



What Is Yoga Therapy?



THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
YOGA THERAPISTS

Bridging Yoga
and Healthcare

All yoga is potentially therapeutic...

Yoga therapy:

Specifically applies yogic tools—postures, breathwork, meditation, & more

To address an individual's needs—physically, mentally, emotionally, & even spiritually



Yoga itself offers tools
that touch on the whole
spectrum of human
experience

Yoga therapy can address a range of concerns

CHRONIC PAIN

Low-back pain
Arthritis
PMS
Fibromyalgia
Etc

NEUROLOGIC ISSUES

Stroke effects
MS
Parkinson's
TBI

MENTAL HEALTH

Anxiety
Depression
PTSD
Insomnia

ILLNESS SUPPORT

Cancer, diabetes
Heart disease

HEALTHY AGING

Osteoporosis
Balance & fall prevention

And go beyond conditions & individual systems or parts

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OVERALL WELL-BEING

Yoga therapy...

clients are usually not coming to learn yoga, but to get help with or relief from some symptom or health condition that is troubling them. In most cases, the instruction focuses on their condition and how the yoga techniques can help them feel better or improve their function, rather than on the techniques or methods of yoga practice.

—Gary Kraftsow, C-IAYT

Differing focus

YOGA CLASS

- Instruction in yoga techniques
- General practice, often fitness-oriented
- Limited individual adaptations
- Community practice

YOGA THERAPY SESSION

- Individual assessment, formal intake
- Address specific concern(s)
- Practices tailored to client goals
- Individual empowered with self-healing
- Therapeutic relationship, possibly in a group

Differing focus: Knowledge base

- A yoga therapist is a yoga teacher who has completed additional training
- IAYT-accredited training programs last at least 2 years

FOR EXAMPLE . . .	YOGA TEACHER (RYT 200)	YOGA THERAPIST (C-IAYT)
Yoga philosophy/foundations		
Basic anatomy & physiology		
Practice teaching, assisting a teacher		
Psychology, additional biomedicine		
Adaptation of yoga tools to individual needs		
In-depth anatomy & pathophysiology		
Extensive clinical practicum		

Yoga Alliance 200-Hour Standards:

<https://www.yogaalliance.org/Credentialing/Standards/200-HourStandards>

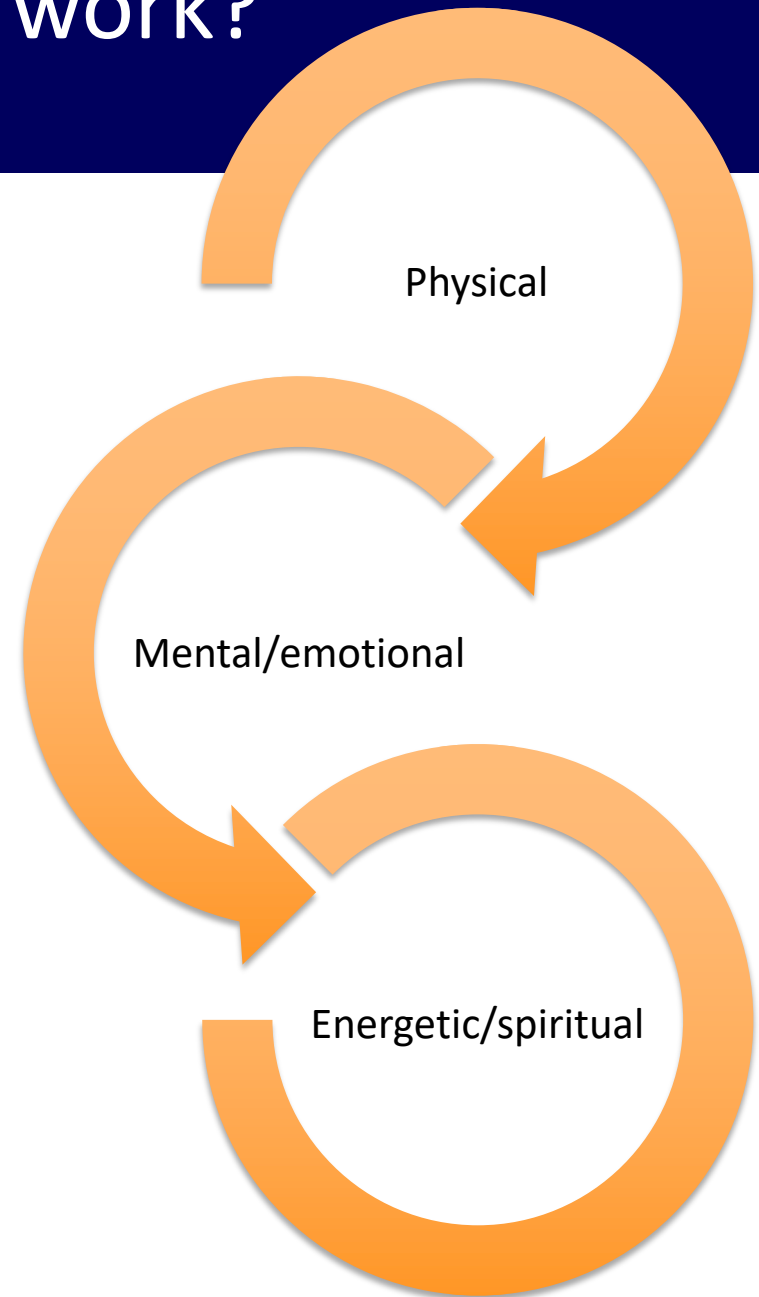
IAYT Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iayt.org/resource/resmgr/accreditationmaterials/2017_11_Updates-Ed_Std/2017_IAYT_Educational_Standa.pdf

How does yoga therapy work?

Biopsychosocial-spiritual methodology

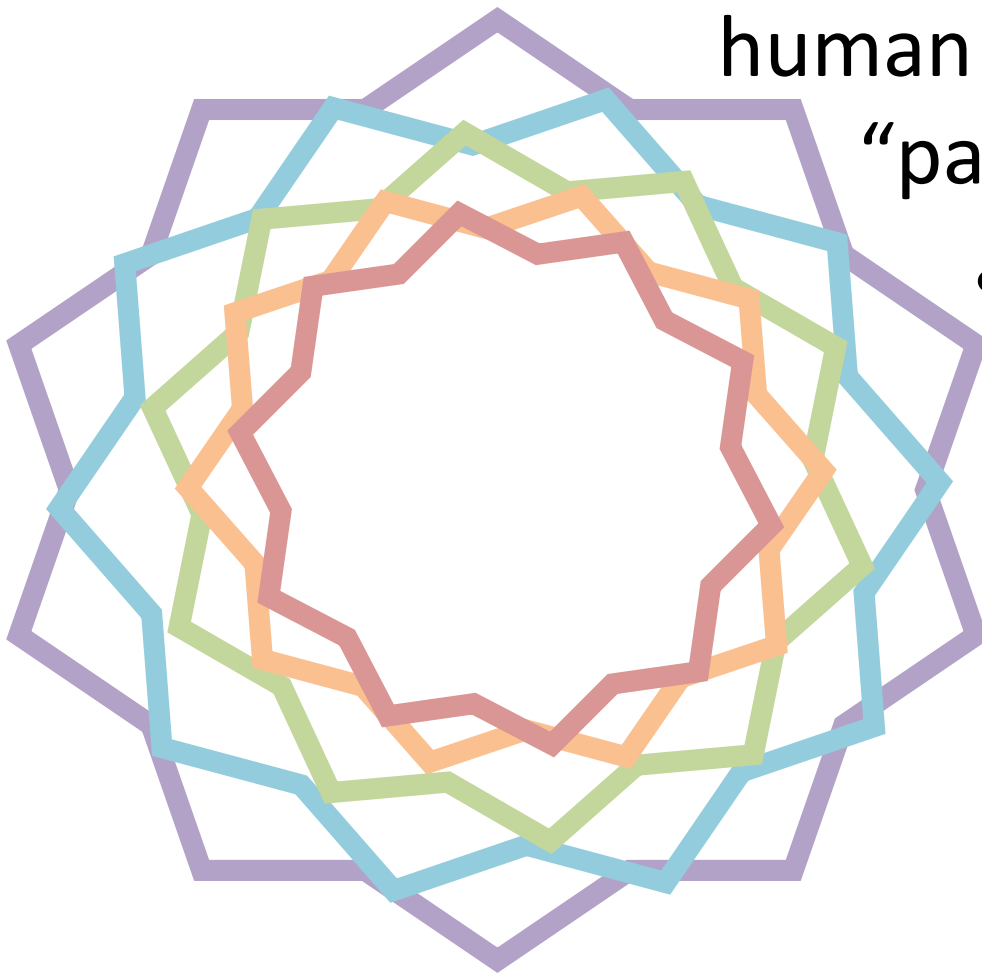
- Musculoskeletal stretching & strengthening
- Changed neurological processing
- Nervous system regulation



How does yoga therapy work?

- Inextricably interconnected human system, the “pancamaya” model

- Tool used in one area (eg, breathwork) affects another (eg, musculoskeletal) —in fact, affects *all* others



A growing evidence base: Research starting points

- Barrows JL & Fleury J. Systematic review of yoga interventions to promote **cardiovascular health** in older adults. *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 2016;38:753–81.
- Cramer H, et al. Yoga for **multiple sclerosis**: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS One* 2014;9. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0112414
- Gard T, et al. Potential **self-regulatory mechanisms** of yoga for psychological health. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 2014;8:770.
- Khalsa SBS, et al (eds). *The Principles and Practice of **Yoga in Health Care***. Pencaitland, UK: Handspring, 2016.
- Sharma M, et al. A systematic review of yoga interventions as integrative treatment in **breast cancer**. *Journal of Cancer Research and Clinical Oncology* 2016;142:2523–40.
- Sherman KJ, et al. A randomized trial comparing yoga, stretching, and a self-care book for **chronic low back pain**. *Archives of Internal Medicine* 2011;171:2019–26.
- Uebelacker LA & Broughton MK. Yoga for **depression and anxiety**: A review of published research and implications for healthcare providers. *Rhode Island Medical Journal* 2013;99: 20–22.
- Vizcaino M & Stover E. The effect of yoga practice on glycemic control and other health parameters in **type 2 diabetes mellitus** patients: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* 2016;28:57–66.

How can I find a yoga therapist?

Yoga therapists practice in hospitals, private clinics of all kinds, & on their own

Some offer online sessions or specialize

To find a certified yoga therapist, visit

yogatherapy.health

Who is IAYT?

- Not-for-profit professional organization founded in 1989
- Now represents 5,600+ yoga & healthcare professionals & 170 member schools worldwide
- Mission: to establish yoga as a recognized, respected therapy
- In-depth competency-based educational standards
- Rigorous accreditation process for training programs
- Certification of individual therapists (C-IAYT)
- Learn more at www.IAYT.org