

yogatherapy
ireland



2nd YOGA IN HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

A Medical & Holistic Perspective

1st March 2025



Welcome Message

In January 2000, five like-minded Founder Members – Linda Southgate (sadly no longer with us), Marie Lennon, Helen Morrow, Elma Toland and I gave birth to a new yoga training organisation. We nursed it lovingly and watched as it took its first tentative steps into the public arena. We each held its hand through the toddler years and we stood patiently by through the growing pains of the teenage years. And now, 25 years later, we stand in awe and pride for the wonderful, professional adult we have created – leaving behind us a legacy, which gathers a yoga community nationwide and beyond.

YTI is a thriving yoga training school with International recognition from the Yoga Alliance and the International Association of Yoga Therapists. And more recently we have achieved recognition from ITEC (the QQI equivalent within the Department of Education would be a Higher Certificate) for our Yoga Teacher Training course.

YTI has provided professional training for over several hundred teachers, who offer general and specialised yoga classes through Ireland. Our ethos is to ensure that all our graduates are competent to teach all aspects of yoga safely including breathing techniques, physical postures, relaxation, meditation and mindfulness. Many of our teachers further their skills to specialise; providing high quality teaching in Prenatal & Postnatal Yoga, Yogain Sports, Yoga for Children, Teens & Special Needs. Our emphasis on the therapeutic aspects of yoga is forefront in all our teaching and training with many of our teachers specialising in Yoga Therapy.

In 2023, Yoga Therapy Ireland was delighted to present the first ever International Yoga Conference to be held in Ireland,



entitled The Principles and Practice of Yoga in Healthcare. This pioneering weekend was a huge success on many levels.

During this our 2nd Yoga in Healthcare Conference, where the focus will be on the Medical and Holistic perspective, we are honoured to host some of the most renowned international speakers in the field of Yoga, Yoga Therapy Lifestyle, Medicine, Women's Health and Psychology in Ireland. I thank all our speakers for their support, time and generosity in sharing their expertise with us.

On behalf of YTI, I wish to recognise and thank the work of the many teachers that have paved the way over the past 25 years.

I hope that our conference provides you with an opportunity to explore and learn about the inclusion of yoga in healthcare and how yoga can become a much valued part of Ireland's healthcare system.

I know I speak for the remaining Founder members when I say that we have been so privileged to walk this walk with you. We never dreamed that we would still be around 25 years later. It has been the adventure of a lifetime, and we are so grateful for all your support, encouragement and friendship over the years. A very sincere thanks to all our Patrons, our Boards of Directors and Operations teams over many years. We are so fortunate to have had their guidance - and they have ensured that we continue on the right path. We have lots more exciting ventures in the pipe-line but for now we will continue to make yoga available to everyone as has been our mantra for the last quarter of a century.

Maureen Nightingale – General Manager



Conference Background

People who have experienced yoga first hand, will no doubt attest to its many benefits. This ancient practice can help and support people through the various stages and challenges of life. As our western society evolves, so does the incidence in diseases related to lifestyle-many of which are a huge burden on society and over stretched medical systems.

Yoga is well positioned to be part of the solution to empower people to take a more active role in their health and wellbeing. Research has shown its ability to manage stress plus improve physical and mental health by using physical postures and movement, breathing techniques, relaxation practices, meditation and mindfulness.

In August 2022, the seeds for the first international conference were sown and through the work of the YTI's conference team, we were honoured to share with you the wealth of Irish and International Experts. Over a two day conference we explored Yoga & Research, Lifestyle as Medicine, Integrative Medicine, Yoga on Prescription, Yoga Therapy, Yoga for Prenatal Care, Cancer Care, Stages of Menopause, Mental Health, Children's Wellbeing & Ageing Populations.

This, our 2nd Yoga in Healthcare Conference is suitable for all healthcare practitioners, medical doctors, yoga teachers and all those with an interest in supportive therapies.

We hope that the conference will create an opportunity for the yoga; holistic and medical worlds to come together, learn from each other's expertise, explore shared interests and forge ahead on the path for Yoga in Healthcare in Ireland.



Timetable

	Title	Speaker
8.45	Registration & Coffee	YTI
9:00	YTI Welcome : House Keeping	YTI
9:05	Opening Remarks	Dr. Teresa Doherty, President of Marino Institute.
9.15 - 9.30	Patron's Speech	Mrs. Sabina C. Higgins
9.30 - 10.15	Yoga and the Vagus Nerve	Dr. Padraic Dunne, RCSI
10.15-11.00	East meets West: Complementary Cancer Care for Mind & Body.	Ursula Courtney, RGN, M.Med
11.00-11.45	Prescribing Yoga	Carmel Gallagher, Social Prescriber & Link Worker.
11.45 - 12.30	The Science of Yoga Breathing	Patrick McKeown, Author & Founder of the Buteyko Method.
12.30 - 1.45	Lunch & Presentations.	
2.00-2.45	Yoga for Heart Health	Dr. Robert Kelly, Consultant Cardiologist
2.45 - 3.30	A New Era of Women's Health in Ireland	Dr. Rachel Mackey, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist
3.30 - 4.15	Yoga as Therapy.	Elma Toland, Yoga Teacher for over 30 years & Yoga Therapist .
4.15 - 5.00	Exercise as Medicine.	Dr. Ronan Kearney,
5.00 - 5.30	Short Panel Discussion	

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YOGA IN HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE 2025 SPEAKERS



L – R: Dr Padraic Dunne, Dr Robert Kelly

Dr. Padraic Dunne, RCSI

Dr Pádraic Dunne is a research scientist (immunologist) and accredited psychotherapist based at Centre for Positive Health Sciences (CPPH), Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). He is co-director of an MSc in Positive Health Coaching and leads the Digital Health Research Group within the Centre. As an RCSI Lecturer, Dr Dunne is interested in the development of Health and Wellbeing programmes for postgraduate healthcare professionals, corporate work forces, as well as for patients suffering with chronic disease and for the general public. He is keenly interested in the interaction between mental stress and the immune



system. Dr Dunne is also a co-developer of the RCSI MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on “Science of Health and Happiness” as well as “Science for Health and Happiness for Young People”. Both courses were made freely available to the public in 2021.

Dr. Rachel Mackey

Dr. Mackey graduated from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 1992. She completed 9 years of Obstetrics and Gynaecology training.

She was admitted as a member of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 2000. As part of her training, she completed three years of research in Sydney, Australia in the area of the menopause.

From 2001 to 2005 Rachel worked in the Womens Medical Clinic in Blackrock, combining womens health with aspects of general practice. Dr Mackey opened the unique Womens Health Clinic in May 2007 in the Dun Laoghaire area, offering a wide range of services using her extensive obstetric and gynaecological expertise. Rachel has written the Women’s Health Book: A Guide for Irish Women covering health issues from teenage years up to later life.

Patrick McKeown

Patrick McKeown is creator, CEO and Director of Education and Training at Oxygen Advantage®, Director of Education and Training at [Buteyko Clinic International](#) and President of Buteyko Professionals International. He is a leading international expert on breathing and sleep, and author of bestselling books including The Oxygen Advantage. His focus — to empower more people every day to breathe better, feel better and achieve their potential.

Patrick’s interest in breath training began when he discovered the Buteyko Breathing Method, aged 26. After a lifetime of asthma medication and inhalers, he found immediate relief from his symptoms and has remained asthma-free ever since. He travelled to Moscow, Russia, to learn from Dr.



Konstantin Buteyko, and was accredited to teach the Buteyko Method in 2002.

For the last two decades, Patrick has provided breathwork training and breath-based sports and mindfulness coaching to thousands of people. In that time, he has:

- Written bestselling books including *Asthma Free, Naturally, Close Your Mouth*, [*The Oxygen Advantage*](#) and [*The Breathing Cure*](#)
- Been awarded fellowship of the Royal Society of Biology in the UK
- Contributed to scientific journals including the *Journal of Clinical Medicine*
- Trained hundreds of breathing instructors
- Founded Buteyko Clinic International — the foremost Buteyko breathing clinic in the UK
- Been featured on many popular health and fitness podcasts, TedX, and in publications including USA Today, MindBodyGreen and Men's Health
- Devised his own research-backed breathwork training program, Oxygen Advantage®, which continues to develop and grow in line with his clinical experience as a breathing coach, and with the latest scientific research

Many people first discover Patrick McKeown's work by reading his 2015 bestselling book, *The Oxygen Advantage*. The book has an important place in the growing body of literature about the breath. It is referenced in James Nestor's New York Times Bestseller, *Breath, The Science of a Lost Art*, which is shortlisted for the 2021 Royal Society Science Book Prize.

Patrick is deeply committed to communicating his knowledge to the people who need it. He is passionate about conveying the importance of breath therapy in traditional healthcare and sports coaching. And he is determined to break down barriers that prevent an accessible, holistic, empowering approach to wellbeing and performance.

Healthy breathing changed Patrick's life for the better.



Carmel Gallagher

Carmel has over 30 year's experience in the field of advice and guidance having worked previously for Durham Careers Service, NICS Careers service, Royal National Institute of Blind People and AFASIC (Supporting young people with Communication difficulties.) A Psychology graduate from the University of Ulster she has worked as a Social Prescribing Co-ordinator/ link worker with Inishowen Development Partnership for the past 10 years. Initially working part- time she is now employed full-time under Slainte care covering all of Inishowen. She is a passionate believer in the power of Social prescribing and has been practicing it in her own personal life for many years! Carmel endorses and recommends yoga on a regular to participants as a way of benefitting them physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Dr. Robert Kelly

Dr. Robert Kelly, Consultant Cardiologist with a keen interest in Lifestyle Medicine and all matters of heart health.

Based in Dublin Ireland, with a network of clinics to see patients from anywhere in the country or around the world.

He runs clinics daily and provides services in all aspects of Cardiology.

Dr. Kelly has over 15 years' experience as a Consultant treating patients with heart problems. He has held several senior roles as Head of Cardiology Department, Program Director, Head of Clinical Innovation, Medical Director of several clinical programs across health and connected health spaces. His greatest experience has been in helping patients who have concerns about their health and wellbeing. He has worked as Cardiologist in Ireland, UK, Europe and USA.

Robert is passionate about helping people who have any concerns about their health or wellbeing. He cares about preventing, treating and potentially reversing chronic illness and disease helping everyone to live long, healthy and happy lives.





Top Row L-R: Dr Rachel Mackey, Patrick McKeown, Carmel Gallagher



Bottom Row L-R: Ursula Courtney, Dr Ronan Kearney

Ursula Courtney Ex Director Arc Cancer Centre

Ursula Courtney was appointed as a Director at ARC Cancer Support Centre, 65 Eccles Street, Dublin 7, Ireland in December 1997 to promote the vision and deliver the Mission Statement of ARC. This new role incorporated many areas of expertise and offered opportunities to use her



initiative in the identification, delivery and evaluation of community based cancer support services for people who have been affected by a cancer diagnosis.

Ursula was responsible for the selection of all staff responsible for the delivery of services ensuring that the standard of care provided to clients was in line with best international practice and consequently ARC enjoyed considerable growth and public awareness under the professional leadership of Ursula Courtney.

ARC became recognised for its high standards of care under the direction of Ursula Courtney and she has been the recipient of several national and international Awards for her innovative research work and leadership of the team in ARC .She is a superb national and international ambassador in highlighting the need for supportive cancer care in Ireland. As a strong leader she has demonstrated considerable innovation and advocacy while delivering the mission of an organisation, and her initiative, enthusiasm, and hard-working ethos have been exemplary for staff, clients and the wider community. She offers her professionalism, leadership, business acumen, enthusiasm and initiative as a world class top professional in her broad field of expertise.

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Dr. Ronan Kearney Sports Medicine Physician

Dr Ronan Kearney [FFSEM, MFSEM (UK), MB, BCh, BAO, MICGP, MSc (SEM), Dip (MSK, FIFA, Occ. H)] is a Consultant Sports and Exercise Medicine Physician at the UPMC Sports Surgery Clinic, Dublin alongside sporting roles with Sport Ireland Institute, European Tour Golf and Louth GAA.

He completed undergraduate medical training at the [Royal College of Surgeons Ireland](#). After working across a number of Orthopaedic and Emergency Medicine roles in Ireland and Australia, he completed an MSc in Sports and Exercise Medicine at [Trinity College Dublin](#). Subsequently he undertook General Practice training at RCSI/Dublin before completing Higher Specialist Training in Sports and Exercise Medicine with the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine (RCSI/RCPI).

Dr Kearney has worked as Team Doctor across a number of sports including: Soccer (Rep. of Ireland Men's U18, U21, Rep. of Ireland Women's U16, Women's National Senior Team, Shamrock Rovers FC), Rugby (Trinity Rugby, Easts Rugby Union Brisbane), GAA (Louth GAA, Castlebar Mitchells), Athletics (Sport Ireland Institute, Dublin Marathon Series) and Rowing (Commercial Rowing Club Dublin). He has also been an Expedition Doctor on Mount Kilimanjaro and has worked as Medical Officer at multiple European Tour golf events.

He is an Associate Editor for the BMJ Open Sport and Exercise Medicine Journal having previously held the role of Lead Author for Education from other Journals section of the British Journal of Sports Medicine. He is a



Sports and Exercise Medicine lecturer to the MSc Sports and Exercise Medicine (Trinity College Dublin) and Paramedic Studies ([University of Limerick](#)) postgraduate courses. He is Chairman of the Gaelic Athletic Medical Association, Secretary of the Football Association of Ireland Medical Committee as well as member of the Irish Society of Lifestyle Medicine and FSEM Education Committee.

Ronan is an active sportsman having previously played underage intercounty gaelic football for Louth and now enjoys running, cycling, hiking and golfing.

YTI's Elma Toland

Elma Toland trained as a yoga teacher with the Irish Yoga Association in 1993. From 1997 to 1999 Elma took further yoga training with the Biomedical Trust (London) and qualified as a yoga therapist. Elma is fully certified with the Yoga Alliance as a Continuing Yoga Provider (YACEP) and holds the International Association of Yoga Therapists Certification (C-IAYT). In 2000, Elma co-founded with four other yoga teachers Yoga Therapy Ireland (YTI) – a professional organisation that provides general and specialised training for yoga teachers with a therapeutic approach. For the last 20 years she has worked as a senior tutor for YTI on their many training courses. Elma taught yoga on the outskirts of Dublin for over 25 years. In 2015, Elma returned to live in her native Donegal and is currently teaching yoga in her local community.



How to Get Involved?

The work to integrate yoga into the Irish health system appears to be gathering momentum. Yoga Therapy Ireland is dedicated to sharing the many benefits of yoga to all members of the community. We offer many training opportunities and further education to those wishing to deepen their knowledge of yoga.

Perhaps you have a yoga practice and would love to train as a teacher? Or perhaps you are a yoga teacher and wish to gain more specialised training. Then check out our courses on our website www.yogatherapyireland.com.

Are you interested in Yoga in Healthcare - either sharing yoga with colleagues or supporting clients/patients? Then we need you to join us and get involved.

Why not be part of this journey, to forge the path and bring yoga into healthcare in Ireland? Check out our website to become a member of YTI or speak to one of the YTI team for more details.

Details of some of our offerings

- 6-month Foundation Course.
- Internationally Recognised Yoga Teacher Training Course



- Internationally Recognised Post Graduate Therapy Training Course.



- Yoga for Children/Teens/Special Needs training courses.
- Yoga for Pregnancy/Birthing/Mum & Baby training.
- Yoga for Sports training.
- Flex & Stretch – 4 day training for Healthcare Professionals & Yoga Teachers.
- Nationwide Yoga classes to suit all abilities.
- Yoga workshops/seminars /Healthcare Conferences led by Irish and International Experts.
- Regular Yoga magazine and ezine for Yoga enthusiasts.

Our Founding Members



Marie Lennon, Helen Morrow, Elma Toland & Maureen Nightingale



