

Teacher Training Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What makes the Thrive ISHTA Yoga teacher Training Program unique?

The Thrive ISHTA Teacher Training Program is lead by Alan Finger who was trained from the age of 16 by the most prominent modern yogis of our time. Other staff teachers include yoga teachers with a deep background in the practice of yoga in the ISHTA lineage as well as other traditions such as Iyengar and Astanga (vinyasa yoga is a branch of these two traditions).

In addition, we have developed the Teacher Training Program to meet 3 major goals:

- Intensive training that can be completed within a 3 month time period so that potential teachers and immersion students can get certified within a reasonable time period with minimal interruption to their lifestyle and livelihoods.
- Exceed the Yoga Alliance standards by providing rich content written and taught by experienced experts in yoga.
- Students will leave prepared to be able to teach a yoga class and will have the foundation to refine their teaching in the advanced 300-hr training. Students will be mentored and be able to practice teaching yoga classes at Thrive.

Q: Is the Thrive ISHTA Yoga Teacher Training Program appropriate for me if I want to deepen my practice but have no interest in being a yoga teacher?

Yes. The Thrive ISHTA Yoga Teacher Training is a yoga immersion designed to train you to be a teacher for yourself first and is perfect for students who seek to deepen their awareness of postures and who seek to understand how yoga can be used to help balance their lives. The 200 hr training is a perfect foundation for cultivating your practice of yoga, meditation and pranayama.

Q: I am new to yoga and am not able to do advanced postures, can I take this training?

Yes. We require that you have a basic understanding of yoga postures and have been practicing for 6 months. The Teacher Training Program is an *inclusive* program and since yoga is an *individual* practice, we expect different levels of physical abilities. We seek students with a commitment and desire to deepen their understanding of yoga.

Q: Will I be able to teach Vinyasa Yoga after the training?

Yes. The Thrive ISHTA Yoga Teacher Training graduate will be trained to teach the asana yoga class format that suits them. The student will learn tools for living a balanced life. Practice teaching will be based on the ISHTA system, a deep and well rounded yoga training which includes and asana, meditation and pranayama practice.

Q: What is ISHTA Yoga?

ISHTA Yoga derives its name first from Patanjali's Sutra 2.44:

SVADHYAYAD ISTADEVATA SAMPRAYOGAH.

(Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: Book 2, Sutra 44)

*"Through selfstudy one ascertains one's necessary path to spiritual enlightenment.
Traditionally this path is represented by an individualized spiritual deity."*

Hindus are traditionally assigned *ishta devatas*, or particular gods who look after them throughout their lives, based on the qualities those deities possess or represent and the needs of the individual. For the same reason, we feel everyone who practices yoga needs an *ishta sadhana*, an individualized daily practice that enables them to best look after themselves. Thus ISHTA means individualized or "personalized", emphasizing ISHTA's belief in finding the yoga that best suits the individual. The second meaning of ISHTA is the acronym Integrated Science of Hatha, Tantra and Ayurveda. These three principles – Hatha, Tantra and Ayurveda – are the three key sciences of yoga, and it is through understanding of these three sciences that the student can blend and find their own practice. ISHTA Yoga provides in depth studies for each of these three pillars for its practitioners and teachers.

Hatha Yoga is the science of strengthening the weaknesses in an individual and removing the stress and blockages that form in our system, through the practice of asana and pranayama. The balance between strength and weakness, effort and surrender, is hatha (sun/moon) yoga. It is interesting to note that the asana element is what most Westerners consider to be synonymous with Hatha yoga; however, asana is the basis of reestablishing harmony in the physical body so that you may breathe deeply and freely in order to practice and explore pranayama. Hatha yoga originated in the Tantric period.

Tantra embraces all aspects of our being, fulfilling that which Hatha yoga sets the stage for. Beginning with pranayama and following the last four limbs or Raja Yoga, it uses the mind and the energetic body to establish yoga in your system. To exist in the state of Tantra is to reside in the fullest potential in every aspect of our being; and more, to understand that all these aspects are interrelated. From the root words *tanoti*, expansion, and *trayati*, liberation, Tantra is the belief that our essential nature is divine, perfect "as it is", part of the universal consciousness, and filled with bliss. The practice of

Tantra is the practice of expanding our awareness into this blissful state of liberation through awareness of our innate perfection and acceptance of ourselves and everything around us. The tools of Tantra in practice are: pranayama, Kriya yoga, visualization and all aspects of meditation.

Ayurveda means the science of life, but with the sense of: what makes you alive? Ayurveda is the study of *prana*, the vital force of life, and how it manifests uniquely in every individual.. In Ayurveda, these distinct forces are called the *doshas* and are given names: *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Vata* (air and space) is the force that motivates all movement and breath: even on a cellular level, it moves the cells of our bodies and the thoughts that move through the mind. Lightness and creativity of mind and body are essential *Vata* characteristics. *Pitta* (fire and water) is the heat that is the temperature of our body, our metabolism, our physical magnetism, and the power for metabolism of thought, as thought too is a chemical process. The digestive fire in our system is created by acid, which is the combination of fire and water; the fire and directness of *Pitta* results in clarity and strength of thought. *Kapha* (earth and water) is the force of physical manifestation which binds water and earth together and creates the flesh body. Steadiness, patience and “groundedness” are *Kapha* qualities.

How the life force mixes with the elements and exists in every human being is unique; each human being has their own unique makeup of the *doshas* to suit their spirit and its karmic tendencies. That unique mixture is called the *prakriti*, which is the constitution of a particular human being, or the constitutional makeup of the *doshas* in that human being. The effect of our *prakriti* in our circumstances of our daily living creates our *vrikriti*, which is the state or condition our life force is in. In other words, our *prakriti* is the underlying immutable fingerprint and *vrikriti* is the mutable, ever changing experience of the interplay of our *prakriti* in our current circumstances as it manifests in our daily life. Therefore we need a good understanding of our inherent nature (*prakriti*) first, and then an awareness of our *vrikirti*, so through our yoga practice we can address the imbalances of our living to bring us into perfect balance and perfect health.

It is through this process that ISHTA Yoga, through the tools of Hatha, Tantra and Ayurveda, helps us to understand and address the unique construction and the unique needs of each individual.

Q: Is attendance in all the sessions mandatory to receive the ISHTA Certification and to be able to register with Yoga Alliance as a certified teacher?

Yes.

Q: What if I have to miss a session or if I am sick?

If you are going to miss a session for any reason, and you would like to receive the Certification, you will need to make arrangements with the Training Coordinator to make up the missed sessions at your cost. You must notify the Training Coordinator as soon as possible that you are going to miss a session.

Q: How do I receive my certification and register with Yoga Alliance?

After the testing weekend (last weekend of the training), you will be notified of your certification status and will receive the necessary paperwork to register with Yoga Alliance. You can go to the Yoga Alliance website and complete the forms to register. More information about Yoga Alliance registration is available on the Yoga Alliance website at www.yogaalliance.org.

Q: After the 200 hr Thrive ISHTA Yoga Training, how can I study ISHTA more deeply?

Thrive will be offering a 300 hr Professional ISHTA Training for your 500 hr RYT with Yoga Alliance.

Q: What are the next steps? How do I register?

Decide YES! Immerse yourself in the training and it will transform your life. Register by completing the Thrive ISHTA Yoga Teacher Training Application and submit it with a \$500 nonrefundable deposit to Thrive Yoga. The Training staff will review your application and notify you of acceptance to the program. At that time, you are required to pay for the program in full by March 8 or arrange for financing through Susan Bowen at Thrive Yoga.

Q: Do you offer work study in exchange for the Thrive ISHTA Yoga Teacher Training?

A work-study position is available in exchange for a 50% discount on tuition. The position requires administrative tasks such as tracking attendance, collecting and tracking homework, and various other duties as assigned. The student must have a strong competency in the major computer office programs. If you are interested, make note of this on your application or contact Susan Bowen directly.