

# Mandala Yoga Ashram



## Yoga Teacher Training Course Prospectus

September 2019 - July 2021



Mandala Yoga Ashram: Yoga Teacher Training Course 2019-2021

[www.mandalayogaashram.co.uk](http://www.mandalayogaashram.co.uk)

# Introduction

Mandala Yoga Ashram, under the guidance of Swami Nishchalananda, has been conducting authentic Yoga Teacher Training Courses (YTTC) for almost 30 years. The courses offer a unique training to all those who aspire to become quality yoga teachers from a strong foundation of personal practice, discovery and understanding.

This 500-hour course 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 unique in the U.K. as it not only gives the essential skills and training to teach yoga to adults, but also a systematic training in how to teach both meditation and yoga nidra. Furthermore, students gain valuable exposure to Ashram life which gives an added depth and breadth of spiritual experience to enhance their teaching ability.

The course will be for two years and includes a total of 69 days of tuition during residential retreats at the Ashram (see pg. 12).

The course is well recognised within the U.K. and Ashram graduates successfully teach throughout the U.K. and abroad.



# Why choose this Course?

- Authentic depth of training designed to encourage deeper realisation and awakening to our essential nature
- A full training in teaching the popular and profound practice of yoga nidra
- A systematic training in how to practice meditation and how to teach meditation to others
- Time and the skilled guidance for you to fully assimilate the practices over the two-year period
- Immersion in the energies and ethos of daily Ashram life which adds a greater quality to your practice and understanding of yoga
- Holistic approach covering many of the practical and esoteric aspects of yoga
- The depth and breadth of experience of the tutor team
- Ongoing mentor support for personal practice and for developing your experience and confidence as a yoga teacher
- Strong emphasis on personal practice and discovery, and less stress on 'academic' essay writing
- Opportunity to research a yoga related project that inspires you - many students find this a favourite part of the course, and some go on to publish articles/ books on their subject
- Diverse range of students of different ages, experiences and backgrounds
- The course draws upon a long standing tradition of teachings, while encouraging each individual student to discover their unique approach to teaching and practice.

*The time had come in my life when it seemed naturally right to deepen my yoga journey and upon looking around, the course at Mandala Ashram seemed to offer the richest, most comprehensive and authentic training in the country. The teachings at the Ashram are excellent and the course had a well balanced and knowledgeable tutor team. I was drawn to this course because it explores the yoga tradition in all of it's myriad aspects, not overly focusing on the physical practices of Hatha yoga, and we got the chance to really experience Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga and all kinds of other strands of the rich tapestry that is yoga.*

*Ben Major, 2015-2017 course graduate*

**Swami Nishchalananda** (Swamiji) is the founder and director of Mandala Yoga Ashram. He lived for 14 years in India, from 1971 to 1985, where he studied and practised the different paths of yoga under the direct guidance of his guru, Swami Satyananda, founder of the Bihar School of Yoga. During this time, he wrote a number of books on yoga which are now considered classics, including *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* (the first edition), *Meditations from the Tantras* and *A Systematic Course in the Ancient Tantric Techniques of Kriya Yoga*.

He has touched many people by his inspiring yet practical, down to earth teachings and many have realised a new meaningful dimension in their lives. Since founding the Ashram, he has written the following books: *Mantra Yoga and Ashram Chants*, *The Edge of Infinity* and *Insight into Reality – the Tantric Teachings of the Vigyana Bhairava Tantra*.

In 1992, he realised the importance of training high quality yoga teachers who are inspired to pass on the life-transforming message and teachings of yoga. Since then the Ashram has conducted seven Yoga Teacher Training Courses under his guidance. On the course, Swamiji will give periodic teachings when present in the Ashram.



## Main Course Tutor Team



**Swami Krishnapremananda** is the course director. He will deliver teachings on pranayama, meditation, yoga nidra and the yogic texts, as well as providing key input on other aspects of yoga. He has been an Ashram teacher for many years, developing his own practice and understanding under the guidance of Swami Nishchalananda, the late Swami Neel Kamal, and others. He has studied and practised all the main paths of yoga and meditation. A graduate of the 1999-2001 Ashram's YTTC, he has been tutoring on all subsequent YTTCs over the past 17 years. He regularly teaches seminars around the U.K. and also Europe, offering the Ashram's practical and profound teachings.

**Maha Sattwa** was drawn deeper into Yoga and Meditation about 20 years ago, becoming a student of Swami Pragyamurti for a few years before moving to the ashram in early 2013. She graduated from the Ashram YTTC in 2014 and was a tutor on the following teacher training course. She is one of the main ashram teachers specialising in a more meditative approach to the different paths of yoga, including Hatha Yoga. She brings compassion and sensitivity into her teachings, which she conveys in a clear, uncluttered and accessible manner. Among others, she gives courses on Kriya Yoga, Mantra Yoga & Chanting as well as yoga as a means of removing obstacles, finding one's true voice and accessing a place of inner calm and stillness.





**Nick Edge** was inspired by the depth of yoga teachings through the influence initially of Swami Vedantananda and then Swamiji. He brings an intuitive and reflective approach to his teaching. A born seeker, Nick is a passionate advocate of the path of gyana yoga. He is currently the Ashram's Operations Manager. He teaches regularly both within the Ashram and elsewhere, transmitting the teachings with a natural warmth, honesty and humour. Nick will be contributing to the teaching of asana on the course, as well as other subject areas such as meditation, pranayama and philosophy.

**Dr Hania Kramlund** is a Swedish medical doctor with a degree in orthopaedic medicine. She is also an experienced yoga teacher who applies yogic techniques daily in her current work as an occupational doctor. She is dedicated to bringing a scientific perspective into the teachings of yoga and removing outdated practices which can harm the body. She currently gives seminars on Yoga Therapy in the Ashram and elsewhere. Dr Hania will give occasional input relating to Yoga Therapy during the course.



**Debbie Farrar (Devi)** will lead the teaching on anatomy and physiology, and professional studies, as well as contributing to asana teaching. She was introduced to yoga by her mother in the 1970s, and has enjoyed a daily practice for almost 40 years. Inspired by her mother, Nature and Godfrey Devereux, she began teaching yoga in 1999. Time in Indian ashrams gave her the opportunity for silent meditation and study. Devi began training teachers in 2012 in Lancashire under the name **Feel Now Yoga**: a sensitive somatic practice rooted in the philosophy of the Yoga Sutras. Her teaching offers a safe, accessible and supportive framework within which each person becomes more intimate with their true nature, wisdom and authority.

**Rebecca Allen (Rambha)** will primarily give the teaching on yoga nidra. She was first inspired by the teachings of Swami Vedantananda and Swami Pragyamurti over 30 years ago. She subsequently left her work in the legal profession to practice and teach yoga full time. She has worked on Satyananda Yoga teacher training programmes in India, Portugal and the UK and as an assessor for the Ashram YTTC. She has a realistic and pragmatic approach to teaching yoga, aiming for it to be appropriate and accessible to the people in front of her. Her specialist areas include teaching people with ME/CFS, cancer, chronic pain, and antenatal yoga. She is currently (2018) studying with Pete Blackaby on his one-year humanistic yoga course for teachers.



# Course Content

The syllabus of the course comprises four main components:

1. Practical techniques of yoga
2. Theoretical studies
3. Professional teaching of yoga
4. Final year project.

Details of these are given below.

## Practical Techniques of Yoga

There will be a detailed study of how to practise and how to teach each practice and its likely effects on a physical, mental and emotional level.

### Asana

A comprehensive list of asana practises (postures) will be covered during the course. Particular attention will be given to practical methods of practising each asana, it's counterpose, modifications, likely benefits and precautions, as well as discussion of its anatomical and physiological effects. Asanas will be related to kinesiological principles (movement of muscles and joints) to promote safe, effective and focussed physical movement.

### Relaxation

Several key relaxation practices will be taught and experienced.

### Yoga Nidra

All the key sequential stages of this deep meditative relaxation practice will be taught. Yoga nidra is a distinct and powerful tool which is growing in popularity. You will learn to teach the practice in a safe, effective and supportive manner, and understand some of its applications.

### Pranayama

Selected preparatory and classical pranayamas (breathing practices) including: viloma (step breath), samavritti (equal breath), nadi shodhana (balancing breath), bhastrika (bellows breath), ujjayi (psychic breath), bhramari (bee breath) and kapalabhati (cleansing breath). Anatomical and physiological aspects will be studied and discussed.

### Bandha and Mudra

Full training will be given in the four bandhas (psycho-physiological locks): jalandhara (neck lock), moola (pelvic floor lock), uddiyana (abdominal lock) and maha (great lock), individually and in combination with pranayama, mudra and other yogic techniques. Selected classical mudras (body positions which invoke particular sentiments and attitudes) will be included, such as hand mudras, yoga mudra (gesture of union), prana mudra (gesture of peace), shambhavi mudra (eyebrow centre gazing), khechari mudra (tongue lock) and vipareeta karani (inverted psychic attitude).

### Shat Karmas

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



## Meditation techniques

Practices will include body stillness, breath awareness, spaciousness, antar mouna (inner silence), japa (mantra repetition), ajapa japa (spontaneous sound repetition), likhit japa (writing with mantra), chankramanam (meditative walking) and trataka (candle gazing).

## Mantra yoga

Selected classical mantras will be taught including OM, Shanti Path (Invocation for Peace), Brahmapranam (Invocation before food), Mrityunjaya (Healing mantra, and for seeing beyond mortality), Gayatri (Invocation of the Light of Awareness), Om Purnamadaha (Invocation of Fullness), Om Saha Naavavatu (Acknowledgement of the connection between teacher and student), Surya Namaskara (Sun Salutation) Mantras - both Bija (seed) and Sun Mantras. Students will also participate in chanting each day at the Ashram and regular kirtan (group chanting) to experience the benefits of mantra yoga, the yoga of sound vibration.

## Mouna

As part of Ashram life, there will be periods of mouna (silence) to help students go deeper within as part of their practice. There will be mouna every evening until breakfast the next day and longer periods of mouna periodically.

## Karma yoga

Students will practise karma yoga as part of the Ashram retreats. Karma yoga is meditation in action: doing work with the attitude of service (seva) and with Awareness. See the Ashram website for more information: <https://www.mandalayogaashram.co.uk/teachings/the-different-path-of-yoga>

## Satsang

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



## **Theoretical Studies** (all of which are rooted in experience, not dry theory)

### **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.

### **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.

### **Yogic Energy Centres and Pathways**

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

- chakras (subtle energy centres governing our daily life)
- 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).

### **Yogic Philosophy**

There will be a 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.

### **Mantra**

The theory of mantra will be covered along with its ongoing practice.

### **Theory of Meditation and the Yogic Theories of the Mind**

This will include classical theories of how the mind functions.

### **Different Paths of Yoga**

This will give an introduction to Gyana (Insight), Karma (acting in Awareness), Hatha (Balancing sun and moon), Bhakti (yoga of the heart) and Raja (Royal) yoga.

## Course Texts and Downloads

Students will be required to obtain the following texts.

- Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha by the Bihar School of Yoga
- Meditations from the Tantras by the Bihar School of Yoga
- Prana and Pranayama by Swami Niranjanananda of the Bihar School of Yoga
- Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Swami Muktibodhananda of the Bihar School of Yoga
- Edge of Infinity by Swami Nishchalananda (available from the Ashram)
- Peter Blackaby - Intelligent Yoga (second edition)
- Margaret Matt - Human Anatomy Colouring Book - (only £2)
- The Bhagavad Gita by Eknath Easwaran £7 (other versions may be appropriate if you already have one – check with Sw. Krishnapremananda before purchasing Easwaran’s version).

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

- Yoga Nidra by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
- The Concise Book of Muscles by Chris Jarmey
- Leslie Kaminoff - Yoga Anatomy (second edition)

Students will use CDs or downloads of good quality yoga nidras and meditations to assist them with their own practice and to prepare them to teach yoga nidra and meditation. The Ashram sells some meditation CDs/ downloads that would be appropriate, and others are available elsewhere.

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



## Professional teaching of yoga

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

### Communication

Effective communication between teacher and student is essential. Students will explore a range of communication techniques, including effective and timely demonstration, the value of clear succinct verbal instruction, and presentation skills.

### Planning and Preparation

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

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

### Delivery

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

### Teaching yoga as a business

Information will be given on how to teach yoga professionally as a business

### Health and safety

Consideration will be given to the health and safety aspects of planning, preparing and teaching yoga classes.

### Specialised Areas:

During the course students will receive input on:

- child protection, including the legal requirements of teaching yoga to children and vulnerable adults
- yoga for pregnancy
- trauma sensitive yoga

### 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.

### Teaching Practice and Assessment

Teaching skills and experience will be nurtured and developed in students through the preparation and presentation of yoga practices to their peers. These will be in small groups initially, building up to larger groups. Students will be trained in how to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, so that they can continually improve.

## Final Year Project

Each student will undertake a yoga-related research project during the second year of the course. Students will choose their topic in consultation with the course tutors. The project will consist of both a written document (5000-7500 words) 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 and inspiration. The presentations are enjoyed by all as the depth and breadth of the projects is fascinating.

Completed projects from previous courses can be viewed within the Ashram library.



*After lots of research, there was simply nowhere else I would have chosen to undertake my yoga teacher training and I would do it all again if the opportunity arose! Thorough, rooted in tradition and yet always encouraging of personal exploration, the training built on my personal practice to bring the coherence and confidence I needed to allow me to step into the role of a teacher. Supported by a group of tutors from diverse backgrounds, each student is assigned a personal mentor for the duration of the course with whom to discuss anything personal, practical or 'academic' - a real gift. The course is comprehensive, and the work load can be demanding at times, but the Mandala YTTC was, for me, a wonderful, rich and inspiring experience - I highly recommend it.*

Olivia Desborough/ Shraddanjali: 2015-17 course graduate

## Course Aims:

- to provide a comprehensive training in many aspects of yoga and meditation so that course graduates will be capable of providing professional, responsible and high quality teaching to their students
- to 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
- to motivate and inspire students to undergo a transformation in their understanding and perception of themselves, others and life in general.

## Course 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 need to impart to others
- have the knowledge and ability to teach the practices safely according to the needs of their students, and have acquired sufficient knowledge of anatomy and physiology and how to relate this to hatha yoga practice.
- have acquired a grounding in the philosophical bases and spiritual aspects of yoga and their application to everyday life in the Western world
- demonstrate their capacity to effectively plan, deliver and evaluate a yoga class.

## Course Prerequisites

Applicants should have:

- at least three 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
- computer proficiency, including confidence with email, internet, Microsoft Word, insertion of images into documents, working with tables, and access to printer and scanner.



## 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 all the residential seminars at the Ashram, including the introductory two-days
- teach their own regular weekly yoga class(es) in the second year of the course.

## 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
- 1-week introductory retreat
- Eleven 3-day weekend retreats (Thu - Sun)
- 2-week summer retreats in each year.

**Introductory Days:** Either Thu-Sat July 4-6, or Sat-Mon July 6-8 2019. These include the informal interview.

**Residential Retreats:** September 21-28 2019 (7-days), October 24-27 2019, November 21-24 2019, February 20-23 2020, March 26-29 2020, May 14-17 2020, July 11-25 2020 (14 days), September 24-27 2020, October 22-25 2020, November 26-29 2020, February 18-21 2021, March 25-28 2021, May 13-16 2021, July 17-31 2021 (14-days)

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. One night will be free and other nights will be charged at the usual stay rate, currently £30.

*Throughout the journey the support and exchange amongst YTTC student teachers was warm and enriching. Personal projects became a focal point throughout the second year and the presentations were the highlight of the final two weeks retreat. The projects are a treasure trove of jewels, seeds of wisdom collected by each of the YTTC students on this remarkable alchemical journey.*

Thalia Brown/ Chitrini: 2015-17 course graduategraduate

## 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 by the course tutors, focusing mainly on the students' ability to practise accurately and appropriately. Theoretical knowledge will be assessed by periodic written assessment.

Teaching ability will be assessed through the course via 'micro-teachings' (teaching to small groups of peers), and also via the ongoing completed course work. In addition there will be:

- a Mid-Course Class Assessment during the winter of the second year in your local area. This is designed to offer salient advice and encouragement, rather than pass/ defer
- a Final Class Assessment (FCA) - which is pass/defer - which will take place towards the end of the course in your local area
- a final yoga nidra and meditation assessment in the Ashram at the end of the course
- a project presentation in the Ashram at the end of the course

## Course costs

**Course Fee:** £4750

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

There will be a charge of £60 for the two introductory days in July 2019, 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 two weeks of a place being offered as confirmation of acceptance of the place on the course.

**Balance:** £3500

The balance is payable at the beginning of the course as one payment or by monthly instalments by direct debit of £175 a month for 20 months from October 2019 to May 2021 inclusive.

**Additional Costs:** The following costs are additional to the course fee. Below are 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.

- Yoga (student) teacher insurance: approximately £75-95 p.a.
- First Aid Training Day: approximately £50-60
- Assessor's fee for the initial teaching assessment approximately halfway through the second year: ~£85 plus travel expenses
- Assessor's fee for the final teaching assessment at the end of the second year – ~£90 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 pg. 9)
- CDs or downloads recommended for the course of yoga nidra and meditation
- A mala for use in meditation - available from the Ashram: approximately £20.



## Application process

Due to the expected numbers of people applying for the 22 places, the following process applies:

### Stage 1: Application Form

Applicants must return completed application forms to arrive at the Ashram by *Monday 17th June 2019*.

### Stage 2: Informal Interview

Completed application forms will be reviewed and suitable applicants will be invited to an informal interview in the Ashram in July 2019. This will be part of a two-day introduction to the course, which will give an overview of the course content, a taste of the Ashram energies and teachings, and help you to decide whether or not the course is suitable for you.

The initial interviews will take place in two groups:

Thursday 4 (arrive before 6pm) - Saturday 6 July 2019 (after 1pm lunch)

Saturday 6 (arrive before 6pm) - Monday 8 July 2019 (after 1pm lunch)

As soon as the application form has been reviewed, the applicant can book a place on the introductory days, on a first come first serve basis, via payment of the £60 fee (see pg. 13).

### Places

Successful applicants will be offered places by Sunday 14 July 2019. On being offered a place, applicants will need to confirm acceptance or otherwise within two weeks, by paying the course deposit to the Ashram. If this deadline is missed, then the place may be offered to another person.

### Late applications

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

Priority will be offered to applicants who are considered suitable and adhere to the above time schedule.



## Further information

For further information you are very welcome to 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, Maha Sattwa or Nick Edge.

## Mandala Yoga Ashram

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mandalayogaashram>



*I don't regret choosing Mandala Ashram's YTTC above all of the other ones now being peddled on the yoga market, and I would heartily recommend it to anyone who really cares about deepening their own spiritual development and being able to pass on this incredible treasure that is yoga with real depth and authenticity.*

Ben Major: 2015-17 course graduate



*An early morning view from the Ashram showing the morning mist in the valley below, the hills of the Brecon Beacons to the East, and the rising sun.*

*Mystically, the sun represents the dawning of Awareness, revealing both Nature's pristine beauty, and also the mystical horizons or treasures that lie within.*

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