



the devon school of yoga

# newsletter

AUTUMN 2021

## Welcome to Autumn!

Welcome to the 2021 Autumn edition of the Devon School of Yoga's Newsletter.

We trust that you have been keeping well wherever you are and with whatever you have been doing.

We also trust that this issue of our newsletter might provide you with some holistic yoga perspectives, insights and tools for your yoga practices and studies.

Thank you to everyone who contributes and reads the newsletter. Please feel free to share it with anyone you think may be interested.

Namaste

Duncan and the Devon School of Yoga

## DSY Advanced Yoga Teacher Training Course starting January 2022

This seven-month Advanced Yoga Teacher Training Course aims to inspire, empower and support qualified yoga teachers by drawing from yogic and associated traditions. By honouring the uniqueness of the individual as both student and teacher of yoga, the course develops the intuition and confidence necessary to evolve personal and teaching practices and skills.

We aim to provide a space to facilitate the deepening of personal practice, thereby inspiring yoga teaching. The course presents a 'toolbox' of yogic and associated practices to apply in personal practice and when teaching. Qualified, self-motivated yoga teachers from any tradition are invited to apply.

This 150-hour yoga course includes 100 taught hours held over 14 days (7 weekends of which 2 are Friday to Sunday residential weekends which are included in the course fee) plus 50 hours of home study and practice. For further information, see our website at: [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) or email us at [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)

## DSY Spring Foundation Course & DSY Autumn Foundation Course

The spring course starts in February 2022 and the Autumn course starts in September 2022. Each foundation course is taught over five monthly weekends which include Friday to Sunday full board residentials and are included in the course fee. The course is ideal for those who wish to deepen their understanding of yoga. It is also a helpful pre-requisite for joining our 500-hour yoga teacher training course for those wishing to do so. Comprehensive course manuals are provided. For further information, see our website at: [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) or email us at [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)

## DSY Pre and Post-Natal Yoga Teacher Training Course

Starting in March 2022 this 10-day Pre and Postnatal Yoga Teacher Training Course is aimed at students who would like to explore how to support women through their pregnancy. Whether your interest is for a personal insight into your own pregnancy or you want to help and support women through this life changing event, the course is in-depth and fascinating. For further information, see our website at: [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) or email us at [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)

## DSY Yoga Teacher Training Course

Starting September 2022 this 2-year, 500-Hour, Yoga Teacher Training Course focuses on the skills required to teach yoga in a safe and inspiring way. This is achieved through gaining deeper knowledge and practical experience in a safe and nurturing environment. With heightened self awareness, confidence will grow enabling knowledge to be intuitively shared. On meeting the prerequisites, students can join the course which comprises 44 days of practice and study held over 21 weekends in Devon, three of which (6 days in total) are long weekend residentials (and are included in the course fee). Comprehensive course manuals are provided.

The course is 284 taught hours over 21 monthly weekends, plus home study and practice, leading to 500-hour qualification with the Yoga Register. The prerequisites for joining the course are: two or more years of regular practice including classes, workshops, retreat attendance and/or completion of the Devon School of Yoga's Foundation Course or a similar yoga foundation course. For further information, see our website at: [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) or email us at [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)

*Please note: While we invite and encourage contributions to this newsletter, the content and views included in the articles below are those of the authors and not necessarily of the Devon School of Yoga.*



# Harmonise Your Hormones with Yoga

By Zoë Harris

Over the past year there's been an influx of media attention given to the menopause. Instead of the usual disparaging comments we hear celebrities openly talking about the effects, and the difficulty they experience getting useful information on treatment.

With an estimated 13 million women living with the menopause in the UK, it's about time we stopped treating it as a taboo subject. This negative approach has created confusion, which means many women in their 40s don't recognise they are experiencing menopausal symptoms when they first happen. It's great the menopause is getting the attention it deserves, but much of the information still talks about HRT as being the best way to deal with the symptoms. It's still difficult to find useful advice on complementary therapies, for those of us seeking a natural approach.

I've been post-menopausal for over 2 years. When I started experiencing menopausal symptoms a few years back, I naturally turned to yoga to help manage it. I found meditation and pranayama helpful, they certainly eased the symptoms, but I felt I needed more. Last year I had the opportunity to learn to teach Hormone Yoga Therapy, and for me that's been a life changer.

What is Hormone Yoga Therapy?

It was devised in the 1990s by Brazilian Yoga Therapist Dinah Rodriguez to manage her own menopause symptoms. Her gynaecologist was so impressed with the results he encouraged her to share the method. Hormone Yoga Therapy uses yoga poses, dynamic breathing and concentration techniques to stimulate specific glands to produce more beneficial hormones. It also uses pranayama, relaxation and anti-stress

techniques to reduce stress hormones. Dinah has since used the system successfully to help women with irregular periods, hypothyroidism, polycystic ovaries and PMS.

The Benefits

It's definitely helped me through my menopause journey. I sleep better, I've got more energy, I experience less brain fog and my bloated belly has gone. I've now taught the method to over 30 women. It's been fascinating hearing how

it's affected them. Women who regularly practice say they have more energy, less stress, improved menstrual cycle, feel more sensual and have alleviated stress incontinence.

**“I was a tiny bit sceptical whether it would be of any benefit to me”**

“Before having the sessions I was a tiny bit sceptical whether it would be of any benefit to me as I am 58 years old and post-menopausal. The main thing I've noticed is my lack of joint/muscle pain. At first I thought I was imagining it, but I'm not and it's amazing. Also my self-esteem is much better, which is a joy in itself, together with a greater appreciation and love of my body. Energy levels are definitely up” (Caroline C.)

I'm available to teach Hormone Yoga workshops around Somerset, Devon and Dorset. Further information is on my website at [www.zogayoga.co.uk](http://www.zogayoga.co.uk)

Please visit [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) for information about the school



## Intentional Exhalation and the Power of Inspiration

By Sama Fabian

We live in a culture that understands taking a breath, taking time, taking it easy... as an act of will. In those everyday expressions we recognise that the word 'taking' is the driving force. Unconsciously we integrate the movement that goes with the language which, in this case, implies an intentional pull that draws from the outside towards the inside.

As yoga practitioners we are occupied with breath, its relationship to mind and body and their mutual integration into an undivided, un-fragmented whole. For it is not perfection that we seek but wholeness.

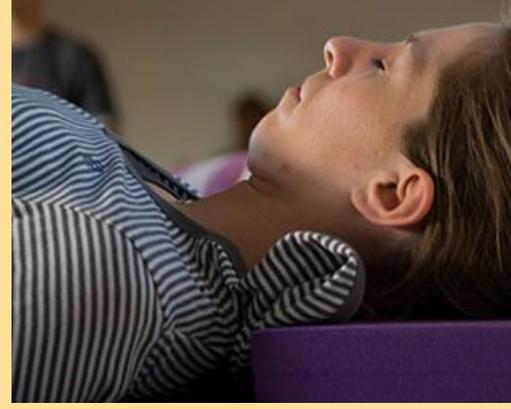
In the current pandemic context and the ensuing increase of anxiety, what many people are experiencing is a shortness of breath, a sense of asphyxiation, an inability to draw a breath in as we have all been taught to do. 'Take a deep breath' is the recommended movement. But this simple gesture may no longer be available, possibly resulting in a full-blown state of panic. How can we change the culture of 'taking' and invert it into its opposite movement: to release, to give ourselves a long, uninterrupted and complete exhalation. There might even be a lingering of the out breath into a peaceful suspension from which, almost unexpectedly, a spontaneous inhalation can arise.

This is the art of pranayama, an entirely different culture which always starts with an

exhalation. An intentional exhalation that we consciously follow to its full expression allowing it to linger to the finest filament outside of the body until an inhalation laps gently in from the back body like an inevitable tide. The power of spontaneous inhalation is a revelation to the system, transforming the deep ecology of body, psyche, intellect and emotions. This radical change opens new perceptual fields, creating a new dialogue between the inner and outer lives. This practice requires refined sensitisation, the gentlest of touches and an unwavering trust in the power of letting go. From here, all pranayama becomes an inspiration, a rising of light into the system, a precious gift from Spirit.

The Rainbow Practice is on available online.

The next Teacher Development Study Program is an on-line 2-hour fortnightly call starting again in late September. For more information, registration or a chat about the above get in touch with Sama: [samyoga@btinternet.com](mailto:samyoga@btinternet.com) or visit [www.aurolabyoga.net](http://www.aurolabyoga.net)



# Yoga Nidrā - Radical Rest for the Over-Stressed

By Barry Elms

With the onset of a Global Pandemic earlier this year it seems, even to me, sat in almost the middle of nowhere in Cornwall, that people are more stressed than ever. Being locked indoors for months on end has been a big problem for a lot of people, with one worry coming after another - avoiding catching the virus; holding down a job whilst caring for kids at home; mixed information coming from even official outlets; and many others. It's a big citta-vṛtti generator in action. Alongside stress comes exhaustion; and when there is exhaustion and overwork, āsana and prāṇāyāma practice take a hit - we're too busy and tired to do our yoga practice.

During this time, more than any other time I can remember, we need something radical - rest. But not simply rest, we need radical rest, yogic rest. We need Yoga Nidrā. If you've ever attended any Devon School of Yoga courses, you will have practiced some Yoga Nirdā, it's kinda like a "śavāsana-plus".

Yoga Nidrā is a liminal practice, a practice on the edges - on the edge between sleeping and waking; on the edge between relaxation and meditation. It gets to places other yogic practices do not. And it requires no effort. You simply have to be.

It's my experience, both personally and over many years of yoga teaching, that this practice is hugely valuable during the most stressful times, and it is also one of the most accessible and effective practices. Rested humans are more able to cope with stress, and make more sensible choices.

So what is it? Well, Yoga Nidrā is referenced as far back as the Mahābhārata (300BCE-300CE), as the sleep of Viṣṇu; and a few hundred years later personified as a goddess with the power of

nidrā (sleep). We first come across recognisable practices in the middle-ages, for example a rotation of consciousness around the body (Yoga Yājñavalkya), and the union of pairs of opposites (Śiva Samhita).

The contemporary practice as we know it is a combination of these older practices combined with Western relaxation techniques; it comes to us via a number of lineages, such as Sw. Satyananda and Sw. Rama. Although the form can vary slightly between lineages, there is a common set of core parts of the practices that make them Yoga Nidrā - settling, rotation, opposites, breath/body awareness, externalisation.

Yoga Nidrā is easy to practice, from getting hold of a CD such as Sw. Janakananda's classic "Experience Yoga Nidra" or downloading from a specialist web site, through to attending live Yoga Nidrā in classes or on Zoom. And once you are experienced at the practice, you can 'do' Yoga Nidrā to yourself, in other words, mentally running through all the sections of the practice without needing a voice to follow.

If you are interested in taking up Yoga Nidrā I'm happy to recommend CDs, downloads, books, live Yoga Nidrā on Zoom, and courses on teaching/facilitating Yoga Nidrā. The new DSY Advanced Teacher Training Course will also be including Yoga Nidrā, please get in touch with the School office for more information.

Please get in touch if you'd like to know more, or if you would like to come along to my Wednesday evening Yoga Nidrā session on Zoom. I also have free to download Yoga Nidrās on my website: [www.elmsgrove.com](http://www.elmsgrove.com) contact me at: [barry@elmsgrove.com](mailto:barry@elmsgrove.com) or on 07941199001. Live 'Good Night' Yoga Nidrā on Zoom with Barry, Wednesdays 9:00-9.30pm

# Inclusivity

By Ruth Heard



Yoga is an inclusive practice and our teaching and language should reflect that. Thankfully, today, it seems to be coming to the forefront of peoples conscious to question the topic of inclusion in their own practice and teaching. And so it should be. Yoga is not an exclusive club, it is the practice of every single individual that chooses to, regardless of body size, ethnicity, disability sex or gender. Perhaps the term of inclusivity is assumed in yoga but we cannot rely on this assumption. It's helpful to be aware and part of a solution in providing a safe space to practice yoga away from trauma and without judgement. We need to make a safe space without being gender specific, using non-binary language, including our pronouns and trying to lose any possible preconceived perceptions.

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community and in an 'ever changing' body size, I am passionate about making yoga classes more accessible to all. At a very basic level we, as teachers, can look at how we use our anatomical terminology, our language assumptions and our expectations. On a physical level we can look at our somatic adjustments and how we read the physical space we are practicing in – for example: is it accessible to disabilities, are there only gendered binary toilets?

Potentially there is no way to make a class completely trigger or trauma free but we can do a lot. Here are some helpful things we can do:

- Consider how do we advertise our classes. Being open and honest about the space you are creating from the start so that the individual can choose if it's right for them. If you are offering a safe space then make sure you follow that up. In other words don't claim to be inclusive unless you are.
- If using physical adjustments, perhaps the use of consent cards so that there is an understanding from the beginning whether it's ok to touch or not.
- Careful consideration of our wording, for example we could use the term 'feminine flow' rather than 'women's wellness' to make it more inclusive. Or instead of male/female side we could use lunar and solar.
- In prenatal/postnatal yoga using the term 'birthing person' rather than 'pregnant woman' as to not marginalise any pregnant people.

We have a legal responsibility to take action to protect our students. Using our allyship to support someone else's beliefs and rights doesn't always have to be loud. Using any privileges we have to use our voice to speak up for marginalised communities.

For some of us, terminology and preconceived ideas have been ingrained in our very beings and we have to be gentle at unpicking them. If we make mistakes, apologise and move on. We can be raising the voices of marginalised communities and act as an ally to support someone else's beliefs and rights. To include is not to exclude anybody else, only to include all people.

I am an inclusive yoga teacher and birth worker and will be teaching a specific class this year focusing on a 'yoga for all' class. I teach workshops for birth preparation and specialise in pre-and postnatal yoga. As well as being part of the community, I have attended an LGBTQ+ competency in Birth workshop and am part of an LGBTQ+ yoga teachers' group for support, mentoring and education. Alongside this I am a Doula trained with Badass Birth.

I am able to offer workshops to yoga teachers wanting to become LGBTQ+ plus competent in their classes. Questions can go to: Ruth Heard [www.satyabirthandyoga.co.uk](http://www.satyabirthandyoga.co.uk) Ruthheard108@gmail.com 07500439670

For classes, workshops, retreats and courses, please visit [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com)

# Am I in my right Ayurvedic mind?

By Virginia Compton

The last year or more has taken a huge toll on many people's mental health. Whether we are conscious of it or not, our mental health is constantly fluctuating, and just because we talk about mental health, it doesn't mean that there is anything wrong. We are just becoming more aware of our moods and emotional states. In Ayurveda we use the Gunas of Rajas, Tamas and Sattva when considering the mental state of a person.

When we are Rajasic in nature then we may be high in energy, hot and flustered, busy and our mind might be racing. Because our mind state often dictates how we present in the world and how we are physically this can also be seen as manic behavior, rushing about, busyness and not enough down time. This then creates feelings of ongoing restlessness, which can lead to insomnia and heightened anxiety. This can also lead to a state of exhaustion.

The Tamasic state is one of inertia. We don't have any motivation or feel that we are interested in anything. We might be more withdrawn and less interactive, physically very slow or sedentary. Sleeping more than usual and not feeling like doing much at all. This can lead to low mood and symptoms of depression.

The 'ideal' state is to be Sattvic. We often feel this way at the end of a Yoga practice. Relaxed yet alert. Energy flowing but not agitated. It feels good! So how can we be in this state more often?

Although our mental health is of course associated with the mind we are affected by the physical body, how we move and the food we eat. If we are feeling Rajasic then a fast-paced heating asana practice and spicy stimulating foods (including coffee and alcohol) will increase this further. To reduce Rajas, we need to embrace calming and grounding practices, pranayama and earthy nurturing foods. In the case of an excess of Tamas we may feel like we want lots of restorative and yin practices, but we actually need to get moving! So, a more dynamic practice is helpful, including kriyas, along with lighter foods, lots of leafy greens and less carbohydrates and heavy foods.

Ideally our practice and diet should be Sattvic in order to help us to maintain a sense of equilibrium and balance. Grounded and yet fluid, nurturing and yet not stagnating. Ayurveda, practiced alongside our Yoga, helps us to notice the mind state and to bring in back into balance both on and off the mat in the way that we live our life.

Virginia enthusiastically practices Ayurveda and Yoga in South Devon and is based in Ashburton [www.virginiacompton.com](http://www.virginiacompton.com)

Please visit [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) for information about the school

## DSY Events

**Holistic Yoga Autumn Retreat with Duncan Hulin and Andrea Guest**  
12-14 November 2021.  
**FULLY BOOKED**

**Spring North India Yoga Retreat at Basunti. Provisional dates are 26 March – 8 April 2022.**  
**2 Places Available.**  
[www.basunti-yoga-india.co.uk/](http://www.basunti-yoga-india.co.uk/)

For those looking for a place to immerse into their yoga practice, totally relax, enjoy wonderful food and experience incredible India, our India Yoga Retreat at Basunti is perfect. Basunti's unique location, surrounded by wildlife and with extraordinary views of the Himalaya, was created especially for yoga retreats by David and Izzy.

Beautifully, fresh, vegetarian and vegan food is lovingly prepared daily for hunger practitioners. There's afternoon tea and freshly prepared cakes, all served with smiles from the team that look after Basunti guests.

Accommodation is in en-suite rooms which are comfortable, clean and quiet. The gardens that surround the property are full of the local flora and fauna which merge gently into the surrounding countryside. Plus, there are outside sitting and dining areas, sheltered by verandas. A large pool with loungers overlooking the lakes and woodlands. Local villages are just a short walk from the property. For further information, see our website at: [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com) or email us at [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)

**4 December 2021**  
**Holistic Yoga Workshop with Duncan Hulin**  
The Angel Hall Bowden House  
Totnes, TA9 7PW  
Includes: Breath only kriyas, asana, shavasana, satsang, miscellaneous practices and pranayama.  
Price TBC  
Book via:  
[joyfulprater@googlemail.com](mailto:joyfulprater@googlemail.com)

## Other Yoga Events

### Yoga and Ayurveda retreat for Women. 13 - 17 October 2021. Coombe Martin, North Devon.

The initial cost for this retreat is £324 per person (plus a donation). Virginia Compton. Ayurveda and Yoga Wellness [virginiasyoga@icloud.com](mailto:virginiasyoga@icloud.com)  
[www.wellnessrevolutionretreats.co.uk](http://www.wellnessrevolutionretreats.co.uk)

### Inner Flow Yoga Immersion 2022 Molino del Rey Andalusia Spain 22nd - 28th May 2022.

Contact [sallyornellas@gmail.com](mailto:sallyornellas@gmail.com)  
Limited places available.

#### Inspiring Quote:

Yoga is not a collecting of information,  
But a process of transformation;  
Not a matter of skilful manipulation  
Of reference libraries,  
but of detaching layers of ignorance  
from oneself.  
Yoga is the opening of silence  
Within the mind;  
The dissolution of clouds  
In the pool of clarity  
And allowing passage to the winds  
of space.  
Yoga is the arising of a smile  
From the roots of silence,  
The play of sunlight  
on the open petals  
And allowing passage  
To the breath of grace.

By Velta Snikere

## The music between

If the beginning was the word,  
a vibration ululating  
through the universe,  
then words were the apple

shaped in the mouth,  
tasted and exhaled,  
in song, dancing  
in step with change.

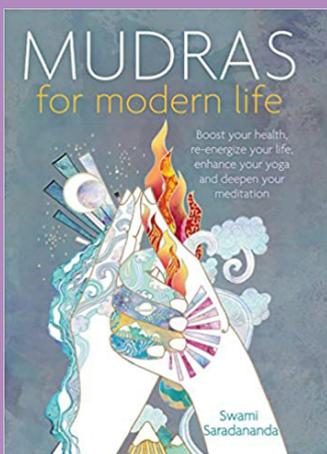
When did words become stones?  
cells and silt, bones,  
compressed to chalk  
marking surfaces  
calcified time,

and story, fast-cooled obsidian  
smooth as certainty  
or thick walls of  
bruising granite.

there are  
overlapping circles  
radiating from the pebble  
casually tossed beyond

our shared space  
and music shimmering  
between the thought  
and the word

*Poem by Anne Bateman*



### Book of Interest

*Mudras for Modern Life by Swami Saradananda*

Mudras are subtle hand gestures that channel your body's energy flow and easy-to-learn but powerful tools for physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Yoga and meditation teacher Swami Saradananda draws on her years of experience in all aspects of yoga to explain the background, techniques and benefits of working with mudras to boost health, relieve stress and enhance inner peace.

# Returning to the Yamas and Niyamas for guidance

By Anne Bateman

I have spent this year's various forms of lock down in south west France, unable to teach yoga face to face or on zoom (iffy internet) and although I have much to be grateful for (house, garden, beautiful walks nearby) I have missed my children, my family, my friends and have felt fearful for the future of the world.

I have cultivated Santosha, contentment, grateful for a yoga and meditation practice and for all the positives which my neighbour and I obsessively list on meeting up (socially distanced) outside our houses most days.

But there are days of unravelling, when the news intrudes, when the sadness at not seeing loved ones wells up and an angry irritated volatility takes hold. And worse, seeing how friends and family have fallen into unforgiving adurance, with strongly held opinions on the best way out of this mess, to the point where I self-censure to avoid being accused of being either a conspiracy theorist or a scientist. And I have felt it in myself, a visceral reaction to a different point of view, as if my very identity is under attack.

It's not surprising that after a year of fear and isolation, people veer into camps where there is the offer of some clarity and rightness, but as another friend wrote to me recently concerning vaccination, "...truthfully, all any of us can do is make the best decision possible with the limited and muddy information of the moment."

So, I keep returning to the Yamas and Niyamas, and in particular to Ahimsa, Satya, and Ishvara Pranidhana. As all vestiges of normality recede, and all news seems to be of threat, reflexes go into fight or flight, and my ego goes into overdrive, trying to work out what I can do, cling on to, to stay safe. Other people's opinions seem to threaten my life.

And then I remember Ishvara Pranidhana, that I am not in control, that I am part of something bigger and that I can let go of that which does not serve me.

There is no one realisation event, but this realisation evolves swinging back and forth between ego panics and releasing. And other people are going through these panics and they believe that it's the fault of big pharma or the Chinese or whatever but I try to balance Ahimsa, or non-harming and Satya or truthfulness by questioning and challenging sensitively and in the end, I realise I know nothing in these muddy waters. Perhaps all will become clear in hindsight. So, I treat my friends with their different opinions carefully as I value them. However, what does hurt me is the anguish I see and hear they are experiencing.

According to the Yoga Sutras, when you are acting, speaking, or thinking against the Yamas and Niyamas, the suggestion is to remind yourself that such negative actions, speech, or thoughts are going in the wrong direction, and will bring you nothing but unending misery. It can be as straightforward as silently repeating the words to yourself, "Mind, this is not useful; this is going to bring me nothing but more suffering, and lead me into greater ignorance of truth." This simple practice is an extremely important way to balance, purify, and train the mind. A helpful resource = <https://www.swamij.com/yoga-sutras-23034.htm>

## Namaskaram

Namaskaram is the online magazine and newsletter of The Independent Yoga Network. Here you will find news, views, and authoritative articles on all matters Yoga, plus an up-to-date list of workshops, retreats and seminars put on by Independent Yoga Network members. If you are an Independent Yoga Network member you can list your classes, workshops and events - go to the 'what's on' page to find out how to add your listing. **For more information:** [www.namaskaram.co.uk](http://www.namaskaram.co.uk)

