

# KRIPALU'S 27<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL YOGA TEACHERS CONFERENCE

## The Yogic Body

October 2–5 | Tuesday–Friday

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

7:30–9:00 pm | **Opening Session** *Micah Mortali and Vandita Kate Marchesiello*

**Keynote | Yoga: Form vs. Function** *Timothy McCall*

What goals should we have for yoga practice? To improve health? Create ideal anatomical alignment of muscles, bones, and joints? Challenge ourselves and build strength? Prevent injury? Increase self-knowledge and foster spiritual growth? Or all of the above? And what happens when these goals are in conflict? Timothy McCall, MD, founder/director of the Yoga As Medicine teacher trainings and previous Kripalu Scholar-in-Residence, addresses this multifaceted topic, kicking off a conference focused on in-depth learning and experience.

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3

8:30–11:30 am | Morning Workshops (choose one)

**Relieving Neck Pain with Yoga and the Franklin Method of Imagery** *Christa Rypins*

Use movement, touch, and imagery to develop a deeper understanding of the anatomy of the neck and its relationship with the lower spine. Take home to your students new tools to relieve neck pain and discomfort, including warm-ups for opening and relaxing the neck, shoulder exercises to reduce neck tension, and alignment cues for creating greater ease in this area of the body. Christa also shares a Headstand technique that strengthens the spine and reduces tension in the neck.

8:30–11:30 am and 1:15–3:45 pm | Master Class

**Polyvagal Theory and the Gunas, Part 1: An Embodied Foundation for Compassion, Connection, and Equanimity** *Marlysa Sullivan*

Polyvagal theory teaches that physiology, emotion, and behavior arise from underlying neural platforms. Similarly, the paradigm of the gunas teaches that underlying qualities both inform and connect characteristics of the body, mind, and action. Understanding the link between polyvagal theory and the gunas allows us to explore neuroscience through the lens of the foundational philosophies of yoga. In the morning session of this master class, we review polyvagal theory and the gunas, examine the convergence of the two, and explore this framework through yoga practice, lecture, and discussion.

**Polyvagal Theory and the Gunas, Part 2: Emergence of Compassion, Connection, and Equanimity** *Marlysa Sullivan*

How do we prime the system for the emergence of prosocial behavior and experiences, such as compassion, connection, and equanimity? Yoga combines both top-down and bottom-up processes that create fertile conditions for these attributes to arise. In the afternoon session of this master class, we discuss concepts of regulation and resilience, and their relationship to polyvagal theory and the gunas. Finally, we develop and experience a practice that integrates an understanding of the neural platforms, the yamas and niyamas, the gunas, and how they collectively contribute to positive emotional and interpersonal experiences.

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3 (continued)

1:15–3:45 pm | Afternoon Workshops (choose one)

### **Reimagining Yoga Anatomy** *Timothy McCall*

Most of us learned anatomy by focusing on individual pieces. To understand the whole, though, we need to go beyond the parts. The unfolding science of myofascia, our body's connective tissue network, reveals that the pieces are linked to each other in a dense web, from the largest structures down to our cells. This model of biotensegrity offers a more holistic take, likening the human body to structures like bicycle wheels and geodesic domes. While it can be useful to consider the parts of the body in asana, a more global view has radical implications for how we practice. Yoga becomes less about imposing the will on the body, based on how we imagine things are supposed to be, and more about listening closely to the body, breath, and mind—and adjusting our practice accordingly.

### **The Science of Yoga: Epigenetics and Cellular Aging** *Lisa B. Nelson*

Research is revealing the potential for yoga to foster healthy aging and reduce the impact of chronic stress. Explore the concept of epigenetics with Kripalu's Medical Director, and learn how yoga and meditation practice can affect gene expression. Using clinical review studies as illustration, Lisa explains the impact of contemplative practices on telomerase activity, and the implications for cellular aging. Discover how integrated mind-body interventions can positively influence the body's mechanisms on multiple levels, improve well-being, and even alter the progression of chronic disease.

4:30–5:45 pm | Late Afternoon Workshop

### **Yoga Research: Past, Present, and Future** *Sat Bir S. Khalsa*

Yoga is an ancient practice that supports the development of mind-body wellness. Harvard researcher Sat Bir S. Khalsa reviews the basic science underlying the psychophysiology of yoga practices, and describes cutting-edge biomedical studies relevant to yoga, as well as the future of scientific inquiry in this area. He also presents research on the benefits of yoga as a therapeutic intervention for psychological conditions and medical disorders, and as a preventive-medicine practice for maintaining health, well-being, and life purpose and meaning.

7:30–9:00 pm | Kirtan with Girish

Girish, an accomplished musician of many genres, former monk infused in spiritual practice, loving wordsmith linking lyrics and rhythm in a blissful musical event, sings traditional Sanskrit mantras with a modern, funky, yet deeply devotional twist. Accompanied by his amazing band, Girish invites his audience at his kirtan concert to participate by singing along, call and response chanting, and dancing.

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

8:30–11:30 am | Morning Workshops (choose one)

### **Psoas It Is**

*Kari Harendorf*

Part muscle, part neural pathway, the psoas forms the foundation of our core, and is a center of awareness and emotion. It's also a frequent culprit in back pain and sacroiliac dysfunction. Due to our culture and lifestyle, this main hip flexor is chronically shortened, tight, and dry. Problems with the psoas can affect a myriad of body systems, and many aspects of your life. Through lecture, simple movements, awareness exercises, and restorative asana, we explore the structure and power of this mighty muscle. Learn approaches for freeing the psoas in order to access greater freedom and ease in the body.

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4 (continued)

8:30–11:30 am and 1:15–3:45 pm | Master Class

### Exploring the Physiology of Fascia, Part 1 and Part 2

*Michelle Dalbec and Christopher Holmes*

Fascia is our omnipresent internal scaffolding—a superhighway of hydration, communication, and structural integrity. Yoga anatomists Michelle Dalbec and Christopher Holmes lead you in an experiential journey through the fascial system, exploring the inner workings of this body-wide collagenous web. Through asana practice and discussion, we explore how the physiology of fascia leads to a deeper understanding of the body-mind relationship.

1:15–3:45 pm | Afternoon Workshops (choose one)

### Beyond Hip Opening

*Karden Rabin*

One of the most popular requests from students in yoga class is asana to open the hips. But what does hip opening really mean? The hips and lumbo-pelvis are a dynamic, multi-planar system of muscle and joint structures capable of incredible movement—or, in some cases, incredible tightness. Join Karden for an embodied exploration of the anatomy and function of the hips, and discover how fine-tuning your relationship with your hips can forever change your practice and your teaching. This workshop combines movement, multimedia elements, and lecture.

### The Emotional and Psychological Effects of Yoga

*Yoganand Michael Carroll*

Since yoga's resurgence in recent decades, the therapeutic potential of the practice has focused primarily on the physical and medical. However, the first yoga techniques were pranayama and meditation, and the expected results of practice were primarily on the mental and emotional levels. While psychotherapy is not within the realm of most yoga teachers or yoga therapists today, we can benefit from an understanding of the intended psychological and emotional changes originally built into the techniques—which contemporary students continue to experience, even in the most foundational asanas. Through examining several schools of ancient yoga, we explore how these techniques were designed to work, so we can respect their deeper effects if they should occur. Please note that this workshop will not cover instruction in how to apply these techniques therapeutically.

4:30–5:45 pm | Late Afternoon Workshop

### Embrace of the Living Earth: A Mindful Outdoor Experience

*Micah Mortali*

Take your yoga and meditation practice off the mat and into the wild. Micah Mortali, Director of the Kripalu Schools and founder of Kripalu's new School of Mindful Outdoor Leadership, serves as our guide to the history, geography, and flora and fauna of this sacred land. Bathe your senses in the beauty of the forests and streams of the Shadowbrook grounds. We breathe in, listen to, feel, taste, and observe the qualities of this environment, deepening our connection with the "more than human world" to which we belong.

7:30–9:00 pm | Evening Keynote

**The Wild Road Home: Mindful Rewilding and the Kripalu School of Mindful Outdoor Leadership**

*Micah Mortali*

The average American spends 11 hours a day on a screen and more than 90 percent of their life indoors. And yet, as a species, we have evolved almost entirely within the embrace of the living earth. What is the impact when a species is cut off from its natural habitat? How is this disconnection affecting our health and well-being? In this keynote, Micah discusses the phenomenon of Nature Deficit Disorder, and shares how the new Kripalu School of Mindful Outdoor Leadership is positioned to help people reconnect with their sense of place, fostering greater health, happiness, and connection.

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5

8:30–11:30 am | Closing Ceremonies