

TWO-MONTH KARMA YOGA PROGRAM – INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The intent of this question-answer information sheet is to provide clear information to prospective participants interested in a Karma Yoga stay at Yasodhara Ashram. Please read it thoroughly before completing your application, which is found below.

Applicants must have a willing and curious attitude, plus the capacity for sustained moderate to strenuous physical activity. We ask all applicants to start with an online class followed by a two-month commitment if your application is accepted. Please include at least two work/character reference letters with your application.

The Ashram can accommodate only a limited number of participants, so please apply early. Incoming Karma Yogis can expect to share a room with one other participant. Occasionally a private room is available for extended stays beyond the two months. Tents may also be used in the summer.

During the two-month timeframe, you can apply to extend your stay to further enrich your experience. The Two-Month Program can be a stepping stone to longer-term residency ranging from three months to two years or longer. See more information in the Extended Stays section below.

What is Yasodhara Ashram?

The Ashram is a spiritual community that continues to celebrate founder Swami Sivananda Radha's yogic teachings, which she has adapted from the East for the Western practitioner. Yasodhara Ashram was established in Kootenay Bay in 1963. We are a registered charity and a thriving retreat and study centre with a diverse offering of [yogic practices](#). Hatha Yoga, the physical practice that most people associate with the word "yoga", constitutes a small part of what we do here. Our practices, as well as courses and workshops that are offered throughout the year, are described in greater detail on the [Ashram's website](#).

What is "Karma Yoga"?

The main spiritual practice here at the Ashram is [Karma Yoga](#), the practice of selfless service. This means the work we do not only contributes to the functioning of the Ashram as a living community (from cleaning rooms to preparing meals and everything in between), but is also used as a tool to help us understand ourselves and grow into who we want to be. Participants in the Two-Month Introduction participate in 6 to 8* hours/day of Karma Yoga, as well as the gentle morning Hatha Yoga classes, evening Satsang (chanting and prayers) in the Temple and weekly classes and workshops.

* If you are 60 or older, there is an option to work no more than 6 hours/day.

What is the Two-Month Karma Yoga Program?

The Two-Month Program provides an opportunity for personal exploration, reflection and growth in a safe, supportive and well established spiritual community. Participants will be introduced to the different forms of yoga (for example Hatha, Karma, Kundalini, Bhakti and Mantra), and learn how these can be practically applied in everyday life situations, both within and outside of the Ashram.

As a karma yogi you will become an important part of the community. Hatha Yoga, evening Satsang and weekly classes will help to strengthen your understanding of the Ashram teachings. Occasionally there will be a half-day workshop to enhance your understanding of the yogic tools used at the Ashram. An important aspect of this program is learning to work within a spiritual community based on the teachings of Swami Radha. Participating in all aspects of Ashram life also helps us support the atmosphere that has been built up over many years of spiritual practices.

Daily Schedule:

Each day includes a schedule from 6:50 am to approximately 8:15 pm, including free time. During that period, you will be offering Karma Yoga for up to 8 hours. This includes work in areas of the Ashram such as Hospitality, Kitchen or Grounds, as well as occasional breakfast-making and evening dishes.

An outline of the typical daily schedule looks like this:

6:50 - 7:50 Hatha Yoga class

8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast

8:30 -12:30 Karma Yoga (work as spiritual practice)

12:30 -1:00 Lunch

1:00 - 1:30 Reflection Break

1:30 - 6:00 Karma Yoga (2 to 4 hours within this time frame; hours can vary)

6:00 - 6:30 Dinner (followed by dishes, variable)

7:30 - 8:15 [Satsang](#) 'Satsang' is a Sanskrit word meaning "in the company of the wise". The community gathers for devotional singing and talks about experiences on the spiritual path.

These times vary in the summer, for example, starting earlier, taking a longer mid-day break and finishing later when it is cooler in the garden.

Please note that all meals are eaten in silence to support personal reflection.

Specific to this community:

Drugs and alcohol

Drugs and alcohol are not permitted in this program. Neither drugs or alcohol are necessary for spiritual growth. Upon your arrival you will be asked to sign an agreement that you will not use or possess any of these substances while you are here. Anyone found possessing or using these will be asked to leave the Ashram within 24 hours. There is a designated smoking area in the parking lot at the southern end of the Ashram for people who smoke tobacco.

Relationships and dress code

At the Ashram, we invite you to enter a community of inner-directed energy, which includes the practices of celibacy and speech awareness. While here, you have the opportunity to look inward and develop a solid foundation for yourself. Because our focus is on character building, self-reliance and emotional independence, we do not encourage romantic or exclusive relationships.

We ask you to support this self-reflective atmosphere by wearing modest clothing that will be comfortable for you to work in. We also ask that you wear clean clothes to classes and in the Temple.

We understand that dress can be a sensitive area, relating to self-image and the cultural history of gender inequality, and that "modesty" is understood differently in different social contexts. If you are unsure about dress at the Ashram, please ask us and we will be happy to discuss it.

Yasodhara Ashram is an 'On-site Retreat' community

Participants in the Two-Month Karma Yoga Program are asked to remain on the Ashram's property for the duration of their time in the program. Being on retreat in this way allows for the integrity of the experience to be maintained. If it becomes necessary to leave at any time due to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances, the applicant is asked to notify the office in writing.

Extending Your Stay – Pathways to Living & Serving in the Ashram Community

During your initial stay we welcome you to consider whether you would benefit from an extended experience through our [Pathways Program](#). Provided both parties agree it is a good fit, it is possible to become a Karma Yoga resident by extending in steps which might start with 3 months and could continue for 6 months, 1 year or 2+ years depending on your interests. This gives you the opportunity to deepen your spiritual focus and practices, expand your skills as you live and work alongside us as part of our community. You might become a team leader, eventually even become a teacher, and continue to gain experience that is transferable to work outside the Ashram. We will be happy to discuss possibilities with you.

**YASODHARA ASHRAM
TWO-MONTH KARMA YOGA PROGRAM APPLICATION**

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name _____

Gender Identification _____

Birth Date ___/___/___ Age _____ (minimum 18 years)

Today's Date _____ (m) (d) (y)

Phone (____) _____

Email Address _____

Permanent Home Address _____ City _____

Province/State _____ Post/Zip _____

Country _____

PERSON TO CALL IN EMERGENCY

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Province/State _____ Post/Zip _____

Country _____

Phone (____) _____

E-Mail Address _____

WHEN TO JOIN US

The 2023 intake days are: January 5, February 5, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 4, June 29, July 27, August 31, September 28, October 19, November 9, November 30.

What is your preferred start date? _____

And your second choice? _____

If you are traveling by air or bus we can advise you on your arrival options.

FOOD

Food Category (Bold or circle ONE choice)

Most of our meals are vegetarian. We occasionally offer chicken or fish. Please indicate your food preference:

Occasional Chicken or Fish; Occasional Fish; Vegetarian; Vegan

Food Intolerances (Bold or circle ALL that apply)

A food intolerance impacts digestion and does not involve the immune system. It is not life-threatening.

Wheat Dairy Gluten Soy Nightshades Dry Beans Corn Other: _____

YOUR STAY

Is this your first visit to the Ashram?

Yes / No

If this is your first visit to the Ashram, have you taken any classes or retreats online with us? Please provide details, when? Who with? And the name of the person leading the session, if possible.

How are you travelling?

HEALTH AND SKILLS INFORMATION

Much of our work at the Ashram, especially in the summer and early fall is outdoors and of a physical nature – garden, orchard, grounds.

Are you currently in good health and able to offer moderate to strenuous physical work? Yes/No

Please identify your skills or experience:

Cooking (Kitchen)

Food preserving (PK)

Building maintenance

Vehicle maintenance

Video

Audio

IT

Online Learning

Caregiving/nursing

Book-keeping

House-keeping

Other

COVID PROTOCOLS

Please read our [COVID-19 Health and Safety](#) protocols before traveling to the Ashram.

Emergency Medical Services: The Ashram is at least one and a half hours from the nearest hospital and three hours from larger hospitals with specialized services. Because of the Ashram's isolated rural setting, ambulance services are not always immediately available; at best an ambulance takes half an hour or longer to arrive on the Ashram site. Although the Ashram has basic first aid and a medical clinic is nearby, the clinic is only open three days per week and is without emergency service; accordingly the Ashram's ability to respond to medical situations is limited.

Given our remote location, health services can be quite costly for individuals who do not have adequate health insurance coverage. For example, one trip to the hospital in an ambulance costs about \$400, just for the trip alone!

Allergies (Bold or circle ONE choice)

An allergic reaction can affect the skin, gastrointestinal, respiratory, immune or cardiovascular system.

I don't have significant allergies I'm moderately allergic

I'm severely allergic (life-threatening)

Please list each allergy and degree of severity:

Physical Constraints (Bold or circle ALL that apply)

Do you have any physical constraints that could affect your participation in daily activities? None; Back problems; Knee problems; I have trouble with stairs

Other: _____

Medical Concerns (Bold or circle ALL that apply)

None; Coronary; Diabetes; Asthma

Other: _____

Are you currently taking any medications? (Bold or circle ONE choice)

Yes / No

If yes, please list your current medications:

Have you had any critical illnesses or life-threatening medical incidents?

Yes / No

If yes, please describe:

Do you have any communicable health conditions that may require extra precautions to be taken to protect others with whom you may be living (e.g., athlete's foot)?

Yes / No

If yes, please describe the condition and precautions you take.

Do you have any emotional or mental conditions that may affect you during your stay? Yes / No

If yes, please describe:

Are you currently under the care of a therapist, counselor or physician?

Yes / No

If yes, please describe:

Do you smoke?

Yes / No

Are you currently or have you in the past struggled with substance abuse, dependency or addiction?

Yes / No

If yes, please provide details including any treatment or recovery program:

What additional support would you need from us to enable you to be here given what you have stated above?

HEALTH COVERAGE

If you are from outside Canada, you will need to send us a copy of your health insurance policy that is valid for your time in Canada. If from Canada, you will need to have a valid health care card. Otherwise, you will need to purchase emergency travel insurance for your time here. Your acceptance into the program is dependent on this document.

What is the status of your health insurance coverage? Briefly describe the name of your plan, and what coverage it provides.

Do you have funds available to you to cover possible medical related costs that may be incurred while you are here at the Ashram?

Yes / No

If yes, please describe how you would be able to access these funds in the case of an emergency.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This program is funded by donations given in a spirit of generosity and is offered to you, the program applicant, at no cost. The value of the room, board, tuition and services you receive for one month at the Ashram is approximately \$2400. Delicious organic meals, shared accommodation, your weekly classes and half-day workshops are included.

We welcome any contribution you can offer towards mitigating these costs and supporting the program. Please indicate your possible contribution:

I would like to make a contribution of \$_____ towards the cost of my participation in the Two Month Program. Any amount above \$4800 will be treated as a donation and eligible for a receipt for tax purposes.

Also note that participants generally require about \$100 each month to cover fees such as internet, telephone, laundry and other sundries. Sufficient funds must also be available to pay for your departure plans.

Do you have these funds available? Yes / No

We are fortunate that donations help us to maintain this program. Please consider encouraging others to donate (tax receipted) to the Ashram's Learning & Outreach Fund which in part funds the Two Month Karma Yoga Program and our program for returning Karma Yogis!

AGREEMENT

When you register at Yasodhara Ashram you will be asked to sign an agreement taking full responsibility for yourself physically and emotionally. Drugs and alcohol are not permitted. We are a celibate ashram and the focus is on inner spiritual development. Are you willing to sign such an agreement? Yes ___ No ___

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions in-depth, essay style.

1. What is your work experience? What are your skills and interests? What is your education?

(We would, for example, be interested to learn about any experience in cooking, food preservation, video, audio, IT and care-giving.)

2. Why do you want to come to Yasodhara Ashram? What are you looking for in life?

3. What do you want to focus on or learn about yourself at the Ashram?

4. What are your expectations of yourself and the Ashram Community?

5. Please give a brief description of your previous experience with yoga.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Please be sure to include:

1. Fully completed copy of this application form;
2. Responses to the in-depth essay questions;
3. At least two work/character reference letters are also required in your proposal to participate in the Two-Month Karma Yoga Program.

Your application can be submitted by mail or email. In order to fully process applications, they must be received no later than one month prior to intake date. Feel free to contact us by phone or email with any questions, or for more information. If you need to make any date changes after you have applied, we need to hear from you at least one week ahead.

Yasodhara Ashram
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