

SKM YOGA

ॐ शिवं सुन्दरम् ॥

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO YOGA RETREAT

Design · Delivery · Branding · Business · Spirituality

For Students of Yoga Teacher Training (YTT)

Compiled by

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From the Founder's Desk

A Message of Love & Light

Yogah karmasu kaushalam

— Yoga is excellence in action — Bhagavad Gita 2.50

Beloved Students of SKM Yoga,

When I first walked barefoot on the dew-kissed grass of a mountain ashram at dawn, I understood — not intellectually, but in every cell of my body — that a Yoga Retreat is not merely a scheduled event. It is a sacred container in which human beings remember who they truly are.

This manual has been compiled with one unwavering intention: to give you, my students and fellow teachers, a complete, practical, and spiritually grounded framework to design, deliver, brand, and sustain a Yoga Retreat that transforms lives — beginning with your own.

The world is hungry for stillness. People are exhausted by speed, disconnected from their breath, alienated from their bodies, and starving for silence. A well-crafted Yoga Retreat is medicine. As a certified SKM Yoga Teacher, you are now a healer of modern life. Take that responsibility with reverence.

Read every chapter slowly. Let it settle in you before you act on it. The best retreat you can ever offer flows from who you have become — not merely what you know.

With love, light, and endless faith in your journey,

Dr. Shivam Mishra

Founder, SKM Yoga

Chapter 1

What Is a Yoga Retreat?

Svadhyaya — Niyamas 4.1

— Self-study is the path to the Supreme Self

1.1 Definition & Essence

A Yoga Retreat is a dedicated period of immersive practice — typically ranging from one day to several weeks — designed to take participants away from the habitual rhythms of daily life and into a deeper relationship with themselves. Unlike a regular yoga class, a retreat creates continuity of practice, community of spirit, and depth of inquiry that is not possible in a one-hour session.

The word 'retreat' itself comes from the Latin retrahere — 'to draw back.' In the yogic context, we draw back from distraction and draw inward toward the unchanging centre of our being: the Atman.

1.2 The Four Dimensions of a Retreat

- **Body:** Physical renewal through asana, pranayama, and conscious movement
- **Energy:** Expansion of prana through breath work, sound healing, and ritual
- **Mind:** Quieting the vrittis (mental fluctuations) through meditation and silence
- **Spirit:** Direct encounter with the unchanging witness — Sat-Chit-Ananda

1.3 Why Retreats Are More Relevant Than Ever

In the 21st century, we live in a state of perpetual cognitive overload. Screen time has replaced reflection time. Convenience culture has eroded our capacity for patience and stillness. Chronic stress, anxiety, sleep disorders, and lifestyle diseases are at all-time highs globally.

A Yoga Retreat provides what modern medicine cannot prescribe: uninterrupted immersion in practices that heal at the root. As an SKM Yoga teacher, you are not simply offering holidays — you are offering transformation.

1.4 Types of Yoga Retreats

Type	Description
Day Retreat	6–8 hours, local venue, introductory, ideal for beginners and urban participants.

Weekend Retreat (2–3 Days)	Standard entry format. Detox, reconnect, reset. High demand segment.
5-Day Retreat	Deeper transformation. Combination of themed modules. Intermediate participants.
7-Day Retreat	Deep dive. Includes silent days, pranayama intensives, philosophy. Full transformation.
14-Day Retreat	Advanced sadhana. For YTT students, spiritual seekers, health professionals.
21-Day Retreat	Ashram-style immersion. Internal redesign of habits, beliefs, and identity.
Destination Retreat	International or exotic location. Premium pricing. High-end branding required.
Corporate Wellness Retreat	Tailored for organisations. Leadership, stress management, team cohesion.
Therapeutic Retreat	Healing-focused. Yoga therapy, Ayurveda, trauma-informed practices.
Virtual Retreat	Online format. Global reach. Lower overheads. Strong content required.

Chapter 2

Spiritual Foundation of the Yoga Retreat

Taittiriya Upanishad: Anando Brahmeti vyajanat

— He realized that Bliss is Brahman — the source of all

2.1 The Retreat as Sacred Space (Kshetra)

In the Vedic tradition, certain spaces are designated as Kshetra — sacred ground. A pilgrimage (yatra) to such spaces accelerates spiritual evolution because the environment itself is charged with intention, prayer, and prana. When you create a Yoga Retreat, you are literally constructing a temporary Kshetra — a field of awakening.

Every decision you make — the location, the altar, the morning bell, the quality of silence — either adds to or diminishes the sanctity of this field. As the retreat leader, you are the primary custodian of this field. Your own spiritual integrity is non-negotiable.

2.2 The Pancha Kosha Model as Retreat Architecture

Patanjali and the Taittiriya Upanishad describe the human being as dwelling within five sheaths (koshas). The most profound retreats are designed to work on all five simultaneously:

Kosha (Sheath)	Retreat Practices That Address It
Annamaya Kosha (Physical Body)	Asana, walking meditation, conscious eating, fasting, Ayurvedic therapies, rest.
Pranamaya Kosha (Energy Body)	Pranayama, bandhas, mudras, sound healing, fire ceremony (havan), nature immersion.
Manomaya Kosha (Mental Body)	Dharana, guided visualization, journaling, circle sharing, philosophical discourse.
Vijnanamaya Kosha (Wisdom Body)	Svadyaya (self-study), Yoga Nidra, silent walking, scripture study, contemplative inquiry.
Anandamaya Kosha (Bliss Body)	Deep meditation, Samadhi practice, devotional singing (kirtan), seva (service), surrender.

2.3 The Role of the Teacher as Spiritual Guide

The Sanskrit word for teacher is Acharya — one who lives the teaching. During a retreat, participants are in a heightened state of vulnerability and openness. They have left their familiar environment and habitual defenses. Your presence, steadiness, and genuine spiritual practice are the most powerful teachings you will ever offer.

"The guru does not give light. The guru removes the darkness so the student's own light can shine."

- **Principle 1:** Begin your own practice before the first participant wakes. Your quality of presence is your curriculum.
- **Principle 2:** Maintain ethical impeccability. No romantic involvement, no hierarchical manipulation, no spiritual bypassing.
- **Principle 3:** Hold space for grief, joy, confusion, and breakthrough without making any of it about you.
- **Principle 4:** Every ritual, bell, chant, and silence should be authentic — never theatrical.

2.4 Daily Spiritual Rhythm — The Retreat Dharma

Traditional ashrams and monasteries understand that rhythm itself is transformative. When participants surrender to a daily structure of waking, practice, silence, inquiry, and rest — the nervous system recalibrates, the mind softens, and something ancient in the human being awakens. Design your retreat timetable as a living mandala.

Time	Spiritual Activity
04:30 – 05:00	Brahma Muhurta — Wake in Silence, Jala Neti, Tratak (optional)
05:00 – 06:30	Morning Sadhana: Pranayama, Meditation, Mantra
06:30 – 08:00	Asana Practice (Dynamic / Hatha / Vinyasa)
08:00 – 08:30	Sattvic Breakfast in Silence or Gentle Conversation
09:00 – 10:30	Svadyaya — Scripture Study, Journaling, Yoga Philosophy
10:30 – 12:00	Workshop Module / Theme Session / Guest Talk
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch — Mindful Eating Practice
13:00 – 15:00	Rest, Nature Walk, Creative Expression, Free Time
15:00 – 16:30	Afternoon Practice: Yin Yoga / Restorative / Yoga Nidra
16:30 – 18:00	Pranayama Intensive / Breathwork / Therapy Session
18:00 – 19:30	Evening Sadhana: Kirtan, Havan, Chanting, Satsang
19:30 – 20:00	Sattvic Dinner
20:00 – 21:00	Evening Circle, Sharing, Guided Meditation, Story
21:00	Mauna (Silence) begins. Sleep as a spiritual practice.

Chapter 3

Retreat Modules — Curriculum Design

A Retreat Module is a self-contained unit of learning and experience built around a central theme. Well-designed modules give participants a sense of progressive depth while ensuring the retreat has a cohesive narrative arc. Think of each module as a chapter in the story you are telling together.

3.1 Core Modules for Every Yoga Retreat

Module 1: Arrival & Grounding

Purpose: Help participants fully arrive — physiologically, emotionally, and energetically. Most people carry the momentum of their busy lives into the first hours of a retreat. This module creates a gentle but deliberate transition.

- Welcome Circle: intentions, names, and one word describing how they arrived
- Orientation to the space, rules of the container, digital detox agreement
- Grounding Asana Sequence: forward folds, hip openers, seated twists
- Pranayama: Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing) — 15 minutes
- Body Scan Meditation — letting go of the journey and arriving fully

Module 2: The Breath — Gateway to the Subtle Body

The breath is the single most powerful tool a human being possesses. Most people breathe at 10–20% of their lung capacity habitually. This module awakens participants to the extraordinary resource they carry in every moment.

- Theory: The Prana Vayus (Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana, Vyana)
- Practice: Kapalabhati, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Sitali, Sitkari
- Extended practice: Kumbhaka (retention) — with safety guidance
- Integration: Journaling on the experience of energy moving through the body

Module 3: The Asana Laboratory

This is the physical centrepiece of any yoga retreat. Unlike a regular class, the Asana Laboratory gives space for exploration, adjustment, and understanding the Why behind each posture.

- Morning Dynamic Practice: Sun Salutations, Warrior Series, Peak Pose Sequence
- Anatomy Integration: understanding alignment through the lens of the subtle body
- Partner Assists: community building through appropriate touch
- Evening Restorative Practice: supported inversions, Savasana extended

Module 4: Meditation — The Seat of Witnessing

Meditation is the heart of a yoga retreat. Without a daily, deepening meditation practice, a retreat risks becoming a very expensive wellness holiday. Ensure meditation is non-negotiable and progressive.

- Day 1: Breath Awareness — Counting, then release
- Day 2: Tratak (Candle Gazing) — Developing one-pointedness
- Day 3: Mantra Meditation — Japa with Mala
- Day 4: Yoga Nidra — Conscious sleep, Sankalpa planting
- Day 5+: Open Awareness / Samadhi approach / Guided Vipassana

Module 5: Yoga Philosophy & Svadhyaya

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Upanishads are living scriptures — they speak directly to the experiences participants are having in real time. Philosophy sessions should never be dry lectures. They should be living conversations sparked by practice.

- Patanjali's Ashtanga — the 8-limbed path as a life design system
- The Kleshas — understanding the roots of suffering
- Dharma — discovering one's unique life purpose
- The Gunas — Tamas, Rajas, Sattva in daily life

Module 6: Nutrition & Ayurveda

Food is medicine. A retreat is an ideal container to introduce participants to the Ayurvedic understanding of food as prana. Sattvic cooking workshops, dosha assessment, and conscious eating rituals are powerful experiential additions.

- Dosha assessment: Vata, Pitta, Kapha constitutions
- Sattvic cooking workshop — live preparation with participants
- Mindful eating ceremony — one meal eaten in complete silence
- Herbal tea ritual — morning and evening Ayurvedic herbs

Module 7: Sound Healing & Kirtan

Sound is perhaps the most direct route to altered states of consciousness available in a yoga retreat. Kirtan (devotional chanting), Nada Yoga, Tibetan bowls, and binaural sound healing have profound effects on the nervous system and the emotional body.

- Morning chant: Gayatri Mantra, Mahamrityunjaya, OM
- Kirtan evening: call-and-response chanting, instruments, community
- Sound bath: Tibetan singing bowls, crystal bowls, or recorded binaural frequencies

Module 8: Nature Immersion & Silence

The most ancient 'yoga studio' is the forest, the mountain, the river bank. Ensure your retreat includes unstructured time in nature without devices. A walking meditation in nature or a supervised silent morning walk can be a peak experience for many participants.

- Mauna Vrata — partial or full day of silence
- Forest bathing (Shinrin-Yoku) with a mindful awareness practice
- Sunrise/Sunset ceremony at a natural landmark
- Earth Element practice — bare feet on earth, Prithvi mudra, grounding visualisation

Module 9: Integration & Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony is as important as the opening. Without a deliberate integration process, the transformation of the retreat evaporates within 48 hours of participants returning home. Design a closing that plants the seeds of practice deep enough to grow.

- Gratitude circle: every participant shares one breakthrough or insight
- Sankalpa renewal: revisiting and refining the intention set on Day 1
- Havan or fire ceremony: releasing what no longer serves
- Tilak ceremony: symbolic blessing from teacher to student
- Personal commitment letter: written to themselves, sealed, returned 3 months later

Chapter 4

Planning & Operations

A spiritually profound retreat and an operationally excellent retreat are not opposites — they are partners. Participants cannot drop into depth when logistics are chaotic. Master the practical framework below and you will free yourself to be fully present as a teacher.

4.1 Pre-Retreat Planning Timeline

Weeks Before	Actions Required
12+ Weeks	Fix dates, secure venue, define theme, set pricing, open registration.
10 Weeks	Design curriculum, create session-by-session timetable, book guest teachers.
8 Weeks	Launch marketing campaign: social media, email, WhatsApp, partner outreach.
6 Weeks	Prepare all printed materials (handbooks, journals, certificates).
4 Weeks	Confirm all bookings. Send pre-retreat preparation guide to participants.
2 Weeks	Final headcount, dietary requirements, medical disclosures, room assignments.
1 Week	Pack all supplies. Test all tech (projector, sound, playlists, lighting).
1–2 Days Before	Arrive at venue. Set up altar, decor, welcome area. Personal sadhana & rest.
Day 1	Arrive calm, grounded, and fully present. The retreat begins with your energy.

4.2 Venue Selection Criteria

- Natural setting: proximity to forest, mountains, river, or ocean enhances prana
- Adequate indoor space for yoga practice (minimum 3m x 3m per participant)
- Quiet environment — minimal road noise, construction, or commercial activity
- Sattvic kitchen or catering partnership for fresh, vegetarian meals
- Private accommodation options (shared and single rooms)
- Reliable electricity, hot water, Wi-Fi (restricted hours), and emergency access
- Outdoor spaces for morning practice, nature walks, and ceremonies

- Legal permissions for outdoor fire ceremony (havan) if planned

4.3 Group Size Guidelines

Group Size	Ideal Format
8–12 people	Intimate. Deep transformation. Premium pricing. Suitable for new teachers.
12–20 people	Optimal balance of community and individual attention.
20–30 people	Requires at least one assistant teacher. Strong logistics needed.
30–50 people	Festival-style. Multiple workshops running in parallel. Large venue.
50+	Conference-style. Requires full event management team.

4.4 Essential Supplies Checklist

- Yoga mats, blocks, bolsters, straps, blankets (per participant)
- Altar items: Ganesh/Shiva murti, flowers, ghee lamp (diya), incense, kumkum
- Sound tools: harmonium or guitar, mala beads, Tibetan bowls, bell, gong
- Printed materials: schedule booklets, philosophy handouts, journaling workbooks
- First aid kit, essential oils, herbal teas, honey
- Certificates of completion (printed on quality paper with official seal)
- Welcome gifts: journals, crystals, malas, tulsi plants, essential oil roll-ons
- Fire ceremony materials: ghee, camphor, mango wood, samagri (havan material)

Chapter 5

Business Module — The Retreat Economy

Artha is one of the four Purusharthas

— Prosperity and right livelihood are sacred duties

Treating the business of a yoga retreat as somehow 'un-spiritual' is a common and costly mistake. The Vedic tradition recognises Artha (prosperity) as one of the four legitimate life goals (Purusharthas). You cannot serve others deeply if your financial foundation is unstable. Build your business with as much integrity as your spiritual practice.

5.1 Revenue Streams for a Yoga Retreat Business

Revenue Stream	Notes
Core Retreat Fees	Primary income: accommodation + meals + tuition. Price by duration and depth.
Early Bird Discounts	Fill spots early, improve cash flow. Offer 10–15% for 8+ weeks out.
Payment Plans	Increase accessibility. Require deposit (30–40%) to secure commitment.
Merchandise Sales	SKM Yoga branded mats, apparel, malas, essential oils, journals.
Add-on Services	Private sessions, Ayurvedic treatments, astrology readings, photography.
Alumni Follow-up Programs	Post-retreat online courses, monthly circles, membership community.
Corporate Contracts	Annual wellness retreat contracts with companies.
Affiliate Partnerships	Venue commissions, supplement brands, wellness product collaborations.
Teacher Mentorship	Charge for mentoring your graduates as they run their own retreats.

5.2 Retreat Pricing Framework

Pricing is both a practical and a philosophical decision. Price too low and participants do not value the experience. Price too high without the brand authority to justify it, and you struggle to fill. The SKM Yoga Retreat Pricing Formula:

"Total Retreat Price = (Direct Costs × 2.5) + Teacher Premium + Brand Premium"

Cost Component	Typical Range (INR)
Venue Hire (per person, per night)	800 – 4,000
Meals (per person, per day)	400 – 1,200
Materials & Welcome Kit	300 – 1,500
Marketing Cost per Conversion	200 – 800
Insurance & Admin	100 – 300
Total Direct Cost (Weekend, Shared)	~4,000 – 15,000 per person
Suggested Retail (Weekend, Shared)	~8,000 – 35,000 per person
7-Day Retreat (Standard)	20,000 – 75,000 per person
International Destination Retreat	\$1,200 – \$5,000 per person

5.3 Financial Planning & Breakeven Analysis

Before launching any retreat, complete a formal breakeven analysis. Know your minimum viable number of participants before you are profitable. This clarity protects you from running retreats at a loss and allows you to make confident refund and cancellation policies.

Sample Breakeven Calculation

Fixed Costs: Venue ₹40,000 | Teacher accommodation ₹5,000 | Materials ₹8,000 = ₹53,000

Variable Cost per Participant: Meals + materials = ₹1,800

Retreat Price per Participant: ₹12,000

Contribution Margin per Person: ₹12,000 – ₹1,800 = ₹10,200

Breakeven Point: ₹53,000 ÷ ₹10,200 = 5.2 → Need 6 participants to break even

At 10 Participants: Revenue ₹1,20,000 | Total Cost ₹71,000 | Profit ₹49,000

At 15 Participants: Revenue ₹1,80,000 | Total Cost ₹80,000 | Profit ₹1,00,000

5.4 Refund & Cancellation Policy

- Full refund if cancelled more than 60 days before the retreat

- 50% refund if cancelled 30–60 days before the retreat
- No refund within 30 days, but credit applicable to future retreat
- In case of medical emergency: full credit transfer with medical certificate
- Teacher cancellation: full refund + 10% goodwill discount on next booking

5.5 Legal Structure & Compliance

- Register your yoga business: Proprietorship, Partnership, or Private Limited
- Obtain GST registration if annual turnover exceeds ₹20 lakhs
- Have all participants sign a Health & Waiver Disclosure Form
- Carry professional liability insurance for yoga teaching
- Maintain separate business bank account for retreat finances
- Issue formal receipts and maintain GST-compliant invoicing
- Contracts with venues, visiting teachers, and service providers in writing

Chapter 6

Building the SKM Yoga Retreat Brand

"A brand is the promise you make. Your reputation is whether you keep it."

6.1 What Is a Yoga Retreat Brand?

A brand is not a logo. A brand is the total experience a person has when they encounter your work — your energy, your language, your visual identity, your teaching style, your community, and your values. The strongest yoga brands in the world are built on authentic spiritual depth, not marketing budgets.

As an SKM Yoga certified teacher, you carry the foundation of a powerful brand: the authority and credibility of a recognised lineage, a systematic curriculum, and the personal integrity instilled through your training. Your task is to build your unique expression on this foundation.

6.2 Brand Architecture — The Four Pillars

Pillar	Description
Purpose	Why you exist beyond profit. Your dharma as a teacher. What pain do you heal?
Positioning	Who you serve, how you are different, and why participants choose you.
Personality	The human qualities of your brand: warm, structured, mystical, grounded, playful?
Promise	The specific transformation you guarantee participants will experience.

6.3 Brand Identity Elements

Name & Tagline

Your retreat brand name should be easy to pronounce, memorable, and evocative of your teaching essence. It can be your own name (Dr. Shivam Mishra's Himalayan Yoga Retreats), a Sanskrit name (Akasha Retreats), or a descriptive phrase (Inner Root Retreats).

- Keep it under 3 words if possible
- Check domain availability and Instagram handle before finalising
- Create a tagline of 5–8 words that captures your promise

Visual Identity

- Colours: Choose 2–3 colours that evoke your retreat's essence (earthy, serene, vibrant)
- Typography: Use one serif font (elegant, traditional) and one sans-serif (clean, modern)
- Photography: Invest in professional photos of practice, nature, and community. This is your highest marketing ROI.
- Logo: Simple, scalable, meaningful. Works in black and white as well as colour.

Brand Voice

- Write your descriptions as if speaking to a dear friend who is suffering and seeking
- Avoid yoga jargon with beginners — translate every Sanskrit term
- Use sensory language: what will they smell, feel, hear, taste, and see?
- Share vulnerability — your own journey of transformation is your most powerful marketing

6.4 Digital Brand Presence

Website Essentials

- Home page: your brand promise and a compelling hero image within 3 seconds of loading
- About page: your authentic story — not your qualifications first, your journey first
- Retreats page: every retreat fully described with dates, price, inclusions, and booking
- Testimonials: genuine, specific, emotionally resonant stories from past participants
- Blog/Content: monthly articles on yoga philosophy, retreat preparation, and well-being
- SEO essentials: Google Business Profile, local SEO for your city/region

Social Media Strategy

Platform	Content Strategy
Instagram	Daily stories of practice, nature, and teaching. Reels of retreat moments. Posts teaching bite-size yoga wisdom.
YouTube	Full-length guided meditations, pranayama tutorials, philosophy talks. Builds trust and organic reach.
WhatsApp	Personal broadcast list for graduates, alumni, and warm leads. Most effective conversion tool.
Facebook	Community group for alumni. Event promotion. Works well for 35+ age demographic.
Email List	Most valuable asset. Weekly/bi-weekly newsletter with teaching content + retreat invitations.

6.5 The Retreat Launch Formula

1. Content Phase (12–8 weeks out): Create and share content related to the retreat theme without selling.
2. Desire Phase (8–6 weeks out): Share testimonials, transformation stories, and sneak peeks.
3. Announcement Phase (6 weeks out): Open registration with early-bird pricing and bonus.
4. Urgency Phase (3–2 weeks out): Highlight remaining spots, share participant preparation excitement.
5. Final Call (1 week out): Last call email and story series. Share your own excitement and readiness.

6.6 Building Long-Term Brand Equity

- Alumni Community: Create a private group for all retreat graduates. This is your most loyal audience.
- Referral Programme: Offer meaningful incentives for participants who bring friends.
- Annual Retreats: Create signature annual retreats that people mark in their calendars years ahead.
- Media & PR: Pitch your story to wellness magazines, podcasts, and yoga publications.
- Partnerships: Co-create with Ayurvedic practitioners, therapists, artists, and chefs.
- Book or E-Book: Position yourself as a thought leader in your niche.
- SKM Yoga Association: Leverage your affiliation for authority, joint marketing, and community support.

Chapter 7

Marketing & Sales — Filling Your Retreats

Marketing is service before the service begins. When your marketing is authentic, educational, and aligned with your values, it is an extension of your teaching — not a compromise of it.

7.1 Understanding Your Ideal Participant

The most effective marketing begins with deep empathy for who you are serving. Resist the temptation to market to 'everyone who does yoga.' The most powerful retreats serve a specific person with a specific need.

Create Your Ideal Participant Profile

Age range, occupation, lifestyle, and life stage (e.g., 28–45, professional, urban, high-stress).

The primary pain they are experiencing that brings them to a retreat.

The transformation they secretly dream of but have not yet dared to pursue.

What has stopped them from doing a retreat before (cost, time, fear, doubt).

Where they spend their time online and who they trust as influences.

What language they use when they describe their own experience of suffering.

7.2 Organic Marketing Strategies

- Teach regular free content: Instagram Lives, YouTube tutorials, free meditation downloads
- Host local events: free yoga in the park, satsang evenings, workshop tasters
- Community building: show up consistently, respond to every comment and message
- Email newsletter: provide genuine value weekly before inviting to retreats
- Partnerships: cross-promotion with therapists, nutritionists, and wellness brands
- Google reviews and testimonials: systematically collect after every retreat

7.3 Paid Marketing

- Meta Ads (Facebook/Instagram): retargeting website visitors and lookalike audiences
- Google Search Ads: target high-intent searches like 'yoga retreat India 2025'
- Yoga retreat listing platforms: BookRetreats, YogaFinder, Retreat Guru, Airbnb Experiences
- Invest in professional photography and video: highest ROI marketing asset

7.4 Sales Conversations — Enrolling with Integrity

Sales in the yoga world should feel like a caring conversation, not a pitch. When someone enquires about your retreat, they are often already in a state of longing for change. Your job is to help them see whether your offering is the right next step for them — and to be honest when it is not.

- Listen first: ask 'What brings you to consider a retreat?' before talking about yours
- Identify the transformation they seek: reflect it back in their own words
- Answer objections with empathy, not persuasion tactics
- Offer a payment plan to remove financial barriers where genuine
- Always be willing to say: 'This retreat may not be right for you right now' — trust builds

Chapter 8

Health, Safety & Ethics

8.1 Pre-Retreat Health Screening

Every participant must complete a comprehensive Health Disclosure Form before arriving. This protects them and you. Flag any conditions that require modified practice: cardiovascular disease, recent surgery, epilepsy, severe mental health conditions, pregnancy, or eating disorders.

- Online form submitted at registration — mandatory, not optional
- Follow up personally with any flagged conditions before arrival
- Have a clear policy on who cannot safely participate
- Emergency contact details collected from every participant

8.2 First Aid & Emergency Preparedness

- At least one team member with certified First Aid and CPR qualification
- First aid kit fully stocked: bandages, antiseptic, burns gel, basic medications
- Knowledge of nearest hospital, emergency number, and route
- Written Emergency Response Protocol shared with all staff
- Asthma inhaler protocol, allergy protocol, seizure protocol documented

8.3 Psychological Safety

Intensive yoga and meditation practices can surface difficult emotions, memories, and psychological material. This is not a problem — it is a sign the practice is working. However, you must be prepared to hold this with skill and compassion, and to refer onwards when needed.

- Create explicit agreements in the opening circle about confidentiality and respect
- Never force anyone to share, chant, or participate against their will
- Have the contact of a psychologist or counsellor available for referral if needed
- Do not diagnose or attempt to therapize — hold space, acknowledge, and refer

8.4 Code of Ethics for SKM Yoga Retreat Teachers

- Never engage in romantic or sexual relationships with participants during or immediately after a retreat
- Maintain strict confidentiality about participants' personal disclosures
- Never teach practices beyond your training and competence

- Be transparent about your qualifications and affiliations
- Do not consume alcohol or intoxicants during the retreat period
- Uphold the dignity and autonomy of every participant at all times
- Disclose any conflicts of interest in product recommendations

Chapter 9

Post-Retreat Excellence & Alumni Journey

9.1 The 72-Hour Window

Research in neuroscience confirms that the emotional and neurological state experienced at the end of a transformative retreat creates a 72-hour window of exceptional neuroplasticity. What participants do in these three days largely determines whether the retreat's effects become permanent or fade. Design your post-retreat support accordingly.

- Send a post-retreat email within 24 hours: integration practices, gratitude, next steps
- Provide a 7-day home practice guide specific to what was experienced on the retreat
- Encourage journaling every morning for the first 7 days post-retreat
- Discourage immediate return to social media and excessive stimulation
- Schedule a 1-week check-in call or group online circle

9.2 Alumni Community Building

- Private WhatsApp or Telegram group for each retreat cohort
- Monthly online satsang (online gathering) for all alumni
- Quarterly in-person meetups or mini-retreats at subsidised alumni rates
- Alumni early access and discounts for future retreats
- Create a 'Ripple Effect' programme: alumni who bring friends receive credits

9.3 Testimonials & Social Proof

Genuine testimonials from participants are your most powerful marketing asset. Collect them systematically and ethically.

- Send a structured feedback form within 48 hours while the experience is fresh
- Ask specific questions: 'What was your biggest breakthrough?' 'What would you tell a friend considering this retreat?'
- Request video testimonials for social media with explicit permission
- Feature testimonials prominently on website, social media, and marketing materials

Chapter 10

Sample Retreat Schedules

10.1 Weekend Retreat Schedule (2 Nights / 3 Days)

Time / Session	Content
DAY 1 — ARRIVE & GROUND	
15:00 – 16:00	Arrival, Check-in, Welcome Tea
16:00 – 17:30	Opening Circle, Intentions, Orientation
17:30 – 19:00	Grounding Asana & Pranayama
19:00 – 20:00	Sattvic Welcome Dinner
20:00 – 21:00	Evening Satsang: Introduction to Yoga Philosophy
21:00	Mauna begins
DAY 2 — DEEPEN & EXPLORE	
05:30 – 07:00	Morning Meditation & Pranayama
07:00 – 09:00	Dynamic Asana Practice
09:00 – 10:00	Breakfast in Silence
10:30 – 12:30	Workshop: The Kleshas & How Yoga Heals
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:30	Free Time / Nature Walk / Ayurvedic Consultation
15:30 – 17:30	Yin Yoga & Breathwork Intensive
18:00 – 19:30	Kirtan & Sound Healing
19:30 – 20:30	Dinner
20:30 – 21:30	Yoga Nidra
DAY 3 — INTEGRATE & CLOSE	
06:00 – 07:30	Meditation & Journaling
07:30 – 09:30	Closing Asana: Heart Opening Practice
09:30 – 10:30	Breakfast
10:30 – 12:00	Integration Workshop + Closing Circle

12:00 – 13:00	Havan (Fire Ceremony) & Tilak Blessing
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch & Farewell

10.2 7-Day Retreat Theme Arc

Day	Theme & Focus
Day 1	Earth — Arriving, Grounding, Establishing Safety
Day 2	Water — Releasing, Letting Flow, Emotional Cleansing
Day 3	Fire — Discipline, Tapas, Transformation
Day 4	Air — Breath as Bridge, Pranayama Intensive, Silent Day
Day 5	Space (Akasha) — Meditation, Emptiness, Presence
Day 6	Light — Philosophy, Self-Inquiry, Inner Vision
Day 7	Integration — Ceremony, Gratitude, New Beginning

Chapter 11

Scaling Your Retreat Business

11.1 The Three Stages of Growth

Stage	Characteristics & Focus
Stage 1: Apprentice (0–2 years)	2–4 retreats/year. Intimate groups. Build confidence, collect testimonials, refine curriculum. Revenue: ₹3–10 lakhs/year.
Stage 2: Established (2–5 years)	6–10 retreats/year. Growing team. Distinct brand. Signature retreat. Revenue: ₹15–50 lakhs/year.
Stage 3: Leader (5+ years)	Multiple retreat formats, international destinations, teacher training programmes, online courses. Revenue: ₹50 lakhs+/year.

11.2 Building a Team

- Assistant teachers: SKM Yoga graduates you mentor and co-teach with
- Retreat manager: handles logistics, communication, and on-ground coordination
- Chef/Cook: specialised in sattvic, Ayurvedic nutrition — a major selling point
- Photographer/Videographer: document every retreat for marketing and memory
- Virtual Assistant: email management, social media scheduling, booking administration

11.3 Creating a Signature Retreat

A Signature Retreat is your flagship offering — the retreat that most fully expresses your unique teaching, your deepest knowledge, and your highest aspiration for participants. It becomes the retreat you are known for, the one that generates word-of-mouth year after year.

- Choose a theme that reflects your deepest personal transformation and expertise
- Create a unique name that is ownable and searchable
- Build a dedicated sales page for it that lives year-round
- Run it at the same time every year to build anticipation and alumni return
- Create a signature ritual (opening ceremony, unique practice, closing gift) that becomes legendary

11.4 International Expansion

- Begin with neighbouring countries: Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bali — familiar culture, manageable logistics
- Partner with local yoga studios or wellness centres abroad to co-host
- Price international retreats in USD or Euros for currency advantage
- Apply for international teaching visas where required
- Leverage the SKM Yoga global network for participant referrals and venue partnerships

Chapter 12

The Teacher's Own Sadhana

Shraddhavan labhate jnanam — Bhagavad Gita 4.39

— One who has faith and devotion attains knowledge

12.1 You Are the Retreat

In the final analysis, after all the planning, branding, marketing, and logistics — the single most important element of any retreat is YOU. The quality of your presence. The depth of your practice. The authenticity of your surrender. Participants will forget what you taught. They will remember how you made them feel. And how you made them feel is entirely a function of who you are when you stand before them.

"Before you can fill others' cups, you must first make sure your own well is overflowing."

12.2 The SKM Yoga Teacher's Daily Sadhana

- Brahma Muhurta rising (4:30–5:30 AM) — at least 5 days per week
- 30 minutes of pranayama: Nadi Shodhana, Kapalabhati, Bhramari
- 30–60 minutes of personal asana practice — not teaching, practicing
- 30 minutes of seated meditation — do not compromise on this
- 10 minutes of journaling: gratitude, sankalpa, self-inquiry
- Daily study of scripture: Yoga Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, or Ayurveda texts
- Weekly community satsang or kirtan attendance
- Annual personal retreat of at least 5 days in silence

12.3 Preventing Teacher Burnout

Teaching yoga retreats is deeply fulfilling and deeply demanding. You will be holding space for others' most vulnerable moments while managing complex logistics and leading multiple practices daily. Without deliberate self-care, burnout is inevitable.

- Rest after every retreat: minimum 2 days of very light schedule
- Receive regular bodywork (massage, marma therapy, acupuncture)
- Maintain supervision with a senior teacher or mentor
- Set clear boundaries with participants — you are their teacher, not their therapist or friend

- Know your own shadow: the wounds a teacher projects onto students are the most dangerous

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu

— May all beings everywhere be happy and free

This is the deepest intention behind every retreat you will ever lead.

Appendices

Templates, Checklists & Resources

Appendix A: Participant Health & Waiver Form

This form must be completed and signed by every participant before arriving at the retreat.

Field	Participant Response
Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Emergency Contact Name & Phone	
Current Medications	
Recent Surgeries or Injuries	
Chronic Health Conditions	
Pregnancy Status	
Mental Health Concerns	
Dietary Requirements / Allergies	
Previous Yoga Experience	
I confirm I have read the retreat guidelines and agree to the terms. Signature:	Date:

Appendix B: Post-Retreat Feedback Form

Question	Response
Rate your overall retreat experience (1–10)	
What was your most significant breakthrough or insight?	
Which session was most impactful and why?	
What could be improved in	

future retreats?	
Would you attend another SKM Yoga Retreat? Why?	
Would you recommend this retreat to a friend? (Rate 1–10)	
Please share a testimonial we may use on our website:	

Appendix C: Recommended Reading

- Light on Yoga — B.K.S. Iyengar
- The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali — Sri Swami Satchidananda (commentary)
- The Bhagavad Gita — translation by Swami Chidbhavananda
- The Heart of Yoga — T.K.V. Desikachar
- Autobiography of a Yogi — Paramahansa Yogananda
- The Miracle of Mindfulness — Thich Nhat Hanh
- Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing — Dr. Vasant Lad
- The Biology of Belief — Dr. Bruce Lipton
- Start With Why — Simon Sinek (Business of Purpose)
- Building a Story Brand — Donald Miller (Brand Clarity)

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