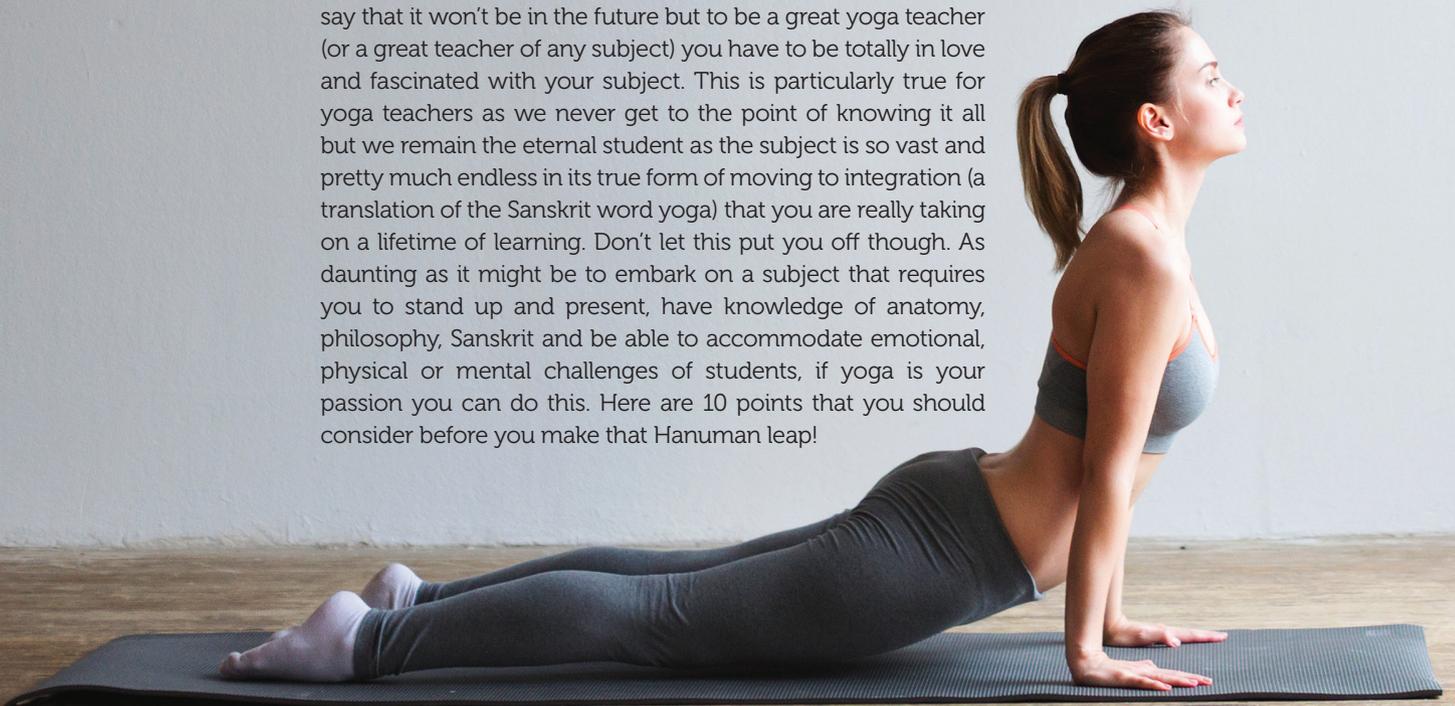


Thinking of being a yoga teacher?

What you need to know

So, you love yoga, maybe you have been practising for some time now or you are fairly new to yoga but you have this niggling thought that maybe you'd like to teach. In class perhaps, you observe your teacher and think what an amazing job they have to be able to share their passion and it has inspired you to consider this as a possible option for your own continuing path of exploration of yoga, or you just simply feel that this practice should be shared with more people! So where do you go from that initial seed of thought of teaching to actually becoming a teacher?

There are many different routes into becoming a yoga teacher but the first stage of the progression from student to teacher should be a love for the subject. If you are considering taking on this role because it seems like an easy career, as an escape from another career or a lack of knowing what to do with yourself then it probably isn't for you right now. That's not to say that it won't be in the future but to be a great yoga teacher (or a great teacher of any subject) you have to be totally in love and fascinated with your subject. This is particularly true for yoga teachers as we never get to the point of knowing it all but we remain the eternal student as the subject is so vast and pretty much endless in its true form of moving to integration (a translation of the Sanskrit word yoga) that you are really taking on a lifetime of learning. Don't let this put you off though. As daunting as it might be to embark on a subject that requires you to stand up and present, have knowledge of anatomy, philosophy, Sanskrit and be able to accommodate emotional, physical or mental challenges of students, if yoga is your passion you can do this. Here are 10 points that you should consider before you make that Hanuman leap!



How long have you been practising?

Is your enthusiasm based on this being a new experience or is based on you having practised for long enough to know that yoga is now and un-negotiable part of your day to day life for the rest of your life? If you are new (less than a year or two of practising) and think "but I already know that yoga is here to stay" then be patient - if it's here to stay then you have plenty of time. A course will be so much easier and more fulfilling for you if you have more familiarity with the practices and know yoga in your own body before you embark on translating that into other people's bodies.

Do you have a particular style of yoga that you practice or a particular teacher who inspires you?

If you play the yoga circuit and go to lots of different yoga classes you may want to start honing this down into the practice that you most resonate with. It's not to say you shouldn't practise varied styles or even in the future teach more than one style, but begin with one style or method as there will be teachings from different courses/schools of yoga that appear to contradict each other and it takes experience to pull out the similarities from the contradictions. So focus on one style and then once trained the yoga world is your oyster and you can continue your studies in other styles if you feel the need.

Course and teacher credentials.

Sadly, some courses are developed as a way of making money for a teacher or studio, and I won't lie to you - it can be pretty tough to make a living out of teaching yoga classes alone. You need to ask questions about the course. How long has it been running? How experienced is the course tutor? What teaching qualifications do they have? I personally wouldn't want to undertake a training from a teacher who has been teaching for less than 10 years as the wealth of knowledge you build as a yoga teacher comes firstly from the quality of your original training, then mostly from the experience you gain by teaching and continued learning or continued professional development. It's a little like the analogy of only really learning to drive once you have passed your driving test.



How long have you got to train and how can you fit it into your life?

Courses range from foundation courses of around 50hours (which will not give you a teaching qualification but will give you a taster), to 200hours which can be done in a month or less, to 500 hours which are done over 1-3 years. There are obviously pros and cons to longer and shorter courses. A shorter course may fit into your life easier and allow you to take a short burst of time off work to get the job done, they may also be abroad such as in India which may be an added bonus! The downside of this shorter course is obviously the limitations of what you can learn in 200hours. A 500hour course on the other hand will take longer, but may be able to fit into your life as one afternoon a week or a one weekend a month over the allocated time period. This type of course will obviously be much more in-depth than the 200hour course and will require more time commitment but you will probably feel more equipped to go out and teach at the end. I co-run a '500-hour Teacher Training Plus' course and many of the trainees who come to the course are 200-hour teachers who feel they didn't learn enough on their original course so they actually end up doing 700 hours in total! There are many good 200-hour teachers out there too who are confident from that level of training, it's very much a personal decision. So, think about time, commitment, overall cost of the course and how this will fit in with your life, and prepare you for being an inspiring yoga teacher!

What is taught on the course?

Ask questions about how you learn on the course. How much teaching experience do you get? Is it purely asana based? How much anatomy do you learn? How much philosophy? Is it a fixed sequence or series of postures that you learn to be taught in a specific way or is there a wider exploration and more freedom for creativity in the teaching? Does the course cover meditation, mantra etc? How is the course assessed? Think about what you want from a course and don't compromise! You do not need to fit yourself into a course, you can definitely find a course that meets your needs as there are a multitude of courses available now.

Are you able to speak to previous students of the course or attend their classes? See if the course turns out teachers that inspire you!

Does the course provide any mentorship whilst on the course or post-training?
Is there a community? Do you want a community? Is there an option for continued professional development with the school post training?

Are there teaching opportunities available through the training? Or is there assistance for you in setting up classes? What is the application process?

Check deadlines! If you are embarking on a two-year course there may be limited intakes, whereas a shorter one-month training may have very regular intakes so you won't have to wait too long if you miss an intake.

Is the course accredited?

In the UK accreditation is with Yoga Alliance Professionals, The British Wheel of Yoga or The Independent Yoga Network. An accreditation will ensure that the course has met particular standards of professionalism and content. If the course is not accredited then ask the teacher why and seriously consider finding another course. A non-accredited course may prevent you from being able to obtain Public Liability Insurance (which you will need when you teach).

On the teacher training I co-run the application letters are always interesting and varied. People embark upon a teacher-training course for a multitude of reasons but the main thing that all applications have in common is a LOVE of yoga. So whether or not the training is a means to a career or is more of a process of self-development your enthusiasm for the subject is key. If you love yoga, you will be able to share that in a way that truly inspires others and enriches your own life so go for it!



WRITTEN BY

KHADINE MORCOM

KHADINE HAS BEEN PRACTISING YOGA FOR 20 YEARS. SHE IS A SENIOR YOGA ALLIANCE TEACHER AND SHE CO-RUNS THE 500 HOUR YOGA TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME WITH THE VAJRASATI SCHOOL OF YOGA IN LONDON AND BRIGHTON. SHE TEACHES CLASSES, WORKSHOPS AND RETREATS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT KHADINEYOGA.COM AND VAJRASATIYOGA.CO.UK/TEACHERTRAINING