

# ***Teach Yoga Nidra***

## **Training Module/Course**

**Practical training & personal & professional development**

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**To be offered as an elective module on the  
Yogacampus Yoga Therapy Diploma Course 2011**

## **Synopsis**

This course trains yoga teachers to teach yoga nidra with confidence in the class setting, in one-to-ones, and for a range of therapeutic applications. It offers a detailed exploration of the structure, content, history, development and function of yoga nidra, providing a clear programme of supported study and practice to develop personal experience, understanding and creative engagement with this most powerful healing yoga practice.

Uniquely amongst yoga nidra training courses, this module offers a comparative evaluation and investigation of different approaches to yoga nidra, exploring and considering the relative merits and suitability of different traditional and contemporary forms of the practice, thus enabling students to make informed choices about the appropriate application of particular types of yoga nidra to meet specific needs.

The course is all about yoga nidra as a healing and transformative practice of swadyaya (self-study), pratyahara (sense withdrawal), dharana (concentration) and dhyana (meditation). It addresses the therapeutic use of yoga nidra for healing, deep relaxation and problem solving, as well as for spiritual and personal growth by accessing and developing creativity and intuitive wisdom.

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### I. Background

- a. Yoga nidra is a powerful yogic tool for healing and transformation, which many yoga practitioners and teachers would like to be able to use with confidence.
- b. To teach genuinely appropriate and helpful yoga nidra is a form of applied yoga therapy for which yoga teachers require specialist training.
- c. Most yoga teacher training courses in the UK do not include yoga nidra as part of their syllabus.
- d. Currently in the UK, the only regularly available full training in yoga nidra has been the lineage-specific training offered by the Satyananda (Bihar) school of yoga (in its own teacher training programme, and on special yoga nidra modules. Introductory sessions on yoga nidra have also been included in the YBT yoga therapy diploma, the Yoga Therapy Techniques (Foundation) course, and on the Sitaram Pregnancy Yoga Training and Well Woman yoga Therapy Course offered through Yogacampus.
- e. The demand from yoga teachers for a complete yoga nidra training currently exceeds the supply of available courses. This course aims to meet that demand with a high quality training.
- f. With the intention of encouraging students to make informed choices about the forms of yoga nidra most suited to themselves and their students and clients, this new course offers a critical evaluation of different approaches to and application of Yoga Nidra. The training has the unique advantage of offering considered evaluations and a wide context of understanding of yoga nidra, both by offering comparison with other approaches to the form (e.g. those presented by Satyananda yoga, Richard Miller and the Integrative

Restoration Institute (i-rest yoga nidra), and by Rod Stryker (Para Yoga) and the Himalayan Institute), and by drawing upon understandings from clinical hypnotherapy, clinical psychology and yoga therapy.

## **2. Suitable applicants**

- a. Yoga teachers and yoga therapists from any tradition.
- b. Yoga teacher trainees. Priority to be given to those on the Yogacampus teacher training courses, but places available to those on other courses, provided they have the written agreement of their course tutor/s.
- c. Yoga practitioners. Please see section 9 for the different route to completion for practitioners who are not required to do a teaching appraisal at the end of the course.
- d. Counsellors, psychotherapists, life coaches, clinical hypnotherapists, complementary medicine practitioners and others with an interest in the healing power of yoga may also apply for the course, but acceptance would depend upon them being able to demonstrate an appropriate level of yogic understanding. This would need to be assessed on an individual basis prior to acceptance on the course.
- e. All participants would need fluent spoken and written English.

## **3. Aims of the course**

- a. to provide an holistic, comparative, creative, investigative and sustained examination of the practical application of yoga nidra in yoga classes, for personal use, and in one-to-one sessions.
- b. to enable yoga teachers and yoga therapists to use yoga nidra safely, creatively and appropriately in the class situation, and for one-to-one sessions.
- c. to encourage a critical awareness of a range of different approaches to yoga nidra in order to empower students to evaluate others' perspectives and develop a clear rationale for their own approach to the uses of yoga nidra.
- d. to develop a creative response to the needs of clients and students, enabling teachers and therapists to create and tailor yoga nidra scripts appropriate to specific circumstance and requirements.

#### **4. Intended learning outcomes. Students will be able to:**

- a. devise and deliver yoga nidra scripts appropriate to the needs of themselves, their students and their clients.
- b. demonstrate a clear practical understanding of the structure and function of yoga nidra, including models of best practice, and techniques to be avoided.
- c. demonstrate a practical understanding of the key principles of yogic psychology and philosophy relevant to the practice of yoga nidra.
- d. demonstrate a contextual understanding of the development and history of yoga nidra across different lineages.
- e. teach yoga nidra with an informed sensitivity to the emotional and spiritual experiences of those receiving the practice.
- f. teach a range of restorative yoga asanas suitable for use during yoga nidra practice.
- g. teach within the appropriate safety guidelines for this type of yoga practice.

#### **5. Course tutors - an outline of expertise**

a. Uma Dinsmore-Tuli PhD, YThDip

I have been practicing yoga nidra daily (often twice daily) for the past fifteen years. So I know that it works – from personal experience. I teach it to individual clients and yoga classes weekly, and also offer teaching and training in the subject on my own teacher training specialist courses in pregnancy and postnatal, family and women's yoga, and for the Yogacampus yoga therapy trainings. I have a huge range of experience of the variety of application and responses to yoga nidra, ranging from two hour mass yoga nidra classes in vast tent structures (at Santosa yoga camps!) to intimate therapeutic use in cases of severe illness and injury. I was initially introduced to yoga nidra in 1996 through Satyananda yoga, and since then have deeply explored all available approaches to the form, and have been very positively influenced by the developments offered by Richard Miller. Together with my husband Nirlipta, I have recorded three audio CD yoga nidras, and one on the Sitaram *Mother Nurture* DVD.

b. Lucy Clarke PhD

Lucy is a clinical psychologist and yoga therapist, with specialist experience of yoga for The Special Child. She is contributing sessions on the psychological impact of yoga nidra.

## **6. Content : A-Z. A brief outline of 26 key topics to be covered**

- a. history and development of yoga nidra: nyasa, tantra, Satyananda yoga, Himalayan institute, Richard Miller, Swami Veda Bharati, Swami Jneshvara Bharati.
- b. yoga philosophy and cosmology in relation to yoga nidra: tattwas, chakras, koshas, Samkya, Upanisadic world view.
- c. neuroscience, clinical psychology, psycho-neuro-immunology and physiology: in relation to the function of yoga nidra, including stress and the relaxation response.
- d. restorative asana: propping poses for yoga nidra.
- e. hypnotic components: understanding the structure and variations in yoga nidra.
- f. settling the physical body: first stage of yoga nidra, language and other tools.
- g. sankalpa: resolution and intention setting, listening to inner guidance, framing and using Sankalpa within and around yoga nidra.
- h. rotations of consciousness: a range of different effects, rationales and methods.
- i. pairs of opposites: a range of different structures, effects, variations.
- j. breath awareness /pranayama: specific use within the structure of yoga nidra session, and to support the practice of yoga nidra.
- k. visualisations: a range of different traditional and creative scripting options, contra-indications, appropriateness and therapeutic value.
- l. abreactions: why they happen and how to handle them.
- m. therapeutic applications: values and limitations of yoga nidra.
- n. creativity and innovation: devising your own yoga nidra scripts; metaphor, poetry and grammar for enlightened communication.
- o. responsiveness: tailoring script to needs of target populations.
- p. bespoke scripts: utilizing client images in yoga nidra.

- q. self development: sample practices, support for self-reflection and growth.
- r. differentiation: sample scripts for different levels of practitioner experience.
- s. voice and gaze: developing and supporting prana transference through voice and gaze.
- t. delivery: timing, safety issues and other practical consideration
- u. pratyahara: understanding the effects of sense withdrawal.
- v. dharana: yoga nidra as an aid to improve concentration.
- w. dhyana: yoga nidra as the meditative heart of yoga.
- x. hypnosis and yoga: exploring the connections: yoga nidra as hypnosis, yoga as self-hypnosis.
- y. spontaneous and creative unfoldings of yoga nidra: facilitating the practice as a portal to creative expression and spiritual growth.
- z. living yoga nidra: practical and effective integration of yoga nidra into daily life.

## **7. Resources and teaching methods**

- a. books / articles: set texts for the course are Swami Satyananda Saraswati's *Yoga Nidra* and Richard Miller's *Yoga Nidra, the meditative heart of yoga*, both to be read prior to embarking on the course. The course manual also includes relevant extracts from other texts. Such extracts /articles are 'set reading' prior to each weekend, to provide students with a share point of reference for informed discussion of key issues / controversies in the field.
- b. course manual: clear and comprehensive to summarize teaching input on each of the topics outlined in the previous section and minimize the need for note taking.
- c. charts, diagrams: to facilitate understanding of the physiology and relaxation.
- d. audio CDs and/or MP3 downloads: a full selection of yoga nidra recordings selected and assembled by the course tutors (from our vast library of yoga nidra recordings, collected over 20 years!) for personal use during the course and as the basis for analysis and comparison during assignments and discussions.
- e. small group work: for discussion of controversial points raised in reading and practice

f. pair work: for detailed application of practical issues in teaching

g. teaching practice: each student teaching whole class group [see comments on assessment below]

h. case studies: used as examples in course leader's talks. See also assessment and assignments.

i. flip-chart and white board for notes and diagrams to explicate tutor's talks and record small group report-backs

j. sharing and de-briefing of own experiences

## **8. Teaching contact hours and time frame**

a. The course requires 40 hours contact hours of group tuition. There is a longer gap between first and second weekends to allow sufficient time for the completion of assignments and case studies (see section 9). The contact hours also include time for student led practice and sharing from assignments and comparison exercises.

b. The three weekends are spread out over a period of six months to provide sufficient times for completion of assignments, case studies and practice.

c. Daily schedule is 'retreat style', from 9am Saturday morning until 9pm Saturday night (including kirtan, mantra and sleep-entry yoga nidra – i.e. doing yoga nidra in your pyjamas in your bed!), and from 7am Sunday morning until 4pm Sunday afternoon each weekend, including country walks to draw inspiration for the creation of yoga nidra scripts. This retreat style training facilitates deep engagement with the practice, and enables students to connect very literally with the application of yoga nidra in daily life, because doing the course is actually 'living' yoga.

d. The ideal learning environment for retreat style training, which fully optimizes the experience of yoga nidra, is best described as a 'Twenty-first century gurukula setting': a contemporary take on the traditional way of yogic training, where the student literally lives as part of the teacher's family. The Sitaram yoga studio in the countryside outside Stroud, in the Cotswolds, provides an ideal environment, where students can focus on their immersion in yoga nidra, in a protective, held and nurturing space.

**9. Proposed draft schedule:** 40 hours contact time over 6 days, spread across three meetings with time for assignments and practice between.

<b>Group's first gathering</b>		<b>Group's second gathering</b>		<b>Group's third gathering</b>	
<b>Day 1 Saturday</b>	<b>Day 2 Sunday</b>	<b>Day 3 Saturday</b>	<b>Day 4 Sunday</b>	<b>Day 5 Saturday</b>	<b>Day 6 Sunday</b>
<b>...Beginning every morning with chants, meditation &amp; pranayama ...</b>					
0900 Welcome, Introductions Orientation	0700 Sankalpa part 2. PMA & YN practice	0900 Reconnections, Assignment feedback	0700 PMA & YN practice. Sankalpa part 2; grammar and language	0900 Reconnections, Assignment feedback	0700 PMA; Student led YN + feedback (11, 12)
1000 History and development of YN Part I	<b>0830 Breakfast</b> 0930 Using Pairs of opposites YN	1000 Neuroscience & Therapeutic applications YN	<b>0830 Breakfast</b> 0930 Pratyahara & welcoming, YN	1000 Student led YN + feedback (1, 2)	<b>0830 Breakfast</b>
1100 Philosophical context of YN Part I	1030 Use of Breath awareness in YN	1100 comparison Students share detailed analysis (1, 2, 3, 4)	1030 Settling and externalising, re- integration in YN	1100 Voice, delivery, eyes & prana	0930 Dhyana; spontaneity, creativity, innovation inYN
1200 YN Practice	1130 YN Practice and analysis	1200 YN Practice	1115 More on restoratives & other YN poses 1200 YN Practice	1200 Student led YN + feedback (3, 4)	1130 Student led YN + feedback (13, 14)
<b>... The yoga of eating and sharing together – 1230 Lunch ...</b>					
1330 Sensory awareness: on country walk	1330 Metaphor gathering: on country walk	1330 Sense image gathering: on country walk	1330 Meditative awareness: on country walk	1330 Sensory welcoming: on country walk	1330 Closing chants and integrations <b>Ends 1400</b>
1500 tea, with compare & contrast: from assignment notes	1400 Visualisations; responsiveness in YN	1430 Individual script development discussion sangha	1430 comparison Students share detailed analysis (9, 10, 11, 12)	1430 Student led YN + feedback (5, 6)	
1530 Settling the body & restorative asana for yoga nidra	1500 YN's hypnotic components: utilisation	1530 History, development & philosophy Part 2	1530 Living YN in daily life – integration and regularity	1530 More on hypnosis and yoga nidra – case studies	
1630 Structures of YN: overview	1545 Practice and analysis	1630 Abreactions theory & practice	1600 Practice and analysis	1630 Dharana, tantra, yoga nidra	
1730 Sankalpa part I	1620 Closing chants	1730 YN practice and analysis	1620 Closing chants	1730 Student led YN + (7, 8)	
<b>1830 Supper</b>	<b>Ends 1630</b>	<b>1830 Supper</b>	<b>Ends 1630</b>	<b>1830 Supper</b>	
1930 Rotations of consciousness		1100 comparison Students share detailed analysis (5, 6, 7, 8)		1930 Case studies discussion 2000 Student led YN + (9, 10)	
2030 Practice		2030 Practice		Student led YN +	
2100 Closing chants then silence & sleep entry yoga nidra		2100 Closing chants then silence & sleep entry yoga nidra		2100 Closing chants then silence & sleep entry yoga nidra	

## **10. Assignments, tutor support, and assessment**

These assignments and assessments are intended to support the development of a deep personal engagement with the practice of yoga nidra, and to empower the student with the practical skills and understanding to use and deliver the practice with confidence. Please note there are two 'routes' to completion of the course, the teacher route and the practitioner route. The latter does not require delivery of yoga nidra to the group, but all other elements of the assignments are required, with the modification of using self-reflection instead of student evaluation of the yoga nidras practiced.

### A Prior to acceptance on the course:

- i. a yoga CV: yoga training and/or experience, particularly yoga nidra.
- ii. a brief account of why you want to do the course, what you hope to get out of it, and what you hope to contribute.
- iii. A brief account of experience of yoga nidra attended / observed by the student and their comments upon its usefulness.

### B Comparative studies in yoga nidra

- i. Before the first weekend meeting, all students should read the two course set texts: Swami Satyananda Saraswati's *Yoga Nidra* and Richard Miller's *Yoga Nidra, the meditative heart of yoga*.
- ii. Before the first weekend meeting, all students should listen at least once to all of the six yoga nidra audio recordings provided on CD or as MP3 downloads and sent to each student as part of the course registration documents.
- iii. In preparation for the course, students write very brief review notes on each of the recommended yoga nidra tracks listened to (pro-formas provided in course registration documents).
- iv. Between the first and second weekend, students select two of the six recommended recordings and write a detailed comparative analysis of their content, timing, language, structure and delivery. Pro-formas for these analyses are provided in the course manual. Discussion of these comparisons occurs in the second weekend.

### C First yoga nidra script development project:

- i Prior to the second weekend, write a draft script for a fifteen minute yoga nidra which you are intending to use for yourself, or with your students or clients. Feedback and suggestions on the draft to be provided by course tutors.

- ii. Practice the tutor-approved draft on family, friends, students, self or clients.
- iii. Get feedback from those receiving the yoga nidra (pro-formas supplied in course manual).
- iv. Refine the script, incorporating feedback from recipients.
- v. Record the script and submit to course tutors for appraisal and feedback.

D Second (or further development of first) yoga nidra script delivery project:

- i. Either choose to deliver the first yoga nidra script to the course group, for appraisal and feedback by colleagues and tutors, or:
- ii. Develop a second fifteen minute yoga nidra script in consultation with course tutors, and deliver that script to the course group, for appraisal and feedback by colleagues and tutors.

e. Case study (to be completed by the time of the final meeting):

A case study, conducted over four sessions of yoga nidra, based on the reactions of either an individual client (or self, if taking the non-teacher route) or a class receiving the yoga nidra. Case study can utilize the scripts developed during the course, or be based on other scripts developed by the student. Case study to include the following documents (pro-formas provided in course manual):

- i. statement of intent/aim of the yoga nidra
- ii. summary script of the yoga nidra/s delivered over 4 weeks
- iii. feedback from students/clients (or self-reflection for the non-teaching route).
- iv. Self-evaluation, exploring the outcome of the yoga nidra case study, considering positive experiences and areas for future development.

We would also recommend that students who complete the yoga nidra training course would be well advised to maintain contact with each other and with the tutors for continuing support/professional development after the course, for example on Yoga Nidra refresher and innovation days, but a programme for these would likely develop during and after the course.