



Reading List (updated 2022)

200-hour Hatha Yoga Teacher Training

Essential Pre-Course Reading

These are the books we recommend you have to hand throughout the course and we hope you will find them useful throughout the rest of your life.

Please read and be familiar with these books before starting your course. You will need knowledge of them for group discussion, presentation and coursework. There are several translations of some texts. You need to have at least one copy of each text.

1. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

There are many translations of this text, the one that is most up to date and useful is:

- The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Edwin F Bryant.

But there are simpler & shorter translations if you prefer. One of the more accessible is:

- TKV Desikachar. The Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice- a yoga text book with sutras included at the end.
- Online brief translation can be downloaded here:
<http://www.swamij.com/yoga-sutras.htm>

2. The Bhagavad Gita

Again, many translations exist. Recommended translations include:

- Eknath Easwaren. Bhagavad Gita
- George Thompson. The Bhagavad Gita: a new translation
- Edward Viljoen. Bhagavad Gita for Beginners

3. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika Translations include:

- Swami Muktibodhananda. Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Yoga publications Trust
- Brian Dan Akers. Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Yoga Vidya. The text can be downloaded online at (June 2016):
<http://www.swamij.com/hatha-yoga-pradipika.htm>
<http://terebess.hu/english/HathaYogaPradipika2.pdf>

NB There is a new translation coming 2023 from James Mallinson that will be an up to date and accurate translation.

4. A good anatomy/ physiology book:

The Physiology of Yoga, Andrew McGonigle & Matthew Huy

Is a good “myth” busting book with up to date science, available to buy in studio.

Swami Satyananda Sarawati. Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha. Yoga publications trust.

Further recommended reading

1. Asana

Choose a text that outlines the poses.

Options include:

BKS Iyengar. Light on Yoga- has lots of postures but the descriptions are not evidence based.

Or any number of books.

2. Anatomy/ Physiology:

Choose either an online app/ you tube as a resource or another textbook may support you better

Illustrated Yoga Anatomy, Stu Girling (We have copies of both of these in studio to buy)

Andrew Biel. Trail Guide to the Body

Ann Swanson, Science of Yoga

Blandine Calais-Germain, Anatomy of Movement

General Yoga by Westerners

Body, Mind, Spirit, Donna Farhi.

This is now 30 years old but remains a useful book with simple practices that inform the asana you can explore for yourself & reflections on the sutras especially the ethics of yoga.

The Spirit and Practice of Moving Into Stillness by Eric Schiffman

3. A chakra book

David Pond. Chakras for beginners- simple

Or

Anything by Anodea Judith.

- Anodea Judith. Eastern Body Western Mind covers the psychology of chakras
- Anodea Judith. Chakra Yoga covers a more practical approach

4. Yoga literature & history

You may prefer to read up through blogs and online resources

Or go to source texts:

Upanishads, ancient texts elucidating some of the key teachings on yoga and tantra; any translation

Vedas, even more ancient texts which are chanted by priests to this day

Roots of Yoga- refers to a number of source texts and aims to fill some of the many gaps in our knowledge of yoga literature & themes.

Online resources including:

- Yogajournal.com for articles on teaching, asana, pranayama, meditation etc. •
- Bandhayoga.com for information on anatomy
- yogamatters.com is an invaluable resource.

Further Reading- this section could go on forever!

- Yoga Root, James Mallinson etc.

If you'd like to understand yoga history this text offers some insight with readings from a broad array of references and reflections on the development of yoga across the ages.

- Yoga Biomechanics, Stretching redefined; Jules Mitchell.

Take an evidence based approach BUT is hard going, so you might like to wait for this one!

There are many online resources including:

Blogs- Laura writes regularly sharing tips for personal practice & up to date ideas on movement & yoga philosophy. Her newsletters link to videos & articles so be sure to sign up as we will expect you to be taking an interest in relevant yoga circles.

<https://www.bristolschoolofyoga.co.uk/articles> &

<https://lauragilmoreyoga.co.uk/blog>

Podcast- Yoga Movement Meets Science- Jenni Rawlings & Travis Pollen share up to date evidence based research in this podcast, it is a bit US centric but mostly relevant.

Cultural appropriation resources-

Cultural Appropriation- to understand the research & debate around cultural appropriation have a listen & read to the following

Yogajournal.com for articles on teaching, asana, pranayama, meditation etc. Often not at all evidence based

Bandhayoga.com for information on anatomy

yogamatters.com

Evidence Based Yoga

Academic papers to check research on movement science pain science etc. can be found on <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/> A note on reading scientific papers: don't believe everything- it is all open to interpretation & there is a hierarchy of thoroughness with systematic reviews at the top.

Social media there is a lot of good and evidence based work, and a lot of nonsense! We can share on this during the course. Laura tries to support all the trainees and graduates with relevant and up to date information. So do follow if you can cope with instagram! @lauragilmoreyoga and @bristolschoolofyoga

We aim to teach this course in an evidence based manner- ie according to the latest understanding of how the body & mind works, from reliable research. This means we can better serve our students and ourselves by offering a movement & mindfulness & meditation practice based on solid research.

This is “myth busting” stuff since a lot of ideas about yoga movement emphasized the fragility of the body which is now disproven. e.g. your foot on your knee in tree pose could hurt your knees. Whereas now we can move to a movement positive approach- since it has been shown time & again that the body is fundamentally really resilient.

Research into body, mind, neurology is always changing so perhaps simply follow some trusted resources who spend time researching & sharing on this. This is exactly what my yoga based platform also does- so this is ready for you anytime you need more support.

In general be wary of what you read, & what sources you believe, since a lot of what is written is simply wrong! We will guide you to helpful literature and resources throughout the course.

The focus on scientific research can seem to take away from the spiritual, but since yoga has always been a search for truth there must be ways to reconcile this. I like to do this by reflecting on what were the yogis saying with words like “prana”. I touch on this in all my offerings but especially the later 300hr course, once you’ve got to grip with teaching!

A note on reading scientific papers: don’t believe everything- it is all open to interpretation & there is a hierarchy of thoroughness with systematic reviews at the top. It’s helpful as you read a study to see how thorough the research was and whether their conclusions actually match what they set out to study & how they approached it.

I describe this in more detail here....

In Conclusion

Read anything that you can- anything that you are interested in. Many of us are guilty of having the books- not necessarily studying them.

Yoga is vast- we can think of so many related fields from yoga history & philosophy to pain science, somatics to exercise science, neurology to psychology etc. etc. so decide what you want to know and go for it!

For an evidence based approach you will need to know how to read academic papers, a few specific books & to question everything you read!

It's not that yoga language about "prana" or energy is wrong. Just that we can't validate it scientifically- so we can leave it as a separate exploration.