

BACK TO BALANCE

Yoga for Healthy Backs

**2–5 April 2027 at the Viveka Centre for Being, French Pyrenees
With Ankit Kumar and Claire-Louise Symonds**



Our backs carry us through everyday life, yet we rarely make time to notice how we stand, sit, breathe and move. Back to Balance is a long weekend dedicated to exploring a more spacious, responsive spine.

Through alignment, supported postures and attentive movement, we'll explore length along the spine, breadth across the back and a renewed sense of fluidity.

Join Ankit and Claire-Louise at Viveka Centre for Being in the French Pyrenees for an exploration of spinal wellbeing, bringing together Ankit's detailed alignment work and Claire-Louise's somatic and Yin practices.

Ankit's sessions will centre on awakening awareness along the spine, from the lower back through the ribcage to the neck. We'll explore how grounding through the feet and balancing the support of the legs and pelvis can invite an upward sense of length, while allowing the back ribs to broaden with the breath.

We will explore how twists begin with length and develop gradually, with attention to how movement is shared through the body. We can also explore opening through the chest and upper back without concentrating the effort in the waist to move towards backbends.



Drawing on Sharat Arora's distinctive method, Ankit will use blocks, belts, chairs, bolsters and blankets to adapt the practice to each body. Props offer support and feedback: a way to notice gripping, reduce unnecessary effort and explore movement with greater confidence.

Claire-Louise's Scaravelli-inspired movement, Yin yoga and somatic awareness will deepen this exploration through listening and sustained, supported stillness. Her sessions invite curiosity about how the spine responds as effort softens. Mindfulness, nature connection, and Yoga Nidra will offer time for rest and integration.



Alongside the physical work, we'll notice how emotions and a sense of energy are experienced in the body.

Where we feel held or blocked, the invitation is to explore with patience, allowing room for release. An "awakened spine" describes this growing sense of sensitivity, connection and aliveness in practice.

Between sessions, there will be time to enjoy the surroundings, share meals and rest. You'll leave with ideas for a personal back-care practice: ways to find support when the back feels tired, explore comfortable movement and bring greater awareness into sitting, standing and everyday activity.

All levels of yoga experience are welcome. We'll ask about injuries and health conditions when you book. If you're unsure whether the retreat is right for you, please get in touch.

"Ankit's warmth, wisdom, and cheer made the day not just a workshop, but a truly heartfelt experience."

— Southampton Yoga Association, Heart-Opening and Grounding with Ankit

About Ankit

Ankit Kumar is a Brighton-based yoga teacher with eight years of teaching experience. He holds a Master's degree in Yoga, with a background in traditional Hatha yoga and classical Indian philosophy. He spent several years training at the Himalayan Iyengar Yoga Centre under Sharat Arora, who studied with B.K.S. Iyengar before developing his own distinctive approach to alignment and practice.

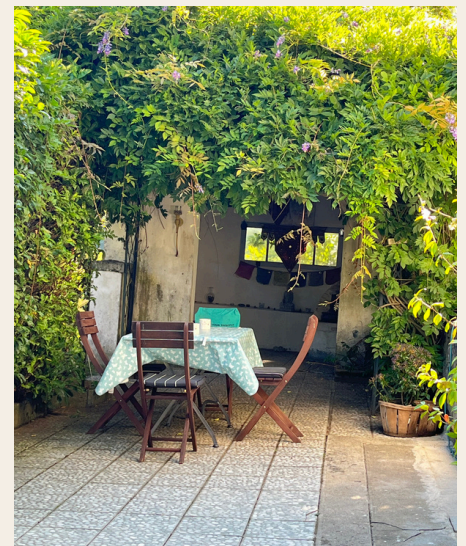
His teaching combines precise alignment, breath awareness and a thoughtful, individual approach. Props are central to his work, helping him meet each body where it is and adapt the practice to different abilities and levels of experience. Warm and attentive, Ankit encourages students to explore how a practice feels, using props and adaptations to support individual needs. His approach remains rooted in tradition while responding to modern bodies and everyday life.

About Claire-Louise

Claire-Louise has been teaching yoga since 2007. Her practice brings together Scaravelli-inspired yoga, Yin yoga, mindfulness and nature connection, with an emphasis on exploring the relationship between body, mind and heart.

Through somatic movement and sustained, supported stillness, she invites students to become curious about their own experience and find a pace that allows them to listen. Yoga Nidra and body scan practices are also part of her teaching, offering time to settle, rest and reconnect.

At Viveka Centre for Being, Claire-Louise brings these practices into relationship with the surrounding natural world, creating space for both inward reflection and connection with the landscape.





Two vegetarian/vegan meals a day, cooked by Jon, using locally sourced ingredients. There will be no alcohol served.

The house is spacious with a gorgeous sitting room, dining room with windows onto the terrace, a large kitchen. Opportunity to relax alone or with others indoor or out.

Outside there is a meditation hut, gardens and two woodlands, one of which has a meditation circle with tree stumps arranged for sitting.

There is a **variety of lovely accommodation** in single and some shared rooms. And the option for glamping in a Bell Tent in the garden. The house is exceptionally comfortable and cared for with wonderful attention to detail.

There are abundant possibilities for **afternoon led or solo walks** to places such as the Col de Marrous, Chapelle de St Joseph, Nescus. The encouragement will be to switch off devices, to not go anywhere in a vehicle for the week, a true balm for our body, mind and heart.

In terms of travel, there are overnight trains direct from Paris to Foix (20 minutes drive away), day trains, mostly via Toulouse. A combination of coach and train works out cheaper. Nearest airport is Toulouse. Shared taxis can be arranged to travel from the airport direct to Viveka Centre for Being or you can travel by public transport.

Costs and other details

£750 in a room sharing with another (£700 Early Bird)
£790 if you would like your own room (£740 Early Bird)
£650 sharing bell tent with another (£600 Early Bird)
£710 in bell tent on your own (£660 Early Bird)

Early Bird is for bookings before end of January. The above costs include accommodation, 2 meals a day, admin, administration and teaching.

The only extra costs are your travel. If you would like to stay an extra night to travel on the Monday you can pay 100 euros direct to The Centre for room, supper and breakfast.

And 20 euros per person per pick up or drop off from Foix.

If there are several people arriving at Toulouse Airport at the same time, it will be possible to arrange a shared taxi.

To book simply send me an email nurturingshala@gmail.com and the non-refundable deposit of £200 confirms your place. Balance due 45 days before the start of the retreat.



www.nurturingshala.com