

## **‘Healthy Ageing through Yoga’ Graduate Training Course**

### **Introduction:**

Life expectancy has increased over the past few decades with the age group over 80 years of age doubling since 1996. (Australian Demographics Statistics. June 2016)

The public health message for Healthy Ageing, emphasizes the importance of exercise. Many health care professionals encourage older people to practice yoga. However, many older people begin yoga with little or no knowledge of yoga and they may be starting their practice after years of a sedentary lifestyle or after a major episode of ill health or surgery.

The ageing body undergoes Primary Ageing Changes (the changes that we all experience) and Secondary Ageing Changes (changes complicated by chronic health conditions).

To benefit from a yoga program, the holistic combination of physical, cognitive and spiritual aims of yoga need to be introduced. The benefits of yoga occur when it is implemented as a way of life (not just an exercise program) and is best done with gentle, regular exercise and the exploration of cognitive relaxation guided by a yoga teacher trained in this field.

### **The Course:**

Between 1996 to 2016, people over the age of 65 increased by 3 % but those aged over 85 years of age, doubled in number. (Australian Demographics Statistics. June 2016)

The yoga teacher who is experienced with working with older students and for the older person who has practiced yoga for some time, they will be aware of the specialised needs of the ageing body. This may not be the case for many yoga teachers.

The ageing population, is being encouraged both in the media and by health practitioners to remain active for a healthy old age. (Johnson et al. 2008). Many are being directed either through personal research or by General Practitioners, to take up yoga. Yoga is being presented as a ‘panacea for all that ails you’. For these reasons many older people turn up at a yoga class with unrealistic expectations and may expect a purely physical activity.

Primary Ageing Changes, to the brain and nervous system, pre- dispose the older

person to reduced cognitive ability. This reduction can be mitigated with relaxation and meditation practices. Dementia is a 'fear' that many older people acknowledge. Yoga has been recognised as mitigating the onset of dementia. (Small et al. 2008). Age sensitive introduction of Pranayama, Dharana, Dhyana and Niyama will be included in this training.

With the increased life expectancy, brings more complex management of chronic disease and surgical techniques, polypharmacy and many undiagnosed health conditions. "Rather than directly causing Osteoarthritis (OA), ageing changes in the musculoskeletal system contribute to the development of OA by making the joint more susceptible". (Loeser. 2010).

The older person may have undiagnosed health conditions.

Pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes are such conditions. (Shaw et al. 2012). This also applies to hypertension and cognitive deficits. These conditions may not become apparent until the older person starts some form of exercise.

### **Summary:**

This course is not expecting to train the yoga teacher to be a health practitioner, but to provide the background knowledge of the different abilities between a 65 year old and an 80 year old and modify the practice to suit each student and provide a safe and effective practice. It is aimed at the Yoga teacher who has limited experience with teaching the older, beginner student.

*"With the changing demographics and the promotion of physical activity, these rates (of injury) will likely increase and recreational injuries among older adults will become a more pressing public health issue".* (Gerson et al. 2001)

As many of these older students will have limited background knowledge of yoga, the holistic benefits of breathing, meditation, relaxation and the language of Sanskrit may need to be introduced with the older generation's lack of knowledge and possible suspicion of 'foreign' practices, in mind.

The yoga practice for the older student will include aspects that the general yoga teacher may not have experience with. As an example, the ears, tongue, and jaw all undergo significant Primary Ageing Changes, and strengthening and flexibility practice need to be included in every yoga class. The importance of foot exercises and balancing practice is one of the most reported benefits of yoga.

With the increased Government scrutiny for persons providing care and activities to the older population, consideration will need to be given to the qualifications of the yoga teacher providing yoga sessions to this demographic. Insurance policy cover for yoga teachers who specialise in Yoga for the older person and who enter Residential Aged Care Facilities, may soon require some post graduate training.

### **References:**

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. Australian Demographics Statistics. Gerson, L. and Stevens, J. 2004. Recreational injuries among older Americans, 2001. *Injury Prevention*. 10. P. 134-138.

Johnson, M. and Bungum, T. 2008. Aging Adults Learning New Avocations: Potential increases in Activity among Educated Baby-Boomers. *Educational Gerontology*. 34. p. 970-996.

Loeser, R. 2010. Age-Related Changes in the Musculoskeletal System and the Development of Osteoarthritis. *Clinical Geriatric Medicine*.26(3).p.371-386.

Shaw, J. and Tanamas, S. Ed. 2012. Diabetes: the silent pandemic and its impact on Australia. Downloaded from <https://static.diabetesaustralia.com.au/s/fileassets/diabetes-australia/e7282521-472b-4313-b18e-be84c3d5d907.pdf>

Small, G. and Vorgan, G. 2008. The Alzheimer's Prevention Program. Workman Publishing New York.

### **Your Course co-ordinators:**

#### ***Ruth Campbell, Yoga Australia Senior teacher.***

Ruth has been teaching yoga to older students for 12 years and has considerable practical experience in dealing with the particular challenges of this very special age group. Her experience in working regularly at a Retirement Centre on Brisbane's northside has inspired her interest in this field of work. She has specific training in Chair Yoga, Therapy Yoga and the relevant practices of Yin Yoga which can safely be introduced to older students. As a Yoga teacher with over 15 years of experience Ruth enjoys, and constantly learns from the difficulties faced by students who are regarded as "Seniors".



***Elizabeth Williams***

Liz has worked in the health field for over 40 years. Since 2000 she has been a Clinical Nurse Specialist, Clinical Nurse Educator and Clinical Nurse Consultant of Geriatric Nursing. Her work has involved physical, cognitive, and social assessments in the acute hospital, community and RACF. She has worked with experienced physiotherapists, developing fall prevention exercise interventions, rehabilitation programs following hip, knee and shoulder replacements and fractures. She has also developed an assessment tool for monitoring the confused older patient in hospital and an associated education package for health care staff. Liz has extensive experience working with the older client with cognitive impairment. Her post graduate qualifications include:

- Masters of Health Science:- Aged Care and Healthy Ageing.
- Graduate Certificate:- Mental Health (Aged Care).
- Graduate Certificate:- Aged Care Nursing
- Diabetes:- Advanced Nursing Management
- Wound Management for the Adult.
- Assessing and Managing Acute Adult Pain
- Palliative Care
- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment TAE 40110

Liz has practiced yoga for many years. She has completed 200 hours of Yoga Teacher Training with Pine Rivers Yoga and Level 2 Chair Yoga Teacher Training with Knoff Yoga.



<b>TIME</b>	<b>Saturday 28th April Activity</b>	<b>Time (mins)</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April Activity</b>	<b>Time (mins)</b>
8:00- 8:10am	Introduction	10	8:00 -9:00am	Age modified sequence with focus on age appropriate warm up movements	60
8:10 – 9:00 am	Surya Namaskar with Age appropriate modifications	50	9:00 – 10:00am	Theory: Primary Ageing Changes (includes covering Workbook assignment)	60
9:00 – 11:00 am	Theory: Primary Ageing Changes (includes covering Workbook assignment)	120	10:00 -10:30am	Specific needs of the older yoga student. Feet, ankles, wrists, elbows, knees, eye, ear, tongue movements	30
11:00 – 11:30am	Break		10:30- 11:00am		
11:30 – 12:00pm	Group work:- develop practices for Balance, Flexibility, Strength	30	11:00am - 13.00pm	Group practice. Develop practice for special senses. Incorporate warm-up, special senses practice into a sequence	120
12:00 – 13:30pm	Implement the sequences from the group work with comments & questions	90	13:00 - 13.30pm	Yoga philosophy and ageing	30
13:30- 14:30pm	Lunch				
14:30- 15:30pm	Theory: Adult learning principles. Lesson plans: Social attitudes: Ageing	60	14:30-15:00pm	Healthy ageing and cognition	30
15:30- 16:30pm	Modified yoga for bone strengthening	60	15:00 – 15:30pm	Asana & philosophy practice for Healthy Cognition	30
16:30-17:00pm	Relaxation/Conclusion (Savasana)	30	15:30-16:00pm	Lymphatic system, ageing and the importance to healthy ageing	30
			16:00 – 17:00pm	Asana Practice bringing all aspects of the weekend together including a Gratitude relaxation	60
	<b>Total</b>	450			450

<b>TIME</b>	<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August Activity</b>	<b>Time (mins)</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August Activity</b>	<b>Time (mins)</b>
8:00 – 9:00am	Short warm up practice with emphasis on age appropriate movements	60	8:00 - 9.30am	Chair yoga with Healthy Ageing students	90
9:00 – 10:30am	Theory: Secondary ageing changes	90	9:30 – 10:00am	Medication/First Aid	60
10:30-11:00am	Break		10:3- - 11:00am		
11:30- 12:30pm	Theory: Secondary ageing changes. Focus on Workbook questions	60	11:00 12:00pm	Visiting older yoga student class	60
12:00 - 13.30pm	Cognitive impairment: Yoga for anxiety; depression; MCI; dementia	60	12:00 – 12:30pm	Discussion with the older students how ageing; health issues; social issues & attitude, have impacted on their life	30
			12:30 – 13:30pm	Class discussion. Question/answers about the Senior Yoga class	30
13:30 – 14:30pm	Lunch		13:30 – 14:30pm	Lunch	
14:30 – 15:30pm	Group work: Develop practice for : cardiac disease, osteoporosis; osteoarthritis, fear of falling	60	14:30 – 15:30pm	Group work: developing yoga practice for specific abilities and health conditions	60
15:30 – 16:30pm	Implement the group work sequences	60	15:30 – 16:30pm	Implementing the group work sequences	60
16:30 – 17:00pm	Relaxation with emphasis stress reduction	30	16:30 – 17:00pm	Relaxation (Savasana)	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>