



Wild Swimming and Embodied Movement

About the retreat

This retreat will take a playful approach to reconnecting with the body through the elemental experience of water and through movement. Each day we will have the opportunity for several swims in the local lochs and rivers as well as other explorations of water and wet places. We will be using movement, including Qi Gong and dance to support embodiment and connection. There will also be introductory meditation teaching, daily collective meditation practice, and a practical contemporary look at some traditional Buddhist teachings.

Swim activities will include lifeguard supported bank-based activities, swim trips (for more experienced swimmers) and the opportunity for unsupported personal swimming. There may also be the opportunity to walk by water and explore local burns and waterfalls.

What is the required swimming ability?

Our aim is to give everyone access to the water but there are limits we have to observe for safety and group management. The minimum swimming ability is confident to swim two lengths of a pool unaided and be of average mobility.

Some of the trips will require greater degrees of open water confidence and may require above average mobility to access the water. However, we will always aim to give opportunities appropriate to people's ability and confidence.

If you might be considered to have below average mobility, need support in the water, or have anxiety issues related to water, please contact the office to discuss retreat suitability prior to booking.

If you have a medical condition that might be exacerbated by cold water or might be dangerous in open water situations please discuss this with your doctor and advise us prior to booking so we can determine whether we can appropriately and safely support you on the retreat. Please see wild swimming experience and contraindications sheet, which we ask you to complete upon booking.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

- Two sets of swimwear, two towels (camping towels recommended as fast drying), suitable loch-shore footwear (sandals, croc's etc)
- For longer swim trips a wetsuit (ideally a swimming wetsuit) will be essential
- Warm clothes and hat (for post swim)
- Sun cream and sun hat
- You might also want to bring a flask for a hot drink, wetsuit gloves, boots, swim hat and earplugs if you use them.

- Loose comfortable clothes for movement sessions
- For trips and walks by water – walking boots/trainers, waterproofs, rucksack

Please note: even in midsummer water temperatures at Dhanakosa are below the recommended British Triathlon Society no-wetsuit threshold for novice swimmers. Therefore, use of a wetsuit will be mandatory on all longer swim-trips. Dhanakosa does not have a stock of wetsuits so if you do not have one but want to hire one please make your own arrangements. There will be bank based swim activities each day where a wetsuit is not required so it will still be possible to participate in the retreat if you do not have a wetsuit but some of the trips will not be available.

What can I expect from the programme?

Each day will start with meditation practice (this will be fully introduced for beginners) and an opportunity for a dip in the loch. After breakfast there will be an embodied movement session, time in the water and some other meditative or reflective activity to help connect us with the elements and our surroundings. In the afternoons we will alternate longer swim trips with movement and meditation sessions, and finish the day with opportunities for sharing, short talks on aspects of Buddhism and Buddhist mantra chanting.

There will be periods of silence throughout the retreat to support reflection. These will typically be overnight until after breakfast but may be extended to longer periods of the day.

About the retreat team

Nayaka is one of the resident teaching team at Dhanakosa and a regular local swimmer.

Subhanaya – Lives and works at Dhanakosa and was ordained in 2021. She works in the garden, helping to tend this wild and beautiful place. Time in nature, particularly swimming in the loch, are an important part of her spiritual and embodiment practice. Dance and movement has been a major part of her life and practice for 8 years, both 5Rhythms© and Open Floor. She is currently in training to teach Open Floor, which is a resource based movement practice – www.openfloor.org

The retreat will also be supported by other members of the retreat teaching team. Swim group leaders are open water lifeguard trained.