



TEACHER TRAINING MANUAL  
**85 hr Yoga Alliance Perinatal**



## Welcome!

Welcome to our 85 hr Prenatal Yoga Alliance Yoga Teacher Training. I'm elated to offer this unique training to you with the hopes that you find it inspiring and valuable as you embark on creating more programs within your birthing community.

Something magical about observing glowing mothers and birth beings moves in unison with their breath and honouring the subtlest of mindful movements during gestation. For those that choose to be mothers and parents, discovering their conception is both wondrous and trepidatious as it's filled with excitement, anticipation, joy and fears.

The perinatal continuum is the journey into conception (fertility), pregnancy, labour + birth and postpartum. There isn't a separation between the paths to one, and to teach prenatal yoga, we must have an understanding of all the stages of becoming a mother or parent.

We cannot teach about pregnancy without some knowledge of the labouring and birthing journey, and we cannot teach postpartum without understanding pregnancy and labour + birth. These stages, like our emotions, co-exist together. One cannot not and does not exist without the other, so it would be challenging to teach one concept on the birthing continuum if we did not discuss the entire process.

Prenatal Yoga is one of the most recommended movement practices for women and birth beings during pregnancy. These versatile and gentle classes teach and educate students on how to use breath-work, guided mediation and body awareness to prepare for labour and birth. These specified yoga classes are known for their gentle yoga postures to reduce tension and stiffness and to find relief from common pregnancy ailments.

Many misconceptions about yoga during pregnancy can confuse first-time mothers and birth beings. The entire practice of yoga has evolved in the last 20 years. Not only do we know more about the physiological movements and structure of the body, but we also know more about connective tissues, fascia and the mechanics of functional movement.

One of the biggest misconceptions about Prenatal Yoga is that it prepares mothers and birth beings for labour and birth by increasing flexibility. One of my wise teachers once asked, 'why do we only teach our students how to be flexible? Labour isn't about flexibility; it's about endurance and stability. She is correct!

Prenatal Yoga + Movement should be about finding the balance between flexibility and stability. Due to the hormone relaxin (first produced by the ovary and then by the placenta) being secreted in the body during gestation, the pregnant body is already exceptionally pliable.

By physiological design, relaxin and progesterone relax and soften the smooth muscles in the body to allow for the uterus's expansion and the cervix's softening. It is crucial to release ligaments in the pelvis to aid in childbirth. This versatile hormone also has a relaxing and softening effect on the connective tissue, so there isn't any need to go 'deeper' in a yoga pose as a stretch is already happening.

Yoga during Pregnancy is the next to finding the balance between stability and flexibility and using one's awareness to feel into their body to sense if they need more stabilizing poses (if they feel like they are over-stretched) or more flexible poses (if they feel a tightness).

Because every mother, being, and pregnancy is different, so are their physical demands. What I felt in posture one week will most likely shift in the next. Another misconception is that deep hip opening poses will allow for an easier birth, and the truth is, it's more about the awareness one has to breathe and move their body that matters the most.

The focus and intention of a prenatal yoga class should be about moving mothers and beings into their bodies to feel and observe their movements and breath. To allow emotions and sensations to be touched and be able to centre their breath to prepare for contractions.

Guided meditations allow mothers and beings to pause in the present moment and focus on the messages from within rather than all their rampant thoughts. To release the need to control this unexpected journey and be prepared to ride uncontrollable waves.

One of my favourite misconceptions is the need to cue and practice 'Kegel's throughout pregnancy to ensure the pelvic floor muscles have a strong tone. Why do we want these muscles to be 'tight' or continuously contracting? Will a baby be able to move through gripping muscles or muscles that are relaxed?

We know more about the pregnant body, mothers and beings NOW. They are capable of more than society since the early 1900s has given them credit. The pregnant holds an incredible power, wisdom and intelligence one will never witness. It knows what to do if it just needs our minds and others not to control the process.

Prenatal yoga allows all students to connect inward to allow a more conscious experience using breath, awareness, movement and meditation. That's it! That's all we need!

Prenatal Yoga Classes are some of the most enjoyable classes to teach. These women and beings are eager to share their joy with others, and WE get the honour of witnessing them become mothers and parents. There is no greater joy as a teacher, guide and friend than to share in one of their most memorable moments in this lifetime.



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