



# Yoga Mandali

Karen Score, RYT - Owner

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**Success Magazine:** Karen, you began your yoga journey in 1999. What prompted you to start practicing yoga?

Karen Score: I began my own yoga practice as a way of healing myself. I had contracted a potentially deadly infection following a routine sinus surgery. As a result, I was required to take IV antibiotics for a period of six months. Both the infection and the mega-doses of antibiotics were taking a serious toll on my body. I decided I had to find my own healing power. I had heard of the healing benefits of a yoga practice and thought I would give it a try. It worked! I began my training as a teacher with Mark Kinder and then received Iyengar training from the Yoga Center of Seattle. I received my 200hr Yoga Alliance Certification from Gopi Kinnicutt and have begun the 500hr certification with Shiva Rea. For the past several years I have been practicing, teaching, and now running Yoga Mandali. This past fall I went on a retreat to India which solidified and deepened my devotion to the importance of yoga in one's life.

**SM:** What effect has yoga had on your life? Why do you believe in the healing properties of practicing yoga?

KS: Based on my own experience, and also from teaching yoga and watching others heal their bodies as well as their minds, I am a true believer that yoga is a healing practice. Yoga is a transformative experience, bringing balance into our lives. Yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning to yoke-body, mind, and spirit. By bringing those elements into balance and becoming more mindful and aware, we heal and grow.

**SM:** When did you open Yoga Mandali? What was your goal for this venture?

KS: Yoga Mandali was originally started by Gopi Kinnicutt and Heather Dacus in 2005 in the lower level of the Downstreet Marketplace. Gopi shortly after moved to Washington, DC. I was teaching at the studio and then became partners with Heather. The opportunity arose to move Yoga Mandali to the second floor of the building last January. Heather and I together decided that I would take on the task of running Yoga Mandali on my own, just because I had more time available. After a few months of renovations to the new space, we moved our studio in June 2010. I am proud to be able to offer this beautiful space to the community. Yoga Mandali is a special place, a sanctuary—a place to find yourself; to see a friendly, caring face; and to restore and grow.

**SM:** What classes do you offer? Do you offer options for all different skill levels?

KS: We offer yoga classes seven days a week with several classes per day. There is something for everybody at Yoga Mandali. Most of our classes are vinyasa classes (a sequenced, flowing class where movement is linked to breath). We do have different levels, from beginner to advanced, but most of our classes are accessible to anyone as all of our teachers are highly trained by some of the very best teachers in the world and all have several years experience. They have the knowledge and skill to teach a mixed level class, offering variations and modifications to meet the needs of the beginner- or advanced-level student. Some of our instructors are trained yoga

therapists, offering restorative yoga and my former partner and instructor, Heather Dacus, is a doctor. Our classes always come from a place of nurturing and compassionate guidance. We believe yoga should feel good!

**SM:** What do you want people to know and understand about yoga at Yoga Mandali?

KS: Yoga Mandali is a place to learn a solid yoga practice with proper alignment and therapeutic benefits from some of the best instructors in the Capital District. We base our teachings on the traditions of yoga established over 5,000 years ago in India. We believe yoga is not just another form of exercise. We incorporate the spiritual aspects of yoga as taught in the Yoga Sutras or Bhagavad Gita, for example. Along with our yoga classes we also offer many other opportunities to the community such as kirtans, meditations, workshops, movie nights, vegetarian pot-luck dinners, etc. We are dedicated to providing a welcoming atmosphere to all who enter our space. We are also the only studio in the area that is a registered yoga school offering 200hr and 500hr teacher training once a year.

**SM:** Who can benefit from practicing yoga?

KS: If you can breathe, you can do yoga. Everyone can benefit from a yoga practice, no matter your age, strength, or flexibility level. Yoga heals, detoxifies, and exhilarates the body and mind. With emphasis on the breath, it reduces stress, relieves common aches and pains, and invites increased mental focus, calmness, and peace ... and everyone benefits if we are all more peaceful!



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