



The Devon School of Yoga

Spring 2026 Yoga Foundation Course

Syllabus

COURSE DATES

- 28 February – 1 March
- 21-22 March
- 25-26 April
- 15-17 May (Residential)
- 6-7 June

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

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Introduction

The Devon School of Yoga, established in 1989 brings together classes, workshops, retreats, and training courses under one umbrella, covering all aspects of the subject. 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 practices are based on the Dr. Pillai system of Kriyas, Pranayama, and Meditation, and its spiritual energy source comes through 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 practice 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, just as a mountain top can be reached by different routes
- 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
- Standards are derived and underpinned from three fundamental Yoga principles:
 - Ahimsa (non-injury)
 - Satya (truthfulness)
 - Savdyaya (self-study)
- The ratio of students to a teacher will not exceed 16

Course Hours

Tutor-led: 68 hours of theory and practice
Home practice: 80 hours, suggested guide, to include a weekly class

Primary Course Aims

1. To enable students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective personal practice.
2. To provide a basis for the continued study of the philosophy, principles, and practices of holistic yoga.

Secondary Course Aims

1. To introduce the key principles and subjects of yoga.
2. To introduce students to a variety of teaching styles.
3. To allow time for focussed attention, especially via residential.
4. As a stepping-stone to a deeper and more established practice and/or training course.
5. To provide an opportunity to mix with like-minded people.

Prerequisites

Other than no absolute beginners, there are no prerequisites for the course beyond enthusiasm and commitment to self-development and to enhancing awareness.

Practical Content

Preliminary exercises

Standing

Shaking out – rag doll
Rotations (several stages)
Swinging and twisting
The skier (two stages)
Stand erect with posture awareness (two stages)
Upward stretch
Backward and forward stretch
Palms to ground (two stages)
Forward bend with arm raised and twist
Forward bend single leg raise
Full circle stretches
Squat to standing
Buttocks to heels
Indian squat (two stages)
Side stretches (two stages)
Shoulder stretches (six stages)

Kneeling

Kneeling toe stretch (two stages)
Spine awareness on all fours
Spine flex (cat)
Alternate arm and leg extension (tiger)
Tiger pose leading to hip opening
Child pose to relax (two stages)
Back stretch, buttocks on heels to upward facing dog
Walking dog
Downward facing dog extensions (two stages)
The kneeling sequence

Sitting

Spine rotation
Butterfly (two stages)
Preliminary to lotus (four stages)
Sitting to and fro
Back and forth loin stretch (two stages)
Stomach strengthener
Simple twist (two stages)
Cross leg forward stretch and twist
Navasana preliminary (two stages)

Lying on front (prone)

Arm and leg diagonal straight stretch (two stages)
Front body lift (three stages)
Hands clasped behind back, front body lift
Alternate thigh lift
Both thighs together lift
Alternate leg raises with straight legs (two stages)
Rock a relaxed body
Lie still and relax

Lying on back (supine)

Spine rocking – several variations
Thigh stretch (two stages)
Cycling (two stages)
Alternate leg raises with straight legs
Semi – supine twist (three stages)

Asanas

Sanskrit name

English name

Standing asanas

Parivrtta-parsvakonasana	Revolving side angle posture
Parivrtta-trikonasana	Revolving triangle posture
Parsvakonasana	Extended side angle posture
Parsvottanasana	Intense side stretch posture
Prasarita-padottanasana	Wide leg forward fold
Tadasana	Mountain posture
Trikonasana	Triangle posture
Utkatasana	Squat posture
Uttanasana	Intense stretch posture
Virabhadrasana	Warrior posture

Balancing asanas

Ardha-chandrasana	Half-moon posture
Parivrtta-ardha-chandrasana	Revolving half-moon
Garudasana	Eagle posture
Vrksasana	Tree posture

Sitting asanas

Ardha-matsyendrasana	Half spinal twist
Navasana	Seated boat posture
Bhadrasana (Baddha-konasana)	Thigh stretch posture
Dandasana	Staff posture
Janushirshasana	Head-to-knee posture
Mahamudra	Great seal posture
Parvatasana	Seated mountain posture
Paschimottansasana	Back stretch posture
Purvottanasana	Front stretch posture (inclined plane)
Siddhasana	Adept posture
Sukhasana	Comfortable posture
Yogamudra	Yoga seal

Kneeling asanas

Balasana	Child posture
Gomukhasana	Cowface posture
Marjarasana	Cat posture (upward and downward)
Simhasana	Lion posture
Vajrasana	Diamond posture

Inverted asanas

Halasana	Plough posture
Sarvangasana	Shoulder-stand
Viparitarani	Half shoulder-stand

Prone asanas

Adhomukha-svanasana	Downward-facing dog posture
Bhujangasana	Cobra posture
Naukasana	Boat posture
Shalabhasana	Locust posture
Urdhvamukha-svanasana	Upward-facing dog posture

Supine asanas

Jathara-parivartanasana	Lying twist
Matsyasana	Fish posture
Merudandasana	Lying on back posture
Pavanamuktasana (Apanasana)	Air release posture
Setu-bandhasana	Bridge posture
Supta-hasta-padangusthasana	Supine hand-to-big toe posture
Shavasana	Corpse posture

Dynamic Sequence

Surya-Namaskara	Salute to the sun
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Mudras and Bandhas

Chin mudra
Jnana mudra
Maha mudra
Prana mudra
Yoga mudra
Jalamdhara bandha
Mula bandha
Uddiyana bandha

Pranayamas

Kapalabhati
Complete yoga breath
Alternate nostril breathing
Ujjayi

Kriyas

Agnisara (fire cleansing)
Brahmamudra (vata sara - air cleansing)
Kapalabhati (skull shining)
Taramgaka (abdominal wave motion)

Mantra – japa (repetition)

Relaxation Techniques

Yoga Nidra
Tense & Relax

Basic Meditations

Breath
Mantra (silent)

Theoretical Content

Philosophy

Students will be introduced to some of the principal texts of yoga philosophy, including the major Upanisads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutra and Hatha Yoga Pradapika. The course will include the study of key concepts such as:

- Ashtanga Yoga – the eight-fold path
- The sthula, suksma and karana sarira (gross, subtle and casual bodies)
- Pancha Koshas (five sheaths)
- Nadis and chakras (subtle channels and centres)
- Prana (vital force)
- Kundalini (coiled serpent power)
- Tri gunas (three strands or aspects of phenomenal reality)
- Kleshas (afflictions)
- Jivatman and paramatman (individual self and supreme self)

Anatomy, physiology, and pathology

An introduction to basic Anatomy & Physiology from the chemical level to body systems, including the summaries of the following systems:

- Muscular
- Skeletal
- Respiratory

Related studies

Students will be introduced to a number of ideas and techniques which are complementary to yoga. These include:

- Dietary Guidelines
- Self-massage techniques

Quality Issues

Quality control is primarily the responsibility of the School Director and the course tutor. Attention is paid to student safety matters. Feedback is welcomed verbally and via a form. The teachers on the course will be properly qualified, insured, and monitored through evaluation.

Upon completion of the Foundation Course, a certificate is awarded and students are eligible to apply for the Devon School of Yoga Teacher Training Course.

Indicative Reading List

As there are numerous yoga books these days, the following list is only a guideline, and it is not necessary to purchase or read everything on this list.

On the second weekend of the course (the first residential), a school library will run, and students may borrow books until the last weekend of the course (the last residential). The suggested donation for borrowing books is £1 per book. Books are to be returned on the last weekend of the course. All monies collected go towards purchasing new books to increase the school library and enhance sharing.

Yoga Texts

Bhagavad Gita, Satchidananda Swami, The Living Gita (Integral Yoga Publications)
Hatha Yoga Pradipika of Svamarama, Devananda Vishnu Swami, Hatha Yoga
Yoga Sutras of Patañjali, Satchidananda Swami, (Integral Yoga Publications)
Various other translations are available for your choice.

Yoga General

Burley Mikel, Hatha Yoga (Motilal Banarsidass)
Desikachar T.K.V. The Heart of Yoga (Inner Traditions International)
Devereux Godfrey, Dynamic Yoga (Thorsons)
Farhi, Donna, Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit, A Return to Wholeness (Newleaf)
Feuerstein George, Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga (Unwin)
Hewitt James, The Complete Yoga Book (Century Paperbacks)
Iyengar B.K.S., Light on Pranayama (Aquarian)
Johari Harish, Chakras: Energy Centres of Transformation (Destiny)
Mehta Shyam & Mira Silva, Yoga The Iyengar Way (D K Books)
Monro Robin, Yoga For Common Ailments (Gaia)
Radha Swami, Hatha Yoga: The Hidden Language (Shambhala)
Radha Swami, Mantras (Timeless)
Satchidananda, To Know Yourself (Integral)
Satyandanda Swami, Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha (Bihar School)
Schiffmann Erich, The Spirit and Practice of Moving Into Stillness (Pocket Books)
Swenson David, Ashtanga Yoga “The Practice manual”(Ashtanga Yoga Productions)

Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology

A concise medical dictionary of your choice
Blakey Paul, The Muscle Book (Bibliotek Books Ltd)
Elson & Kapit, The Anatomy Colouring Book (Harper & Row)
Jarmey Chris, The concise book of muscles (Lotus publishing)
Ross and Wilson, Anatomy and physiology (Churchill / Livingstone)
Tucker Louise, Introduction to Anatomy and Physiology (Holistic Therapy books)