



Report on YogaFit Training to complete 200hr Yoga Alliance Qualification

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During the northern spring of 2008 I spent 6 weeks in the States under taking the training to complete my yoga alliance 200hr qualification, thanks in part to the generous support of the Shackleton Scholarship Fund for which I am very grateful.

I had not imagined when I first began to practice and teach yoga 6 years ago that it would have such a huge influence on many areas of my life. My initial reasons for practising were for physical benefits of strength and flexibility but over the years like so many people who take up yoga my reasons for continued practice are now no longer the same.

I feel very fortunate to have been able to spend 6 weeks entirely devoted to yoga practice and during that time discovered many more benefits of yoga and also how to teach and modify physical postures for pre & post natal clients as well as older or less able-bodied clients. Workshops were also held on anatomy and alignment for yoga practice, so that teachers are able to ensure a safer practice for their students. As well as workshops covering the lower levels of 1 & 2 to re-cap knowledge and bring the teachers up to date with any new developments at those levels.

Yoga comprises 8 limbs, which are referred to as astanga:

1. Yama – Social ethics of which there are 5 (ahimsa – non-violence, satya – truth, asteya – non-stealing, brahmacharya – appropriate use of one's vital energy & aparigraha – non-possessiveness)
2. Niyama – Personal ethics of which there are 5 (sauca – purity, santosa – contentment, tapas – practice causing change, svadhyaya – self-study, isvarapranidhana – devotion)
3. Asana – Physical postures
4. Pranayama – Breath regulation
5. Pratyahara – Internalisation of the senses
6. Dharana – Focus or concentration (preparation for meditation)
7. Dhyana – Meditation
8. Samadhi – Complete absorption or enlightenment

Level's 4 & 5 focus less on asana and more on a variety of methods for developing the other seven limbs there by allowing the teachers to further develop their own sense of self awareness and personal practice, which in turn they can then pass on to their students.

Since returning home I have continued to teach twice a week in Stanley incorporating the new ideas, concepts & formats into the classes. As well as my regular class I am also planning to run a pre natal and a class for older or less able-bodied clients, which will begin during the spring.

Plans are also under way in conjunction with the Mental Health Awareness Strategy Group to hold a yoga workshop over the weekend of 20th & 21st Sept on the West. These workshops will incorporate a wide variety of practices from all limbs of yoga and hopefully allow those who attend to take advantages of the benefits that yoga can bring by continuing or developing their own practice in the future.