmodern, and jazz). Aerial Dance uses myriad apparatuses, can be choreographed solo or in a group, and is typically set to music.

BRIEF HISTORY

The concept of vertical dance originated in the 1950s and 1960s during the postmodern dance movement, when Alwin Nikolais and Trisha Brown experimented with fabrics, shapes, and height in a dance context. (Lynch, 2016) Isabelle Vaudelle and Isabelle Chasse are credited with the art of Aerial Silks. In 1998, they premiered an act for Cirque du Soleil's show, Quidam. Frequent Flyers Productions is considered to be the first aerial dance company to integrate the art form. (Vertical Wise, 2023)

BENEFITS

In addition to the physical benefits of aerial, Aerial Dance provides an opportunity for experimentation and exploration of movement. With the Sling, Aerial Dance can be an adaptive form of movement for those who have difficulty with conventional dance techniques.

RISKS

Due to its use of the hard floor, Aerial Dance (i.e., aerial with grounded elements) has a higher rate of injury compared with other aerial practices. (Greenspan & Stuckey, 2023)

CLASS FORMAT

Aerial Dance has the most flexibility with class structure. You can mix grounded and aerial exercises, preparing the participant for a choreographed phrase with dynamic movement and levels drawn from various disciplines.

Develop the choreography first, then plan the Warm Up to Raise, Mobilize, and Potentiate. For example, a choreographed phrase might be:

- Backpack Wrap with Reverse Plank – add arm movement
- Tip-Toe under Plum Line – stay or begin a spin
- Inverted Straddle, Crochet with Straight Leg to Harness
- Roll Down to Knee Hang
- Straddle to Stand – add an ending pose

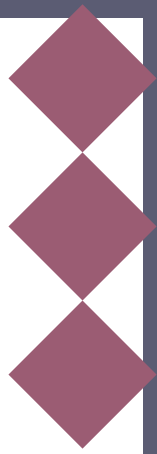
An Off-Fabric Warm Up could consist of:

- Jumping Jacks
- Demi-Pliés, Leg Swings, and Foot Exercises
- Core Marches – introduce Hollow Body
- Dynamic Stretches – include Straddle & Arched Body

You can then continue Warm Up with the fabric:

- Standing Planks – focusing on grip and alignment
- Inverted Straddles – focusing on straight legs, pointed feet
- Knee Hang Drills – concentrate on placement and activation

Based on the Primers introduced, you can decide to simplify, keep, or advance the choreography. You might need to provide Options for all. You might even get ideas on the fly! Let's practice different scenarios using the above example.



CLASS FORMAT

Composition

There are many components of Aerial Dance to consider when creating a phrase. Here are suggestions for developing choreography:

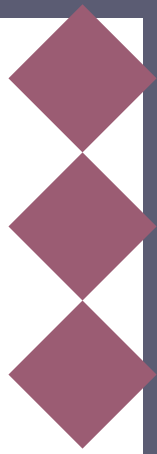
- Develop a beginning, middle, and end.
- Consider levels: grounded, low, and high.
- Entry movements: how does one approach the Sling?
- Experiment with timing.
- Experiment with the movement of the arms and head.

Take one of the above suggestions and create a small phrase (2-3 movements).

With beginning-level classes, avoid counts unless needed to keep people from bumping into one another. **When in doubt, keep it simple to start, and welcome the possibility of creativity in the moment.** Observe with curiosity and introduce Variation, if possible. Is a participant doing something inspiring? Highlight their Variation and present it as an Option, celebrating the ability of the participant to interpret movement from their unique point of view.

The Integrative Approach

Leveraging your knowledge and experience with Aerial Fitness and Aerial Yoga will equip you with a poses kit that translates to Aerial Dance. Experiment with intention, connection point(s), and movement direction (spin, swing, orbit) to turn a pose or exercise into performance art.



Try it: Add Layers of Movement and Intention

Are there exercises that can 'kill two birds with one stone'?



SHOULDER CIRCLES A



SHOULDER CIRCLES B

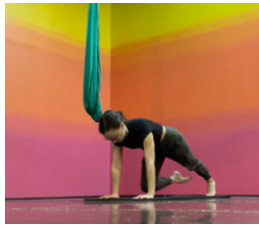


CAT/COW

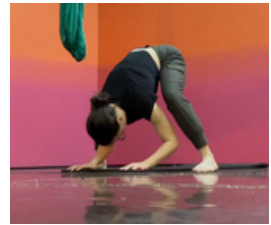
Be intentional with your movement; introduce balance and level changes. Aim to pair movement and music with every exercise. With any class, ensure to move the head/neck/spine in (6) directions.



HAND WARM UP

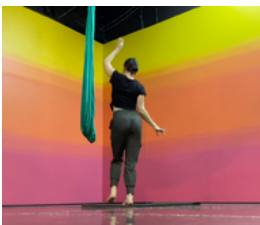


MTN CLIMBERS



HAMSTRING BEND

Introduce the ground as a crucial element of class. Are there mat optional or traveling exercises? Think about how a body moves through space without neglecting the must-haves for a proper Warm Up.



DANCE PARTY



DANCE CONCEPTS



90/90

Promote fun, curiosity, and community with easy-to-follow social dance steps. Once again, focusing on pairing movement with music. Dynamic stretches like 90/90 are ideal for the hip-opening choreography planned for class.

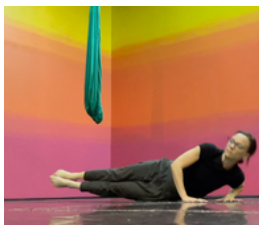
WARM UP

Try it: Add Layers of Movement and Intention

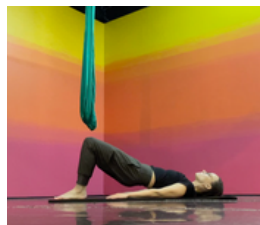
Identify moments for participants to Opt-Out or Choose Their Own Adventure.



TWIST/FEET POINT



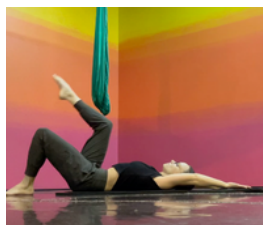
PIKE SWINGS



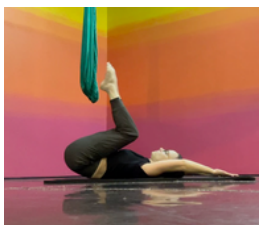
BRIDGE

WARM UP

Take a seated twist. While twisting, introduce foot and ankle exercises. Pike Swings activate the upper body and core; quickly and with great fun. Bridges activate the hamstrings for stretching during dance and cool down.



MARCHES



CURL UPS



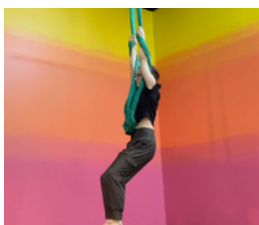
PLANKS

CONDITION

Advancing one's practice in Aerial Dance involves Inversions. Protect the participant's energy by practicing Inversions in a safe environment – the floor! (They can practice at home, too!)



PULL UPS



SHRUGS



WALKS

Start adding choreographic elements to Conditioning. For example, add arm movements when Walking to the Plum Line in Backpack.

Try it: Add Layers of Movement and Intention

Give clear direction for grip placement. (i.e., remove fidget steps).



INVERTED STRADDLE



CROCHET



PIEGON

Include elements of the dance during Conditioning. Participants can practice individual poses in a low-pressure environment as they continue to Mobilize and Potentiate. Consider how to string poses together (Transitions).



STRADDLE

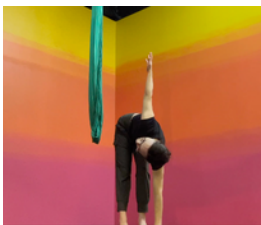


FINISH



REVERSE PRAYER

Choreography should have a beginning, middle, and end. Reinforce the importance of finishing the phrase, i.e, make an exit strategy.



DEEPER STRETCH

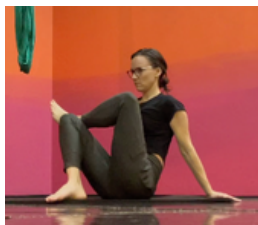


FIG. 4



NECK STRETCH

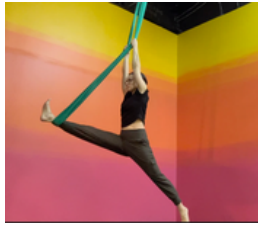
In addition to Inversions, Aerial Dance also promotes flexibility. Take deeper stretches during cool down (not during Warm Up).

Try it: Add Layers of Movement and Intention

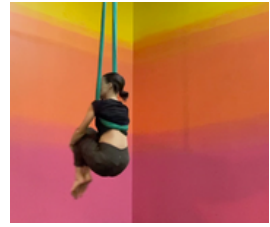
Encourage conversation. What was surprising? Challenging?



FORWARD FOLD



STANDING SPLIT



BALL SPIN

VARIATIONS

Should the class have the energy, provide one last Optional exercise. Standing Forward Fold or Split promotes grip strength and flexibility. Participants can advance their practice by adding a spin to any pose. Practice spinning in a 'lower stakes' environment like a Backpack.



IRON SPIN

An Iron Spin provides height and, therefore, freedom of leg movement. Keep the shoulders depressed and away from the ears. Arms are straight and activated.

Aerial Dance demands multi-level, multi-functional movements. Most phrases or combinations will require more than one class for the participant to gain confidence and full expression.

Adding a visual, inspiration, or story to the phrase will aid in the participants' understanding and absorption of the dance.

DAY 3 LECTURES

CLASS FORMAT CONT.

- Class Levels

01.



KIDS AND ADULTS

- Commonalities & Differences

02.

CONCLUSION

- Integration
- Next Steps

03.

CLASS FORMAT

Open Level

Open Level classes can be a fun, warm, and welcoming environment when planned correctly. Beginners can look to Advanced students to see what's possible with consistent practice. Advanced students can focus on refining movement instead of getting frustrated with fancy tricks. Consider Open Level classes as a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' game, promoting curiosity, community, and sometimes silliness!

Providing Options for all is an expected outcome for an Open Level class. Leverage Universal Learning and scaffolding of exercises for participants to choose their adventure. Here is an example of an Open Level demonstration (assuming participants have been Primed with previous activities).

“Let’s prepare for Harness.

Find Backpack into Inverted Straddle.

Pose or come up and find a finishing moment.

Or keep going and take a Spin if you want!

Crochet into Harness. Reverse your steps to find your finishing pose, or experiment with shapes here.

If you know a Variation, go for it!

Reverse your steps or roll forward into Knee Hang.”

Be prepared to repeat Options as the participant enters the apparatus – it’s common for many to forget what to do once they start dancing! Remind them to shout if they need help or if they want ideas! With Aerial Dance, there are infinite ways to experiment with shape and movement. Find and celebrate the special moments.

CLASS FORMAT

Beginner Level

Similar to Open Level, be prepared with Variations. **Break down poses or phrases into smaller sections and have a backup combination if the class needs to change course.**

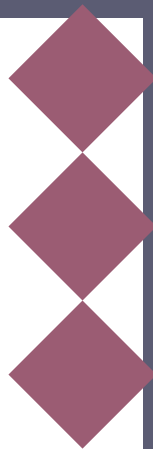
If appropriate, demonstrate how the phrase can be developed with continued practice and encourage participants to return!

Should a more advanced participant attend a beginner-level class, teach to the beginner level, i.e., the majority of the class. The advanced practitioner knows which class they signed up for, and they may have personal reasons for wanting to return to that level. You're welcome to have a private conversation before class begins to understand their goals and expectations.

While we won't cover more advanced formats, here are broad guidelines for skill level (subject to change from studio to studio). Note that a practitioner can experience several level changes throughout their lifetime.

Suggested Level Descriptions for Aerial Dance in the Sling:

- **Beginning:** the student is new to Aerial Dance. Ideally, will have taken 3-4 Aerial Fitness or Aerial Yoga classes.
- **Intermediate:** the student can invert from a Grounded position and has progressed flexibility. Demonstrates knowledge of vocabulary and understands their skill limits.
- **Advanced+:** the student can invert from a Flying position and has further progressed flexibility. Demonstrates knowledge of vocabulary and understands their skill limits.



KIDS AND ADULTS

Whether you choose to teach one age group only or mix it up, understanding the needs of different populations enhances your ability to relate and empathize with a participant.

Regardless of age, all participants require a Warm Up, Cool Down, and a series of exercises with Intention. When considering Kids in an Aerial Fitness or Aerial Yoga environment, focus more on engagement vs. performance (Games, Visual Aids/Props, and Lectures). Below are broad considerations when class planning for each group.

Kids (17 or under)	Adults (18+)	Both
Gym Mats+ Req.	Mat Options	Class Rules Agreement
Clean Music	Clean-ish Music	Scaffold Planning
Less Choices	More Choices	Direct Comms
Simplicity	Abstract Ideas	Lectures
Self Advocacy in Dev.	Self-Advocate	Play
Agency in Dev.	Agent	Spotting
Active ACE(s)	History of ACE(s)	Visual Aids and Props
Progress Reports		Curiosity
Parent Comms		Opt. Out
Games		Undiagnosed Cond.
Growth Spurts/Puberty		Neurodivergence
		Injury
		Trauma

While nuances in these age groups deserve attention and adjustments in class planning, most teaching techniques can be adapted to fit the population's needs. Note that this list can be significantly expanded upon, and teaching requires experience and continued education to best serve the participants. Should you be interested in teaching an unfamiliar age group, observe classes, and recruit support from discipline-specific teachers!

INTEGRATION

Over this training weekend, we dedicated each day to a discipline: Aerial Fitness, Aerial Yoga, and Aerial Dance.

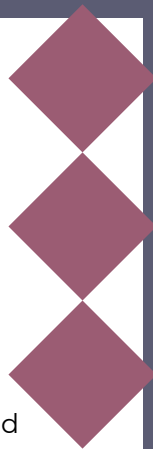
When studying Aerial Fitness on day one, we focused on executing exercises in the Sling that promote strength, flexibility, alignment, coordination, and adventure. We addressed structuring an aerial class with formatting, cues, and your relationship with the Sling.

On day two, we learned about Aerial Yoga and the greater importance of transitions. We addressed the intention of movement and breath and how our role as teachers can promote an environment of kindness and accommodation.

At first glance, it appears we've 'scaffolded' formats to culminate in Aerial Dance. While there are benefits to practicing Aerial Fitness and Aerial Yoga before participating in Aerial Dance (such as understanding multi-disciplinary concepts in a slower-paced environment), all three formats can be practiced independently and with great benefit.

With that said, explore integrating other disciplines into your classes. Take a Spin-in-a-Straddle break in Aerial Fitness to promote play and curiosity. Dedicate the first 20 minutes of Aerial Dance and lead practitioners through an Aerial Yoga sample class to demonstrate how movement has a rich, long, and multi-disciplined history. Introducing and integrating alternative perspectives enriches our classrooms, promotes multicultural perspectives, and challenges our personal growth and development.

Teacher training is a lifelong journey. Don't stop learning; celebrate progress, take breaks, and share the experience with others!



NEXT STEPS

Certificate of Completion

Please see below for the next steps in the teacher training process:

- Open Gyms – we'll schedule time for you to practice!
- Observe – you're welcome to attend regularly scheduled classes to get ideas.
- Written Exam – it's open book, complete at your own pace.
- Final Class – choose a format, and teach to friends. Celebrate!
- Stay in Touch – reach out to your peers for ongoing support.

Considerations for Teaching Aerial

Once you're ready to start teaching, consider the following:

- **Continuing Education:** Where and how will you continue your growth? Suggestions:
 - Additional Teacher Training: Yoga, Aerial Yoga, or other apparatuses.
 - Subscriptions or follow-up reading
 - Taking classes
 - Rigging education courses
 - Joining associations and online groups
 - First Aid/CPR training for youth and adults
 - Attending workshops or retreats
 - Education is tax-deductible!
- **Instructor Insurance:** Visit <https://www.americancircuseducators.org/insurance-faqs/> to learn about individual coverage options.

What are your FAQs for Teaching Aerial? Check out the Resources & References page at the end of the manual for more information!

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Suggested Reading

- **Science of Yoga** by Ann Swanson, 2019.
- **Applied Anatomy of Aerial Arts** by Emily Scherb, a.k.a. the Circus Doc, 2018.

Suggested Participation

- **Hall Rigging Academy:** hallriggingacademy.com
- **Born to Fly Curriculum by Rebekah Leach:** <https://www.aerialdancing.com>
- **American Circus Educators:** <https://www.americancircuseducators.org>

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