* Who are you/What do you teach?

Hi! I’m Kat Clayton, a USA Colorado/ Texan native. I teach yoga, facilitate teacher trainings and yoga retreats. I’ve been lucky to call Sydney and BodyMindLife my (yoga) home for the past 15 years - ever since I did my first teacher training at BML in 2007.

* Why were you originally drawn to yoga?

Actually, I wasn’t at first… 20+ years ago dabbling in dance, I thought yoga and stretching was quite boring! ( I clearly hadn’t found my teachers yet!)

Until one hot summer’s day on break from University, I tried a Bikram class. I thought I might collapse from the intensity of the heat. Instead, I walked out of that class feeling so light I could float on the clouds – I was so blissed out I frankly probably shouldn’t have driven my car home.

I fell in love with the challenge and that incredible post-yoga glow feeling: radiantly energised, yet completely zen and calm. From that moment on, yoga has (literally) caught my attention.

Yoga also ticked a lot of important boxes: great workout, space to clear the mind, connection to self and community. Plus endless opportunities to study, learn and grow.

I was finishing my degree in Psychology, so I loved that yoga also incorporated elements of mindfulness, philosophy and science. It can be stimulating for the mind, just as much as for your body!

* What do you love about what you do?

Co-creating a positive ripple effect in people’s lives. Being a continual student of yoga and refining my craft. I especially love sharing different of aspects of yoga philosophy and asana technique on my retreats. Witnessing the incredible transformations in my students’ mind, body and life.

* Tell us about your role as a senior facilitator on yoga teacher training?

I’ve had the wonderful opportunity to teach and help create BodyMindLife’s yoga teacher training programs. As head of teacher training for many years, my job entailed curating and helping to build our current program and TT team. I’m still really proud to be a part of it - it’s one of the best 200hr trainings in the world! Our faculty are all incredibly passionate, unique and inspiring. I have loved watching our students, community and the BML TT teachers all grow side by side.

I consider myself a life-long student of yoga. I have studied and taught almost every single subject in BodyMindLife’s Yoga Teacher Training Program. It’s a great privilege and honour to get to study and teach yoga. The more you know, the more you realise you don’t know. I love that! As a teacher, I get to continually learn and grow, and endeavour to share that in a fun and meaningful way.

* You teach the pranayama sessions during teacher training - what does this entail and why is it an important part of the course?

One of the subjects I teach on the 200hr YTT is how to breathe -- focussing your mind to balance your nervous system through yogic breathing techniques (called pranayama). This entails learning how to correct your everyday breathing / posture. Your breath affects the quality of your mind and health, right down to the cells in your body.

Connecting to your Breath is everything. It is how students can learn to quieten the mind, deepen their yoga practice and be more energy efficient in asana. It’s also a powerful gateway to the more subtle states of yoga and meditation.

Your breath and posture have a huge knock-on effect in terms of your stamina in the practice, ability to focus and your mood. I teach my students exercises and practices to help them improve all those things.

Once you learn the basics about your postural breathing habits, we move on to learning different yogic breathing techniques. These techniques are designed to purify your body and calm the mind. I joke that we can use the breath in the same way we use a glass of wine or cup of coffee (aka, to wind down and relax or reenergise - sans the caffeine or hangover).

Breathing mindfully can literally change your life.

* What’s the best piece of advice you can give a student looking to do a Yoga Teacher Training?

Do it!! I always say your very first 200hr Teacher Training is like going to ‘Yoga Kindergarten’ – you’ll learn the ABC’s. Then you can take that knowledge with you everywhere. It’s more like a training for life (*plus* you’ll meet so many amazing people, and basically get to do yoga all day, everyday!)

My first 200hr teacher training @BodyMindLife (thanks to Google search: ‘Yoga in Australia’ all those years ago) – is what put me on the path of yoga for life. Best. Decision. Ever.

* Can you tell us about any workshops or courses you have coming up this year?

Yes! I am so excited to share my brand new 25 hour training – which is designed for absolutely anyone who loves yoga and wants to learn more about it!

I’ve chosen 3 of my favourite yoga topics: yoga philosophy, the science of yoga and breath work/ energetics – so you can dive a bit deeper in your practice without having to an entire YTT. We will practice yoga and discover more about:

* The History & Philosophy of Yoga
* Science of Yoga – discovering the impact of Yoga on your health
* Taking a Deeper Dive – beyond skin deep, the breath (pranayama) and energetics of yoga

<https://www.bodymindlife.com/teacher-training/25-hour-deepen-your-practice>

I’ve also got a Workshop coming up on Sat 5th March called [Radiant Spine & Quiet Mind at Surry Hills](https://www.bodymindlife.com/workshops?mobile=false&options%5Bids%5D=2144407496&options%5Bsite_id%5D=114&version=0). As well as my upcoming Yoga Retreat in beautiful Byron Bay in April 2022 <https://katclaytonyoga.com/> So lots of opportunities to inspire and deepen your practice ☺

* What does your home/personal practice mean to you?

Anchoring, connecting, radiant health, clarity, joy.

* How has your relationship to the practice changed?

Much like love at first sight, I was fascinated by the physical aspects of the practice. Exploring Asana. Learning how to hold Crow pose. Holding 1 minute handstand. Progressing my nemesis poses (aka, Half Pigeon / Pincha). This was a significant gateway for understanding how yoga ‘wakes us up’ from unconscious physical and mental patterns and is woven into every day life.

Then after a while, I discovered the yoga philosophy and breath which changed everything. My practice became more quiet, efficient, freeing up energy to experience the more mediative and subtle aspects of yoga. My practice is now is balanced between action (yoga sadhana) and study.

It’s amazing how vast yoga truly is. I can’t wait to see how it evolves over the next 20 years.

* What are you watching/reading/listening to?

Zen Mind, Beginners Mind. And I started the Harry Potter Series on maternity leave – I’m currently reading the last book ☺