

Teaching Manual

Mastering Safe & Deep Backbends

Workshop Overview

This 3-hour workshop is designed for yoga teachers and dedicated practitioners to understand the science, safety, and skill of deeper backbends. The focus is on muscle engagement, spinal space creation, shoulder and lower back protection, alignment, and hands-on guidance.

Learning Objectives

- Understand correct muscle engagement for deeper backbends
- Learn how to create spinal space safely
- Apply techniques to protect shoulders and lower back
- Improve alignment, control, and teaching adjustments
- Develop confidence in hands-on guidance

Session 1: Opening & Intention (15 min)

Introduce the theme of safety and longevity. Discuss common injuries, poor alignment patterns, and importance of awareness. Practice gentle breathing and spinal awareness techniques.

Session 2: Anatomy & Biomechanics (30 min)

Cover spinal curves, key muscle groups, and biomechanics of extension. Focus on thoracic mobility, core stability, pelvic alignment, and shoulder mechanics.

Session 3: Muscle Engagement for Deeper Backbends (40 min)

Teach grounding through feet, leg engagement, glute activation, core stability, and controlled spinal extension. Practice drills in standing, prone, and supine positions.

Session 4: Creating Spinal Space Safely (35 min)

Introduce axial extension, traction, wave-like spinal movement, and breath-supported expansion. Use props to help students experience safe opening.

Session 5: Shoulder & Lower Back Protection (30 min)

Teach shoulder stabilization, rotator cuff engagement, scapular positioning, and lumbar support techniques. Practice preparatory drills and corrective exercises.

Session 6: Control, Alignment & Hands-on Guidance (20 min)

Teach verbal cueing, visual assessment, and safe hands-on assists. Practice partner adjustments in bridge, camel, and wheel pose.

Session 7: Peak Practice Flow (20 min)

Guide a progressive sequence moving toward peak backbends while maintaining safety and control.

Session 8: Cool Down & Integration (10 min)

Forward folds, twists, relaxation, and group discussion for integration.

Teaching Tips

- Always prioritize spinal length before depth
- Avoid lumbar compression
- Encourage slow controlled movements
- Use props generously
- Emphasize breath awareness

Injury Prevention Guidelines

- Never force range of motion
- Warm up thoroughly
- Strengthen supporting muscles
- Respect individual limitations
- Encourage rest and recovery