

Tracy Flynn, RYT-500

Viniyoga™ Teacher, Rochester, MI, Viniyoga Therapist-in-Training with the American Viniyoga™ Institute, LLC

"I learned so much as the yoga teacher for the non-small cell lung cancer study. There was such a depth of knowledge about yoga therapy behind the yoga that went into the protocol. So much was focused on lung function and using the right yoga tools in the right way to positively affect lung function. I also learned new ways to help students develop a different kind of relationship with their bodies".

- Tracy Flynn

Tracy Flynn, RYT-500, AVI YT-10, has been an avid yoga practitioner since taking her first class in 1989. At the time, she worked in the publishing world as a production editor and manager. She came to her first class stressed out and with a mind run wild. She walked out a changed person and has been practicing ever since.

Tracy began teaching yoga in 1999 when she left the corporate world in order to more fully integrate her passions with her daily life. She began studying with Gary Kraftsow in 2000 after attending a workshop he taught at the Midwest Yoga Conference in Ann Arbor, MI. She immediately resonated with the teaching and with Gary. For the next five years, Tracy took workshops with Gary, and in 2005 began formal teacher training study with him through the AVI Viniyoga Teacher Training. She completed that program in 2006.

A full-time yoga teacher for the past 10 years, Tracy acts on a strong belief in and commitment to community service. Who and where she teaches is a testament to this. Four out of the fourteen weekly classes she teaches are for seniors at a senior center. The other ten classes serve a variety of populations in different parts of the community, including those who come to an elegant yoga studio in her hometown, an adult education with the public schools, a church, a community center, and a university.

As soon as Tracy began working one-on-one with students she felt she was in her element and loved it. As she worked privately with students, she saw that most people had therapeutic issues that needed to be addressed. This helped fuel her desire to learn more. Tracy knew from taking workshops and teacher training with Gary that a really organized, in-depth study on the topic of yoga therapy was the learning environment she needed to understand how to apply the tools of yoga therapeutically for a wide variety of conditions. She is currently studying with Gary to become a yoga therapist through the AVI Viniyoga Therapist Training.

When the opportunity arose to teach the yoga classes as part of a study on the effectiveness of yoga therapy for people with non-small cell lung cancer, Tracy eagerly joined the research team. She was thrilled that the study's principle investigator, Judith M. Fouladbakhsh, PhD, decided to go with Viniyoga for the study's yoga protocol. Vijai Sharma, PhD, RYT-500, CYT, another student of Gary, Gary, Judi, and Tracy developed the protocols for the eight-week series that Tracy taught. Her experience as the yoga teacher for the study not only deepened her skills as a yoga teacher, it gave her an even deeper appreciation of the beneficial effect of *sangha*—community support—in a therapeutic group class setting, not to mention the therapeutic application of the tools of yoga, particularly meditation and guided relaxation. Tracy looks forward to teaching in future studies on the effectiveness of yoga therapy for health promotion, wellness, and self-care.



"As the yoga teacher for the non-small cell lung cancer study, I was so impressed with the yoga. Just as important, though, was the group support. These classes became a place where the students who were a part of the study wanted to go. They wanted to be there because of that group support."

- Tracy Flynn,
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