What Is Yoga Therapy?
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR EXAMPLE . . .</th>
<th>YOGA TEACHER (RYT 200)</th>
<th>YOGA THERAPIST (C-IAYT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoga philosophy/foundations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic anatomy &amp; physiology</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice teaching, assisting a teacher</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology, additional biomedicine</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation of yoga tools to individual needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth anatomy &amp; pathophysiology</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extensive clinical practicum</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
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Yoga Alliance 200-Hour Standards: https://www.yogaalliance.org/Credentialing/Standards/200-HourStandards
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

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