

Deepening Your Skill Set and Developing as a Yoga Teacher

A [200-hour Yoga Teacher Training](#) is the gateway to becoming a yoga teacher... but once you have completed it, what's next?

The obvious answer is start teaching.

The gains from teaching are too multitudinous to cover here — but expect your confidence and abilities to grow in ways you can't anticipate, your relationship to your own practises to shift, and your heart and mind to open.

Another insight you will gain is where next? Where do you lack confidence or knowledge in your teaching? What element of teaching do you enjoy most and how can you grow this? What do you envision yoga teaching to look like for you in five years and how do you get there?

This blog is a guide to navigating those next steps. Developing your teaching skill set often involves an investment — of time and money — and with so many trainings, books and resources available it's important to reflect on how, where and why your resources are best spent. These reflections coincide with some of Nourish's recent development and growth, and how listening to what matters to yoga teachers when it comes to trainings has informed how we develop ours.

- To learn more about further trainings in general start [here](#)
- To learn specifically about Nourish's Advanced Training [jump to here](#)

Further Trainings And Specialisation

Some people embark on their initial teacher training knowing exactly where their heart (and niche) lies in the yoga teaching world. Often they have a background in a field such as osteopathy or psychotherapy and want to enhance their existing offerings, or are deeply committed to a certain style or aspect of yoga, such as Yin or Accessible Yoga. These people have already started their teaching journey with a specialisation...

But they are few and far between. For the majority of people I have taught (and myself), specific interests don't materialise until further on in their yoga teaching career. For many of us, they will continue to evolve and branch off in different directions over time.

Do I Need to Specialise?

Your personal interests in yoga may be expansive and broad-reaching, but as a teacher it is helpful to refine your offerings by specialising in a particular style or modality, be it Vinyasa Flow, Mindfulness or functional movement and mobility.

This doesn't mean you can't still teach Yin alongside your Power classes, but perhaps you invest in a great book to deepen your Yin knowledge (I recommend these by [Bernie Clark](#), [Sarah Powers](#) and [Norman Blair](#)) but attend workshops for Power yoga. This also doesn't mean you have re-invent the yoga wheel and teach something wholly new or original. **Where your strength lies as a teacher will allow you to teach most joyously and authentically, and this is what students connect to.**

If you know you want to teach [Pregnancy](#), [Kids'](#), or Accessible yoga, you will require further training. You may be able to accommodate pregnant and young students and adapt your classes to make them accessible, but if you want to solely offer these styles then seeking out an experienced teacher in these fields to certify with, and/or be mentored by, is essential.

Your specialisation doesn't need to be bound to a particular style. If your interest is in anatomy or philosophy you can weave these into any class, but deepening your knowledge in these realms will mean your teaching develops around them.

Before you invest further in your yoga path take some time to reflect on:

- what is lacking from your existing experience of being a yoga teacher (this also includes business aspects of teaching)
- Where can you offer the most as a teacher? What classes bring you joy to teach? What do you feel your students most connect to? This may vary from what your personal practice, and that is fine!

How To Pick a Training

If you don't already have a training in mind, asking around for recommendations from fellow yogis whose teaching style you respect is a great place to start. Ask them what didn't work for them in the training as well as what did. It's important to reach out to a few different yoga schools; the quality of your communication will often reflect the quality of the training.

How Do You Learn Best?

This is a significant, often overlooked, consideration. **How the course is delivered is as important as what the content of the course will be and who is teaching it.**

Think about:

- **Delivery style:** do you prefer residentials and intensive learning environments or evenings and weekends? Can you commit to a set timetable or do you need flexibility? Is online, in-person, or a hybrid style of teaching best for you?
- **Group size:** we tend to get the most out of small group settings, although this isn't always possible. It is not uncommon to be one of 30+ students if you train at a larger studio or organisation or with a renowned teacher. If group size affects how you learn, bear this in mind.
- **Investment and commitment:** What fits best with your existing commitments? You might love the idea of travelling overseas to train, but is it comfortably possible? Trainings are an investment of time and money, so make sure you are getting your worth. Ask yourself whether a specific training is going to work for you, or if self-study is just as beneficial. Good investments should pay for themselves.

Look Beyond Yoga...

Once you have figured out your yoga specialisation, consider if you might benefit from non-yoga specific trainings.

For example:

- Anatomy courses not specific to yoga.
- If you teach dynamic styles of yoga mobility, pilates, and strength training are great ways to enhance your offerings, particularly as you figure out creative ways to interweave different movement principles into asana sequences.
- If you are interested in Yin yoga, you might consider learning more about Traditional Chinese Medicine or fascia meridians.

Something to bear in mind is that Yoga Alliance has certain [Continuing Education requirements](#) in order to maintain your membership. Nourish is certified by Yoga Alliance for a number of reasons, most prescient being that they are internationally recognised. It is good practise (and in future may become mandatory) to be part of a regulatory body, and for this reason we recommend our trainees to register with Yoga Alliance. That being said, we are critical of some of Yoga Alliance's practices and do not agree with how they monetised and monopolised yoga. We recommend doing your research whether it is beneficial for you personally as a teacher to be certified by them. [This episode](#) of the Yoga is Dead podcast gives some good insights, although it is from a US perspective.

300-hours Advanced Training

The natural next step for many people is a [300-hour teacher training](#), taking your total accreditation up to 500-hours. 300-hour trainings take you deeper into all aspects of practising and teaching yoga, supplementing the foundational knowledge from a [200-hour training](#) and, perhaps, addressing any concerns you have from your teaching experience.

So, is a 300-hour Teacher Training essential?

Given that Nourish has just launched our [300-hour Teacher Training](#) (a joyous labour of love which I have been developing and collaborating on for the past two years!), my answer may surprise you — No.

You should want to take this next step to deepen your knowledge and skills across the yoga spectrum — from anatomy to pranayama, business aspects to ethics and philosophy.

(In some instances you may actually need a 500-hour training, such as if you want to become a [lead yoga teacher trainer](#) you must be an E-RYT 500.)

What's Different about Nourish's 300-hour Training?

Most simply, it doesn't have to be a 300-hour training. You can either complete all [course requirements](#) or cherry-pick the modules that appeal to you and still benefit from Continual Professional Development (CPD) credits.

For example, if you are interested in offering [rest practises](#), you might choose to take one or both of the [Leading Simple Yoga Nidras](#) and [Introduction to Restorative Yoga](#) modules. Or if you want to enhance your understanding of [Embodied Asana](#) and Anatomy, you could take either one or all four of the Embodied Asana and Embodied Anatomy modules. Similarly for Pranayama or philosophy.

Embracing Flexibility

When developing the 300-hour curriculum I considered both content and delivery style. Repeatedly I had heard how beneficial the flexible delivery style of the 200-hour training was for our students and this became something important to replicate in the Advanced Training offering.

This also means you do not have to commit fully to the 300-hour course if you are not sure if it is for you. You can take a couple of the modules that are most interesting to you, and then re-assess whether you would benefit from completing the entire 300-hours. **In order to receive 300-hour certification you are required to complete all 15 modules and our [mentorship program](#).** The program has been designed so you can complete the modules in any order and you have three years in which to fulfil all the requirements.

The modules are offered on a rotating basis, some on intensive weekends and others on weekday evenings spread over a number of weeks. This means, timetable depending, you can set your own time frame for completing the 300-hour training. It also means that you can integrate what you are learning into your existing teaching practices, which is a great way to deepen your understanding of a topic and get more of a feel for your teaching specialisation.

Small Groups

Each module is capped at 16 people. As a facilitator I know that not only do my students learn better in small groups, but I am also able to give more to each individual.

Scholarships

There are two partial scholarships for our 300-hour training for individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ and/or BAME. If you are eligible, [get in touch](#) about the application process or to find out a little more about why our scholarship program is such an integral part of Nourish read this [blog](#).

Mentoring and Support Groups

Mentors support, guide and challenge us — all with a gentle hand.

Mentors play many roles; they help to grow us and connect to us in ways that empower us to step into our potential. A good mentor both draws from their own experience and recognises our unique strengths and concerns.

You may have senior teachers who you look up to, however, if you still have questions then it may be time to formalise your mentorship. You can approach this teacher and see if this is something they are open to and agree compensation accordingly. You can also seek out a [mentorship program](#), such as Nourish's.

Formalising and investing in mentorship, as opposed to just throwing the odd question at senior teachers helps to ground and guide us in our professional growth.

Support Groups

A majority of teachers I know have a yoga teacher support group, whether they think of it in these terms or not! These may be your fellow teachers at your studio, gym or where you live, or perhaps people you connected with on your teacher trainings. Together you chew over your current teaching trials, tribulations, questions, and celebrations.

As freelancers, yoga teaching can be a lonely, somewhat strange place. Support groups provide a career community and allow you to come together to lift each other up. Regular meetups, perhaps over coffee or at a studio, to discuss any teaching concerns you have can be invaluable.

Mentorship and community are profound ways of deepening and growing your teaching, which is why Nourish's six month [Professional Development and Mentoring Program](#) is an essential part of our 300-hour training. Nourish's mentorship program is structured in such a way where

specific goals are set and realised, with both the support of a small group (3 people + Harriet) and one-to-one time with Harriet.

I'd love to hear where you are at in your yoga teaching journey and what some of your biggest considerations — and concerns — are when it comes trainings or deepening your skill set. Drop me a comment below!

If you have any questions regarding any of Nourish's trainings, please don't hesitate to [get in touch](#).