



ashtanga yoga dublin

teacher training e-book
2020/21

200hour Teacher Training Syllabus

Introduction:

On our Teacher Training course, we will share with you our combined experience of more than forty years of practice and study of all aspects of Yoga. We believe that to teach well, we need to be rooted in the traditions of Yoga, to understand from personal experience why we do Yoga, exactly what it is, and how to do it correctly – we have to live and experience it ourselves to be able to pass it on to someone else.

Training yoga teachers is something we are passionate about because we believe that being a Yoga teacher is a way to genuinely contribute to making the world a better place, by helping people to fulfil their potential, and to be as happy and healthy as they can be.

Our teacher training is focused in three main areas:

- (i) We help you to develop a strong personal practice of postures, breathing techniques and meditation, underscored with practice supportive lifestyle and nutrition principles from Ayurveda.
- (ii) We teach you a broad syllabus of postures in great detail, including anatomy, physiology, alignment, benefits, contraindications and modifications, as well as the practical steps of teaching postures to students of all levels. We show you how to design, sequence and teach different types of classes – from gentle to more dynamic. We teach you how to incorporate Ayurveda, structuring classes to balance different constitutions.
- (iii) We give you a solid foundation in the philosophy of Yoga from the classical texts of Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Bhagavad Gita and Hatha Pradipika, so that you understand not just the what, but most importantly the why and the how of Yoga.

Additionally, you will learn the principles of Ayurveda, Subtle Anatomy, Chakras and Nadis, Sanskrit chanting, and the history of Yoga.

The 1-year course is structured into 3 terms, and each term is comprised of 2 Modules. A module consists of Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday, and bi-weekly attendance at classes throughout the term (these can all be taken online). The course can be taken both in person and online and full details are on this page.

This course is designed to prepare you to teach from the heart, so you can give your students not just another exercise programme but a practice for body, mind and spirit that can genuinely help them to cope with the pressures and stresses of modern life. So, if you would like to learn to teach authentic Yoga in a way that will encourage and support your students in a truly transformative way, we would love to hear from you. Contact us if you have any questions or if you would like more information.

As part of the course material you will receive notes that you can download, as well as access to a library of video resources detailing the postures. There will be some written assignments throughout the course and a final practical assessment at the end.

Course Content and Structure

Key Subjects:

- I. **Yogāsana**
- II. **Prānāyāma**
- III. **Yoga Philosophy**
- IV. **Anatomy and Physiology**
- V. **Ayurveda**
- VI. **Meditation and Relaxation Techniques**

I. Yogāsana:

Each trainee will be expected to understand the postures through personal experience in their own practice, which will be monitored and assessed at ongoing weekly classes throughout the training, as well as from the information in the classical and modern texts and the training course. We can only share what we have experienced ourselves and the emphasis throughout the training will be on understanding that a Yoga teacher is always working on their own development through personal practice and study.

The teaching of the postures will include:

- (i) Anatomy: musculature, joint action, factors inhibiting movement, alignment, modifications, common errors
- (ii) Benefits: Physiological and psychological
- (iii) Breath co-ordination
- (iv) Contraindications
- (v) Directions - guiding a student safely into and out of a pose

Table 1: List of postures in the syllabus

Sun Salutation	Standing Āsana	Seated Āsana	Back-bending Āsana	Inverted Āsana	Meditative Āsana	Relaxative Āsana
Surya namaskara A Surya namaskara B	Pādānguṣṭhāsana Pādā Hastāsana Utthita and Parvṛtta Trikonāsana Utthita and Parvṛtta Parśvakonāsana Prasarita Padottānāsana A - D Parśvottānāsana	Paścimottānāsana Purvottānāsana Ardha Baddha Padma Paścimottānāsana Triang Mukhaikapāda Paścimottānāsana	Śalabhāsana A + B Dhanurāsana Urdhva Dhanurāsana Bhujangāsana Sarpāsana Uṣṭrāsana Setu Bandha	Salamba Sarvāṅgāsana Halāsana Karna Pīdāsana Urdhva Padmāsana Pīndāsana Matsyāsana Uttānā Pādāsana Śīrśāsana	Sukhāsana Siddhāsana Padmāsana	Śavāsana Supta baddha konāsana Viparita karāni
	Utthita Hasta Pādānguṣṭhāsana Vṛkāsana Ardha Baddha Padmottānāsan Utkatāsana Vīrabhadrāsana I, II	Janu Śīrśāsana A Parvṛtta Janu Śīrśāsana Janu Śīrśāsana B Janu Śīrśāsana C				
	Ardha Candrāsana Vīrabhadrāsana III Garuḍāsana	Mariciāsana A, B, C and D, Ardha Matsyendrāsana Bharadvajāsana Gomukhāsana Navāsana				

II. Prānāyāma

Prānāyāma practices are very profound, and it is vital that one understands the effect and usage of the different practices, their properties in relation to the different doshas and any contraindications to their practice. Each trainee will be taught a personalised Prānāyāma practice, including Kriyās, preparatory breathing techniques and classical Prānāyāma. Again, emphasis will be placed on personal practice and experience to inform the trainees capacity to teach the techniques appropriately at a level suitable to beginners.

The capacity to practice prānāyāma is greatly enhanced as the system is cleansed and purified of toxins. The Sanskrit term “ama” is used in Ayurveda to describe a build-up of toxins that results through incomplete or inefficient digestion, assimilation and elimination. This in turn leads to the clogging of the channels in the body, impacting circulation, respiration, nervous and endocrine function resulting in a constitutively ‘agitated’ physiology. High ama can manifest as a poor quality of life, often involving high stress, sleeplessness, low energy, feelings of insecurity, nervous anxiety or depression, and if not addressed can ultimately lead to serious illness.

Preparatory Kriyas, or cleansing practices help to remove toxicity, improve energy flow and relax the respiratory centre of the brain making prānāyāma even more effective. Thus, our syllabus, which follows the teaching of Swami Kuvalayananda and the Kaivalyadham Institute, as prescribed in the traditional text, Hatha Pradīpika, includes 5 preparatory cleansing techniques (2 for the digestive and excretory systems, 2 for the lung and upper respiratory tract and 1 for the musculature of the shoulders and neck) as well as the classical prānāyāmas.

Table 2: List of Cleansing and Breathing Practices

Kriyas:	Prānāyāma
Uddiyana Bandha	Kapālabhati
Agni Sara	Nadi Śodhana / Anuloma Viloma
Simha Mudra	Ujjayi
Jivha Bandha	Surya Bhedana and Chandra Bhedana
Brahma Mudra	Sītali / Sitkāri
	Bhastrikā

III. Yoga Philosophy

Yoga states that each individual should be happy and healthy, should understand themselves completely, and should live free of suffering. This is a tall order, and for most people today the levels of stress, unhappiness, confusion and suffering are reaching unsustainable levels.

Quality of life, the understanding of what is important in life, and taking the appropriate steps to preserve our health and well-being is what yoga is all about. There are many classical and traditional Yoga texts which give clear guidance and explanations of the causes of suffering that lead to unhappiness and illness; in particular, they show the common misperceptions and lack of understanding of our own mental and emotional habits and conditioning that lead us to make lifestyle and behavioural choices which are not conducive to our health and happiness.

We draw on the wisdom of three texts in particular: Pātañjali Yoga Sutra, Bhagavad Gītā, and Hatha Pradīpikā.

The Yoga Sutra give us a precise definition of what Yoga is, how the practices are to be performed (General Protocol and Specific Protocol) and the results that we can anticipate if we follow the correct 'how to' instructions.

The Gītā gives us insight into how to approach day to day life in a Yogic way, such that we can maximise our enjoyment of life, fulfilling our potential and thriving physically, emotionally and mentally.

Hatha Pradīpikā provides insight into specific postures and breathing practices, giving techniques and benefits, and in particular demonstrating the close link between Yoga and Ayurveda.

We draw on the texts to elucidate the following themes:

1. Understanding your own nature - what it means to be a Human Being
2. The causes of unhappiness
3. Removing the obstacles – techniques to re-establish balance
4. The 8 Limbs of Yoga
5. Lifestyle and behaviour conducive to health and happiness
6. Quietening the mind – the inward journey to peace

Each weekend we will draw on specific sections of the texts which we will explore fully in the context of our Yoga practices and of day to day life.

TABLE 3: Yoga Philosophy from the Traditional Texts

Weekend	Theme	Pātañjali Yoga Sutra	Bhagavad Gītā	Hatha Pradīpika
1	The Vedantic Complex: Body Mind, and Intellect	I: 1-4, 5 - 9	Chapter 2 selected verses	
2	The Kleśas; Causes of Suffering.	II: 1 - 11	2: 47, 48 & 62, 63.	
3	General Protocol	I: 9 – 16, 20 – 32; II: 1 - 11	Chapter 6 selected verses	Ch. I: 14 - 17
4	Specific Protocol	II: 28 – 34, 46 - 55	Ch. 6 & Ch. 18 selected verses	Ch. II selected
5	Practice Supportive Lifestyle & Behaviour	II:35 - 46	Chs, 12, 17 & 18 selected verses	Ch. II selected
6	Calming the mind	I: 33 -39; III: 1-8	Chs. 6 & 12 selected vrses	

In addition, we will use Mr. Iyengar's Light on Yoga and Light on Life.

IV. Anatomy and Physiology

Knowing our bodies and how they work is a key part of Yoga and of our developing self-awareness. We aim to introduce trainees to Anatomy and Physiology in as practical a way as possible, without blinding ourselves with science! Each trainee will be expected to have a good functional understanding of the skeletal and muscular systems, knowing the key movements at the joints, the musculature responsible for the various movements, as well as the factors that can limit movement at a particular joint. Anatomy will be learned in the context of asana and how to understand what a student might be experiencing. The physiology of respiration and circulation, the relationship between the nervous and endocrine systems, as well as digestion and elimination will also be covered, particularly from the perspective of Prānāyāma and Ayurveda.

TABLE 4: Overview of Anatomy and Physiology Themes by Weekend:

<i>Weekend No.</i>					
1	Axial + Appendicular Skeleton	Hip & Lower Limb Musculature	Orientation/Proportion Tension/Compression		
2		Shoulder & Upper Limb Musculature			
3		Back Musculature			
4		Musculature of Respiration	Heart, Lungs + Pulmonary Circulation	Arteries, Veins + Capillaries	
5	CNS and PNS	Autonomic + Somatic NS	Sympathetic and Parasympathetic		
6	Mouth to Anus	Liver and Spleen	Stomach and Pancreas	Large and Small Intestine	

V. Ayurveda

Ayurveda translates as the Science or Knowledge of life. It is one of the world's most ancient yet sophisticated mind-body health systems. It prepares us for our individual spiritual path by guiding us towards optimum health.

Yoga and Ayurveda are sister sciences and complement each other so perfectly, that it does not make sense to practice one without the other. This teacher training course includes a comprehensive introduction to Ayurveda and its relationship with Yoga.

We have chosen a different theme for each weekend to provide you with a foundation in some of the key principles that will prove invaluable to you in deepening your own yoga practice as well as equipping you to teach classes that incorporate some of these fundamental principles.

Table 4: Overview of Ayurveda Themes by weekend:

Weekend 1	Introduction to Ayurveda: 5 elements, 3 doshas (vata, pitta, kapha), prakruti (Innate Constitution) & vikruti (Doshic Imbalance)
Weekend 2	Dinacharya & Ritucharya (Daily and Seasonal Routines)
Weekend 3	Agni (Digestion) and Ama (Toxins)
Weekend 4	7 dhatus (Tissues of the body) and Ojas (Immunity)
Weekend 5	Sub-doshas (5 aspects of each dosha)
Weekend 6	Ayurveda and Food

VI. Meditation and Relaxation Techniques

Meditation:

The culmination of all Yoga and Ayurveda practices is Meditation. The path of Yoga takes us from the outside world that we experience through the senses, through the body, through the emotional aspect of mind, and as a last step, through and past the thinking mind itself till we arrive at the very centre of our awareness that is our most peaceful, most fundamental self.

On the course, we utilise a pratyahara practice called Antar Mouna, or inner silence to enhance our ability to let go of the sensory and mental distractions that prevent us experiencing this peaceful Self more regularly. We also explore other techniques from Pātañjali to help this process of quietening, as well as techniques such as Anapana Sati, from the Buddhist tradition and other breath-focused meditation practices.

It is worth noting that the practices that we tend to call meditation are more aptly concentration techniques which lead us towards the stage of full absorption of attention, where the thinking process is let go of completely, and the state of inner peace arises.

In effect, all the other practices we do, prepare us to be able to sit quietly, in comfort, and to let go. That is the journey of Yoga, back to our deepest Self, to knowing who we really are, and it is this that all Yoga teaching, and all Yoga teachers should be guiding us towards.

Relaxation:

Relaxation in Yoga is more than just a matter of lying down and falling asleep. It is a means of releasing physical tension, emotional agitation, and mental stress. Through a practice called Yoga Nidra, we teach trainees how to relax at a deep level and how to guide others into deep relaxation.

The syllabus includes variations of guided relaxations so that the trainees have the capacity to guide students into relaxation to various depths, from shorter, post-asana relaxation to longer and deeper Yoga Nidra.

Conclusion:

This course is designed to prepare you to teach from the heart, so you can give your students not just another exercise programme but a practice for body, mind and spirit that can genuinely help them to cope with the pressures and stresses of modern life. So, if you would like to learn to teach authentic Yoga in a way that will encourage and support your students in a truly transformative way, we would love to hear from you.