

DoYoga Newsletter

www.DoYoga.com and www.Swatantrya.com

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Enlighten

Swatantrya Yoga — not a 'style' of yoga, but an attitude toward the process of growth and learning in yoga

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Empower

Swatantrya provides a sturdy foundation and guidance for independent, self-directed study

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Embody

The nature of freedom is expansion, and there will be expanding opportunities for learning in the near future

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Moving Forward

The Swatantrya Program will provide structure and freedom while supporting genuine diversity in the study of Yoga As Therapy

Your enthusiastic response to my announcement of the Swatantrya standard has also helped a great deal in illuminating the kind of program that will best support yoga teachers in offering their service, particularly in the field of the therapeutic benefits of yoga practice.

The vast majority of teachers and practitioners interested in this program of study are not seeking yet another piece of paper; nearly all are experienced yoga teachers who have already established their abilities, and many already have formal training in other fields of health and wellness.

What I'm offering is a program that gives structure and direction in moving forward in studies specifically focused on the use of yoga practices and techniques for healing. It invites us to bring to bear diverse fields of knowledge and innovative insights, and acknowledges and supports your own independent work, study and insights.

The possibilities for Yoga As Therapy are as vast as the health challenges we face. No one teacher or school can address them all, or even reduce yoga to a single unitary approach to all health challenges. But a program of learning can and should provide a foundation for you to move forward in exploring and offering your own unique contribution to the field.



Swatantrya Yoga

Swatantrya Yoga is the yoga of independent freedom. The name expresses a philosophical tradition founded upon the independent, creative and evolutionary nature of spirit itself.

Swatantrya is not a 'style,' it's an attitude — toward the learning, practice and the value of yoga. The Swatantrya paradigm ultimately puts the question to you: after learning so much from your teachers, what do you bring as your offering?

This in itself is a revolutionary idea: we are not dogmatically 'following' an ancient path or teacher, but rather positively and creatively participating in living, breathing evolutionary wisdom.



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Requirements

To provide that foundation, the program will set forward core requirements — like the ‘required courses’ for a college degree — and will also provide support for ‘electives’ in your specific field of interest.

The core course requirements consist of the following:

1. Assessment tools for evaluating therapeutic problems — primarily postural assessment tools.
2. Anatomy/Kinesiology/ Functional Anatomy: study of the major muscles affecting structural health that are impacted through asana practice: (e.g. the psoas, gluteals) as well as the smaller muscles and tendons associated with chronic problems (e.g. rotator cuffs/forms of tendinitis, piriformis). This includes knowledge of the relationships between specific muscle groups at work in movement, and whose imbalances have bearing on injuries as well as chronic problems.
3. Asana Alignment and Action — Theory and Practice: alignment oriented training in the major classes of asanas, with focus on the specific muscle groups impacted by the alignments and actions of the poses, and their therapeutic value; also principles of sequencing for working effectively with these muscle groups to address injuries. This includes training in signs of injury (such as forms of tendinitis), contraindications, and modifications and adjustments.
4. Common Therapeutic Problem Areas — the common biomechanical therapeutic problems in muscles and joints — feet and ankles, knees, hips, sacrum and SI joints, spine (all areas — lumbar, thoracic and cervical), shoulder girdle, elbows wrists and hands. This also includes basic training regarding scoliosis, and extends to global problems such as fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue.
5. Breath Pattern Awareness — the therapeutic use of *pranayama* to address distortions in breathing patterns associated with therapeutic problems, and the related role of *guided relaxation* and *meditation*, particularly in treating stress-related or emotional factors in therapeutic problems.
6. Ayurveda Basics — fundamental Ayurvedic principles of the doshas and gunas, and their bearing upon therapeutic recommendations for practice of asana, pranayama and meditation.



My own ‘Fundamentals’ courses will be specifically designed to address these requirements. Completion exams submitted by students within four months following the training will be the basis for certifying the credits granted for the course. (They will be short essay and ‘open book,’ allowing you to draw upon the training as well as your own background and study to address the questions)

Students who have taken my courses in the past will have the option of taking the exam as well, within a time frame that works for them (credits already granted will not be affected). People who take my trainings are of course not required to take these exams: the exams are for those who wish to receive Swatantrya credit hours, and they offer a valuable way to solidify and clarify for yourself your learning from the course.

The Swatantrya web site (www.Swatantrya.com) will provide a list of recommended readings for each subject area of the core requirements, and I’m quite open to suggestions for expanding the list. These requirements can be fulfilled through independent study and/or study with other teachers focused on the specific topic, with credits granted upon satisfactory completion of the exam. It’s highly recommended that you take at least one ‘Fundamentals’ course with me, though I recognize this is not always possible.

I positively encourage study with other teachers, and you can submit for credit for workshops or trainings with other teachers if they are focused specifically on a therapeutic topic. You submit for credit by completing a 10-question form focused on the content of the course and its relevance to the requirements. (It is not a ‘test’) Teachers whose valuable work in these areas will also be recommended through the Swatantrya web site. Your options will not be limited to these recommended teachers alone, and I expect the list will grow.

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Credit System

The current system for assigning credit for training in most yoga certification systems is in terms of ‘hours’ (such as with ‘200 hour’ certifications, ‘500 hour’ and so on). While the logic of this system is reasonably clear, especially within the context of a single training program, it is a rather inflated and unmanageable system when credit is being assigned across a variety of different types of training. Moreover, it suggests that learning is measured by a stopwatch — the length of time spent on a subject.

For a more manageable system, the Swatanrya standard will assign ‘credits’ for courses of study (again, like college credits), rather than simply ‘hours.’ Thus, for example, a weekend training (10 hours) on a therapeutic topic receives 3 credits, where a single day’s training (involving 3 or more hours of training) receives 1 credit hour. The credits are awarded either to the ‘core requirements’ or to the ‘elective’ fields of study, depending on the topic.

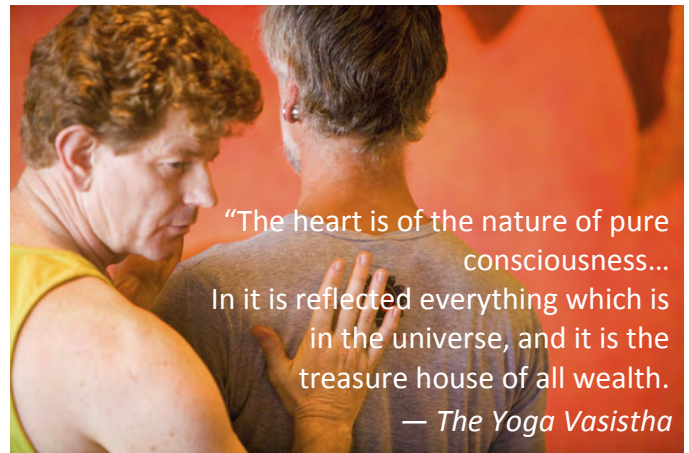
Our intention is to focus on the level and depth of study devoted to a particular topic, rather than on the amount of time spent in the room. The 10-question credit submission form completed after the training verifies the level of focus on the topic covered in the training.

- 1-Day Training (minimum 3 hour session) = 1 credit
- 3-Day Training (min 3 hrs per day, total 10 hrs) = 3 credits
- 5-Day Training = 5 credits
- Independent Study Project = 3 credits
- Apprenticeship with a Teacher = 5 credit hrs *per topic* written up (minimum 20 hours spent with the teacher assisting or observing on that particular therapeutic issue or topic)

Each of the fields of the ‘fundamental requirements’ has a credit hour requirement for completion, for a total of 100 credit hours:

1. Assessment Tools: 10 credits
2. Functional Anatomy/Kinesiology: 20 credits
3. Asana Alignment and Action: 20 credits
4. Common Therapeutic Problem Areas: 30 credits
5. Breath Pattern Awareness: 10 credit hours
6. Ayurveda Basics: 10 credit hours

In addition to the 100 hours of fundamental requirements, **30 hours of ‘elective’ study** is required in the areas of your chosen interest. This *can* be fulfilled through **further** study with a teacher in one of the ‘core’ fields that goes *beyond* the core credit requirements (for instance, further study of Ayurveda beyond the required 10 hours). **Or** it can be training with a teacher or independent study in an area



‘outside’ of the fundamentals requirement, such as the application of yoga practices in the treatment of arthritis, MS, breast cancer recovery, PTSD, addictive behavior, or a host of other topics, biomechanical or otherwise. The elective requirement allows you to define and pursue your specific areas of interest, while allowing you space to be broad-minded, versatile and even eclectic.

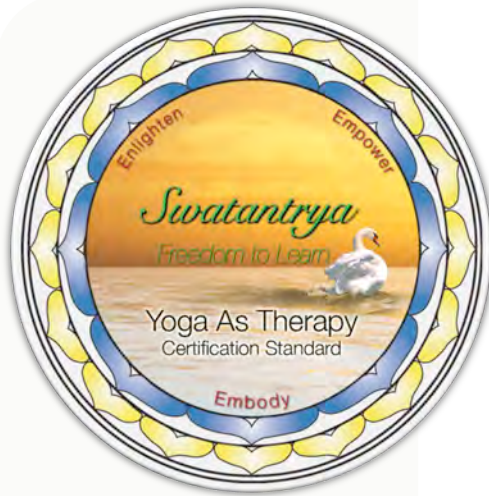
Certification Levels

Completion of the requirements for a level of Swatanrya study ‘certifies’ that you have satisfactorily completed your course of study and have demonstrated your understanding of the material and your ability to apply it. The certification itself does not ‘make’ or license you as a yoga therapist any more than a degree from a law school makes you a lawyer. But it does indicate your excellence in mastering your field of study, which will be significant if regulation comes to pass.

The **first level of certification** requires completion of **130 credit hours** — the 100 hours of basic requirements, and 30 hours of electives. It will involve a **written exam** at the end, which covers questions in the areas of the basic requirements, as well as questions that allow you to demonstrate your knowledge in your chosen area of specialization (drawing upon your study of ‘electives’). It will also involve a **short thesis** in which you present a more in-depth study in the area of your interest, which will involve both research into the topic and laying out the practical applications of your findings. You **may** choose to expand upon an independent study project or apprenticeship topic that was **already** part of your fulfillment of your credit requirements. You’ll also receive suggestions and guidance, both in choosing or refining your topic, and in completing your thesis.

The **Master’s level of certification** requires completion of the first level requirements, and an **additional 50**

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Expanding Opportunities

I will be offering **online courses** through the Yoga Spirit web site (otherwise known as YogaTherapyWeb.com), where you will also find lectures and courses by teachers such as Judith Lasater, Richard Miller, Leslie Kaminoff and many others. My short courses will be on anatomy and therapeutic topics, and upon completion and submission to me of a short quiz, you'll be awarded credits for study.

Study with *other* teachers on topics that specifically fit into the core categories — such as anatomy/physiology, breathing patterns, etc. — **will** also receive credit on completion of a small quiz that will be available through my web site.

We are also producing a cross-over project between **yoga and physical therapy** via video that can be used by both physical therapists and yoga teachers. These video resources will be translated into several languages, and access will be available through a link on my web site once the process of editing is complete.

I will also be working on **further webinars** as a means of effective and inexpensive access to learning, and I will also be recommending and granting credit for study through webinars with other teachers.

credits in the area(s) of your choice or major. These credits may derive largely from independent study projects that you undertake as research toward your final thesis. The second requirement is a **thesis** that is a more extensive and in-depth study of your chosen topic, a good deal of which should be devoted to practical applications of yoga practices to the problem.

Commitment

It is not necessary to choose at the beginning which level of certification you desire. You are free to make your choices along the way, and there are also no time requirements for completion — you can take as long as your life and work situation allows. Nor do you have to be concerned with completing any programs *before* enrolling; you start from where you are, and earn credits as you go.

Your commitment is to your own growth. The program provides a structure for your pursuit of learning, and provides incentive and guidance in moving forward. It does not limit you to a particular style of practice or expression, or subject you to judgment of your teaching style or measure your own abilities against the tastes of others. At each step along the way, you are simply asked to demonstrate that you *know* what you have learned, and you are encouraged to be independent and self-directed in your process of learning.

Your initial financial commitment is the one-time \$30 registration fee. Other fees only arise with your applications for credit hours from workshops, trainings and independent study. (There is no fee for application for credit hours from my workshops and trainings — only the credit hour questionnaire to fill out after the training). There *will* be fees associated with the final exam and thesis projects, all of which will be reasonable. In the case of the thesis, the fee will depend upon the degree of mentoring involved. There is no overall 'tuition' for the Swatantrya program.

Currently Enrolled Members

For those already enrolled in the Swatantrya program, the hours already granted will be translated into credit hours and assigned to the appropriate category.

Yoga Alliance Certification Credit

Yoga Alliance certification indicates training in fundamental teaching skills in Yoga Alliance approved programs. The wide variety of programs offered by studios makes the programs difficult to evaluate fairly for assigning credits to the core requirements of Swatantrya. So credits will *not* be *automatically* assigned for Yoga Alliance certification, whether on the 200 or 500 hour level. But graduates of Yoga Alliance certified trainings **can** do a write-up on portions of the training *relevant* to the core requirements using the *credit questionnaire*, and credits will be awarded accordingly.

Swatantrya Approved Studios

Studios offering trainings — especially Yoga Alliance approved training — **can** submit the curricula of their training relevant to the Swatantrya standards. Then Swatantrya credits will be automatically awarded upon completion of the training program. Testing and evaluation will be done through the studio's own training program, rather than through the Swatantrya questionnaire. The list of approved studios will be available through the Swatantrya web site.

