

Mandala Yoga Ashram

Yoga Teacher Training Course (YTTC) Prospectus

September 2015 - July 2017





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1.0 Overview

The structure of the course and its teachings have been formulated by Swami Nishchalananda Saraswati and are based on his 45 years of experience of teaching yoga and training yoga teachers in India, the UK and Europe.

He is the Spiritual Director of the course as well as teaching parts of it and is supported by an experienced group of tutors: Swami Krishnapremananda who is Course Director, and other tutors: Tara Rupa, Maha Sattwa and Karunamayi (see section 2.0 below).

The course has a dual emphasis – it will develop the skills and experience required to teach yoga to others as well as emphasising and promoting the deepening of each students' personal yoga practice.

The course is almost unique in the UK as the entire course is conducted at residential retreats at Mandala Yoga Ashram, giving students an added depth and breadth of spiritual experience to enhance their teaching ability.

Practices that are not always included in yoga teacher training courses are also taught to students for both their personal practice and so that they are competent to teach them, including meditation and yoga nidra.

Tutors obviously impart their knowledge and experience during the course. There is also strong encouragement for students to practice the techniques and experience their effects and benefits for themselves.

The course will be for 2 years and includes a total of 69 days of tuition comprising of the introductory days, weekend and longer, residential retreats.

In addition to the final Ashram teaching qualification, the course will also lead to a Diploma accredited by the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY). This means that the course certificate will be recognised by the BWY and authorises successful graduates to teach yoga in public places throughout the UK and many European countries.



1.1 Aims

The aims of the course are to:

- provide a comprehensive training in many aspects of yoga so that course graduates will be capable of providing professional, responsible and high quality teaching to their students
- give students a deep understanding of the essence of traditional yogic techniques and philosophy, their practical application, and how they can be taught in a western yoga class
- motivate and inspire students to undergo a transformation in their understanding and perception of themselves, others and life in general.

1.2 Objectives

By the end of this course all students will:

- have expanded and developed their own practice of yoga so that they are fully competent and experienced in all the techniques which they will be required to impart to others
- have the knowledge and ability to teach the practices safely according to the needs of their students
- have acquired a grounding in the philosophical bases of yoga and their application to everyday life in the Western world
- understand the main principles of teaching yoga, including the planning, presentation and evaluation of a yoga class, and demonstrate their ability to apply these in the class situation in a calm and well-co-ordinated way
- have acquired sufficient knowledge in anatomy and physiology, and know how to relate this to hatha yoga practice.

1.3 Potential Students

Potential students are:

- Yoga teachers who wish to upgrade their knowledge and skills by undertaking a further course of study
- Yoga practitioners who wish to become yoga teachers.



1.4 Course Prerequisites

Applicants should have:

- at least 3 years practice of yoga
- a desire to share the benefits of yoga through teaching
- an openness to profound change on a personal level and an aspiration to deepen the understanding of one's innermost Nature
- an ability to use a computer including email, internet and Word.

1.5 Course Requirements

Students will be expected to:

- practise daily following prescribed course material including asana, pranayama, meditation and yoga nidra for a minimum of one hour - throughout the course
- undertake and complete on time the required course work both in the ashram and at home - throughout the course
- attend a regular and suitable weekly yoga class - throughout the course
- attend the Introductory 2 days which includes the informal interview
- attend all the residential seminars at the ashram
- teach their own regular weekly yoga class(es) in the second year of the course.



2.0 Course Tutors



Swami Nishchalananda is the founder of Mandala Yoga Ashram, and has been the inspiration behind all of the previous teacher training courses organised by the ashram. He brings a wealth of experience of all aspects of yoga, having lived and taught it for over 45 years in India, the UK and Europe. Swamiji will guide the course tutors, teach certain key aspects of the course, and offer guidance and support to the students on a one-to-one basis when required.

Swami Krishnapremananda will be directing the course. He will lead the teaching of pranayama, meditation, yoga nidra and the Bhagavad Gita, as well as providing key input on other aspects of yoga. He has been an ashram resident for many years, developing his own practice and understanding under the guidance of Swami Nishchalananda, the late Swami Neel Kamal, and others. In 2007, he participated in a 12-month Vedanta course in India, studying yogic texts, under the guidance of Swami Anubhavananda. A graduate of the 1999-2001 Ashram's YTTC, he has been tutoring on all subsequent YTTCs.



Tara Rupa (Heather Donovan) will lead the teaching of anatomy and physiology and asana – she is a chartered physiotherapist – as well as other elements of the course. She has practised Yoga for 33 years and was a Diploma Course Tutor (DCT) facilitating her own BWY YTTC, before joining the Ashram's YTTC tutor team for both the 2009-11 and 2012-14 courses. She has completed the ashram's 1-year Meditation training course and 1-year Kriya yoga course in recent years, as well as receiving initiation into the Satyananda Yoga tradition. Alongside the depth of her experience, she also brings common-sense guidance and support, a mischievous sense of humour and the qualities of a mother to the course when needed.



Maha Sattwa will teach different aspects of the course. She was a student of Swami Pragyamurti in London for many years before moving to the ashram in early 2013. She completed the Ashram's 1-year Kriya yoga course in 2012 and graduated from the 2012-2014 YTTTC. She has an inner wealth of knowledge and experience which she transmits to her students through her clear teaching style.



3.0 Course Content

The syllabus of the course comprises four main elements:

- Practical techniques of yoga
- Theoretical studies
- Professional teaching of yoga
- Final year project.

Details of these are given below.

3.1 Practical Techniques of Yoga

There will be a detailed study of the practice, its benefits, its likely effects (physical, mental and emotional). Precautions and limitations in undertaking each practice and methods of teaching it will also be covered. The following techniques will be practiced and studied.

3.1.1 Asana

Asana practised and studied will include the following:

- Pawanmuktasana series 1, 2 and 3
- Relaxation Asanas
- Meditative Sitting Asanas
- Asanas performed from Vajrasana
- Standing & Side Bending Asanas
- Backward Bending



- Forward Bending
- Spinal Twists
- Inverted Asanas
- Balancing Asanas
- Surya Namaskara & Chandra Namaskara
- Eye Exercises.

Particular attention will be given to practical methods of practising each asana, it's counterpose, likely benefits and precautions, as well as discussion of its anatomical and physiological effects. Each asana will be related to kiniesiological principles (movement of muscles and joints) so as to promote safe, effective and focussed physical movement.

3.1.2 Relaxation

Several relaxation practices will be taught and experienced.

3.1.3 Yoga and common ailments

The practices which are contra-indicated and cautioned for particular ailments will be covered. An introduction will be given to the management of simple and common ailments using specific yoga techniques.

3.1.4 Pranayama

Selected preparatory and classical pranayamas (breathing practices) including: viloma, samavritti, nadi shodhana, bhastrika, ujjayi, bhramari and kapalbhati. Anatomical and physiological aspects will be studied and discussed.

3.1.5 Bandha and Mudra

Students will be trained in the 4 classical bandha (psycho-physiological locks): jalandhara, mool, uddiyana & maha and methods of combining bandha with pranayama, mudra and other yogic techniques.

Selected classical mudras (body positions which invoke particular sentiments and mental attitudes) will be included, such as hand mudras, yoga mudra, prana mudra, shambhavi mudra, bhoochari mudra, khechari mudra and vipareeta karani.

3.1.6 Shat Karmas



The cleansing practices of hatha yoga will be practised including jala neti, kunjal, agnisar kriya, shankhprakashana (short *lagoo* and full form), kapalbhati and trataka.

3.1.7 Yoga Nidra

All the key sequential stages of the deep meditative and relaxation practice of yoga nidra will be taught.

3.1.8 Meditation techniques

A variety of techniques will be experienced by students including spaciousness, antar mouna (inner silence), japa (mantra repetition), ajapa japa (spontaneous sound repetition), likhit japa (writing with mantra), chankramanam (meditative walking) and trataka.

3.1.9 Mantra yoga

Selected classical mantras will be taught through the course including OM, Shanti Path, Brahma pranam, Mrityunjaya, Gayatri, Om Purnamadaha, Om Saha Naavavatu, Surya Namaskara Mantras - both Bija and Sun Mantras. Students will also participate in chanting each day at the ashram and regular kirtan (group chanting) to perceive the benefits of mantra yoga, the yoga of sound vibration. See our mantra yoga and kirtan webpage for more information: <http://www.mandalayoga.net/content/mantra-yoga-and-kirtan>

3.1.10 Mouna

As part of ashram life during the retreats, there will be periods of mouna (silence) to help students go deeper within as part of their practice. There will be mouna every night from 9pm until breakfast the next day and also longer periods of mouna. See our mouna webpage for more information: <http://www.mandalayoga.net/content/mouna-silence>

3.1.11 Karma yoga

Students will also practise karma yoga as part of the ashram retreats. Karma yoga is doing work with the attitude of service (seva) and with Awareness. See our karma yoga webpage for more information: <http://www.mandalayoga.net/content/karma-yoga>

3.1.12 Satsang

Satsang (questions and answers) sessions will take place regularly throughout the course with Swami Nishchalananda or Swami Krishnapremananda, giving students the opportunity to have their questions answered – on any aspect of yoga, spirituality or their application in day-to-day life.



3.2 Theoretical Studies

3.2.1 Anatomy and Physiology

This will include an analysis of the body and its main systems including respiratory, circulatory, digestive, excretory, endocrine, brain and nervous, muscular, skeletal and lymphatic. There will be particular focus on how these systems relate to, and are affected by, yoga practices.

Students will be required to complete at home the BWY Anatomy and Physiology online module, which includes an online test. This includes use of The Concise Human Body book and a downloadable accompanying document relating the body systems to yoga, written by the excellent Dr Ruth Gilmore.

3.2.2 Yogic Energy Centres and Pathways

This will consist of an introduction to the various systems in yogic philosophy and science including:

- chakras (energy centres governing particular aspects of our personality, bodily functions and health)
- nadis (energy pathways or meridians)
- prana (life energy or life-force)
- koshas (the sheaths or subtle bodies of the human being)
- akashas (inner realms of the mind).

3.2.3 Course Texts and CDs/ Downloads

There will be study of classical yoga texts which will include selections from:

- Hatha Yoga Pradipika
- Bhagavad Gita
- Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- Selected Upanishads.

These will provide the underpinning background, theory and philosophy of yoga.

Students will be required to obtain the following texts to read and refer throughout the course. The costs below are based on prices in November 2014 and do not include postage and packing or discounts that BWY teachers/ student teachers are eligible for through the BWY website and some other websites.

1. Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha by Swami Satyananda Saraswati £19



2. Meditations from the Tantras by Swami Satyananda Saraswati £10
3. Prana and Pranayama by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati £10
4. Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Swami Muktibodhananda £10
5. Edge of Infinity by Swami Nishchalananda £12
6. The Concise Human Body by Steve Parker (a bigger or 'unconcise' version is also available and equally suitable) £10
7. The Concise Book of Muscles by Chris Jarmey £19
8. The Bhagavad Gita by Eknath Easwaran £7 (other versions may be appropriate if you already have one – check with Swami Krishnapremananda before purchasing Easwaran's version).

Books 1-4 are published by the Yoga Publications Trust which is part of the Bihar School of Yoga.

Book 5 is available from the ashram.

The remainder are available from any good bookshop or some yoga websites. Students may be entitled to discounts from some yoga websites once they are Student Teacher/ Teacher members of the BWY.

The following book would also be useful but are not essential:

- Yoga Nidra by Swami Satyananda Saraswati.

Students will be encouraged to use CDs or downloads of good quality yoga nidra and meditations to assist them with their own practice and also preparing to teach yoga nidra and meditation. The ashram sells some meditation CDs/ downloads that would be appropriate.

Students will benefit from the ashram's extensive library which they will be able to browse whilst at the ashram, and also borrow 2 books at a time.

Different Paths of Yoga

This will give an introduction to gyana, karma, hatha, bhakti and raja yoga.

3.2.5 Mantra

The theory of mantra will be covered along with its practice, see 3.1.9.



3.2.6 Theory of Meditation and the Yogic Theories of the Mind

This will include classical theories of how the mind functions.

3.2.7 Symbols & Yantras

An introduction will be provided to selected symbols and yantras (mystical diagrams) that can be valuable tools for practice.

3.3 Professional teaching of yoga

The course will provide all the information and skill-development necessary for student teachers to set up and manage yoga classes. This will include the following aspects.

3.3.1 Communication

Effective communication between teacher and student is essential and the course will teach the following as well as enable students to practise these techniques:

- the two main channels of communication: visual and oral
- the importance of clear and accurate demonstration
- presentation skills (including the use of visual material and hand-outs)
- appropriate use of language
- modulation of the voice to attain a desired effect
- a variety of teaching methods.

3.3.2 Planning and Preparation

Students will learn the logistics of planning and preparing yoga classes including:

- choice of the physical environment for classes
- preparing a course syllabus
- lesson planning
- progressive development and assessment of the practices
- the different approaches required for running private or local authority-regulated classes.

3.3.3 Delivery



Class management will be covered as well as how to teach mixed-ability classes and deal with common class problems.

3.3.4 Teaching yoga as a business

Information will be given on how to teach yoga professionally as a business, including record keeping and tax.

3.3.5 Health and safety

In-depth consideration will be given to the health and safety aspects of planning, preparing and teaching yoga classes.

3.3.6 Protection of children and vulnerable adults

Students will be taught the legal requirements for teaching yoga to children and vulnerable adults and how to put these into practice.

3.3.7 First Aid

Students will complete a first aid workshop covering first aid for yoga classes. This may be carried out at the ashram or students may be required to attend an alternative First Aid Training Day – this will be confirmed during the course.

3.3.8 Teaching Practice and Assessment

Teaching skills and experience will be nurtured and developed in students through their preparation and presentation of yoga practices to their peer group. These ‘micro-teachings’ will be in small groups initially, building up to larger groups towards the end of the two years. Students will also be trained in how to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, so that they can continually improve.

3.4 Project

Each student will undertake a yoga-related research project during the second year of the course. The topic will be chosen in consultation with the course tutors. It will consist of both a written document (7500 words +/- 10%) and a presentation to the peer group (45 minutes with an additional 15 minutes for questions and answers). This is one of the highlights of the course as it gives students freedom to focus on an area of their own interest. The presentations are enjoyed by all as the depth and breadth of the projects is fascinating.



4.0 Assessment

Students will be assessed on their practical and theoretical knowledge of yoga and on their ability to teach the subject as follows:

Practical experience of the yoga techniques will be assessed continuously throughout the course by the course tutors, focusing mainly on the students' ability to practise accurately within their personal limitations.

Theoretical knowledge will be assessed throughout the course both orally and by written assessment. This includes students explaining theoretical aspects of yoga to their peer group, as well as being required to submit written assignments for assessment by the course tutors.

Teaching ability will be assessed:

- in the 'micro-teachings' throughout the course. Students will present specific yoga practices to their peer group on a regular basis
- through the on-going completed course work
- in a Mid-Course Class Assessment - each student will teach their own regular class near their home observed by a trained assessor, independent of the ashram. The assessment is not pass or fail, but the assessment will provide feedback to the student in order for them to grow and develop their teaching capability. This will take place during the winter of the second year.
- in a Final Class Assessment (FCA) - each student will teach their own regular class near their home observed by a trained assessor, independent of the ashram. This assessment is pass or defer and will take place towards the end of the course.
- in final assessments in the ashram at the end of the course – each student will teach a yoga nidra session, a meditation practice and give a presentation on their project (see section 2.4 above).
- The main criterion throughout will be the student teacher's ability to teach in a clear and accessible way which meets the needs and limitations of each person in their class.
- Students will be expected to:
- have knowledge of the appropriate precautions and prohibitions and be able to modify practices accordingly
- have knowledge of the appropriate benefits of each practice and be able to transmit these to their students, so as to enhance their students' understanding of the practices
- be able to teach the preparatory practices to warm the muscles prior to the performance of the strong asanas
- have a sound grounding in the philosophical and theoretical aspects of yoga.



5.0 Typical Retreat Programme

The typical programme for the retreats that comprise the course is:

First day:

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 6.30pm | Supper |
| 8 – 9pm | Workshop, satsang or kirtan |

Other days:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 5.30am | Bell to awaken everyone |
| 6.15 - 7.40am | Workshop or asana and pranayama class |
| 7.50 – 8.40am | Chanting and meditation or pranayama |
| 8.45am | Breakfast |
| 9.30 – 11am | Karma yoga (preparing food, household, gardening or maintenance) |
| 11 – 11.30am | Tea break |
| 11.30am – 1pm | Workshop |
| 1pm | Lunch |
| 3.15 – 4. 25pm | Workshop |
| 4.45 – 6pm | Workshop |
| 6.30pm | Supper |
| 8 – 9pm | Workshop, satsang or kirtan |

Final day:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5.30am | Bell to awaken everyone |
| 6.15 - 7.45am | Asana and pranayama class |
| 7.45 – 8.45am | Chanting and meditation or pranayama |



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|-------------------|--|
| 8.45am | Breakfast |
| 9.30 – 11am | Karma yoga (preparing food, household, gardening or maintenance) |
| 11 – 1.30am | Tea break |
| 11.30am – 12 noon | Early morning class review |
| 12.10-1.25pm | Workshop |
| 1.30 – 1.55pm | Concluding session |
| 2pm | Lunch |

Workshops may be: a talk from Swami Nishchalananda about yogic philosophy or science, micro-teaches by the students or sessions led by the tutors covering any of the topics outlined in section 3.0 above.



6.0 Course dates

The course comprises 69 full days of tuition and practice spread over the two years as follows:

- Introductory 2 days which includes the informal interview (see section 8 below)
- 1-week introductory retreat
- Thirteen 2 or 3-day weekend retreats
- 2-week summer retreats in each year.

The dates are:

- Introductory 2 days including the informal interview: **either** Wednesday 8 - Friday 10 July 2015 **or** Friday 10 - Sunday 12 July 2015

in the first year:

- 1-week retreat in September (Sat 19 - Sat 26 Sep 2015)
- regular weekend retreats (Fri 23 - Sun 25 Oct 2015; Fri 20 - Sun 22 Nov 2015; Thu 18 - Sun 21 Feb 2016; Fri 18 - Sun 20 Mar 2016; Fri 15 - Sun 17 Apr 2016; Thu 19 - Sun 22 May 2016)
- a 2-week retreat in July (Sat 16 - Sat 30 Jul 2016)

in the second year:

- regular weekend retreats (Thu 22 - Sun 25 Sep 2016; Fri 21 - Sun 23 Oct 2016; Thu 24 - Sun 27 Nov 2016; Thu 16 - Sun 19 Feb 2017; Fri 24 - Sun 26 Mar 2017; Fri 5 - Sun 7 May 2017; Thu 15 - Sun 18 Jun 2017)
- finishing with a 2-week retreat in July (Sat 15 - Sat 29 Jul 2017).

All retreats start at 6pm and finish with lunch at 2pm. Students are very welcome to stay for extra nights before or after each retreat – subject to availability of accommodation. One night will be free and other nights will be charged at the usual stay rate, currently £30.



7.0 Course costs

Course Fee: £4650

This covers all tuition and full board at the ashram for the introductory days and all residential retreats.

There will be a charge of £60 for the two introductory days in July 2015, which will be deducted from the initial deposit for those students who are offered, and subsequently, accept a place.

Deposit: £1250

The deposit is non-refundable and is to be paid within 2 weeks of a place being offered.

Balance: £3400

The balance is payable at the beginning of the course as one payment **or** by monthly instalments by direct debit of £170 a month for 20 months from October 2015 to May 2017 inclusive.

Additional Costs:

The following costs are **not included** in the course fee and will need to be paid separately by students. We have given below the current, or recent, cost or best estimate to give you an indication of these additional costs. These costs are not set by the ashram, but by others, so may increase.

- British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) membership subscription - to be renewed annually and to be maintained throughout the course. Teacher/ student teacher annual subscription (October 2014): £76.
- BWY Course Registration Fee, a one-off fee payable in August, before the course starts (January 2015): £60.
- BWY Anatomy and Physiology online module and test (January 2015): £75.
- First Aid Training Day: approximately £50.
- Assessor's fee for the initial teaching assessment approximately halfway through the second year: £75 plus travel expenses.
- Assessor's fee for the final teaching assessment at the end of the second year – (for the 2012-14 YTTTC): £75 plus travel expenses.
- Assessor's fee for the final yoga nidra and meditation teaching assessment at the end of the second year: £85 including travel expenses



- The text books required for the course (see section 3.2.2 above). Estimated cost around £100 (based on prices in November 2014 and do not include postage and packing or discounts that BWY teachers/ student teachers are eligible for through the BWY website and some other websites).
- CDs or downloads recommended for the course of yoga nidra and meditation: approximately £20.
- A mala for use in meditation practices - available from the ashram: approximately £20.

The approximate total of these additional costs is £530 plus travel expenses for the assessor's fee.

8.0 Application process

Due to the expected high number of people applying for the 22 places on the course, the following process has been designed to make the application simple, clear and fair. Places will be offered to applicants who are considered suitable and adhere to the time schedule set out below.

8.1 Stage 1: Application Form

Applicants must return completed application forms to arrive at the ashram by **Sunday 21 June 2015**.

Application forms are available on the ashram website: <http://www.mandalayoga.net/content/yoga-teacher-training>. If you do not have internet access please call the ashram and we will post one to you.

8.2 Stage 2: Informal Interview

Completed application forms will be reviewed by the course tutors and suitable applicants will be invited to an informal interview in the ashram. This will be part of a 2-day introduction to the course, which will give an overview of the course content and help you to decide whether or not the course is suitable for you.

The initial interviews will take place in two groups:

Wednesday 8 (arrive before 6pm) - **Friday 10 July 2015** (after lunch which is at 1pm)

Friday 10 July (arrive before 6pm) - **Sunday 12 July 2015** (after lunch which is at 1pm).

The introductory dates, including interview, will be confirmed to the applicant by the ashram as soon as the application form has been reviewed. Applicant will need to confirm their attendance by sending a payment of £60 to the ashram within 2 weeks of being offered an interview. This is



the usual charge for a 2-night stay and will be deducted from the initial deposit for those students who accept a place.

8.3 Places

Successful applicants will be offered places by **Sunday 26 July 2015**.

On being offered a place, applicants will need to confirm acceptance or rejection of it within 2 weeks, and pay the course deposit to the ashram. If this deadline is missed, then the place will be offered to another person.

8.4 Late applications

If there are still places available following the above process, applications will be accepted during July and August, and interviews offered, for as long as there are places available.

9.0 Further information

For further information please contact the ashram. We can put you in touch with graduates of previous courses so that you can find out directly from them their own experience of training at the ashram. You can also have an informal, no-obligation chat with Swami Krishnapremananda, Karunamayi (the Ashram Manager) or Sue (Office Manager).

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