Choosing the Right RYT200 Yoga Teacher Training Program for You

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# Contents

Introduction ......................................................................................................................................................... 3  
1. Who Do I Want To Teach? ................................................................................................................................. 7  
2. What Do I Want To Teach Them? ...................................................................................................................... 9  
3. How Do I Learn Best? ......................................................................................................................................... 11  
4. Where Do I Want To Take My Training? ........................................................................................................ 13  
5. What Do I Want To Do When I Finish? ............................................................................................................ 14  
6. How Will A Yoga Teacher Training Facilitate My Personal Growth? .......................................................... 16  
7. Who Are The Lead Trainers? .......................................................................................................................... 17  
8. How Can I Swing This Financially? ................................................................................................................ 18  
Conclusion............................................................................................................................................................ 19

Please check out my free eGuide  
“The 5 Secrets All Yoga Teachers Need to Know” [here](#)
Introduction

If you’ve ever thought about becoming a yoga teacher, the first step is to start researching yoga teacher training programs. But finding a good program can be tricky. How are you supposed to assess which programs are high quality, and which programs would be a good fit for you, when you are not a yoga expert? It’s not like you can consult with a yoga career counselors at your local community college, or call the yoga Better Business Bureau for recommendations. The best way is to ask people in the industry.

I have been teaching yoga since 1995 and training yoga teachers since 2003. I’ve worked with hundreds of students in the U.S., Canada, Europe, South America, Australia and New Zealand and I have a good sense of the yoga industry and what yoga teachers need to learn in order to be successful. I offer my expertise as a way to help you make a good decision about choosing the right yoga teacher training program for you. Of course I’d love you to consider Subtle® Yoga trainings – but who knows if they are your path. At any rate, this eBook will help you get started.

Over the years, many people have asked me how to find a good program. My first suggestion is to look for lead trainers who have a deep knowledge and teach safe, heart-felt yoga. They may
not be the most popular teachers in town, but they are certainly professionals committed to continuing their studies and to the safety of their students.

So how do you begin your search? You could take the training that your neighbor down the street took, the one that your sister-in-law’s favorite yoga teacher is offering, or the one that comes up first in Google Ads. But if you have gotten this far, I doubt you are the kind of person who makes decisions about important things (like choosing the right training program) quickly.

How do you know that the program you are considering will help you become a yoga teacher who can provide a safe, healthy, sustainable yoga experience to your students? And how do you know that the trainers of the program you’re considering have a sufficient knowledge base and experience to be offering training in the first place? They may be well-known teachers in your area or even internationally, but training teachers is a different skill set from teaching yoga classes. Popularity does not guarantee that someone can provide a good training experience.

The other problem that comes up across the yoga industry is that anyone who has attended a 200 hour teacher training, and then taught a few hundred classes, can hang out a shingle (or launch a Facebook Campaign) promoting their own training. To put this in perspective, you can’t clean someone’s teeth professionally with 200 hours of training. And in many states a hair stylist has to train for 1500 hours before she can legally cut your hair. A program taught by someone who has just opened a studio, or who just completed a teacher training him or herself, may fall short of your expectations.

I will bluntly suggest that you stay away from yoga teacher mills that crank out hundreds of teachers a year. McDonalds may sell a lot of burgers, but if you want the best meal...well, you know what I’m saying – “popular” and “good” are often not the same thing. It’s impossible to provide personal attention and an excellent learning environment when your goal is about the numbers.

Think about it this way, if you need an operation, you wouldn’t seek out the flashiest surgeon in town, you would want a doctor who had been well trained by a reputable institution and had performed lots of successful operations, was steady and calm, and knew her stuff, right? So, why wouldn’t you hold your yoga trainer to high standards as well?

The benefits of slower Yoga, [read more here!](#)
How To Choose & RYT200 Program

Most people want a yoga teacher training program with a solid curriculum and a clear methodology - where you learn to work with many different kinds of students and understand how to help them with whatever individual challenges they may have. Some also want a program that honors the spirit of the yoga tradition, reflects the core ethical principles of yoga, and teaches how to use yoga for personal growth and personal transformation.

An objective perspective is essential while considering your options. In the yoga tradition, this kind of discernment is called viveka. Applying viveka to your decision is not about being judgemental, suspicious or cynical. Rather, it’s about being lucid and clear about your values and your needs. And in this highly saturated marketplace where there are so many trainings and it can be very challenging to weed through them all, viveka is essential. You won’t regret doing the research and you are sure to sleep better knowing that you chose the right program.
How To Choose & RYT200 Program

Over the years we’ve received hundreds of questions about our programs from potential teacher trainees. So, in light of those inquiries, I put together a checklist of “8 Questions to Contemplate When Choosing a Yoga Teacher Training Program” in order to help you find a program that’s right for you.

One piece of advice, whatever you don’t, don’t make a decision too quickly – it’s a sure-fire way to wind up on regret street. Instead, meditate on and/or journal about the questions below. Take time to be present with your options.

And then decide.

Most of us wouldn’t buy a house or get married on a whim, why should we make hasty decisions about something as important as a yoga teacher training?

Here’s a video interview about rewiring your brain with yoga.
1. Who Do I Want To Teach?

This is the most important question to ask before you make any decisions. If you want to teach elite athlete yoga, you may want to study with an elite athlete. But remember that elite athletes are few and far between and the people that study with them are fiercely devoted to them. People who are into that kind of yoga are, for the most part, are already doing it and not interested in finding a new teacher.

But if you want to teach people with certain health challenges, or teach at a health club, or in a senior center, or at a hospital, or at a community center, or privately to individuals, then there is a growing need for this kind of yoga professional.

Think about what kind of person you want to teach and where you want to teach them. It can be useful to write a profile of your perfect student – age, gender, interests, work, experience, reasons for studying yoga, etc. If you are clear that you want to teach in a particular studio, then a training from that studio might be your best option. However, if that studio has several teacher trainings each year well, the question then becomes how many teachers do they need to fill their
schedule? Do the math – it can be quite competitive to get a job in a studio and it’s not necessarily where the greatest need is for competent, compassionate yoga teachers.

Here are some compelling stats – about 36 million people in America are doing yoga regularly, mostly at gyms or yoga studios. That market has plenty of teachers and is well served, especially in cities. But there are nearly 300 million people who aren’t doing any yoga at all. Many of them have health challenges and could benefit from yoga if it was offered in a venue where they felt welcome, included, and safe. If you choose a program that teaches you how to teach people who already go to yoga studios, you will most likely not learn how to teach to the kind of populations you would find at community centers, hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers, schools, or the health department. But if you choose a program that focuses on those populations, you will be prepared from the get-go.

**To Summarize This Section Ask Yourself (You May Want to Journal)**

- Who do I want to teach?
- Who is my perfect student?
- Where will I find this person?

Here’s my article in Yoga Therapy Today about why yoga should be integrated into the healthcare system.
2. What Do I Want to Teach?

The next question to ask yourself is what exactly do you want to teach? Yoga encompasses all sorts of techniques and traditions. If you want to teach at a fitness center or yoga studio, and you want to teach people who are already into exercise, then a program than emphasizes strong, fast, and/or hot asanas may be the best fit for you.

And the market is saturated with those kinds of teachers – many who have been at it for 10 to 15 years, or more. However, if you are willing to teach seniors, people with health challenges, church congregations who like to do things together, university students, people with specific health conditions, etc., you will have a better chance of creating a sustainable yoga business – and enjoying the wonderful rewards of sharing yoga with people who may have never considered walking into a yoga studio.

A program that teaches you how make yoga accessible to people who may not be physically fit, that doesn’t see difficult poses as the goal of practice, that teaches you how to provide trauma informed yoga, that helps you understand the full, integrated system of yoga beyond asanas, and that helps you learn how to teach breathing practices and meditation, may be a better choice.

It’s a good idea to look at the standards set up by Yoga Alliance. They are pretty basic, but still, some programs fall short of the 180 contact hours required and do not provide sufficient training in all the areas YA has outlined. At a bare minimum, meeting the YA standards is better than meeting no standards at all. Compare the curriculum, and the contact hours, against the YA guidelines which you can find here.

Despite these efforts, it’s important to keep in mind that 200 hours of training will only scratch the surface. Many of our students have taken one, two or even three other RYT 200 hour programs before they come to study with us. We’ve had students tell us that even though they had already trained, they feel like they were starting from square one with our curriculum because it’s so deep and comprehensive.

Malcolm Gladwell researched and outlined the idea that 10,000 hours of practice is the minimal amount of time one needs to become a master at anything. I’m not saying that your course should be 10K hours! But it would be useful to know if your trainers have taught that many hours so that you know you are studying with someone who truly is an expert in the field. (By the way, 10,000 hour is equivalent to a five year full time job!)
To Summarize This Section Ask Yourself (You May Want To Journal)

- What aspects of the yoga tradition do I want to teach – postures, breathing practices, meditation, ethics, all of it?

- Why do I want to teach these practices?

- Which have benefitted me the most and which do I want to share?
3. How Do I Learn Best?

This is a critical question in terms of looking at how different yoga teacher training programs deliver their material. Are you the kind of person who learns quickly and can take in lots of new information? In that case an intensive might be the right format for you. Or are you the kind of learner who prefers to let knowledge simmer for a while as you slowly absorb and integrate it? In this case, you might want to consider a training that meets in a shorter, modular format.

Are you interested primarily in yoga postures? Do you value purely physical learning? Or are you also interested in theory and philosophy, history, science and the full range of practices of yoga? Do you want a supportive group setting or are you a solo learner? Do you want to learn about breath centric movement, alignment, or a combination of both? What about meditation and pranayama? Ethics? Service? Anatomy? The Subtle Body?
How To Choose & RYT200 Program

Make sure you investigate exactly what curriculum is offered in the training you are considering so that you don’t end up being disappointed by the program and wish you had dug deeper before committing.

To Summarize This Section Ask Yourself (You May Want To Journal)

▪ What do I want to know about yoga?

▪ Am I interested in Sanskrit, history, ancient yoga texts or just asanas? Why or why not?

▪ Do I need a lot of anatomy training? Why or why not?

▪ Do I want to learn about subtle energies and the subtle body? Why or why not?

Check out my online course about the Subtle Body [here].
4. Where Do I Want To Take My Training?

Location, location, location!

Many people end up taking trainings because they are close by, but you may not have to travel very far to find a training that more accurately suits your needs and interests. Don’t hesitate to check out trainings in other cities, especially if they are only a few hours away. Some programs will even help you secure affordable accommodations. While a tropical location may sound like an exciting place to do a teacher training, remember that you are going to be in class most of the day and if you don’t have time to tack on some relaxation before or after your training, you may end up regretting that you only had a chance to peek at paradise.
5. What Do I Want To Do When I Finish?

Are you pursuing a yoga teacher training because you want to teach yoga full time, part time, or mostly for your own personal development? Some people choose trainings because they simply want to learn more about yoga and deepen their personal practice. Others are interested in supplementing their existing career. And others want the whole enchilada – to be full time yoga teachers. If you put yourself in that last category, you should probably plan on completing a 300 hour program on top of your initial 200 hour training to get an RYT500 before quitting your day job.

If you train with the intention of attaining a broad, holistic understanding of yoga and of becoming a quality teacher, then you can always follow up by studying a specific style with continued, deeper trainings.

You wouldn’t expect to become a pastry chef with 200 hours of training so assuming you will be able to make a living after completing an RYT200 is dubious. Serious, experienced teachers have invested a serious amount of time and financial resources into their training. If you are going to go for it, it makes sense to get serious. Find a quality program that can give you the knowledge base you need to really begin to make a career out of it.

If you already have skills in one area – for example health care, teaching, corporate experience, etc., yoga training can be an excellent way to capitalize on that experience and bring yoga to your existing contacts and circles without quitting your day job. We’ve graduated dozens of students who do just this and they are making a powerful difference in their communities. Teaching yoga can be a great tool to add to the toolbox of an already well-established career.

To Summarize This Section Ask Yourself (You May Want To Journal)

- What exactly will I do with my training when I finish?

- Can I justify taking a yoga teacher training simply for the personal growth it may confer?
- Do I really want to teach? And if so, will I be able to when I finish?

- Do I want to change careers? Or perhaps teach yoga after retirement?
6. How Will A Yoga Teacher Training Facilitate My Personal Growth?

I think this is one of the most important questions you can ask. You have contemplated the idea of a yoga teacher training, but why? Ask yourself these questions, (you may want to journal):

- What is it about yoga that has touched your heart?
- What makes you want to go deeper?
- How is a training going to benefit you personally?
- How is it going to improve your self-image, benefit your relationships, improve your career skills, and help you be happier?

When you read descriptions of teacher trainings or you talk to the people involved in running these trainings, notice if they speak authentically to issues close to your heart. Put some energy into weeding out the marketing hype from what is deep, true, grounded, authentic and honest.
7. Who Are the Lead Trainers?

The next question is specific to the lead trainers. You have every right to check them out. What is their training? How long have they been teaching? How long have they been leading trainings?

Remember that there are at least three different skills sets to consider: yoga practitioner, yoga teacher, and yoga teacher trainer. Being able to do beautiful asanas is a different skill set from being able to teach yoga. And being able to teach good yoga classes is an entirely different skill set again from being able to teach others how to teach yoga. Don’t assume that any one person leading a yoga teacher training has all of these skills.

Ask the People Organizing the Training These Questions

- What is the lead trainer’s experience? Specifically how many hours of training and how many hours of leading teacher trainings does this person have?

- Are there several different teachers in the program? What are their levels of experience?

- Do they all have similar training or are they coming from different backgrounds (which typically means they are likely to contradict each other and leave you feeling confused)?

- Are they rigidly attached to their own methodology (which may red flag you in the other direction)?

- Do they have any teaching experience outside of the yoga field?

All of these questions are legitimate and can help you make a better decision. Don’t be afraid to ask! This is your life and career we are talking about. Also, make sure you take a class or two with at least one of the lead trainers. Or at least watch some videos to see if their style is a good fit for you.
8. How Can I Swing This Financially?

The fact is that these things cost money. It’s important to assess your resources and look into what kind of return are you going to get on your investment. Does the training have a good business and marketing module and who teaches it? Do you have money saved up? Is the training affordable? Are there payment plans and scholarships offered? Does it fit in with your work schedule?

And although the cost is certainly a factor to consider, the investment is in yourself. How much does self-care really cost? How much does it cost NOT to take a training? In other words, the physical, psychological, and relational costs of not pursuing something that you feel passionate about which has helped you or even transformed you. An example is that you may spend a little extra buying healthy food, but you regain that investment in health benefits. A good yoga teacher training program is similar – spending money to understand and be able to teach and share something that has helped you so much can be an important investment in your health as much as it can be in your career.

Please check out my free eGuide “The 5 Secrets All Yoga Teachers Need to Know” here!
Wrap Up.

I hope this eBook has been helpful for you! If you follow these tips, you will most certainly find the training that is right for you.

I put together a quick check list below the highlights key points of the Subtle Yoga Teacher Training. Compare it to other programs. And talk to our Training Coordinator, Stacey MacDonough, if you would like more information. You can reach her here:

support@subtleyoga.com
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<tr>
<th>RYT200 Teacher Training Checklist</th>
<th>Subtle Yoga RYT200 Training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Who will I learn to teach?</td>
<td>✔ Public Health emphasis, accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What will I learn to teach?</td>
<td>✔ Options, modifications, Trauma-Informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kind of learning</td>
<td>✔ Balance of Experiential and Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Location</td>
<td>✔ Near Asheville and other regional locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Upon Graduation</td>
<td>✔ Teach or integrate into existing work</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Personal Growth</td>
<td>✔ Personal practice and group process emphasis</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Lead Trainers</td>
<td>✔ More than 25 years of training and experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Cost</td>
<td>✔ Affordable, payment plans, scholarships</td>
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