

CERTIFICATION EXAM

Study Guide



Certification Exam Study Guide



International Association of Yoga Therapists

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EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT

The exam blueprint describes the key elements of a test, including the competencies or skill domains to be assessed, the content to be covered, and the emphasis allocated to each area.

Skill Domain	Domain Weight	No. of Items (150 Total)	Subdomains
Domain 1: Yoga Foundations	21.33%	32	Yoga Teachings and Philosophy; Yoga and the Mind; Framework for Health and Disease
Domain 2: Biomedical and Psychological Foundations	16.67%	25	Anatomy and Physiology; Psychology and Mental Health; Body and Mind Integration
Domain 3: Yoga Therapy Tools and Therapeutic Skills	20.67%	31	Yoga Therapy Tools; Basic Principles of the Therapeutic Relationship; Principles and Skills for Working in Groups
Domain 4: Yoga Therapy Practice	31.33%	47	Providing Yoga Therapy
Domain 5: Professional Practice	10.00%	15	Ethical Principles; Legal, Regulatory, and Business Issues Pertaining to Yoga Therapy; Relationship with Peers, Mentors, Clinicians, and Organizations; Personal and Professional Development and Continuing Education

SECTION 1

YOGA FOUNDATIONS

Competencies

1. Familiarity with the evolution of the teachings and philosophy of the yoga tradition and their relevance and application to yoga therapy, including teachings from Vedic and post-Vedic periods, Samkhya, yoga, tantra, and ayurveda.
2. Knowledge of yogic perspectives of the structure, states, functioning, and conditions of the mind.
3. Knowledge of yogic perspectives on distracted/disturbed conditions of mind and their expressions as conveyed in such texts as Pantanjali's Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita.
4. Knowledge of the basic perspectives on health and disease from yoga and ayurveda and their relevance to the practice of yoga therapy.
5. Knowledge of categorizing illness.

Sample Questions

1. According to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which is an obstacle (antaraya) that can impede progress in practice?
A. disease (vyadhi)
B. innate passion (rajas)
C. repeated practice (abhyahsa)
D. dispassion (vairagya)

Correct Answer: A disease (vyadhi)

2. According to the Upanishads, which key concept is a state of utmost peace within the self?
A. cycle of birth (samsara)
B. universal law (dharma)
C. liberation (moksha)
D. soul (atman)

Correct Answer: C liberation (moksha)

3. The Sanskrit word *yoga* can mean
A. a chariot
B. meditation
C. union
D. all of the above

Correct Answer: C union

SECTION 2

BIOMEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Competencies

1. Knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, including all major systems of the body and their interrelationships, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
2. Knowledge of biomechanics and movement as they relate to the practice of yoga and the work of a yoga therapist.
3. Knowledge of common pathologies and disorders of all the major systems, including symptoms, management, illness trajectories, and contraindications, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
4. Knowledge of commonly used drugs and surgical procedures as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
5. Knowledge of common medical terminology as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
6. Knowledge of how to reference current healthcare information, including pathologies, disorders, drugs, and surgical procedures, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
7. Knowledge of how to access and use research relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
8. Basic knowledge of commonly occurring mental health conditions from psychological distress to psychiatric conditions, their symptoms, and common approaches/interventions as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
9. Basic knowledge of psychological concepts and terminology, including mood, cognition, behavior, and personality, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
10. Knowledge of models of human development, including developmental stages, life cycles and personality, and their importance to medical and psychological health and well-being.
11. Knowledge of the influence of familial, social, cultural, and religious conditioning on mental and medical perspectives of health and healing.
12. Knowledge of the interaction of the body, breath, mind, intellect, and emotions in health and well-being.

Sample Questions

1. A client referred to you for yoga therapy presents with anxiety, hypervigilance, the need for a view of doors and windows, and feelings of isolation. This may indicate the client is challenged by
- A. post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**
 - B. diabetes
 - C. fibromyalgia
 - D. all of the above

Correct Answer: A post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

2. Which mind-body system involves the skin and common pathologies that include blisters, rashes, and acne?
- A. musculoskeletal
 - B. endocrine
 - C. immune
 - D. integumentary**

Correct Answer: D integumentary

3. Two of the spine's actions are
- A. flexion and rotation**
 - B. adduction and extension
 - C. rotation and stabilization
 - D. inversion and elevation

Correct Answer: A flexion and rotation

SECTION 3

YOGA THERAPY TOOLS AND THERAPEUTIC SKILLS

Competencies

1. In-depth knowledge of the application of yama and niyama in the context of yoga therapy.
2. In-depth knowledge of the range of yoga practices and their potential therapeutic effects for common conditions.
3. In-depth knowledge of contraindications of yoga practices for specific conditions and circumstances.
4. In-depth knowledge of, and observed capacity for, communication skills such as listening, presence, and directive and non-directive dialogue.
5. Ability to recognize and adapt to specific client needs in an evolving professional therapeutic relationship.
6. Ability to recognize and manage the subtle dynamics inherent in the therapist-client relationship.
7. In-depth knowledge of the scope of practice of yoga therapy and how to assess the need for referral to other professional services.
8. Demonstrated ability to implement effective teaching methods, adapt to unique styles of learning, provide supportive and effective feedback, acknowledge client progress, and cope with unique difficulties and successes.
9. Demonstrated ability to transmit the value of self-awareness and self-responsibility throughout the therapeutic process.
10. Demonstrated ability to develop and adjust practice strategies appropriate to individual clients.
11. Basic knowledge of and demonstrated ability to design, implement, and evaluate group yoga therapy programs.
12. Knowledge of group dynamics and techniques, including communication skills, time management, and the establishment of priorities and boundaries, as well as techniques to address the specific needs of individual participants to the degree possible in a group setting.

Sample Questions

1. A competitive athlete who has practiced yoga for many years is in her third trimester of pregnancy. She complains of increasing pain and pressure in her low back, abdomen, hips, legs, and knees. Even after trying a variety of modified asana and relaxation techniques, you realize she is not improving.

Which is the BEST recommendation?

- A. Advise her not to do any yoga until after she has had her baby.
- B. Advise her to start taking over-the-counter pain medication.
- C. Advise her to consult with her medical professional.**
- D. Advise her to work through the pain and to train more.

Correct Answer: C Advise her to consult with her medical professional

2. The primary tools within the yoga therapy scope of practice are

- A. asana, pranayama, and meditation**
- B. physical adjustments and manipulations
- C. individual or group psychological counseling
- D. all of the above

Correct Answer: A asana, pranayama, and meditation

3. To develop the most effective relationship with the client, a yoga therapist should practice

- A. marketing skills
- B. active listening**
- C. public speaking
- D. advanced yoga postures

Correct Answer: B active listening

SECTION 4

YOGA THERAPY PRACTICE

Competencies

1. Ability to conduct intake and assessment of the client.
2. Ability to elicit the goals, expectations, and aspirations of the client.
3. Ability to integrate information from the intake, evaluation, and observation to develop a working assessment of the client's condition, limitations, and possibilities.
4. Ability to determine which aspects of the client's conditions, goals, and aspirations might be addressed through yoga therapy.
5. Ability to identify priorities and set long- and short-term goals with the client.
6. Ability to apply knowledge of pacification, purification, and strengthening strategies.
7. Ability to apply knowledge of strategies that address common disorders and pathologies of the major human systems and common mental health conditions, as well as other goals and aspirations of the client, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
8. Ability to combine intake, evaluation, observations, and working assessments to develop an appropriate practice or session strategy for individual and group clients, taking into consideration the holistic nature of the individual.
9. Ability to choose and prioritize the use of yoga tools and techniques, including selecting, sequencing, adapting, and modifying yoga practices appropriate to the client's needs.
10. Ability to provide appropriate practices for individuals as well as groups, taking into consideration the assessment of their conditions, limitations, possibilities, and the overall practice strategy.
11. Ability to facilitate the client's or student's experience of the practice.
12. Ability to develop and maintain therapeutic relationships.
13. Ability to provide session follow-up and further development.

Sample Questions

1. Which question will BEST assess a client's spiritual state?

- A. "Do you believe in a moral code of ethics?"
- B. "Do you like to help others?"
- C. "Do you feel that your life has meaning?"**
- D. "Do you believe in the supernatural?"

Correct Answer: C "Do you feel that your life has meaning?"

2. A client's health history and goals are generally captured during which phase in yoga therapy?

- A. intake**
- B. progress evaluation
- C. protocol development
- D. protocol delivery

Correct Answer: A intake

3. A client comes to you with insomnia (for over 3 months), shoulder pain (for over 6 months), and depression (recently diagnosed). What yoga tool would be most effective to start with?

- A. Sun Salutations
- B. Pranayama**
- C. Mantra Chanting
- D. Meditation

Correct Answer: B Pranayama

SECTION 5

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Competencies

1. In-depth knowledge of yoga practices and methods for self-inquiry related to establishing, practicing, and maintaining ethical principles.
2. In-depth knowledge of generally accepted principles of healthcare codes of conduct.
3. Ability to apply generally accepted ethical principles and related concepts from the yoga tradition to professional interactions and relationships.
4. In-depth knowledge of the scope of practice of yoga therapy, resulting in the demonstrated ability to discern the need for referral to other professional services.
5. Knowledge of the extent of one's own individual training, skills, and evolving experience in yoga therapy, and the importance of practicing within such parameters.
6. Understanding the importance of current relevant local, state, and national laws and regulations affecting the work of a yoga therapist.
7. Basic knowledge of business practices relevant to the work of a yoga therapist, including record-keeping, planning, and financial management.
8. Basic knowledge of other healthcare fields and their potential role in and relevance to the work of a yoga therapist.
9. Basic knowledge of how to establish, maintain, and use a referral network of peers and related healthcare practitioners and organizations.
10. Knowledge of the fundamental value of ongoing personal practice, long-term mentorship, and skills maintenance and development through continuing education.

Sample Questions

1. Which yoga guidelines help in the understanding and maintenance of ethical principles?

- A. yama and niyama**
- B. klesha and guna
- C. mahavakya and dosha
- D. kriya and karma

Correct Answer: A yama and niyama

2. Which method would be a proper means for securing client documentation?

- A. unlocked file cabinet
- B. desk drawer
- C. encrypted cloud storage**
- D. none of the above

Correct Answer: C encrypted cloud storage

3. Which of the following is **NOT** a valid reason for disclosing a client's personal health information?

- A. they may harm themselves
- B. a law requires it
- C. they may harm someone else
- D. their partner or spouse requests it**

Correct Answer: D their partner or spouse requests it

REFERENCES

The list of references in the study guide for the IAYT certification exam is intended as a comprehensive reference, not a required reading list. Here are some guidelines for potential test-takers to focus on:

- **Start with the Exam Blueprint** – Identify areas where you feel confident and where you may need more review.
- **Use References Selectively** – If a topic is unfamiliar, refer to the recommended resources to reinforce understanding.
- **Prioritize Core Concepts** – Focus on foundational knowledge rather than memorizing extensive details from multiple sources.

If you have specific areas where you need more depth, the resource list is there to support your learning—but you do **not** need to read everything to succeed.

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