



What is the difference between a yoga teacher and A certified Yoga Therapist?



Most people see yoga as a system of exercise. Students most often go to a yoga class to exercise in a drop-in/large class setting, where there are many levels of ability and experience. In a large class, the instructor is not always in a position to support and guide the student. A yoga teacher will have a minimum of 200 hours of training.

On the other hand, a yoga therapist requires a minimum of 1000 hours of training. Yoga therapy is usually done one-on-one or in small groups of people with similar conditions or life situations. According to the International Association of Yoga Therapists, of which I am a member, "Yoga therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and well-being through the application of the teachings and practices of Yoga". (www.iayt.org.)

Yoga therapy utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to treatment and well-being. Rather than just addressing the physical body, yoga therapy acknowledges that there are five koshas or layers of self that must be addressed for overall healing to take place. The practice and philosophical application of yoga into our everyday life bring all the koshas - body, breath, mind, wisdom, and spirit - into harmony, promoting overall health. The therapist's role is to focus on their clients' needs and to support and empower them in their self-care so they can overcome their challenges and gain independence and health.

Therapists will often focus on the specific symptoms that trouble their clients and identify methods to help them manage those symptoms. Examples include helping clients with mobility issues, chronic pain, fatigue, anxiety, depression or sleeplessness. Therapists are trained to assess clients through listening, questioning, observing, and appropriate touching. Therapists look for ways to help their clients reduce or manage their symptoms, improve their function and help them with their attitude in relation to their health conditions. A well-balanced yoga routine is a great way to empower people to help themselves rather than taking a pill or having someone else work on them.

After assessing the client, therapists establish manageable goals, develop a practice intervention, and then teach the client to practice that intervention. In this sense, therapists choose yoga techniques including talk therapy, journaling and life coaching based on how they will specifically benefit individual clients.

A typical one-on-one yoga therapy session includes:

- Discussing medical history and examining physical, mental, energetic, and spiritual needs.
- Conducting an analysis of breathing, posture, gait, and mobility issues.
- Choosing appropriate physical poses and adapting them to meet the client's needs.
- Utilizing breathing, meditation, and relaxation/mindfulness techniques.
- Providing "homework", such as journaling, life skills and other support techniques.

About Terri

Terri Morgan, founder of YOGA for your KNOTS Inc. - a cozy, private home-based studio in Carp, Ottawa, Ontario - is a Yoga Therapist certified by the International Association of Yoga Therapists and an experienced Yoga instructor. She focuses on applying yoga therapy principles to prevent and heal injuries. Her training includes Trauma Informed Yoga, Pain Care Yoga, Yoga Nidra, a meditation and conscious relaxation practice and Somatics, a mind-body approach to improving health through neuromuscular training. She is also a certified Chair Yoga instructor.

**To learn more about her yoga classes, private yoga therapy feel free to visit:
www.YOGAforyourKNOTS.com**