

**200-HOUR THERAPEUTIC  
YOGA TEACHER TRAINING  
COURSE PROSPECTUS**

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## WELCOME

We appreciate your interest in our 200-Hour Therapeutic Yoga Teacher Training, which is registered with Yoga Alliance and offered in beautiful eco-retreats worldwide.

Join us to engage, explore and immerse yourself in the alchemical teachings of yoga. You will learn to access its inspired wisdom and share its gifts with others to facilitate positive transformation, and vibrant health and well-being!

Our approach is an amazing way to combine your previous experience with yoga and life into an effective framework for health and wellness. Rather than offer standard sequencing or rigid methodologies, we offer a variety of frameworks to give yoga teachers the freedom to integrate and apply the yoga teachings in the best possible way for the student or situation.

We are already busy planning this yoga immersion for you. Each day will be full of learning, contemplations, inspiration, and practice of the yoga techniques themselves as well as teaching the techniques to others. Our vision for this teacher training program is to create positive change and transformation in our communities one affirmative breath at a time. We hope to inspire each teacher trainer to bring the practices and teachings of yoga to diverse populations, touching the lives of individuals and groups regardless of their fitness level, cultural orientation, age, health or circumstance. Yoga uplifts, shifts perspectives and invites us to be fully alive. It offers a path to vibrancy and asks us to make better choices.

In this document, you will find full details about our programs, the daily schedule, and the curriculum. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me anytime.

In the spirit of yoga,

Liz Heffernan, E-RYT 500, C-IAYT  
Soma Yoga Institute  
[www.somayogainstitute.com](http://www.somayogainstitute.com)

## OVERVIEW

This program offers students in-depth skills to explore yoga as a vehicle for vibrant health, self-transformation, and personal empowerment. Our curriculum includes a unique blend of alignment-based vinyasa flow, a solid foundation in Hatha Yoga, and 200 hours of instruction offered within a therapeutic framework.

The instruction will cover a wide range of yoga techniques including yoga postures, anatomy, relaxation, breath awareness and pranayama, as well as meditations to calm the mind, contemplations to transform limiting tendencies into life-affirming thought patterns, and the application of clear principles of alignment to create safety, balance and freedom in yoga poses. Students explore concepts from Ayurveda, the Upanishads, Patanjali and the chakra system to provide frameworks for the application of yoga as a journey towards radiant health and well-being. The asana emphasis includes level one/two alignment-based vinyasa flow sequencing as well as gentler and restorative variations.

Students are exposed to frameworks that inspire each trainee to adapt the practices, awaken their creativity and find their own authentic voice as a teacher. Graduates of this program feel empowered to teach a variety of yoga class types, including all levels of vinyasa yoga, alignment-based classes, and yoga foundations (senior, gentle, and restorative).

## SCHEDULE

Our residential programs are scheduled as an intensive immersion experience. While the program days are full on, activities are diverse and active. The days really are a wonderful mix of digesting concepts intellectually, applying the concepts experientially and diving into the practices of yoga. Within the program schedule, care is taken to ensure that students have a healthy experience both physically and mentally. We promise not to keep you sedentary for too long. Physical activity and deep relaxation are built into the program every day. There will be one day off midway through the program, plus a half day to explore the local area.

6:15 - 7:30 am: Silent meditation walk and oceanside meditation and/or gentle morning yoga, meditation, chanting and pranayama

7:30 - 8:30 am: Breakfast

8:30 - 12:30 pm: Program in session includes yoga asana practice

12:30 - 1:30 pm: Lunch

1:30 - 4:00 pm: Program in session often includes Yoga Nidra or restorative practice

4:00 - 6:00 pm: Free time to enjoy the beach, watch magical sunsets, rest or catch up on your studies

6:00 pm: Dinner

6:30 - 8:30 pm: Program in session often includes philosophy and/or group work

## CURRICULUM SPECIFICS

The overall program is designed to inspire students to dive into the practice of yoga as a life-long journey for vibrant health and wellness in body, mind and spirit. Students are encouraged to take the seat of the teacher with authenticity, loving kindness, patience and celebration of their unique gifts. The aim is for students to leave the program empowered to teach yoga. The curriculum is divided into three main sections: the techniques of yoga, the art of teaching, and yoga as a path for holistic health and radical well-being.

### TECHNIQUES

The techniques of yoga are practiced in classes, discussed on an intellectual level, emphasized through active demonstrations and digested through experiential hands-on exercises. Techniques include:

#### **Alignment Principles & Key Actions in Poses:**

##### **A Holistic Framework for Balance**

Students learn a system of understanding alignment in yoga that applies to all poses. It is based on the concept of finding sama (balance) in every pose so the teacher can skillfully instruct their students into a place of sthira (steadiness) and sukham (ease). Trainees explore this alignment through yoga postures in their own body and through observing others. This course includes physical movement and the skillful use of language to convey concepts. Trainees obtain functional understanding of a comprehensive alignment system that includes: (1) teaching the foundation, (2) moving with spinal integrity, (3) balancing muscle engagement with extension, (4) finding balance between the internal and external rotations of the arms and legs, (5) principles of twists, and (6) alignment points in the upper body.

##### **Art of Vinyasa**

Students explore the theory, principles, and practices associated with vinyasa through specifically designed vinyasa flow classes that weave together breath and movement with attention to alignment. Classes are designed for all levels and offer an opportunity for trainees to develop the sensate experience of a skillfully crafted yoga class. Trainees learn to teach sun salutation A and B and vinyasa sequences with modifications, then practice teaching using clear, precise, effective language with attention to safety.

##### **Fundamentals of Asana**

Students study poses from all categories, including seated, twist, supine, prone, backbend, hip opening and inversion asanas. Trainees learn (1) the general form of the pose, (2) English and Sanskrit names, (3) pose effects, benefits and contraindications, (4) common misalignments, (5) key actions, (6) appropriate modifications and (7) use of props. Students will have a chance to contemplate these poses in-depth through participatory discussions, active demonstrations, practice, observation, hands-on assists, and associated home study. Trainees will demonstrate

their ability to teach these poses to others while offering appropriate modifications and using props to support balanced alignment effectively.

### **Gentle and Therapeutic Yoga**

Students learn how to teach warm-ups, guided relaxations, body scans and restorative yoga practices. Students will feel confident teaching a full-length gentle and/or restorative yoga class.

### **Chanting**

Students are introduced to the practice of chanting, which is used each day as a preparation for meditation. Trainees learn the meaning of each Sanskrit chant, as well as its origin and potential use in personal practice or group classes. Trainees experience the effects of chanting on both body and mind.

### **Breath Awareness & Pranayama**

Trainees learn the techniques and practice of Dirga Pranayama (three-part breath), Ujayi Pranayama (ocean breathing), Viloma One and Two (against-the-grain step breathing), Kapalabhati (skull shining breath), Nadi Shodana (alternate nostril breathing) and Bhramari (bumblebee breath). This course includes how to teach Dirga Pranayama, Ujayi, Kapalabhati, and Nadi Shodana. Trainees will understand the effects, benefits and contraindications of each breath both intellectually and experientially.

### **Meditation**

Meditation practice is introduced to inspire trainees to develop a consistent practice. Topics include how to sit, use of timers and developing a consistent practice. A variety of techniques will be explored including self-inquiry, mindfulness, mantra, Metta, meditation on the breath and inner witness. This course includes discussion, meditation technique practice, and dharma talks.

## **ART OF TEACHING**

### **Observation, Assisting and Adjusting**

Trainees will explore safe and effective techniques for assisting and adjusting students in level one yoga poses. The course includes techniques of observation, hands-on adjustments, and verbal assists, and explores the power of intention, a methodology for assisting with breath and learning to “see” with a compassionate heart. As this part of the curriculum aligns with the holistic alignment course, the observation of postural habits and misalignments is explored in detail. Techniques are discussed and demonstrated, and trainees practice on each other, receiving direct feedback from the lead instructor.

### **Sequencing**

Through lecture, discussion, class observation and small group work, students explore the methodology and principles of sequencing. Students learn how and why to sequence, the variety of ways to approach sequencing, and how to integrate intentions to create an

experience for transformation and growth. The curriculum emphasizes sequencing for safety, preparing for peak poses, and effective ways to return to balance. Students will design sequences for a variety of classes, including beginners, all levels alignment-based flow and a gentle therapeutic class. Rather than providing a set of prescribed sequences, this methodology emphasizes creativity, self-inquiry and the art of self-expression. Students will be able to create safe, well-sequenced yoga classes with fresh, diverse themes and intentions that uniquely express their authenticity as a teacher.

### **Teaching Efficacy**

Through discussion, practice and direct feedback, trainees learn to: (1) use active and passive language appropriately, (2) regulate voice tone and quality, and (3) reflect on habitual speech patterns. Tone, pacing and timing in the class setting are analyzed with regard to the primary aim of the session. Qualities of a yoga teacher are also explored. Trainees learn to cue actions in poses with clear direct language. Through the skillful use of passive language, trainees will be able to invite their students into reflective experiences. Trainees will understand how to match their teaching pace with their overall intention while taking into consideration the time allocated for the class session.

### **Ethical Implications of Taking the Seat of the Teacher - Using the Yamas and Niyamas as our Guide**

Using the yamas and niyamas from Patanjali, trainees practice self-inquiry and take part in small group discussions on common ethical situations that arise when taking the seat of the teacher. Discussion topics include the student/teacher relationship, power differentials, relationships with colleagues, acharya model vs guru model, staying within our scope of practice, training and competence, the influence of our language, creating healthy boundaries and creating a space for transformation that empowers students. Trainees use their version of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras as a reference. Trainees will recognize the process of svadhyaya (self-reflection) as an important tool for the yoga teacher to use throughout their lifetime to refine their relationship with themselves and others.

### **The Conscious Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback**

Feedback plays an essential role in the learning and teaching process. Unconscious feedback can often leave impressions that may hinder our learning process or sense of self-worth. Superficial feedback is often too bland to help us and/or our students develop our skills, embrace our strengths and transform our weaknesses. In this section, we consciously practice the art of giving and receiving feedback to cultivate a supportive learning community. This empowers us to develop effective teaching techniques while embracing our authentic self.

### **Practice Teaching & Observation**

Students are given time to practice teaching yoga asana, pranayama, and relaxation. Teaching practice sessions begin on day one. At first, these sessions include expert guidance and direction but develop into an integrating experience where each student uses the skills and knowledge gained from significant practice throughout the program.

## **Business of Yoga**

Business is an essential part of becoming a successful yoga instructor. Trainees learn how to get started as a yoga teacher. Through discussion and hands-on work, topics covered include (1) tips on how to get hired at studios, (2) what to expect from a yoga teacher's employment contract, (3) how to locate potential places to teach, and (4) specialization and finding your niche. Trainees craft their personal yoga bio and create a plan for the next steps to develop their career.

## **Yoga as a Path for Holistic Health & Radical Well-being**

### **Therapeutic Frameworks**

Students are introduced to therapeutic frameworks and concepts from yoga source texts, which provide understanding on how the path of yoga serves as a holistic journey for mind-body health and healing. Students explore key models of thought including:

(1) Pancha Maya Kosha Model. The Kosha model dates to the period of the Upanishads (~800 BCE), understanding the human as a multi-dimensional and inter-connected being. The layers discussed include the physical body, the breath or energy body, the layer of the mind and emotions, our wisdom consciousness and the seat of wholeness. Students contemplate yoga techniques to harmonize each layer.

(2) Ayurveda. Students are introduced to key concepts in Ayurveda and how to apply appropriate yoga practices to bring balance to the individual.

(3) Patanjali Yoga Sutras. This is often one of the most celebrated sections of the curriculum. Trainees are empowered with the skills and techniques needed to access the ancient philosophical text of yoga, bringing the wisdom alive with relevant, present-day insight.

### **Experiential Anatomy & Physiology for Yoga Teachers**

A practical and broad understanding of human anatomy and physiology is explored within the context of yoga asana. The emphasis is on experiential learning and hands-on application. The course will build both intellectual and sensate awareness of specific anatomical structures and physiological processes of the body through lecture, touch, movement, and exploration of yoga postures. Trainees will hear it, feel it, move it and apply their knowledge as an embodied practitioner to confidently teach yoga with attention to safety. Anatomy will be applied as we explore yoga asana, contraindications, and balanced alignment. The curriculum parallels discussions in the holistic alignment course and the fundamental asana course.

### **Energy Body Anatomy**

This section of the program provides an overview of the anatomy of the energy body. Just as the physical body has an anatomy, the energy body also has unique characteristics. Through lectures and experiential exercises, trainees become familiar with how prana (life force) moves through us. Trainees explore the attributes and qualities of the nadis, pranavayus, and chakras.

### **Introduction to Yoga's History and Philosophy**

Trainees develop an introductory understanding of the philosophical and psychological foundations of yoga. Through lecture, discussion, and assigned readings, trainees contemplate the true meaning of yoga and understand its evolution from the Indus Valley to the modern age. Trainees will understand yoga as a method for self-inquiry that deepens one's connection to the source of all things.

*Please note: This program is approved by Yoga Alliance and graduates are eligible to register with Yoga Alliance as a Registered Yoga Teacher at the 200-hour level (RYT-200). The therapeutic perspective and curricular components of this program are based on Liz's registration as a Certified Yoga Therapist with the International Association of Yoga Therapists (C-IAYT) and not derived from her status as an E-RYT 500 with Yoga Alliance Registry. The Yoga Alliance Registry certifies yoga teachers but not yoga therapists.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Is prior yoga teacher training required?**

No. Prior yoga teacher training is not required. This is the first level of a yoga teacher training program known as a 200-hour level training program.

### **I am not sure if I want to (or if I am ready to teach yoga) but I am very interested in deepening my own understanding of this amazing path. Am I still allowed to take this training?**

Yes, absolutely! Many students immerse themselves in yoga teacher training to deepen their own knowledge and understanding.

### **How accomplished with the yoga poses do I need to be to qualify for this program?**

All students, regardless of their physical ability or proficiency in the poses are encouraged to attend. Yoga is a journey and not a destination. All students are encouraged to begin where they are and make modifications to create health and safety in their body and mind. In fact, a diversity of abilities and body types in the group provides a rich, fertile ground for the teaching-learning environment. Please note: if you have medical considerations, please check with your healthcare professional about the practicality and safety of attending an active yoga-intensive course.

### **When this is complete are you considered a certified yoga teacher or does that require additional hours?**

Upon completion of the program, you will be a certified 200-hour level yoga instructor through Soma Yoga Institute. This teacher training program is also a Registered Yoga School (RYS) with Yoga Alliance (YA). Once a student completes this training program they will be eligible to register with Yoga Alliance as a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) at the 200-hour level (RYT-200). Registration with the Yoga Alliance is not mandatory although it is encouraged for those who wish to teach yoga.

### **What is Yoga Alliance?**

Yoga Alliance is a national non-profit organization that “exists to confer credibility on qualified yoga teachers and schools so the public can have confidence in the quality of yoga instruction they receive”. Due to the popularity and growth of yoga in the United States, the need for competent teachers and safe classes is apparent. Yoga Alliance maintains a registry of yoga teachers whose training and experience meet their minimum standards, along with a registry of yoga schools whose curriculum meets their minimum standards. The Yoga Alliance Registry certifies yoga teachers but not yoga therapists. For more information visit: <http://yogaalliance.org/>

### **I have already taken a 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training. Is there a benefit in taking this program?**

Yes, without a doubt. We have yoga teachers and yoga students who attend this program and have already taken another 200-hour YTT. These students consistently report that they can absorb the material on a much deeper level than the first time through. Our most recent graduate told us: "this was the best YTT I had attended (and, I have done many). Students became confident teachers. After this training for only 200 hours, many students taught classes that were professional, classes as good as many I have attended. The quality of the yoga instruction was outstanding; the alignment was beautifully taught. The instruction in meditation got me started to meditate successfully after years of trying. The kula (community) we created was stellar." - Sandy G., Pennsylvania

### **How intense is this training? Is it life changing?**

Speaking personally, yoga has changed my life in tremendous and wonderful ways. What I have found is the more we are able to open into the present moment, reflect with loving kindness on our challenges and shortcomings, and awaken to our innate and unique gifts, the more life-changing this experience becomes. If you attend the program with the desire to learn with an open heart, the wisdom you will gain will stay with you for the rest of your life. We have many student testimonials that answer this question from a student's perspective. Please visit our website: <http://www.somayogainstitute.com/testimonials.html>

### **Is this yoga teacher training the right choice for me?**

This program is an immersion into the practices and teachings of yoga. It will deepen your experience of yoga and life itself. You will not only immerse yourself in the full experience of what yoga is but also learn to share the practices with others in a safe, effective and powerful way. The teachers offer decades of combined study and practice in yoga within a variety of disciplines and have the unique ability to create a cohesive group atmosphere optimal for learning.

### **What type of yoga am I qualified to teach when I graduate?**

Our program provides a strong foundation in yoga and teaches frameworks for sequencing and alignment that allow our students to modify their classes according to the populations they serve. Working in yoga studios, community centers, universities, healthcare facilities and privately, our graduates teach a variety of classes, including all level flow classes, yoga for

beginners, level 1 and 2 classes, and gentle or restorative yoga. Some graduates specialize according to their specific interests and offer classes for specific groups such as Yoga for Seniors and Yoga for Anxiety.

**I am interested in becoming a yoga therapist, how will this program help me?**

This program is a great first step towards a 1000-hour Yoga Therapist certification.

The International Association of Yoga Therapists accredits yoga therapy programs and this 200-hour YTT will count towards the entrance requirements for most of these accredited schools.

It will also count as your first 200 hours towards your 1000 hours of study. For more information on IAYT, please visit <http://www.iayt.org>.

## **READING LIST**

### **REQUIRED BOOKS**

A 200-page Yoga Teacher Training manual is provided to each student. In addition, two books are required:

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Pick ONE of any several translations. Here are a few suggestions of authors: Bernard Bouanchaud, Nischala Joy Devi, Bhavani Maki, Satchidananda, or BKS Iyengar. It is preferable to have a variety of translations at hand for our discussions.

Light on Yoga - B.K.S. Iyengar

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

Bringing Yoga to Life - Donna Farhi

The Heart of Yoga - T.K.V. Desikachar

The Yoga Resource Practice Manual - Darren Rhodes (E-book)

Yoga the Iyengar Way - Silva Mehta

The Key Muscles of Yoga – Ray Long

\*A final book list will be sent out to registered students prior to the program, the above list may change.

## **PROGRAM LOCATIONS**

Soma Yoga Institute offers residential programs in powerful nature destinations worldwide where prana (life-energy) is palpable.

We partner with eco-retreat centers dedicated to creating a mindful footprint. Sourcing locally grown food, reducing laundry with periodic linen changes, recycling, and sustainable architectural design are some of the features we look for in our retreat locations. It is our belief that living close to nature free from distractions helps us to cultivate compassion for the environment and promote a conservation mindset.

Each location is unique and carefully selected to support a harmonious, tranquil and intimate home for our deep immersions. We select healing environments where each student can unwind from the hustle of modern life to access a deep level of peace within. Internet access is always available, although reducing screen time to a minimum is encouraged.

To learn more about our specific program locations, including pricing and room options, please visit us online at [www.somayogainstitute.com](http://www.somayogainstitute.com).

## **ABOUT OUR FACULTY**

Soma Yoga Institute has a world-class faculty team steeped in the traditions of yoga. Their excellence has been cultivated through decades of enduring dedication to their own practice and in-depth study, often in a variety of lineages. Each faculty holds a role in their home community as an innovator and influencer, inspiring radical change through yoga and playing a profound role in the holistic wellness movement.

As a collective vision, we offer you an unparalleled opportunity to deepen your own practice, connect with your innermost divine nature, develop your professional credentials and teach from a place of authenticity.

To learn more about each member of our dedicated faculty team, please visit us online at [www.somayogainstitute.com](http://www.somayogainstitute.com). Faculty members vary based on program location and time of year. Our website will keep you updated.

## QUOTES

### " ONE OF THE MOST PROFOUND TIMES OF MY LIFE! "

"This has been one of the most profound times in my life. I feel so loved and limitless. I now have the confidence to cultivate a strong home practice, as well as effectively spread the joy of yoga to others! I understand yoga on an entirely different level, so much deeper and most importantly I understand myself much more fully. These three weeks have truly been an amazing journey of self-discovery."

- Emily, YTT Graduate

### " TRANSFORMATIONAL "

"I was surprised by how transformational the whole process felt. All of our teachers were so phenomenal and inspiring, definitely something to strive for. There was such a wide array of information, yet we still had the opportunity to dive deep into different topics. I am blown away by everything we have learned and the impact of this journey we have been on in only three weeks. I am forever grateful."

-Sami G., Oregon

### " EXTRAORDINARY, RICH AND DIVERSE "

"The curriculum was extraordinary, rich and diverse and every aspect was integrated. The artful design of each day's schedule balanced effort and recuperation in terms of physical practice, exertion and mental, analytical, theoretical work. My philosophical understanding and appreciation of yoga has increased ten fold so now I approach yoga as a lifestyle. I feel empowered and much stronger physically than when I started this training. I feel emotionally refreshed and ready to deal with the challenges awaiting me at home."

- Gail, YTT Graduate

### " IN AWE "

"All of my apprehensions were dissolved in the first few days. My expectations were exceeded and I am still in awe at how humbly and precisely these teachings were passed on. The teachings have found a home in every cell of my being. The way this was shared with me is very profound and magical. My mind feels free, my body feels integrated and my life makes so much more sense. The way we were taught instilled amazing empowerment into each of us. I really loved the progression and how at the end I felt so many "aha" moments. My confidence has surprised me." -Jeffrey, YTT Graduate

### " LIFE CHANGING "

"This has been a life changing experience for me. The location of the training was just enough off the beaten path. The amount of support and encouragement was surreal and the teachers were more knowledgeable than I could have expected. I have grown exponentially since the first day. My talents were brought to the surface and through this ever-supportive training, I was able to find my unique voice. I now can speak with a boldness that I did not once have. I have never felt so empowered!" - Ashley, Missouri