



counter poses, and explanations of the postures. Paulie's offerings were never like this and still are not like this. To differentiate his offering from Paulie's Taoist Yoga, Paul chose to use the name "yin yoga" to make sure people wouldn't be expecting Paulie's Taoist Yoga. Once yin yoga became more popular, Paulie adopted the same name, but he never changed his teaching: it is still Taoist yoga derived from his martial arts training. And it is fabulous, but it is not yin yoga "Grilley style"—never was and probably never will be.

Paul Grilley extracted the passive elements from Paulie's martial arts training, added a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) basis for the energetic effects (thanks to his training with Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama), modern anatomical understanding (thanks to his studies with Dr. Gerry Parker and his own research), and placed it into a solid yogic tradition. In this form yin yoga "PG", is far from the teachings of Paulie Zink, which is quite extreme due to its yang components. The resulting yin yoga practice most commonly taught (in the PG or Grilley style) is not extreme and never was. It is yin! Yin is mellow. Yang is extreme. In a yin yoga (PG) class, the intentions are not to go to ultimate ranges of motion, to hold beyond a reasonable amount of time, to experience pain, or any other extremism. A good yin yoga teacher would never encourage extreme attitudes or expectations. Beginners can do yin yoga and it may be better for beginners to start with a yin yoga practice than an active-yang or vinyasa practice (see my article "[Can beginners do yin yoga?](#)")

There are only ~25 postures used by most yin yoga teachers, if even that. I use about 15. This is not an extreme number! Think of the hundreds of postures in the yang world of yoga. In yin yoga, there are no "foot behind the head" poses, or "drop back to wheel" or 108 sun salutations. The poses are seated, simply but challenging to a degree. The edge is not to be passed, but played. If pain arises, it is time to come out. Thus, I disagree with Jason and his assertion that "don't kid yourself, yin yoga is extreme." Sorry, it is not, at least not in the way teachers following Paul's example teach it.

2. I quote Jason "There is no rational world in which anyone, under any condition, should be randomly trying to stretch ligaments! ... It is just literally the most unscientific, most unsound, mal-informed idea that we could talk about." In many places he makes the same claim and cites the statistics that muscles can stretch 200% but ligaments only 10%. Beyond 10% they are damaged with severe consequences.

This is a common myth that pervades yoga. I don't know where it came from! The idea that ligaments must not be stretched and can only stretch 10% before being damaged is patently false. However, Jason makes these (and many other) claims with conviction and authority but without citing any evidence or sources for these dogmatic assertions. Let me cite just a couple examples of where he is wrong.

THE LIGAMENTUM FLAVUM

Located behind the spinal cord is the very elastic ligamentum flavum, which is composed of 80% elastin fibers and 20% collagen fibers. The preponderance of elastin gives this ligament a distinct yellow color: indeed, its name literally means "the yellow ligament." It spans a short distance, from the bottom of the anterior lamina of one vertebra arch to its lower neighbor's top, posterior lamina, but while short, it is very strong. They serve to reinforce the posterior wall of the vertebral canal through which the spinal cord runs. Due to its elasticity, the ligamentum flavum shrinks during extension, so it doesn't become bunched up and press into the spinal cord during backbends.