



SCOPE OF PRACTICE

An accredited Yoga Therapist may pursue any activity that falls within the Scope of Practice. Currently in Australia, Yoga Therapist accreditation is based on verification of initial and continuing competence through the professional body, the Australasian Association of Yoga Therapists (AAYT). Some Yoga Therapists will hold additional qualifications that complement the scope of Yoga Therapy, which will permit such practitioners an extended Scope of Practice, for example being a registered psychologist, physiotherapist, doctor, naturopath etc. Such extended scope is beyond normal Yoga Therapy practice and is to be regulated by the scope and codes of the professional registering body of other such disciplines. The duty of care of a Yoga Therapist is to ensure the safety of a client at all times and to refer to a more appropriate therapist or medical practitioner when the client presents with symptoms outside the expertise of the therapist.

AAYT accredited yoga therapists are expected to understand the 'power differential' between clients and therapists and to avoid the misuse and/or abuse of power for any type of exploitation or suppression. AAYT holds the right to withdraw the accreditation of any member or Training Provider who does not confirm totally to these principles.

A **Yoga Therapist** is an experienced Yoga Teacher with qualifications, specialised skills and knowledge in the application of Yoga within a therapeutic setting.

A **Yoga Therapist** draws from the principles of Yoga and the full range of Yoga practices, bio-medical knowledge and assessment skills to establish a professional relationship with the client. Together, the therapist and client will develop a self-empowering therapeutic program appropriate to the client's needs.

Yoga Therapists registered by AAYT have undertaken additional training beyond that of a yoga teaching qualification and adhere to professional ethics, guidelines and codes relating to the practice of Yoga Therapy in Australia. Further, accredited yoga therapists adhere to all legislative requirements of their country, state or territory including having necessary checks if working with vulnerable populations or in government subsidised venues such as hospitals.

Yoga Therapy may occur in the following settings:

- Individualised yoga therapeutic consultations that occur in a one to one setting. A parent/guardian must be present if the client is a child/or a member of a vulnerable population as defined by the current legislation in that country, state or territory. Alternatively a parent/guardian may provide written permission.

However, as the therapeutic value of the sanga (group) is widely understood and supported by evidence-based research, Yoga Therapy can also take the following forms:

- Specialist groups, such as Yoga for people with breast cancer and Yoga for post-traumatic stress syndrome. In this setting, the Yoga Therapist recognises that, while there are similarities within the group, individual differences need to be taken into account and that a “one size fits all” approach is not Yoga Therapy. In this situation, individual assessment will occur prior to class entry.
- A group therapeutic yoga class consisting of people with a variety of illnesses and/or conditions. Again, individual modifications will be given and individual assessment provided prior to class entry.

*In special cases assessment and evaluation may occur in a group setting. The first group session becomes the assessment.

A Yoga Therapist is qualified to work from a holistic yoga framework of health to:

- Work within the scope of a Yoga Therapy qualification with a variety of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health conditions.
- Offer an integrated set of practices aligned to the needs of the individual and according to yoga models of health such as, but not confined to, the pancamaya kosha (dimensions of the human system) and guna (fundamental forces of nature).
- Include yoga practices such as asana (postures), pranayama (breathwork), relaxation, meditation, *mudra* (energetic gestures and seals), *banda* (energy locks), *mantra* (sacred sounds), *bhavana* (imagery),

A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:

- Work with clients presenting with issues outside the therapists areas of competence.
- Advertise themselves as a medical practitioner.

<p><i>sankalpa</i> (affirmation/intention), yogic lifestyle and nutrition advice according to a yoga framework, education in yoga philosophy, and other practices steeped in the yoga tradition and for which the therapist has received appropriate training, certification and registration.</p>	
<p>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to have an appropriate understanding of health and health systems to:</p>	<p>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an understanding of different diseases, the effects of medications, and contraindications, which helps to inform what is recommended as a suitable practice for each individual. • Be informed by diagnosis provided by other health professionals qualified to do so. • Have a basic understanding of different treatments and procedures from a variety of sources, or, can identify and source credible and relevant information, as required. • Have a basic understanding of health reports from a variety of sources. • Have a basic understanding of transference and counter-transference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnose a medical condition. • Make false claims about yoga's therapeutic and healing capacities. • Advise about ceasing prescribed medication.
<p>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to liaise with other health professionals to:</p>	<p>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive and provide referrals from and to other appropriate healthcare providers. • Be part of a multi-disciplinary team when necessary. • Engage with medical or allied health professionals (when appropriate) and use best practice referral/ feedback processes to optimize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise about other health treatment modalities other than referring clients to appropriate personnel or services. • Request diagnostic tests or procedures unless suitably qualified. • Interpret raw diagnostic test results. • Prescribe medication, nutritional supplements or herbs from Western or traditional medical methods such

<p>client health and wellbeing outcomes.</p>	<p>as Chinese medicine or Ayurveda, unless suitably qualified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform any invasive procedures. • Judge or make recommendations about any other form of advice or treatment from another healthcare professional*.
<p>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to provide assessment and treatment by:</p>	<p>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing each individual client according to a holistic procedure from a Yoga Therapy framework, including qualitative and quantitative assessment tools and maintaining records according to statutory requirements. • Using the assessment process to identify any risk factors or contraindications to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the Yoga Therapy intervention and to then develop an appropriate treatment without fostering dependency. • Developing a treatment plan and/or providing advice within a Yoga Therapy framework with appropriate follow-up procedures and review at regular intervals, while maintaining records according to statutory requirements. • Using practices of yoga within their Yoga Therapy training which are shown to be safe and effective, to support the client and help that client manage their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. • Providing suitable modifications of practices appropriate to each individual client. • Making physical adjustments** to postures only by verbal instruction or gentle touch to the area of the body that needs a change, but only after permission has been sought and given. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform physical adjustments**, manipulations or massage, unless suitably qualified. • Undertake individual or group psychological counselling, unless suitably qualified. • Recommend specific lifestyle changes outside a Yoga Therapy framework or give dietary advice beyond the yoga nutrition framework, unless suitably qualified.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing clear goals of each Yoga Therapy session. • Providing clear instructions for any home-practice that is given, with appropriate feedback mechanisms. • Providing a program that suits the individual client's needs, learning style and access to resources, such as time and equipment. • Fostering the client's own support networks, independent practice and self-responsibility for their own wellbeing. • Providing clear processes for client feedback. • Providing guidance for lifestyle changes to create improved wellbeing; this may include basic nutritional recommendations according to a yoga nutrition framework as provided in Yoga Therapy training. • Using basic methods of touch to guide a movement or to suggest how a client can change their position. 	
<p>As part of their professional practice, a Yoga Therapist is required to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have successfully completed a specialist postgraduate training in Yoga Therapy recognised by a professional association that has clear membership standards consistent with worldwide Yoga Therapy practice, such as AAYT. • Maintain all qualifications and ongoing professional development requirements. • Maintain registration with their professional body. • Have a basic understanding of current yoga evidence-based research. • Maintain confidentiality • Maintain professional practice by having respectful, clear communication; by following the ethical standards of relevant Yoga Therapist/Yoga Teacher organisations and by displaying their qualifications in a suitably visible location. 	
<p>As part of their professional practice, a Yoga Therapist is required to:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to all legal, regulatory and business issues relating to the administration of a professional practice. • Hold the required documentation for working with minors if applicable in their work. • Have parents or guardians present when providing yoga therapy for minors unless 	

written permission has been given if applicable in their work.

- Hold the required documentation for working with vulnerable people if applicable in their work.
- Hold the required documentation for working in Government subsidised facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, some retirement villages etc if applicable in their work.

Other comments:

AAYT has chosen to use a wide, principle-based Scope of Practice to describe the purpose, values and boundaries of a registered Yoga Therapist rather than include a specific list of tasks. It is recognised that a Yoga Therapist will apply their individual skills and knowledge, drawing on both traditional and innovative practices while remaining aware of new innovations and treatment trends within the healthcare environment whilst adhering to all legislative requirements of Allied health care workers such as holding relevant documents for working with children, other vulnerable community members or government subsidised facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, retirement villages etc when applicable in their work. This approach ensures that the Scope of Practice for Yoga Therapy will continue to be relevant in a continually changing healthcare system and that beneficial outcomes will be obtained for each individual seeking the services of a registered Yoga Therapist.

*At times the Yoga Therapist may be offering complementary options which provides the client with new possibilities and practices than those offered by the medical practitioner and enabling the client to make an informed choice, without the Yoga Therapist transgressing into the decision-making of the medical practitioner.

**Adjustment = In Yoga Therapy, it may be necessary to guide the client into improved alignment of the physical body. This may be given through instruction or asking the individual to feel the area of incorrect alignment. At times, it may require the therapist to modify the client's physical alignment by gently guiding the required change through touch, which will only occur after permission has been sought and given in a safe environment without any abuse of power.