

Maura Utley is a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT-500, YACEP) with Yoga Alliance, which acknowledges the completion of a yoga teacher training with an approved and active Registered Yoga School (RYS). She is also a certified fitness professional with over thirty years of experience teaching a variety of group fitness classes throughout the East Coast.

"I initially became interested in Yoga as a way to prevent injuries and become more fit. Through the teacher training process, I learned there were infinite benefits to doing Yoga. I completely fell in love with the practice. After many years of teaching step classes and training with weights, I started experiencing issues with my back and knees. Through Yoga, I became aware of the importance of keeping connective tissue healthy, and with consistent practice, I simply just started feeling better! With regular yoga practice, I improved the function of my musculoskeletal structure and was able to reduce discomfort and heal my body. Yoga increased my flexibility and regular visits to a chiropractor diminished. Yoga's emphasis on controlled breathing strengthens the respiratory system and engages the parasympathetic nervous system to help reduce stress and tension throughout the body. However, what I wasn't prepared for was the metaphysical, personal, and spiritual growth that happens simultaneously as one's practice deepens. Yoga totally changed my life – and my family's life – for the better, and I am deeply grateful for the experience. To this day what I find most inspiring is watching others around me experience the same transformation regardless of age, fitness level, affliction, or physical ability. It's a transformation, unlike anything I have ever experienced in a typical exercise class."

Today, Maura is currently the SVP/Director of Marketing for CCNB, Coastal Carolina National Bank, and teaches virtual and in-person classes throughout South Carolina's Grand Strand.

"Whether it's using my creativity at the bank, or teaching Yoga, I am so blessed to be doing things I love to do. I am obsessed with anatomy, kinesiology, and on a path to continue to learn more. I believe having an anatomical foundation is key to helping someone experience yoga to the best of their ability. Having a deeper understanding of the benefits will keep practitioners motivated, but it's feeling great that keeps students coming back for more. I am humbled to be carrying on the tradition of yoga and feel so grateful both on and off the mat. I am grateful for my teachers – past and present – and feel so blessed to have found this practice and philosophy in my life. "