



Musician's Yoga: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Inspiration by Mia Olson (Hal Leonard and Berklee Press, 2009)

Reviewed by BJ Nicoletti

5 out of 5 flutes!

“Yoga For Musicians is a practice that I developed out of my own experience with music and yoga. It can help in so many ways including the development of a concentrated and focused mind for performance, an awareness of the body to prevent overuse injuries, and an overall awareness of breath to help with relaxation and musical phrasing.” (Mia Olson)

*Become a better musician through yoga. By integrating yoga into your practice routines, you will develop a more focused and concentrated mind for performance. You will be able to increase awareness of how you use your body to allow for proper posture and ease of movement while performing, helping you to avoid overuse injuries and play with greater expression. These concepts, exercises, and practice routines present yoga from the musicians' perspective, focusing on the direct relationships between using yoga and creating music. You will learn to: * Practice meditation approaches, breathing techniques, and yoga postures that will help improve musicianship * Play using healthy posture and technique * Get more out of your practice through improved focus * Use your breath to improve your phrasing and also to ease performance anxiety * Play with deeper expression through inspiration. (Berklee Press)*

[Mia Olson](#) is an accomplished flutist who is trained, certified and experienced in the practices she talks about. She describes herself as “a multi-media expressionist,” “a diverse artist who expresses herself through music, painting, photography, and yoga.” She is a Professor at the Berklee College of Music, an active performing flutist in different styles, painter and yoga instructor.

I recommend this book as useful to our GPFS membership for a range of reasons:

- She does an excellent job explaining the technical, mindful, and more spiritual part of the practice while doing so in a way that translates into our lives as musicians and playing an instrument. Her easy-to-follow exercises connect to our musical and instrument practice. See a snapshot from the table of contents for the book below. [Note – She offers a yoga lesson here on her website - <https://miamarieolson.com/yoga-lesson>](#)
- The book is very simply designed, organized well, and very accessible to different levels of players. It is meant for the musician that appreciates the connection between playing and physical wellness, mindfulness, performance presence/calmness/anxiety and strategies for breathing and posture. One might say it is more geared toward adults, but certainly the more aspiring and curious youth can take away plenty.

- If you are already a practitioner of some level of yoga, breathing awareness, meditation or mindfulness this book may still have perspective to offer. You can read it cover to cover or take on a section or two to discover specific ways to integrate these principles and practice into your actual flute playing.
- The book pairs well with other related resources such as the flutist/practitioner reviewed in the August, 2022 issue of *The Portland Piper* which is available in the Archives for the Portland Piper, on the Teaching & Learning Column webpage.

MUSICIANS YOGA: A GUIDE TO PRACTICE PERFORMANCE AND INSPIRATION: A GUIDE TO PRACTICE, PERFORMANCE, AND INSPIRATION

<p>Opening Sides Variation</p> <p>Thread the Needle</p> <p>Thread the Needle: Hand Variations</p> <p>Forward Bend</p> <p>Extended Child Pose</p> <p>Extended Child Pose Variation</p> <p>Spinal Twist</p> <p>Staff Pose</p> <p>Staff Pose Variations</p> <p>Staff Pose with Arms Extended</p> <p>Water Wheels</p> <p>Spine Exercises</p> <p>CHAPTER 7 Lower Body Exercises</p> <p>Warrior 1</p> <p>Warrior 2</p> <p>Side Angle Warrior</p> <p>Reversed Warrior</p> <p>Triangle</p> <p>Put It into Practice</p> <p>Lower Body Exercises</p> <p>CHAPTER 8 Exercises for Balance, Focus, and Concentration</p> <p>Balancing Pose Warm-Up</p> <p>Tree</p> <p>Warrior 3</p> <p>Warrior 3 Arm Variation</p> <p>Eagle Pose</p> <p>Balance, Focus, and Concentration Exercises</p> <p>CHAPTER 9 Taking Care of Yourself</p> <p>Kundalini Wake-up Routine</p> <p>Tapping and Self Massage</p> <p>Eye Exercises</p>	<p>Eyestrain Reducer</p> <p>Eye Strengtheners: Clock Exercise</p> <p>Postures for Relaxation and Rejuvenation</p> <p>Relaxation (Shavasana)</p> <p>Relaxation for a Good Night's Sleep</p> <p>CHAPTER 10 Developing Your Own Practice Routine</p> <p>Practice Routines</p> <p>Breathing Techniques</p> <p>Meditation Techniques</p> <p>Upper Body Exercises</p> <p>Spine Exercises</p> <p>Lower Body Exercises</p> <p>Balance, Focus, and Concentration Exercises</p> <p>Practice Routines</p> <p>Day 1 Practice Routine</p> <p>Day 2 Practice Routine</p> <p>Day 3 Practice Routine</p> <p>Day 4 Practice Routine</p> <p>Day 5 Practice Routine</p> <p>Day 6 Practice Routine</p> <p>Day 7 Day of Rest</p> <p>CONCLUSION Yoga and Awareness "Off the Mat"</p> <p>APPENDIX Resources</p> <p>Web Sites</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</p> <p>INDEX</p>
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