

# Getting Started

*A guide to surviving and thriving as a new yoga teacher.*

By **Julian Walker** for **YogaTeacherGradSchool.com**

## **1. Ok, so I am certified, now what?**

So you've jumped through all the hoops of teacher training, learned anatomy, asana, yamas and niyamas, and faithfully memorized the main points of each pose. The transformational process you've been through has not only deepened your understanding and experience of yoga, it also has brought you right to the doorway of another major shift: from being a student and practitioner to now also entering the marketplace as a yoga teacher.

You may have many questions about how and where to get started. This ebook is designed to answer those questions and take you step by step through the process.

Many teacher trainings prepare you to teach without covering the nuts and bolts of registration, insurance, being an independent contractor, finding work, how you're paid, taxes, and what a sustainable yoga career looks like in today's world.

The ebook is organized so that you can easily jump to any section that is relevant to your journey at any point in time, but I have also tried to sequence the sections in the order that you are most likely to need them.

My hope is that you will look over all the information and then come back anytime you need to, so as to brush up on any of the specific topics.

## **2. Let's start with Registering through Yoga Alliance.**

Once you're certified through your yoga school, there is still an additional step to take to be registered through YA (*Yoga Alliance*). In order to register, the school you got certified through will need to

already be a YA approved school. If that is the case, you can contact Yoga Alliance here: <https://www.yogaalliance.org/>

Yoga teachers are not required by law to register, and YA is **not** a governing body, or government organization. It is a private organization that has elected to set the bar for maintaining professional standards in the yoga marketplace, and to charge yoga teachers and yoga trainings a fee to be able to say they meet those standards.

As such, being a registered YA teacher has become something of an industry standard in terms of both students and yoga studios perceiving you as a legitimate teacher.

In a new and developing industry with a wide range of quality in teacher training programs, this is an understandable and perhaps necessary endeavor.

Being registered will also mean that your name comes up should anyone be searching on the Yoga Alliance website for teachers in your area.

\* **YTGS Tip:** suck it up and pay the yearly fee to be included in the YA registry. It will most likely help you get work, because it gives employers and students the message that you're well qualified — and you can use their nifty logo on your business cards and website.

### **3. Keep Developing Your Skills**

As a new teacher, your single greatest currency is going to be authentic confidence. This confidence is not an act or an attitude, so much as an earned sense of your own skill set as a teacher.

\* **YTGS Tip:** Create a regular practice teaching day and time with fellow teacher training graduates, and/or with friends and family. I suggest at least once a week, if not twice.

Confidence in your teaching is built on the foundation of repeated experience creating a sense of naturalness and familiarity with what you are sharing.

In addition to the teachers you trained with, identify another two or three teachers you like, preferably at more than one studio.

This is going to be about three things: your ongoing education, keeping your practice consistent, and finding opportunities as a new teacher.

Keeping your practice consistent is perhaps the most obvious aspect of both practicing what you preach and having a current well of experience to draw on for your own teaching.

Continuing to study with teachers you like and admire will also help you keep learning and growing.

To support this, take notes after each class you take on:

*Anything you liked*

*Anything you didn't like*

*Anything you learned, and*

*Anything that made you curious about further study, like anatomical or philosophical references, for example.*

But in terms of teaching opportunities, the key here is building relationships.

**\* YTGS Tip:** Become a familiar face, known as someone who is respectful, sincere, and dedicated is an important step toward finding work in a business that is essentially about community.

Pass the time of day with the desk staff, learn who the owner of the studio is, and have conversations with the teachers about whatever specialties drew you to them in the first place.

You can inquire after some time about how to get on the sub list, and ask the teachers who's classes you have been teaching if they would be

be open to having you sub for them. Be sure to mention what you love about their teaching and specifically how and why you resonate with them in your own aspirations as a new teacher.

Be sure that the desk staff, other teachers and, if possible, the owner know that you are an enthusiastic, humble and qualified new teacher looking for any opportunities. Be willing to sub for anyone, anytime, and to teach community classes, donation classes, lunch times, early mornings, basically whatever may become available to you.

In addition, I cannot emphasize strongly enough how highly I recommended that you look into taking steps toward **running a private yoga business**, as a way to create stable and consistent income for yourself.

My *Psychology of Private Yoga* ebook will be a great help in that regard, and the *Keys To Freedom* course will take you through an in-depth 3-week journey toward setting up that private yoga business, which I believe from experience can and should be the \$50K a year foundation of your career and income.

#### **4. Get Covered!**

It is a good idea to have insurance even if you are primarily teaching at a yoga studio. Some, but not all, studios will require it, but in order to teach privately, and later to offer retreats, or rent space for your own group classes, you will need to be insured.

Insurance will cost you a small amount per year, and will potentially save you many thousands of dollars should you ever need it. The two insurance companies I recommend are [handsontrade.com](http://handsontrade.com) and [fitnessandwellness.com](http://fitnessandwellness.com)

## 5. Earnings & Taxes

When working at a studio, there are a few different business models.

*A) The most common model pays the teacher a portion of what each student pays per class.*

Depending on where you live, and what the market can sustain, you can expect to start at anywhere from \$2 to \$4 per student, often with some kind of *base pay* for the first 4 or 5 students, even if less than that number show up.

For example:

You might earn \$25 for the first five students and then **\$3 per student** above that.

**This means that a class comprised of 10 students earns you \$40.**

*(As an aside, the sad fact of this rate is part of why I recommend also teaching privately, which potentially will earn you close to \$100 an hour in some situations.)*

B) Some smaller studios **only pay a flat rate**, regardless of class size.

This can feel like a relief (if you were being paid, say \$50 per class as a flat rate) when you're starting out and are relatively unknown, but may become frustrating once your classes grow, because you're not seeing your share of that increased revenue.

\* **YTGS Tip:** I encourage all teachers to negotiate confidently and respectfully when the time is right. Remember the more money you are bringing in to the studio the better your position to ask for a raise.

C) Some studios have more *of a co-op/rental model*.

Here, *you will pay a flat rent on a class time*, and take in the money from students yourself. This is usually at a **donation-based studio** with limited administrative staff and infrastructure.

The **downside** to this is you are solely responsible for covering that rent, regardless of class size. The **upside** is that if your classes are popular, your profit might be quite good.

The thing to bear in mind regarding any income earned from teaching yoga, is that, except in rare situations where you are on salary at a studio, you will most **likely have to pay taxes yourself**.

\* **YTGS Tip:** Set up a separate savings account for your taxes, and budget to put 30% of your earnings aside in this account every month.

Get yourself an accountant who specializes in self-employed individuals, and take their advice on how to handle your taxes. Once you are making \$40K or more a year from yoga, I suggest paying your taxes quarterly.

Of course your tax situation is part of being an independent contractor, which means you also have to get your own health insurance.

The upside of this is that along with many other expenses, like *training, clothing, car payments, gas, clothing, music, etc* that are used for your business, you can include **health insurance** as a expense *and write it off on your taxes*.

## 6. Workshops & Retreats

I want to suggest to you that you hold teaching workshops and retreats as a mid-range goal you are working towards.

Teaching workshops is a great situation for teachers, because once you

are creating the content of a workshop and bringing in interested students, the percentage split *improves radically for you*.

*Shall I go on?!*

At a studio under (the most common) **Model A**, you will get paid between 50% and 70% of what each student pays. Which means that on a \$50 workshop with 20 participants, you earn \$500 to \$700 for 2 or 3 hours work.

Increase the number of students, duration and/or price of the workshop, and you can see how your earnings start to really add up!

Perhaps the motivation for creating workshops as a mid term goal makes sense now!

- **YTGS Tip:** Start dreaming up your first workshop now. Think about what you love sharing and how you can turn it into a specialty that your students will find valuable and interesting.

Retreats are more complicated, and potentially even more rewarding, both financially and creatively.

You can learn more about these topics via [yogateachergradschool.com](http://yogateachergradschool.com) articles and the courses *My First Workshop* and *My First Retreat*.

## **7. Marketing, Email List & Social Media**

An essential aspect of building your career as a self-employed teacher is marketing. Rather than being either dismissive or resistant to these tools, consider that all marketing is, is a way to communicate your message to potential students who otherwise would not know about you, but would love to.

Your use of modern marketing tools like fliers, a website, videos, email newsletters, and Facebook can and should all be an authentic

expression of your passion, sincerity, and desire to be of service.

\* **YTGS Tip:** Start to build your email list and getting comfortable writing and sharing ideas, inspirations, and information with people who like your teaching right from the start.

You can learn more about this from YTGS articles and my course: *The Yoga of Communication: How to Use Social Media and Email to Grow Your Career.*

OK! That's your *Guide To Getting Started*. I hope it has been useful in orienting you to this fulfilling journey of sharing your passion for yoga with the world.

I will see you inside **YogaTeacherGradSchool.com** for more as your career unfolds.

All the best,  
~Julian