

CYF Newsletter - January 2025

Chair's introduction

Hari Om Yogis! Welcome to our new look CYF!

When I first attended the CYF October 2014 seminar as a very nervous trainee yoga teacher, I never thought that 10 years on, I would be Chair of the CYF!



At the CYF, we are in a really challenging time for our Fellowship. The winds of change really are blowing through the CYF at the moment – we have reduced the number of seminars due to dwindling attendances – our funds cannot sustain the cost of running these events, plus the number of trainees has plummeted. As a committee, we feel that the Covid pandemic really has changed so many people's outlook on life which has had a profoundly negative effect on the CYF. One of the major changes is abandoning the membership fee, as many members were leaving and did not feel that it was worth the membership fee, particularly if they couldn't attend our events.

Like a flock of geese, on their migration, we are stronger together. A goose can't physically cope with the migration flight on its own, but as a member of the flock it survives the flight. Together we hope that we can continue as a wonderful fellowship. I will never forget how welcoming CYF members were when I joined them.

Let me introduce myself then: Having joined the CYF in the autumn of 2014 as a trainee yoga teacher. I qualified as a yoga teacher in June 2017. I first did yoga when I was 17 and studying for my 'A' levels in Maths, Further Maths and Geography. Yoga seemed to reset my brain, plus it was a bit of exercise. I hated the traditional PE taught in high school, although as a youngster I loved doing gymnastics.

Yoga got abandoned when I got married and had a family, although the breathwork did come in useful during childbirth. My desire to stay fit took me into weight training, but as time progressed combined with my day-job of bus driving (which I have done for 26 years now), the weights started to catch up with my joints. So, in the mid 'noughties' I returned to yoga, which eventually took me to an Iyengar based class at the local leisure centre. One week when the main teacher was away, we had a 'cover teacher' who did not impress me.

"I can do this" I thought to myself – after all, I worked in training and development in the bus industry, so why couldn't I teach yoga? There was no way that I could fit the Iyengar yoga teacher training around my shiftwork, and then my Iyengar teacher suggested the CYF course. The rest is history!

As well as driving buses, I teach yoga and support CYF trainees as a tutor. Over the year, my practice has developed into a Hatha-flow style practice, much of the inspiration for this coming from time spent in Nice, France with teacher Céline Geers. I always aim to have fun during my yoga practice – what could be better for the soul than yoga and laughter!

Love and light
Gill

Wendy Dineen is our latest CYF member to qualify as a yoga teacher. Wendy has a wealth of experience in both education and mindfulness, and kindly shared this feature with us. A special thank you to Lisa Russell for assisting Wendy with the photographs too. Wendy has a beautiful website too: www.mymindfulcoach.co.uk

Viparita Karani (legs up the wall). This is very much a restorative practice

Breathe, surrender, melt, my mind empties and my belly warms and softens. You can stay here for 10 minutes, 20 minutes, sometimes a half an hour or more, until the pose has drawn every last drop of angst and agitation from your soul. Slowly sit up, refreshed and renewed, feeling better able to manage life's challenges of the season with clarity and balance.

This soothing, restorative posture calms the nervous system, eases muscle fatigue, and helps restore healthy, restful breathing. Many yoga instructors offer it as an antidote to exhaustion, illness, and weakened immunity.

In addition, it invites us to drop beneath the surface of life into quieter and more introspective realms. So perfect for the afternoon slumps and the times when our mind is too busy to meditate.

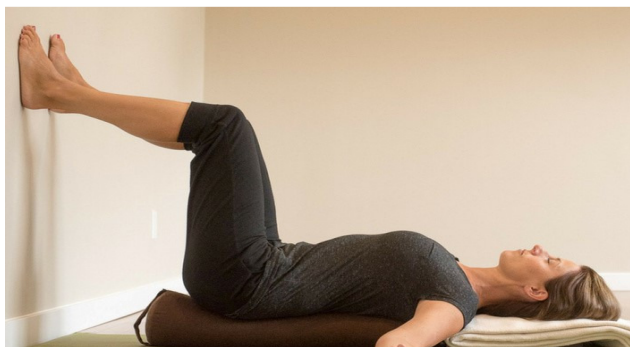
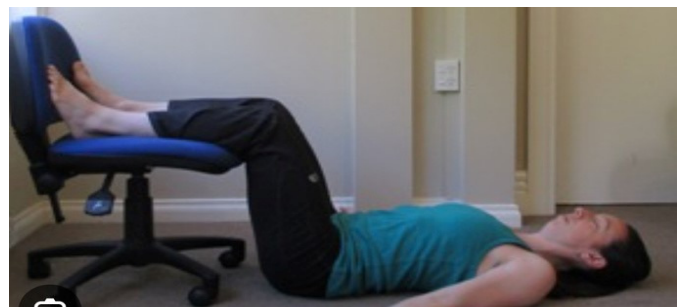
How to Practice

You can practice this as Lisa is in the photograph with simply a bolster placed under your hips, especially good if you do not have a wall or chair available to you.

You can practice it on a chair, which is more restorative as your legs from the knees down are being held by the chair.

You can practice it against a wall, you will need to sit side on to the wall as closely as possible and then scoop up your legs as you turn. This just means that you are as close as possible to the wall. You could also use a bolster under your hips here if you are against the wall.

Find the most relaxing and restorative version for you, cover yourself with a blanket, perhaps a cushion for your head, maybe some chilled music. Allow your arms to drop open so your chest is open and relaxed. Maybe even put on some essential oils for calming the nervous system and concentrate on your belly breathing.



To start the day, Tasmyn shares this **Ayurvedic Granola** recipe

Made with turmeric and other Ayurvedic spices like cinnamon and cardamom, this Ayurvedic Granola is nourishment for the mind, body, and soul.

Prep Time 10 minutes

Cook Time 15 minutes

Ingredients

Dry Ingredients

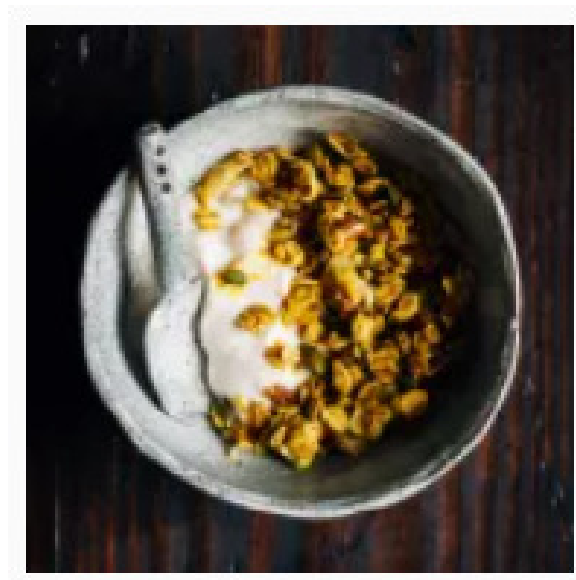
- 300g Rolled Oats
- 50g Pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 100g Pecans chopped
- 50g Coconut Flakes not shredded

Wet Ingredients

- 4 tbsp Coconut Oil melted
- 4 tbsp Maple Syrup
- 1/2 Tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 Tsp Turmeric
- 1/8 Tsp Cardamom
- 1/8 Tsp Ginger Powder

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees C.
2. In a bowl, mix dry ingredients.
3. In another, smaller bowl, mix wet ingredients (melted coconut oil, maple syrup, and spices).
4. Once oven is preheated, fold wet mixture into the dry mixture and stir to combine thoroughly.
5. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, spread granola out into the thinnest layer possible (some overlap is okay).
6. Bake at 180 degrees C for 15 minutes, checking often to prevent burning.
7. Just after being taken out of the oven, granola will still be slightly soft. Let cool for about 10-15 minutes to harden.
8. Serve with your favorite plant milk or vegan yogurt, and enjoy!



Finance corner with Gill Drummond

First, I have the CYF annual report to share:

CYF TREASURER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

INTRODUCTION: The Comprehensive Yoga Fellowship is a "not for profit" organisation which provides a high standard of tuition at an affordable price to the student.

The CYF is able to keep prices low due to the number of volunteers who give up their time freely to ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

Our Treasurer was paid £9.00 per hour for admin work, since a lot of admin work was required in this post: there is no charge for doing the actual accounts. Gill ceased to charge for this after January 2024 as the work had decreased due to lower numbers of trainees attending events and the decreasing bank balance of the CYF.

In late 2024, a decision was taken to cease membership as it has been known over the years due to dwindling membership and reduce the seminars to one event per year, again due to dwindling attendances. The main focus will now be on teacher training.

This accounting year covers 1st January to 31st December 2024, a summary is provided below alongside 2024 for comparison:

SUMMARY:

Receipts	2023	2024	Payments	2023	2024
Opening Balance	2507.15	2533.64	General expenses	12.60	2.10
Membership Subs	665.00	312.00	Tutor payments	510.00	130.00
Course fees	615.00	150.00	Magazine	3.52	0.00
Seminar fees	143.00	55.00	Hire of hall	702.40	712.00
Training day& workshop fees	955.00	845.00	Travelling expenses	22.35	38.95
			Seminar speakers	333.74	295.50
2025 First Aid Course	N/A	N/A	First Aid Course Tutor	N/A	N/A
			Training day tutors/ manuals	609.00	750.00
Donation / Refunds	0.00	0.00	Misc/Refunds	50.00	0.00
Misc.	0.00	0.00	Admin	108.00	34.50
		0.00	Closing Balance	2533.64	1931.99

ACCOUNT BALANCE:

The bank balance at the end of the year was £1931.99 a **decrease of £601.65 on 2023**, quite a drastic decrease mainly caused by training days running at a loss.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

The annual subscription was kept the same at £15 for the full year and £7.50 for half year. At the end of 2024 the membership stood at 42 with only 39 paying. **Membership is 22 less** than the previous year – a **decrease of 34%**.

Many members have chosen not to renew their membership, stating that the CYF no longer serves them, they live too far from Nantwich/Stoke to attend seminars/training or they have moved out of the area/country. Income from subs varies slightly, due to the dates when members renew. The figures for 2024 will be lower, since membership has ceased. As a rule, the bulk of renewals were between December and January.

SEMINARS:

3 seminars were held in 2024: in February with Deb Jackson, June with Ana Bonito (BWY) and October with Mandy Wallace.

Attendance was best for Mandy's seminar at 16, followed by 15 at Ana's, and just 12 for Deb. Members were invited to make donations for Ana's seminar.

Hire costs of Acton Parish Hall have remained stable since we chose to cut costs; we are now only hiring the hall from 10am to 4pm opposed to 9am to 4pm. We have terminated our bookings at Acton.

Overall, the seminars cost the CYF £513.50 with an average cost of £12.23 per attendee in 2024. Mandy asked to be given a small gift in lieu of payment for the October Seminar, respecting our dwindling funds.

For comparison, seminars in 2023 cost the CYF £504.14 with the cost per head of £6.46 per head as the seminars were better attended with an average attendance of 19.5 in 2023 compared with an average attendance of 14 in 2024.

TEACHER TRAINING DAYS / WORKSHOPS:

Seven training/workshop days took place in 2024. Due to lower attendances and the decreasing bank balance, one paid tutor has led some training days, at a reduced cost. Unfortunately, the September workshop is the same date as events at Staffordshire Yoga Fellowship, which can affect attendance for those attending the September workshop which was Children's Yoga as CPD.

The cost of room hire has decreased by £9.60 this year as due to shortening hire times and Deb kindly reducing studio rent due as the limited funds of the CYF, and charged less for heating due to milder weather on training days.

No printing costs were incurred again this year following the move to digital manuals.

Travel expenses have increased by £16.60 – mainly due to Gill travelling to Stoke for training workshops once, plus doing one mentoring/assessment on one student in Chester.

Tutors are still encouraged to claim these for longer journeys to training days and assessments.

All payments and costs for the 2025 First Aid course will appear in the 2025 report due to changing the bank account.

OTHER:

General expenses (stationery, postage, printing etc; not directly associated with trainee manuals and communication) accounted to £2.10, which is £10.50 less than 2023 due to far less paper documents etc being printed, used and sent.

Newsletter costs are now zero (from £3.50 last year) since the newsletter is now digital.

Payments for missed workshops less the deposit are carried forward to future workshops and training costs for a maximum of 12 months.

Admin costs for our treasurer dropped to £34.50, a decrease of £73.50 as Gill ceased the charge from February 2024. In Gill's words "20% of my admin fee goes to HMRC, let's keep the funds in the CYF instead"

Gill Drummond

5.1.2025

My last job as outgoing treasurer!

As well as bus driving and teaching yoga, for a number of years I worked as a freelance bookkeeper too. Some very useful features land in my inbox – I feel this one is well worth sharing:

With the self-assessment season gathering pace, HMRC has warned taxpayers to be extra vigilant as 145,000 scam referrals for fake rebates and demands for tax were identified in the last year.

HMRC has urged taxpayers to be particularly cautious about refund scams as the 31 January tax return deadline draws closer.

Fraudsters are targeting people with offers of tax refunds or demanding payment of tax to get hold of personal information and banking details. Around half of all scam reports (71,832) in the last year were fake tax rebate claims.

In the last year, taxpayers reported nearly 145,000 scam referrals to HMRC, which was up 16.7%. In total 144,298 scam referrals were received between November 2023 and October 2024, up from 123,596 in the previous 12-month period.

HMRC warned: *'If someone receives communication claiming to be from HMRC that asks for their personal information or is offering a tax rebate, check the advice on gov.uk to help identify if it is scam activity.'*

It is also important to note that HMRC will never leave voicemails threatening legal action or arrest, or ask for personal or financial information over text message – only fraudsters and criminals will do that.

HMRC will not contact taxpayers by email, text, or phone to notify that a refund will be paid or to recommend making a claim. Anyone who is due a refund from HMRC can claim it via their online HMRC account or the free and secure HMRC app.

Kelly Paterson, chief security officer at HMRC, said: *'With millions of people filing their self-assessment return before January's deadline, we're warning everyone to be wary of emails promising tax refunds'*.

'Being vigilant helps you spot potential scams. And reporting anything suspicious helps us stop criminal activity and to protect you and others who could have received similar bogus communication.'

'Our advice remains unchanged. Don't rush into anything, take your time and check "HMRC scams advice" on gov.uk.'

It is important to take a moment to think before parting with money or information, and always use strong and different passwords on all accounts so criminals are less able to hack into personal accounts. If a phone call, text or email is suspicious or unexpected, do not give out private information or reply, and never download attachments or click on links as scammers use these to harvest data and infect computers and mobile phones with viruses or phishing attacks.

Feature from [Sara White](#), Editor, Business & Accountancy Daily 26 Nov 2024
businessandaccountancydaily@croneri.co.uk

How to report HMRC scams

Any phishing attempts should be reported to HMRC by:

- forwarding emails to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk
- reporting tax scam phone calls to HMRC on gov.uk
- forwarding suspicious texts claiming to be from HMRC to 60599

After all that heavy reading on finance, let's stop and breathe... here's a lovely essay from Tasmyn, who is working through manual 2:

Describe and comment on lower, middle, upper and full breathing and give your personal comment.

Full Yogic Breathing

Full yogic breath, or pranayama, is a breathing practice that involves a complete inhalation and exhalation where the breath flows fluidly and continuously. In Sanskrit *prana* means breath and *ayama* means to control or regulate or to extend or expand. Although *prana* is usually translated as breath, what we are actually referring to is the energising force that is in the breath. In their book "Healing Depression the Mind-Body Way" Nancy Lieber and Sandra Moss describe prana as follow;

"This is the vibration of life itself and connects our individuality with the cosmos. Prana is the vital life force that reigns over the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our being. It is what defines us as living, organic beings." (i)

Breath is the very essence of life and therefore the life force, or energy. Without this energy there would be no life, and if this energy is depleted in any way, then our quality of life is impacted. In yogic philosophy it is believed that the number of breaths a person has in their lifetime is pre-determined at birth. So how you use your breath will determine how long you live, for example if you breathe shallow and rapidly you will use up your number of breaths more quickly, whereas if you breathe slowly and deeply you will extend your life expectancy. Therefore, pranayama literally translates to "life force extension".

In yoga, pranayama refers to a collection of techniques for controlling the breath to produce specific results to harmonise the mind, body and soul. The goal is to develop the ability to move the breath intentionally but without effort or tension. It may take some time to get used to, particularly for beginners. In fact, pranayama is the fourth limb of Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga following on from the third limb of asana and it is Patanjali's recommendation that pranayama should be practised only when a firm foundation in asana has been established.

According to Nancy Phelan and Michael Volin in their book "Yoga for Women":

"The pranic theory must be accepted by any student who really wishes to make progress, for it is a fundamental part of yoga philosophy. The higher forms of training are all devoted to the control of the breath and advanced students spend more time in pranayama techniques - breath-control techniques - than in physical exercises." (ii)

There are eight main types of pranayama, all aimed to deliver different results or outcomes. There are slow and fast variations but all can be categorised into three main types which are energising, balancing and calming.

Here we will look at Dirga pranayama also known as three-part breath. This is a practice that involves breathing into three different parts of the torso. You start by inhaling deeply into the lower parts of the abdomen as you watch your belly expand, then moving up through the middle chest region, and finishing in the upper chest feeling the collarbone rise. This is a cleansing and balancing breathing exercise which can be practised lying down, seated or standing. Personally, I prefer to do this practice lying down as it makes it easier to feel the breath filling the body, especially where it's in contact with the floor.

Instructions for the full yogic breath



1. Choose to sit on the floor in a comfortable Sukhasana, or sit in a chair with your spine straight and the soles of the feet flat to the floor. Or my preferred option is to lie on my back with knees bent and soles of the feet on the mat.
2. Close your eyes and bring awareness to the breath.
3. Place the hands on the belly at the area of the navel with fingertips touching. Centre your attention just below the navel point.
4. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling the lower part of the lungs with air and feeling the belly rise underneath your fingertips as they naturally part slightly.
5. Exhale completely through your nose, expelling all the air from your belly and allowing it to soften and fingertips touch again.
6. Repeat this cycle at least three times, more if you like.
7. For the next part, move to the Thoracic region or middle of the chest. Placing the hands over the lower ribs with fingertips touching.
8. Inhale, filling the mid chest, feeling your rib cage expand as the fingers part once more. This is where you will notice it more if you are lying on your back as you will feel the back of the ribs making more contact with the floor.
9. When you exhale, let the breath go first from your rib cage so that the ribs draw back together, then release from the belly, drawing your navel towards your spine. Fingertips come to meet again.
10. Take three more cycles of this breath.
11. For part three of the three-part breathing practice, place the hands on the upper chest just below the clavicle or collarbone, fingertips touching.
12. Inhale to fill the belly and rib cage and then sip in a tiny bit more breath to fill the upper chest. Feel your whole sternum rise as you take the air right the way up to the collar bone.
13. To exhale, first release the breath from the upper chest, then from the rib cage and finally from the belly drawing the navel towards the spine.
14. You have now completed all three parts of the Dirga pranayama. You can continue to repeat the cycle allowing the three parts to flow smoothly.

Each part of the Dirga pranayama has its own specific benefits. The abdominal breathing in the first part helps take pressure off the heart and has a natural sedative effect. Thoracic breathing also takes pressure off the heart as well as freshening the blood circulating to the liver, gallbladder, stomach, spleen and kidneys. Breathing into the clavicle area helps strengthen the lymph nodes. As an overall practice, Dirga pranayama increases calmness, enhances detoxification of toxins through the lungs,

boosts oxygenation of the blood benefitting the liver and other organs and reduces physical tension in the abdomen, chest and back.

Whilst there are many benefits to practising pranayama techniques, those suffering from heart and lung conditions should always seek medical advice before partaking in any yogic breathing exercises.

I like to practise full yogic breathing if I find myself feeling a little stressed or uptight. I take a moment to close my eyes and work through just a few rounds of Dirga pranayama, focussing on my breath until I feel a sense of calm is restored. Having done pranayama as part of my yoga practice for a number of years now, I have also found that it has helped immensely with my asthma. I was prescribed an inhaler in my late twenties to help with breathing difficulties brought on by allergies. For many years I was having to use an inhaler frequently, particularly during summer months when the pollen count was high. Now I very rarely have to use my inhaler at all, so much so that they generally go out of date before they are empty! I strongly believe this is due to the positive effects of practising yoga and pranayama. So, changing your breath really can change your life!

Bibliography

(i) Nancy Liebler, Ph.D. and Sandra Moss, M.S.P.H (2009). Healing Depression the Mind-Body Way. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Pg 124.

(ii) Nancy Phelan & Michael Volin (1974). Yoga for Women. Arrow Books Ltd. Pg 122.

Lunchtime.... Back to Wendy... Aubergine Curry



500g aubergine or other vegetables

1 tablespoon ghee (or coconut oil)

1 onion finely sliced 1 green chilli chopped garlic cloves to suit (I would use 4)

Fresh ginger slice chopped small

1 teaspoon turmeric

1/2 teaspoon garam masala

1 teaspoon cumin ground (instead of this I use 2 teaspoons of Panch Phoron a 5-spice available) 1 tablespoon tomato paste, 1/2 - 1 cup water

Cut the aubergine into bite-size pieces and sprinkle with salt. Set aside for 30 mins to draw out some moisture, then rinse the salt off and pat dry the aubergine.

Heat the ghee or coconut oil in a nonstick pan on a low heat and pop in the two teaspoons of panch phoron if using. Allow to cook for 2 minutes and then add the onions for around 4 mins until translucent, then add the aubergine.

Allow everything to gently cook, stirring regularly for around 5 minutes then add the garlic, ginger and chilli for a further few minutes. Then add the remaining spices for 2 minutes stirring all the time.

Add the tomato paste and water and keep on a low simmer for 10-15 minutes, stirring from time to time.

It is ready when it has thickened and softened. Serve with rice, I had cauliflower that I steamed and then mashed to keep my carbs down.

- *Panch phoron- take equal amounts of mustard seeds, nigella (black sesame seeds), fennel seeds, cumin seeds and fenugreek seeds*

CYF training course update: 2025

All events are at Ananda Yoga Kula, 9 Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HP

Courses are from 10am – 4pm (except First Aid which is 9.30am-4.30pm) and are open to everyone and cost £35 unless otherwise stated.

Date	
2.2.25	First Aid Training Course (level 3, Emergency First Aid at Work) £65
2.3.25	Training day – Inversions and Hips part 1
6.4.25	Workshop day – Planning the Flow, Sequences and Vinyasa Practice
4.5.25	Training day – Inversions and Hips part 2
September 2025	<i>Yoga and the brain – to be confirmed</i>
9.11.25	Training day -Loose ends & Yoga Nidra
14.12.25	Workshop day – Integrating Pregnant and Post Natal students

Our 2025 CYF Yoga event is still in the planning stage – if you have any ideas of what you would like the event to involve, or you wish to share your practice on the day, please tell us! All ideas welcome.

CYF Committee – please see the CYF website if you wish to contact committee members at www.yoga-teacher-training.org.uk

Chair	Gill Drummond
Vice Chair	Mandy Wallace
Treasurer	Collin Hayes
Secretary	Shared
Webmaster	Alan Paddick
Education Coordinator (Training Days)	Deb Jackson
Education Coordinator (Secretary)	Julie Gater
Event Coordinator	Tasmyn Stonehewer
Support	Nadia Rossetti, Holly Daglish
Event catering	Shared

Closing meditation - shared by Wendy
Metta - loving kindness

I sit and breathe wishing peace, happiness, and freedom for myself.

I sit and breathe slowly wishing out to strangers, friends, enemies, and all beings peace, happiness, and freedom.

I sit and breathe letting the Metta grow my heart expands just a little as I sit here and now with all my joys and sorrows. May I be at peace, may I be happy, may I be free from suffering.

May you be at peace, may you be happy, may you be free from suffering.

May all beings be at peace, may all beings be happy, may all beings be free from suffering.

This Metta is a beautiful practice during your meditation or just to sit in a quiet place for 10 minutes or so and repeat the words. I started by talking about wishing and praying for others, Metta also supports this for ourselves and all beings.

When you practice in this way you can bring more love and calming energy into your life.

Acknowledgements:

A massive thank you to Gill, Tasmyn and Wendy for providing the features for this newsletter.

Thank you to Colin for spotting the typos in the Treasurer's report.

Last, but not least thank you to Alan for mailing the newsletter out to everyone.