

Ena Rodriguez

### Adapting Private Practice to Your Life Doesn't Have to Hurt



*Ena Rodriguez, C-IAYT, E-RYT 500, owns Treetop Yoga Therapy ([www.treetopyogatherapy.com](http://www.treetopyogatherapy.com)) in northern Colorado and since 2011 has built a clientele of over 200 people in her specialty areas of physical and emotional trauma. Ena has served as faculty for yoga therapist trainings and has been contracted by the Veterans Administration, the Alzheimer's Association, Larimer County Human Resources and other organizations. She earned certificates from the Rocky Mountain Institute of Yoga and Ayurveda, iRest, and UC Irvine's Yoga Studies Program.*

**R**aised in the South with a grandfather who was an evangelical minister, I was rooted in the Divine.

Watching my grandmother speak in tongues not only sent me under the pew, it work me up. Belief is lifeblood in those parts, and mine was radically shaped by that spirit and its power to both intoxicate and purify.

After becoming an actor in Southern California, I took a yoga class in 1997 and felt that familiar stir of spirit again. I started a family and trained as a yoga teacher. My family relocated to Colorado in 2007, and I founded Treetop Yoga above a toy store in Fort Collins. The store owners and I cross-marketed, creating a family-themed space; their success promoted mine. Downtown was filled with mom-and-pop shops supporting each other through word-of-mouth and cross-promotions. This small-town philosophy created a kind of *sangha*, similar to the sense of community I grew up with, especially in the studio.

After my divorce in 2010, my son was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. I utilized the traditional mental health services in our area, but I soon realized I needed more specific de-escalation skills, especially for at home. I enrolled in a nearby yoga therapy program. Those practices had incredible results with my son and with my students. However, post-divorce, I also need to streamline my business practices to afford my family more flexibility and financial sustainability.

I sold the group space to teacher trainers who had been renting from me for the prior 2 years. I kept the business name due to excellent search-engine optimization and opened a private practice in the executive center across the street. My next challenge was rebranding. Yoga therapy was new to the town, and now that my business was nestled amongst lawyers, other therapists, and real estate agencies, my website needed to reflect this shift and the new, less casual environs.

I changed the Eastern visuals on the website to a cleaner, more therapeutic look with images of individual sessions. My magazine articles were uploaded. I no longer offered promotions, emulating those in the mental health field with whom I had become acquainted. I maintained two group classes for exposure. The proximity of the studio to the office was an appreciated convenience. Price points were based on established private clientele, adding a fee increase for therapy clients. Intake assessment sessions include *prkruti* constitution charts and an initial commitment to a five session package. I created hand-drawn home practices, evolving to an iMovie of the clients in their sequences, sent via YouTube. Clients love the video of themselves! Today, approximately 60% of my clients are acquired through my website and Google searches.

The biggest boost in business came from the addition of *iRest yoga nidra* as an offering. The evidence-based practices I was using at home were immediately accessible for my clients too. Within a month of completing that program, I was contacted by Christine O'Brien, MD, at the Cheyenne, Wyoming Veterans Administration. A patient of hers was a client of mine and had mentioned our *iRest* work. The city, partnered with the VA, was awarded a grant for physically and emotionally wounded veterans that specified *iRest* as a therapy. Spanning 3-plus years, Colorado State University interns and local psychologists attended these 6-week sessions combining yoga therapy with *iRest* and building cross-referral relationships. I now regularly share clients with a psychologist who facilitates eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy (generally known as *EMDR*). She attributes her clients' somatic anchoring to yoga therapy. I recently began working weekly at InnerBalance, an addition-recovery inpatient center. My client base now includes therapists, nurses, and doctors, further increasing credibility and visibility for the field of yoga therapy.

Treetop now offers *iRest* through FaceTime and continues to build an audio/video library. In 2017, Fort Collins Public Media asked to co-produce yoga therapy videos, and two are now available on their YouTube channel and Treetop's site. I am creating more therapeutic audio recordings using *yoga nidra* and *iRest* for specific populations, such as sexual assault survivors. Having recently remarried, I now have more time to devote to the scaling of the business to include more yoga therapists with different specialties. I have mentored many wonderful teachers the years as part of Treetop's offerings, and I'm in talks with them to come on board. This will create time to write a book on client-specific yoga therapy practices.

A healthy business rolls with the changing cultural tides. Treetop Yoga Therapy has had to adapt to the changing needs of my life and family, reinforcing a strong belief in spirit and *dharma*. Thanks in part to IAYT, yoga therapy research continues, and the field is gaining credibility. Sharing the work with Western providers clarifies distinctions so as to promote complementary approaches. We trust each other professionally, and this spreads to our clients.

Trusting, especially oneself, is where healing begins. [YTT](#)