



# **THE DEVON SCHOOL OF YOGA**

## **POSTGRADUATE YOGA THERAPY COURSE**

### **SAMPLE SYLLABUS**

**Devon School of Yoga established 1989  
32 Years of Inspiration**

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If you require any part of this publication in larger print or as a pdf document sent electronically or via post, please contact The Devon School of Yoga at:

The Devon School of Yoga  
4 Barnfield Hill  
St. Leonards  
Exeter  
EX1 1SR  
Tel: 01392-420573  
E-mail: [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)  
Web: [www.devonyoga.com](http://www.devonyoga.com)

# Introduction

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The Devon School of Yoga (DSY), founded by Duncan Hulin was established in 1989 brings together classes, workshops, retreats, festivals and training courses under one umbrella, covering all aspects of yoga. Set in locations around Devon, making yoga accessible, the ideal surroundings are provided for yoga practice, study and contemplation. **The school teaches a holistic approach to yoga.** As well as coming from an eclectic base, its core practises are based on the lineage of the Dr. Pillai system of kriyas, pranayama and meditation, and its inspirational yoga energy source comes via, Dr. Pillai's teacher, Swami Sivananda Paramahansa (of Kerala, South India).

The Devon School of Yoga is a member of The Independent Yoga Network.

## Aims of the school

1. To provide the foundations on which individuals can improve and maintain their physical, mental and spiritual well-being.
2. To train individuals to become inspired, competent yoga teachers and to use specific yoga methods as a complementary therapy to help others.
3. To increase personal and public awareness of natural ways of living, eating and healing, enabling individuals to assume more responsibility for their own health.

## Philosophy of the School

**“Yoga – a way of life”** sums up the school's philosophy. The foundations of the school's broad-based approach are grounded in the practise of hatha and raja-yoga.

Key points summarising the school's philosophy are:

- The ultimate guru is the universal guru within oneself.
- Responsibility for developing health and happiness lies with each individual.
- Many yoga paths are studied so an intuitive educated choice can be made as to which main path to follow, backed up by the other paths.
- By purifying our bodies and minds through posture and breath, consciousness can expand to widen our perspective of life. Desire will come naturally to purify our immediate and global environment and to live in harmony with nature and our fellow beings.

This DSY 250hr postgraduate yoga therapy course aims to inspire, empower and support qualified yoga teachers by drawing from the plethora of yogic / Eastern traditions and yoga therapy. By honouring the uniqueness of the individual as both student and teacher of yoga the course develops intuition and confidence.

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 Eastern practices to apply in personal practice, when teaching classes and when working one-to-one with yoga as a therapeutic healing art.

The course will challenge old beliefs, allowing exploration of underpinning values and philosophy and inspiring personal transformation, thus expanding and exploring the creative spirit of the yoga teacher.

This course was designed with the 'Skills for Health' National Occupational Standards (NOS) in mind, as set by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), and is accredited by the Independent Yoga Network as a 250hr postgraduate course. Graduates are able to practice yoga therapy and likewise be insured as yoga therapists.

A Devon School of Yoga Post Graduate Yoga Therapy certificate will be awarded to students who complete minimum required attendance, all coursework and assessments successfully.

Those students who choose to specialise with their three in-depth case studies and project (as outlined in the course content) will have their subject of special interest noted on their certificates if requested i.e. back pain, asthma, anxiety, etc.

# Standards

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Standards are derived and underpinned from three fundamental yoga principals:

- **Ahimsa** (non-injury)
- **Satya** (truthfulness)
- **Svadyaya** (ongoing self-study).

1. In order to serve the needs of students, teachers will be prepared by having a sound practical and theoretical grounding in yoga therapy and in teaching methods.
2. Personal practice is approached with a calm manner. The use of the mind when practicing holistic yoga therapy is equally as important as working with the physical body.
3. The practical and theoretical work is intended to form the basis of postgraduate yoga therapy training. Individuals are encouraged to extend areas of study in the light of their particular knowledge, as there are many valid approaches to the subject.
4. A knowledge of the main aspects of basic yoga texts and knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology underpin understanding of yoga and yoga therapy practices.
5. Professional skill is mainly measured by an ability to help students or clients to practice safely within their personal limits. The therapist's understanding of the effects of yoga techniques will be reflected in their ability to explain and demonstrate them.
6. The ratio of students to teacher will not exceed 12.

# Prerequisites

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Students who apply for this postgraduate yoga therapy course must meet the following prerequisites:

- Be a qualified yoga teacher
  - If the teacher training programme you qualified with was 500 hours, you qualify to join the course.
  - If the teacher training programme you qualified with was 200 to 300 hours, you must have a minimum of 2+ years teaching experience since qualifying.

# Course Hours

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Total course hours:	250-hours	This is a 250-hour course qualification spread over 500 hours inclusive of tutor led and student work.
DSY tutor led:	160-hours	DSY Tutor led hours
Student work:	216-hours	This is approximately 2.5 hours per week x 84 weeks including coursework, project and case studies.
Additional tutor led:	126-hours	This is approximately 1.5 hours per week x 84 weeks including weekly classes / workshop attendance.

# Aims

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To enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become competent, effective, professional yoga therapists in addition to building on personal practice and self-development in preparation for teaching and working as a yoga therapist.

To provide a basis for the continued study of the philosophy, principles and practices of yoga and of the therapist's own development.

# Attitudes

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Throughout as well as after the course students will:

1. Aim to uphold the values and ethical lifestyle of traditional yoga teachings in daily life.
2. Accept responsibilities compatible with the teachings of yoga and the ethics of a professional therapist.
3. Continue personal practice of hatha and raja yoga as well as any other chosen yoga paths such as bhakti, jnana, karma, etc.
4. Commit to being openminded (particularly to exploring new practices and ideas), maintain good timekeeping, be respectful to tutors and fellow students and practice good listening skills.

# Course Content

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## Holistic yoga as a spiritual discipline

- Developing the home / personal practice
- Kriyas
- Mudras and Bandhas
- Asana
- Pranayama
- Meditation
- Raja Yoga / Ashtanga Yoga
- Mantra / Bhakti Yoga

Selected study of yoga philosophy, building on the basic knowledge from teacher training course including:

- Patanjali Yoga Sutra
- Hatha Yoga Pradipika
- Bhagavad Gita
- Upanishads

## Yoga Therapy

Practicalities of working one to one with yoga therapy including:

- The Dr Pillai DSY yoga therapy system overview
- Listening skills and the therapeutic relationship
- How to analyse an individual using the appropriate yoga models and a case history (which includes using a health questionnaire, consultation / assessment of medical conditions and other factors conveyed by the client together with the acute/chronic nature of each issue and the client's priority for improvement)
- How to identify priorities for a yoga therapy programme covering: preferences and needs of the client, current abilities or limitations, potential for improvement, time constraints for practice and choice of one to one sessions or small therapy group classes
- How to select and plan appropriate yoga practices and techniques based on the analysis: in a one-to-one therapy setting where a tailored initial home practice and further home practices are developed to suit the client's individual needs and in a therapeutic group setting: where group practices are personalised with appropriate modifications and variations for the needs of each client in the group
- Yoga techniques as used in therapeutic practice together with their effects: asana (postures), pranayama (breathing techniques), dharana / dhyana

(concentration/meditation), yoga nidra (relaxation), bhavana (visualization), mantra (sacred sounds), mudra (gestures,) kriya (cleansing techniques)

- Contra-indications to the use of the above techniques
- How to adapt and modify the techniques for an individual's specific therapy needs
- How to develop practices prescribed in ways appropriate to the specific individual
- The application of support materials to help the client practice at home – materials could include written instructions, audio recording, etc
- How to encourage and motivate the client to practice regularly; including appropriate aftercare

### **Cautions and contra-indications to yoga therapy**

- The reasons for caution in proposing or excluding yoga practices for clients with major medical conditions or when such conditions are suspected
- The reasons for some caution in apparently minor complaints
- The types of contra-indications including: medical emergencies where yoga therapy should not be practiced and where the client should be immediately referred to a medical practitioner, acute situations where yoga therapy should be temporarily stopped and extreme care situations where yoga therapy can only be practiced in a greatly modified way

### **Study of mental / emotional health and illness**

- Understanding how yoga affects mood and vice versa
- Recognising common mental/emotional health problems in ourselves
- Yoga and depression, anxiety, psychosis
- Looking at old, negative thought patterns that may affect mood
- Specific yoga practices to help common mood disorders
- Emotion and the disease process
- Yoga therapy for trauma and addiction
- Western psychological approaches and how they overlap with yoga psychology

## **Study of the pre- and post-natal period**

- Principles of pre- and post-natal yoga
- Beneficial exercises, modifications
- Contra-indicated exercises
- Overview of menstrual health and fertility

## **Study of professional issues**

- Confidentiality
- Consent
- Documentation
- Professional boundaries
- Scope of professional practice
- Research

## **Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology**

- The anatomy, physiology and pathology relevant to the medical conditions identified in a client to ensure appropriate yoga practice is proposed
- The structure and function of the following systems of the body: cardiovascular system, respiratory system, blood, lymph and immune system, nervous system, endocrine system, reproductive systems, musculoskeletal system, digestive system, urinary and integumentary system
- The pathology of commonly occurring ailments within and between each system including: the possible causes of disease, methods of diagnosis that are used, exacerbating and relieving factors, medical treatments and management

## **Study of Pain Management**

Acknowledge, understand, transform and transcend pain using yoga practice

- Defining pain
- Nociceptive, neuropathic
- Causes of pain
- Assessing pain
- Management of pain
- Pain threshold and how yoga can manipulate it
- Effect of pain on everyday life
- Somatisation of emotional pain into the physical
- Yoga practices that can help

## Study and Practical Use of Subtle Energetic Models

- Shariras
- Koshas
- Nadis
- Meridians

## Review of Ayurveda

- Samkhya Philosophy
- Gunas and Doshas applied to practice
- Seasonal / lifestyle guidelines

## DSY Bodywork including Shiatsu Massage Techniques

- Developing confidence in hands on assessment
- Coaching and application in yoga teaching and therapy
- First Aid pressure points
- Exercises to develop prana / Qi energy awareness and intuition including Qi Gong

## Assessment

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### Coursework and assessment will be in the form of:

- A self-reflective yoga therapy programme - including a self-reflective diary or journal
- Case history preliminary exercise: Take 3 case history notes from friends and family
- Thirty individual yoga therapy case studies. This can be seeing 5 different people for 6 separate sessions each or 6 people for 5 sessions each, etc - with a write up of 750-1000 words for each client including a self-reflective overview
- Five group therapy sessions (i.e. small group classes of 3-6 students for 1-1.5 hours). This should be one course of a minimum of 5 classes with the focus being on one specific condition (e.g. back pain; breathing conditions; etc - discuss your chosen condition with your mentor). Include individual class plans and a write up of 750-1000 words for the group including a self-reflective overview
- Practical observation of one-to-one skills by the tutors
- A 3000-4000-word project on a subject of special interest to the student, potentially involving research. You will receive further information about this during the course.

Each student will be assigned a personal mentor from the teaching team according to the particular area of interest of the student. The mentor, along with the course director and the rest of the teaching team, will be available during the course for support and advise on case-studies, the project and any other course issues. PLEASE NOTE: If you do not request input from your mentor or any of the teaching team, they will presume that you are proceeding well on the course. Therefore, if you have any questions about any aspect of the course work, do be in touch.

# Suggested Reading List

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PLEASE NOTE - you are not expected to own or read all of the following books. They are simply a suggestion and there are many more books available. Specific ones will be recommended during the course.

## Yoga Therapy & Restorative Yoga

- *Relax & Renew - Restful Yoga for Stressful Times*. Lasater, Judith. (Rodmell Press)
- *The Art of Survival - A Guide to Yoga Therapy* Gharote, M.L. and Lockhart, M (Unwin Paperbacks)
- *The Healing Power of Yoga*. Friedeberger, Julie. (New Age Books)
- *Yoga for Common Ailments*. Nagendra, Nagarathna & Monroe. (Gaia. Note: out of print but available second-hand from Amazon)
- *Yoga Therapy - A Guide to the Therapeutic use of Yoga and Ayurveda for Health and Fitness*. Mohan, AG. Mohan, I. (Shambala 2004)

## Yoga Practice (Asana, Pranayama, etc.)

- *The Heart of Yoga - Developing a personal Practice* Desikachar, TKV. (Inner Traditions International 1999)
- *The Spirit and Practice of Moving into Stillness*. Schiffmann, Erich. (Pocket Books)
- *Yoga mind, body & Spirit* Farhi, Donna. (new Leaf)

## Meditation & Yoga Nidra

- *Yoga Nidra - The Meditative Heart of Yoga*. Miller, Richard. (Sounds True)

## Yoga Philosophy

- *Indian Philosophy - A Very Short Introduction*. Hamilton, Sue. (Oxford)
- *The Living Gita*. Sri Swami Satchidananda. (Integral Yoga Publications)
- *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Sri Swami Satchidananda. (Integral Yoga Publications)

## Pregnancy & Postnatal Yoga

- *Mother's Breath* Dinsmore-Tuli, Uma. (Sitaram)
- *The baby making bible*. Cannon, Emma. (Macmillan)
- *Wild Genie*. Pope, Alexandra. (New Generation Publishing)
- *Yoga for Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond*. Freedman, Françoise. (Dorling Kindersley)
- *Yoga for Pregnancy*. Freedman, Françoise and Hall, Doriel. (Cassell Illustrated)
- *Yoga for Pregnancy*. Teasdill, Wendy. (Gaia)

## Anatomy, Physiology & Pathology

- *Anatomy & Physiology*. Ross & Wilson. (Churchill/ Livingstone)
- *Job's Body* Juhan, Deane. (Station Hill Press)
- *Principles of Anatomy & Physiology*. Grabowski & Tortora. (Wiley International)
- *Professional Guide to Pathophysiology* (Professional Guide Series - Springhouse 2006) *British National Formulary and A concise medical dictionary*
- *Symptoms in the Pharmacy: A Guide to the Management of Common Illness*. Blenkinsopp, A, Paxton, P. (Wiley 2008)
- *The Key Muscles of Hatha Yoga*. Long, Ray. ([www.BandhaYoga.com](http://www.BandhaYoga.com))
- *Understanding Diseases*. Ball, John. (Daniel)

### **Therapeutic Relationship & Professionalism**

- *Complex PTSD* Walker, Pete. (Createspace)
- *Meditations from the Mat*. Gates, Rolf & Kenison, Katrina. (Anchor Books)
- *Radical Acceptance* Brach, Tara. (Bantam)
- *The Therapeutic Relationship in Complementary Health Care*. Mitchell, A. & Cormack, M. (Churchill Livingstone)
- *The Zen Path Through Depression*. Martin, Philip. (Harper Collins)
- *Understanding the Consultation: Evidence, Theory and Practice*. Usherwood T. (Open University Press 1999)
- *Waking the Tiger, Healing Trauma*. Levine, Peter. (North Atlantic Books)

### **Shiatsu and Meridian Theory**

- *Acupressure for Common Ailments*. Jarmey, Chris. (Gaia)
- *Dragon Rises, Red Bird Flies: Psychology & Chinese Medicine* Hammer, L. (Eastland Press 1996)
- *Shiatsu: A Practical Introduction*. Cowmeadow, Oliver. (Daniel)

### **Ayurveda**

- *Ayurveda Revolutionised: Integrating Ancient and Modern Ayurveda* Blank, L & Tarabilda, E F. (Hardcover 1998)
- *Ayurveda, Health, Life & Longevity* Svoboda, Robert. (Ayurvedic Institute)
- *Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy*. Stiles, Mukunda. (Lotus Press)
- *The Book of Ayurveda*. Morrison, Judith. (Gaia 2001)

### **General Interest**

- *The Body Keeps the Score. Mind, brain and body in the transformation of trauma*. Bessel Van Der Kolk. (Penguin Random House UK. 2014)
- *CosMos*. Laszlo, Ervin & Corrivan, Jude. (Hay House)
- *Mudras - Yoga in your Hands*. Hirschi, G. (Weiser Books 2000)
- *The Elements of the Chakras*. Ozaniec, O. (Element 1993)
- *Yoga as Medicine: the Yogic Prescription for Health and Healing*. McCall, Timothy. (Bantam Books)