

Aligned & Empowered

A Free Online Summit
Course Companion



Sunday, November 9, 2025

Free & Online | Recording Available

Thanks for joining us for the Yoga Summit. This handout is offered as a companion to your journey through the summit, with descriptions to support you in how to practice the Anusara Yoga method both on and off the mat.

We also warmly invite you to join us for the **Yoga Conference in San Francisco**, April 30 – May 3, 2026, where yogis from around the world will gather with renowned teachers and musicians to celebrate, deepen, and embody the heart of yoga together. Hosted by Anusara Yoga + Yoga Kula

Register today on this website to get the special discount price - available till November 30 -
Write - **Thanksgiving** - in the promo code when you check out.

www.yoga-conferencesf.com

“Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self.” – Bhagavad Gītā 6.20

Summit Schedule

November 9 | 1:30 PM- 5:30 PT

(please note time zone)

1:30- 2:00 PM

Open to Grace- Madhuri Martin

2:00-2:55 PM

Rooted in Strength- Desiree Rumbaugh

3:00- 3:55 PM

Finding Freedom- Adam Ballenger

4:00- 4:55 PM

The Power of Loops- Lisa Long

5:00- 5:30 PM

Layers of Alignment- Saraswati Clere

Introduction to Anusara Yoga

Anusara Yoga is a globally recognized school of yoga rooted in precise biomechanical alignment and heart-centered philosophy. Founded on the principle of recognizing the intrinsic goodness in all beings, Anusara empowers individuals to embody their highest potential, cultivate resilience, and live in harmony with the universal flow of life. Anusara means “flowing with grace” or “following your heart.” The focus is on alignment, integration of body, mind, and spirit. The aim is not just to refine the body, but also intention, energy, and awareness—living yoga off the mat.

The Philosophy behind Anusara Yoga

At the heart of Anusara yoga is a non-dual Tantric philosophy that embraces life in all its fullness. Unlike philosophies that focus on escaping the body or the material world, Anusara teaches that everything is an expression of divine consciousness, including challenges and imperfections. This perspective encourages compassion toward self and others, joy in everyday moments, and empowerment to live authentically. Rather than seeking enlightenment outside yourself, you're invited to recognize that you are already whole—you're just aligning with what's already within.

Key Aspects:

- Heart-centered practice blending precision with freedom and joy
- Physical, energetic, and spiritual alignment
- Three foundational principles: the **3 A's** (Attitude, Alignment, Action)
- Five Universal Principles of Alignment (UPAs)
- Integration of body, mind, breath, and awareness

Three Foundational Guidelines concepts (known as the “3 A’s”)

- **Attitude** - The aspiration to connect to the highest within ourselves, to celebrate spirit, and to align our physical practice with this intention
- **Alignment** - Mindfulness of how the various parts of our physical, emotional and spiritual selves are interconnected. Awareness of the Optimal Blueprint, the way the parts of the body best line up, and how our physical actions align with our intention and highest awareness.
- **Action** - The flows of energy and effort in the body which allow us to balance stability and freedom

The Universal Principles of Anusara Yoga (UPAs)

The Universal Principles of Anusara Yoga

The **UPAs** form the backbone of Anusara Yoga, guiding movement with energy, safety, and integration. They refine energy, engage muscles to protect joints, release tension, and increase mind-body awareness.

The Universal Principles of Alignment for the Lower Body

1) Set the Foundation and Open to Grace

The **Foundation** is the part of the body touching the floor, such as the feet, hands, or the sitting bones. *Root downward evenly through all sides of the foundation, and remember your intention to align with something greater.*

Opening to Grace is trusting in our connection to our own innate goodness, our true nature. *Soften your boundaries and let your inner body become full and radiant.* This manifests in the body in the following ways:

- **Inner Body Bright** – when we remember our innate goodness, the inner energy body inflates, expands, gets full and bright and..

- **Side Body Long** – as the inner body gets full and bright, the sides lengthen from the waistline to the armpits. The arms get light and float up into the shoulder sockets, while at the same time...
- **Outer Body Soft** – the outer body softens and drapes over the radiant inner body. When we are in a position like on hands and knees, when we soften the outer body, the “heart melts” and softens.
- **Release from the Focal Point to the Foundation** – let go of all limiting concepts about yourself and be supported by the earth.

Benefits of Opening to Grace: Centering, grounding, focusing, breathing, settling, pausing, and becoming more aware.

Benefits of Setting the Foundation : Creates stability, balance, focus, and grounded muscular energy

2) Muscular Energy

Muscular Energy has three components:

1. Hug the muscles into the bones evenly on all sides
2. Draw in toward the midline of the body
3. Draw energetically and muscularly from the feet up to the core of the pelvis.

Benefits of Muscular Energy: provides strength, stability and confidence, and integrates parts of the body to the core.

3) Inner Spiral

The **Inner Spiral** starts at the inner foot and widens as it spirals up and around each leg, ending by widening the lower back. It moves the inner thighs back and apart, broadens the pelvis and pelvic floor, and brings more arch to the lower back. Key actions: thighs roll in, back and apart. Anatomy features: tops of the thighs back, sitting bones back and apart, pelvis tilts forward, natural inward curve in the lower back.

Benefits of Inner Spiral: mobility, flexibility, pliability, grounding, releasing, letting go, Introspection

4) Outer Spiral

The **Outer Spiral** starts at the lower back and narrows as it spirals down around each leg, ending at the outer edge of the heels. The tailbone lengthens and the buttocks tone without squeezing . Key actions: maintain the thighs back and apart as you lengthen the tailbone.

Benefits of Outer Spiral: Integration, containment, safety, creates a boundary

5) Organic Energy

Organic Energy expands from the focal point to the extremities (and the foundation), expands the pelvis and legs away from the midline, and expands from the core of each leg to the skin. Organic energy provides freedom and length, preventing compression of the joints and expressing the heart through the expansion of the body.

Benefits of Organic Energy: creates extension, lengthen, shine or radiate out

Bonus Principle of the Legs: Shins in/Thighs out brings the knees into a healthy alignment. This principle combines moving the shins toward the midline, which is part of Muscle Energy, with a widening of the thighs, which is part of Inner Spiral. The action is not a rotation, but straight in and out. This double action protects the knee from torque and compression. And SITO can be done with the other principles too.

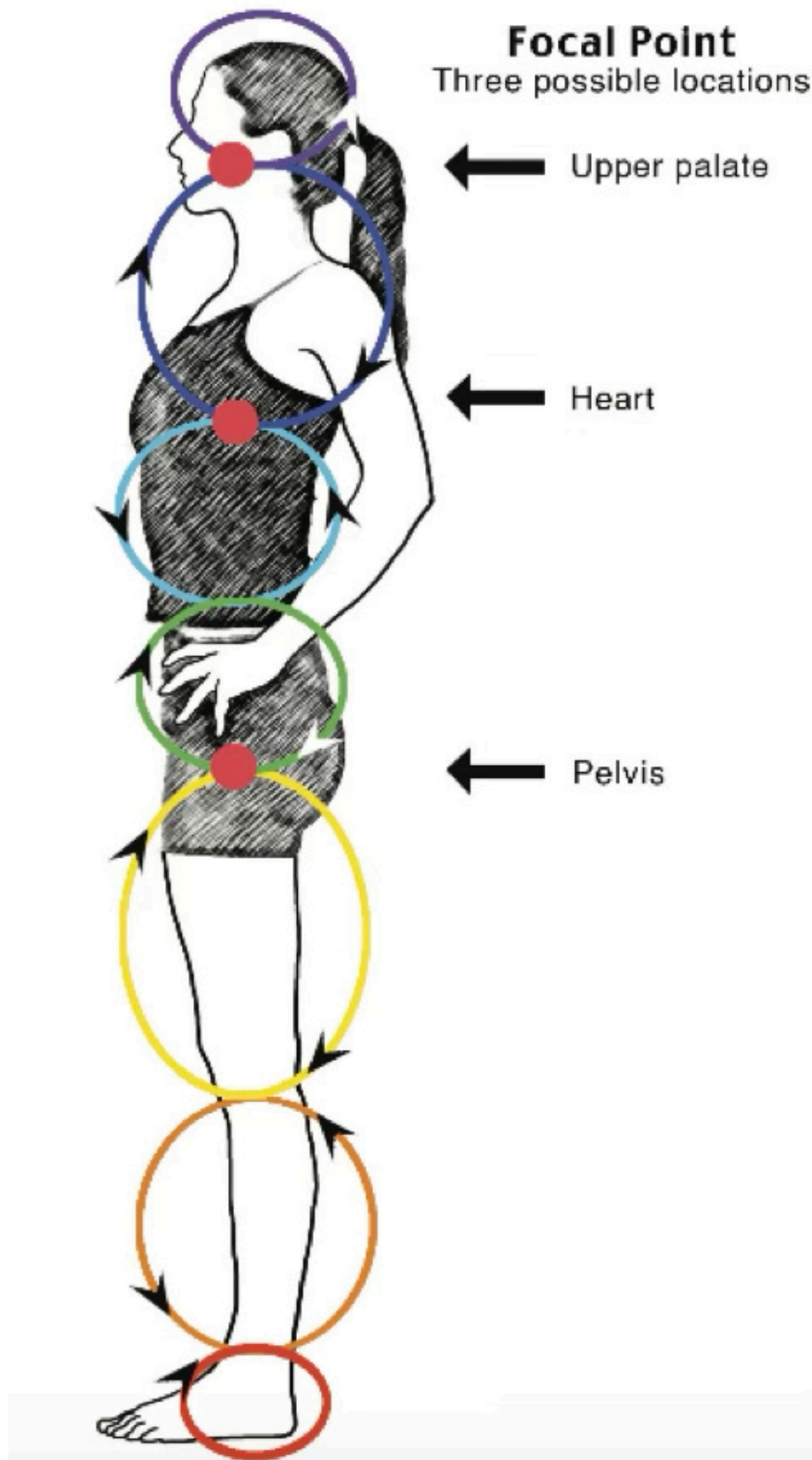
The Universal Principles of Alignment for the Upper Body

1. **Open to Grace.** Lift and brighten the body from the inside, lengthen the sides of the torso and squares the collarbones
2. **Muscular Energy.** Engage arms, draw energy to heart, bring the head of the arm bones back.
3. Create **Shoulder Loop** (see the next section). ie shoulder blades come closer towards the midline and bottom tips of the shoulder blades come into the back. While the head of the upper arm bones go back, the shoulder blades come strongly onto the back.
4. Balance the **rotations of the upper and lower arms:** upper arms rotate out, lower arms rotate in.
5. **Organic Expansion** from the heart focal point out through the arms, broadening the shoulder blades and the entire upper body.

Spirals in the Upper Body (key aspects)

- In the upper body, a spiral is defined as “expanding” or “contracting” based on its action on the upper back, shoulder blades and shoulder girdle.
- **Contracting spiral of the upper body:** Contracts the upper back, draws the shoulder blades towards one another, opens the front of the heart
- **Expanding spiral of the upper body:** Expands the upper back, widens the shoulder blades away from each other, brings space to the back of the heart
- **Inner Spiral of the arms** starts in the hands and spirals into the upper back and shoulder blade area. Hands and forearms pronate (palms face down). Forearms and upper arms rotate internally. Various movements occur in the shoulder blade depending on the position of the arms.
- **Outer Spiral of the arms** starts at the head of the arm bones and spirals out towards the hands. Arm bone rotates externally. Forearms supinate (palms face up). Various movements occur in the shoulder blade depending on the position of the arms.

Focal Points in the Body



The Focal Point: The Key Place of Power within a given pose. The active focal point is closest to the part of the body that is most weight bearing in establishing foundation. The FP provides the center relative to gravity, where ME draws in + OE extends out. Located on central axis of body running from crown of head to pelvic floor.

1) Core of the Pelvis – in line where bottom of sacrum meets top of tailbone.

Active in Standing + Sitting Poses, Plank, Wheel - The pelvis is the most weight-bearing part.

2) **Bottom of the Heart** – where the heart rests on the top of the diaphragm in the core of the chest.

Active in Down Dog + most Arm Balances

3) **Center of the Upper Palate** inside back of mouth in line where top of spine meets base of skull.

Active in Inverted Poses, Headstand, Shoulder Stand, Bridge where head is part of the foundation

The Loops of Anusara Yoga



The Loops of Anusara Yoga Seven pairs of loops guide energy and structure, connecting muscular and organic energy. Intersections create stability and flow.

The 7 Loops (summary)

1. **Ankle Loop** – Heel and arch alignment
2. **Shin Loop** – Shin and calf integration
3. **Thigh Loop** – Top of thigh back, kneecaps lifted
4. **Pelvic Loop** – Core & lower body tension regulation
5. **Kidney Loop** – Ribcage & heart integration
6. **Shoulder Loop** – Heart opening, shoulder mobility
7. **Skull Loop** – Neck and head alignment

Benefits: Activating the Loops creates a systemic energetic current that helps dissolve stuck patterns in our body. As a continuous circuit of motion and energy, the Loops are both fine-tuning dials and dynamic forces creating stability, openness, flow, strength, balance, pliability, energetic integrity and awareness and an integrated flow of prana.

The Loops of Anusara Yoga (key aspects)

- The Loops are a potent key element of Anusara's methodology.
- As refined energy flows, the Loops structurally align our body.
- There are seven pairs of loops, one pair in each of the main segments of the body.
- The loops are secondary currents of Muscular or Organic Energy which help to align the body in the sagittal plane (front to back).
- Loops can operate independently on the left and right sides of the body, or they can flow evenly on both sides.
- When viewed from the side, intersecting Loops generally rotate in opposite directions, (the Thigh and Pelvic Loops are the exception).
- Each loop begins in the median core line of the body, flowing from the core to the back body, then around to the front.
- Initiating the flow of the loops on the back of the body first, instead of the front, creates a softer, more expanded and quieter action.
- Working primarily along our body's vertical access, the Loops govern extension through our core energetic lines.
- As circular flows of subtle energy, the Loops operate like intermeshed gears.
- If you get one Loop flowing, it will assist the gear turning in relation to its neighboring Loops.
- The junctions where the Loops intersect are mighty points of transition in the body.
- Knowing the intersection places is not only therapeutic, it also creates optimal alignment where our body's energy is freed up as powerful, unimpaired flow.
- While a single Loop may positively shift our experience, a Loop is not fully effective if practiced in isolation.
- All 14 Loops (7 pairs) work together and in profound connection with Anusara Yoga's Universal Principles of Alignment (UPAs).

Anusara Yoga's Loops



Skull Loop

Shoulder Loop

Kidney Loop

Pelvic Loop

Thigh Loop

Shin Loop

Ankle Loop



The Loops: description and cues

1. Ankle Loop

Starts at base of shinbone above ankle, moves down back of heel, forward along bottom of foot, then back up through the center of the arch to the front of the shin base

Cue: "draw your heels back, lift the toes,"

2. Shin Loop

Starts at base of shinbone, moves up the back of the calf to the top of the shin just below the knee, forward through the top of the shin, the down the shin to the starting point

Cue: "top of the shins forward, slightly micro bend the knees, push down through the ball of the foot"

3. Thigh Loop

Starts at the top of the thighbone in the core of the pelvis, and moves back and down to the top of the calf muscle, forward through the top of the shin, and then up the front of the thigh.

Cue: "pull the top of your thigh back, lift the kneecaps"

4. Pelvic Loop

Starts at the core of the abdomen, in line with the middle of the lumbar spine and just below the belly button but more central (pelvic focal point), moves down and past the butt, forward through the floor of the pelvis to the top of the pubic bone, then up to the lower abdomen just below the navel and back in - NOTE -> same direction as thigh loop - exception here! Thigh loop moves the top of the thigh back, but the pelvic loop moves the top of the thigh forward, creating a healthy tension.

Cue: "zip up the belly, lift your lower belly in and up, tone your belly, let the lower back open, draw the tailbone down"

5. Kidney Loop

Starts in the same place as the pelvic loop, moves up the back just below the kidney to the bottom of the shoulder blades, forward through the top of the diaphragm (through the heart focal point) to the base of the sternum, then down the solar plexus and into the pelvic focal point start.

Cue: "lift the kidneys, draw the ribcage in, breathe into your lower back, plank lift the lower back"

6. Shoulder Loop

Starts at the center of the upper palate, where the atlas meets the skull (skull focal point), moves down the back of the neck and the upper back to the bottom of the shoulder blades, forward through the bottom of the heart and top of the diaphragm, then up the chest and throat to the upper palate.

Cue: "Melt your heart, roll open your chest and shoulder, shoulder blades hugging in, open your chest to the sky, widen the collar bones"

7. Skull Loop

Starts at the skull focal point, moves back and up along the back of the skull and over the top of the head, then down the face back to the upper palate ("hoodie loop")

Cue: "slightly tilt your skull forward, put on the hoodie on top of your head, lengthen the back of your neck"

Aligning the Inner and Outer Layers of Our Being: Body, Mind & Spirit in Harmony

With Anusara Yoga Principles we explore how alignment awakens strength, freedom, and resilience. Now, we can bring these teachings home—into the deeper layers of our being. Alignment principles apply beyond the physical form—into the layers of mind, breath, emotions, and awareness. These principles support resilience, clarity, and conscious living, leaving us aligned and empowered. In Anusara Yoga, alignment is not just a mechanical action; it's a living relationship. It's how we meet ourselves moment by moment, with awareness, honesty, and compassion. As we refine our alignment on the mat, we refine how we align with life itself, with our intentions, our values, our hearts.

How do these principles —Opening to Grace, Set the Foundation, Muscular and Organic Energy, the Spirals, and the Loops—reflect the inner architecture of your being. Each one offers a doorway into harmony across all dimensions of who you are. Our practice of yoga becomes not something we “do,” but something we live.

The Living Relationship of Alignment: In Anusara Yoga, alignment is not mechanical precision—it is a living relationship between body and breath, effort and surrender, self and the sacred. Each moment becomes an opportunity to realign with truth, to return to center. When we align on the mat, we attune to the pulse of consciousness moving through form.

When we align in life, we embody our values and live with integrity and love.

The First Principle: Open to Grace & Set the Foundation

The first Universal Principle—**Open to Grace**—is the ground of all alignment, physically and spiritually. It is the willingness to soften, to listen, to trust that we are already held in a vast field of intelligence. On the mat, this looks like grounding through the foundation of our pose. In daily life, it means pausing before we react and allowing grace to guide our choices.

Setting the foundation becomes a metaphor for how we build our lives: through steadiness, clarity, and conscious intention.

Contemplate:

- In what ways do you pause, soften, listen to deeper wisdom, invoke grace - in your practice and in your life?
- Can you bring to mind a moment when you remembered to pause in a challenging situation and you were able to connect to a deeper wisdom and stillness?
- How can you more consciously create this practice in your life?
- Can you bring to mind a time when you focused on setting a strong foundation - perhaps in a new project - where focusing on a strong foundation really supported your efforts?
- What daily rituals or pauses remind you to return to the sacred in ordinary moments?
- What part of you resists grace, softness, or surrender—and what might it need to feel safe to open?

The Second Principle, Muscular Energy,

Muscular Energy is the energy of inner strength, stability, coherence and containment. It draws everything toward the midline—the place of integration. In life, Muscular Energy is the discipline to stay centered amidst change. It teaches us to gather scattered attention, to draw awareness back to the heart of what matters.

Contemplate:

- What helps you stay centered when life feels challenging
- What practices, relationships, or environments strengthen your sense of inner stability?
- In what ways can you gather your scattered attention and re-collect your energy throughout the day?
- How does the dance between effort and ease show up in your work, relationships, and self-care?

The Third and Fourth Principles— Inner & Outer Spiral

Balancing expansion and stability, Inner Spiral and Outer Spiral invite the dance between openness and grounding.

Inner Spiral represents spaciousness and receptivity, mirroring humility and curiosity.

Outer Spiral represents grounding and stabilizing through discernment and boundaries.

Together they teach us how to remain open while rooted, receptive while protected.

Contemplate:

- What helps you balance openness with steadiness in your life - what situations come to mind where you feel capable to do this and what situations where you feel not so steady?
- Where might you create healthy boundaries that support your creativity and service rather than restrict them?
- Where in your life are you being invited to expand—and where are you being called to ground?

The Fifth principle, Organic Energy

Organic Energy is the expression of freedom and radiance. After aligning inwardly, this energy radiates outward—our vitality, joy, and love shared with the world. In the body, it's the expansion of breath and the extension of movement.

In life, it's how we express our essence through service, creativity, and relationship.

Contemplate:

- How might you take more time in your life for this expression of organic energy - of radiance, of joy, and sharing your heart with others.
- How might you express your essence more freely
- How can you share your gifts with the world in ways that nourish rather than deplete you
- How might you live as if every breath, every movement, every interaction were an expression of divine consciousness?

The Koshas: Integrating the Layers of Being

These Universal Principles are not limited to the physical body.

They ripple through the **five koshas**—the layers of our being. – the physical, energetic, mental, wisdom, and bliss body.

When alignment flows through them all, we experience harmony between form and essence.

1. **Annamaya Kosha** – the physical body layer
2. **Pranamaya Kosha** – the energy body
3. **Manomaya Kosha** – the mind and emotions
4. **Vijnanamaya Kosha** – the wisdom body
5. **Anandamaya Kosha** – the bliss body - unconditional contentment

Through alignment, each layer becomes harmonized. The physical supports the energetic; the energetic steadies the mind; the mind opens to wisdom; and wisdom dissolves into deep contentment and joy. When these koshas are integrated, we experience wholeness—the realization that the divine is not elsewhere, but shining through every layer of our being.

Contemplate:

- When do you sense disconnection between body, breath, mind, or heart, and how can you gently realign those layers?
- How can you bring awareness of the five koshas into your day—listening to your physical, energetic, emotional, intuitive, and bliss layers?
- What does it mean for me to live in “right relationship” with yourself, with others, and with the world?

Seeing the Sacred in All Things

The ultimate aim of practice is to see the sacred everywhere—in ourselves, in others, in the whole of creation.

This is **pratyabhijñā**—recognition of the divine consciousness within all.

When we live this way, yoga ceases to be something we do—it becomes the way we see.

Contemplate:

- How does your yoga practice help you see the divine in others—even in conflict or misunderstanding?
- How does the recognition of sacredness shift the way you speak, act, and relate?

Living Yoga: Life as Sadhana

Alignment is not confined to asana—it is a state of consciousness.

Each of the five Universal Principles can guide our daily life:

- **Open to Grace** – Begin each day with trust in life’s support.
- **Set the Foundation** – Create daily rhythms that anchor and nourish you.
- **Muscular Energy** – Stay centered and purposeful in your commitments.
- **Inner Spiral** – Remain open and curious to growth.
- **Outer Spiral** – Ground yourself with wise boundaries.
- **Organic Energy** – Express your truth and radiate joy.

Contemplate:

- How can these principles guide you in your relationships, work, and choices?
- What would it mean for your life itself to become your sadhana—a continuous practice of remembering, aligning, and awakening?

Integration and Embodiment

As we explore all the deeper aspects of our being we recognize that we are not separate from the intelligence that moves through all things. Each breath, each movement, each heartbeat is an expression of that universal pulse. When body, mind, and spirit align, we experience coherence—a sense of “right relationship” with ourselves and with life. From this place, strength arises naturally, clarity blossoms, and compassion flows without effort.

May the art of alignment continue to guide you—on your mat, in your relationships, in how you serve and love.

May you stand in your center with grace, live from your heart with courage, and embody the freedom

that comes from being truly aligned and empowered. And may you continue to see the sacred in all things—awakening again and again to the light that you are.

Thank you for being you —and for the light you bring into the world.

An Invitation Forward

As we close, we invite you to continue this journey together at the **Yoga Conference in San Francisco**, April 30 – May 3, a four-day celebration of practice, study, music, and community. There, you will have the chance to study more deeply with these presenters and many other renowned teachers and to meet yogis from around the globe, and to immerse yourself in the living current of yoga.

Register by November 30 for a holiday discount - use code **Thanksgiving** at checkout

www.yoga-conferencesf.com

Yoga Conference - SF - Hosts

Anusara Yoga is an internationally respected school of yoga that weaves precise biomechanical alignment with a heart-centered philosophy. As a teacher-led organization, it is sustained by hundreds of highly skilled teachers and a devoted global community of students, united by a shared commitment to growth, authenticity, and the transformative power of yoga.

Yogakula is a sanctuary in the heart of Berkeley for over 20 years. It is home to some of the Bay Area's most respected teachers. Offering alignment-based classes, workshops, teacher trainings, and therapeutic services, it makes the wisdom of yoga accessible to all. Rooted in community and guided by internationally recognized faculty, Yogakula is a welcoming, heart-centered space for learning, healing, and transformation.

Contact information

Yoga Conference – San Francisco – April 30 – May 3, 2026 - yoga-conferencesf.com

Anusara Yoga: www.anusarayoga.com

Yogakula: www.yogakula.com

Yoga Summit Presenters:

Madhuri Martin

Madhuri's yoga journey began in 1984 with Ashtanga Yoga, studying with Pattabhi Jois and Richard Freeman. Her deep commitment to learning and curiosity led her to study with John

Friend. Madhuri became a Certified Anusara Yoga Teacher in 2000. Guided by decades of immersion with these brilliant teachers, Madhuri embodies a yoga that is both grace-filled and grounded in wisdom. Her teaching reflects the depth of her studies and her devotion to yoga as a living art. www.madhurimartin.com

Desiree Rumbaugh

Desiree Rumbaugh is an internationally renowned Anusara Yoga teacher known for her unshakable enthusiasm, warmth, and authenticity. With more than 30 years of experience in Iyengar and Anusara Yoga, she brings a rich blend of physical precision, creative exploration, and heartfelt wisdom to her teaching. Desiree's own journey through deep grief as a bereaved parent has shaped her understanding of yoga as a path of profound healing and resilience. Her workshops weave humor, storytelling, and practical life wisdom, inviting students to explore how ancient teachings can transform modern challenges. A full-time international teacher, she shares her joy and compassion across the globe, helping students uncover their inner strength and freedom. www.desireerumbaugh.com

Adam Ballenger

Adam Ballenger has been practicing yoga since the early 1990s and teaching since the mid-1990s. As a Certified Anusara Instructor, and Teacher Trainer, he combines over 25 years of experience in yoga, kinesiology, and movement therapy. With a B.S. in Exercise Science and ongoing graduate work in Kinesiology, Adam integrates modern biomechanics with timeless yogic wisdom to create accessible, intelligent practices for students of all ages. He has taught throughout Europe, Asia, and the Americas, sharing his passion for mindful movement, body mechanics, and active aging. Drawing from his own journey of healing physical trauma and emotional well-being, Adam's teaching blends compassion, insight, and playfulness. www.adamballengeryoga.com

Lisa Long

Lisa Long is a dedicated movement and wellness educator who has spent over 30 years helping people move well, breathe well, and live well. An Anusara Certified Yoga Teacher, IAYT Certified Yoga Therapist, YACEP, and certified Pilates instructor, Lisa's multidisciplinary background bridges the worlds of yoga, movement science, and therapeutic practice. She has developed wellness and education programs in collaboration with healthcare systems, fitness centers, and global nonprofits. Lisa's teaching emphasizes longevity, vitality, and self-awareness, guiding students to inhabit their bodies with confidence and grace. www.longlisa.com

Saraswati Clere

Saraswati Clere is an award-winning filmmaker, founder of Yoga Kula in Berkeley, and a Certified Anusara Yoga Teacher with over two decades of teaching experience. A longtime student of Iyengar Yoga, Saraswati is known for her ability to weave the depth of yoga's wisdom teachings

with precise alignment and heart-centered awareness. Her teaching blends rigor and clarity with humor and compassion, offering a deeply embodied and transformative experience for students of all levels. Drawing from years of dedicated study, she brings ancient philosophy to life in ways that are both accessible and profoundly relevant. Saraswati is a teacher trainer and mentor, offering comprehensive yoga teacher training programs that empower students and teachers worldwide. Her classes invite students to explore asana as a pathway to self-discovery, empowerment, and inner freedom. www.yogakula.com

Please email us if you have any questions saraswati@yogakula.com

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