

iRest® Yoga Nidra Certification: Level III

Introduction

I am a certified Yoga instructor and my training (at Yogaview in Chicago, Illinois) had a heavy emphasis on nondualistic teachings and meditation. I completed iRest certification (Level III training) in February 2011. Let me share with you how I came to iRest® and what drew me to continue with training and eventual certification.

Level I

I love teaching Yoga and felt drawn to help reduce suffering for people, whether it be relief from back pain or release from negative thought patterns. In April 2008, I heard that Dr. Richard Miller was coming to Chicago to teach an iRest® Level I training.¹ I made inquiries about Richard and iRest around the Yoga community, including an iRest trainee who had just launched her own company, Pulling Down the Moon, and all the feedback was positive. I signed up, and at the training, I noted the presence of attendees from around the world—Canada, the United States, South America, and England—many of whom were in the mental health professions. Having experienced first hand the benefits of both talk therapy and meditation, I knew this union to be a very effective way for people to develop the capacity to meet and move through life's difficulties. It was during this first iRest training that I felt that I had found my path for helping others. It was also where I met a psychology doctorate intern working at the North Chicago VA, who told me that the "Vietnam guys are just showing up now. They are all retiring and are having to deal with their trauma." This is when I knew that my training would lead me to the men, women, and families of the U.S. military.

After the Level I training, I began teaching iRest within my community at a Yoga studio and a park recreation center. In June 2009, I began working for the government, providing iRest to veterans at a local VA center, where I continue to teach, along with a fellow iRest teacher. Currently, I am involved in the launch of an iRest PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) study at the Lovell FHCC in Great Lakes, Illinois.

iRest certification, unlike the physically attended and teacher-led Level I and II trainings, is a comprehensive process carried out independently with the support of a self-selected supervisor.



Participants practicing the iRest protocol in dyads.

Level II

September 2009 brought me to San Rafael, California for the Level II training. Again, there was a large percentage of attendees from the mental health professions, as well as other healthcare providers. I met two occupational therapists from Boise, Idaho, who shared with me that they knew of neurologists who were writing prescriptions for meditation, and it was being covered by insurance. This was fascinating to me, and considering my involvement with the government and the potential to work in medical establishments, certification seemed to be a worthwhile endeavor. I, along with approximately 80% of the attendees, moved on to certification (Level III).²

Level III

iRest certification, unlike the physically attended and teacher-led Level I and II trainings, is a comprehensive process carried out independently with the support of a self-

selected supervisor. Briefly, the requirements include providing written in-depth knowledge of the fundamental principles and teachings that underlie iRest, journaling and recording of teaching sessions, attendance of two 4-day authorized retreats with Richard and staff, and five assigned reading reflections. The retreats, which lasted a minimum of 30 hours, provide an immersion into the practice. We were given the time, support, and valuable experiences (such as practices, discussions, and activities) that can lead to an even deeper understanding of iRest and in turn increase one's ability to bring it to others.

The time allotted to complete certification is two years, and I took 16 months. During this time, iRest began to permeate my life. I could be walking, talking, or working—and still experience a continual sense of equanimity. I believe the certification process is designed for this to be the case. Professionally, I have gained the necessary credibility not only for my dealings with the U.S. military but also in taking iRest abroad

to Ireland, where I will be presenting a workshop later this year. The certification process brings with it access to people in diverse fields such as education, psychotherapy, medicine, and business who are looking to enhance their professional offerings. Networking occurs not only during retreats but also afterwards via online groups and teleconferences, as people share valuable insights and support. If you have a specific area of interest (from children to substance abuse), you will be able to connect with a fellow teacher.

What Makes iRest different?

I entered certification with eyes wide open, feeling that, as with any profession, it is important to have a deep understanding and belief in what you are offering. References to “mindfulness” practices are quite common. What makes iRest different? As someone familiar with the study of mindfulness once said, “iRest is like mindfulness on steroids!” Therapeutically speaking, iRest is different to other mindfulness practices because it proactively addresses specific



Blacktail Ranch, MT © chumpboyphotography.com.

emotional and cognitive experiences, leading to a dynamic “moving through” process. iRest teachers are uniquely qualified to provide relief to those experiencing chronic pain, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, trauma, substance abuse, and more—relief from that which people often feel they may never move on from. I have clients suffering from trauma and health issues (terminal and benign cancers, asthma, and chronic pain) who would attest to this.

This is an incredible time to be involved in the field of integrative therapy. iRest, being an evidence-based therapy (information on research completed with the military, the homeless, those suffering from chemical dependency, and college students can be found on the iRest website, irest.us), is being funded by institutions such as the government, insurance companies, and schools. The benefits and growth seem, just as iRest itself, limitless. **YTT**

Notes

1. Levels I and II provide advanced training in iRest.
2. Level III provides certification as an iRest® Teacher.




Gemma Adams, owner of Echo Yoga Inc., is a 200-hour certified Yoga instructor, Yogaview, Chicago, IL, and teaches on the North Shore of Chicago. She is a Certified iRest® teacher working within her community, with a focus on the military. echoyoga.com

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