



Camp Utopia Marketing & Career Guide

You are in the Wellness Industry

And you deserve to make money. You also live in the modern Western world, and money is a requirement for living here, so you deserve to make money. Most of us are trying to seek and fulfill a purpose that is somehow larger than ourselves, and for you, it's yoga, and teaching yoga. You deserve to make money fulfilling your purpose. The students who are waiting for you to teach them are willing to pay you for the part you play in their own search for wellbeing. In this world, we assign value to things, and things that are free or cheap are often not valued. Yoga deserves to be valued for what it adds to people's lives, and you deserve to make money as its advocate. I'm not suggesting you need a 6 car garage to park all the Rolls Royces, but you shouldn't be stressed out about money all the time. That energy affects your practice, your teaching, your students, everything. Put away the noble notion that money somehow undermines yoga, and just use your time better, be a better teacher, do a little marketing, and build a life and a lifestyle that pays your bills and makes you happy.

Hopefully, that covers the money issue.

So, what is the wellness industry and why do you want to be a part of it?

The fact is, we live in a pretty toxic, unhealthy society, and "wellness" is not being provided by the medical profession or so-called "healthcare" industry. The actual wellness industry doesn't really have much to do with the healthcare industry except as a means to avoid it. They rarely cross paths unless "unwellness" is occurring, and in the United States, healthcare has largely been hijacked by the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, neither one of which has more than a passing interest in wellness, and none in diluting profitability by promoting wellness in a meaningful way. Healthy people just aren't valuable; the real money for the "healthcare" industry is in chronic, recurring, and incurable diseases, many of which *would* be cured if we ate less and exercised more.

Every moderately informed person understands by now that becoming well comes down to these 2 inescapable requirements: eat less, exercise more. Most of the major diseases of the western world would go the way of smallpox if we just did those 2 things, and everyone knows it. So the healthcare industry can provide a lot of

information about your risks, and make recommendations to help you prevent disease, but improved diet and exercise is *everyone's* prescription, followed by reducing stress and striving for balance.

Do you see where I'm going?

In my experience, all people want is to feel good from day to day, to be free of pain and look ok. They know what they need to do to get there, but eat less and exercise more is hard. Some wait until they get sick, then turn to the healthcare professions for tests, surgeries, and hopefully, some good advice to make healthier choices. But people aren't going to their healthcare provider to actually "get" wellness; they are going to 24 Hour Fitness and Jenny Craig. They are going to yoga studios also, and that's great, because you and I know that yoga's benefits toward wellness can be bigger, better, and so much deeper than spending a few weeks on the South Beach Diet.

The real wellness industry is the diet and exercise industry, the people who help us look and feel better, and that includes the personal trainer, the massage therapist, the diet coach, and you. Doctors are still in the illness industry. There is a world of difference between "I can breathe because of my asthma medication," and "I don't need my asthma medication because I do yoga. I can breathe on my own."

This might be a difficult notion for many yoga teachers, because we're on a profound spiritual path, and we want all our students to join us there. But you can't force that; you can only show them where it starts. In this time, in this place, that is through the physical practice of asana and pranayama. This means, you may need to separate your personal practice from your teaching practice. What you practice in one may not be what you practice in the other, because many people who are not interested in the spiritual aspects of yoga still need the wellness that a physical yoga practice can bring.

If you really want to help people with yoga, you have to be where they are, not where you are. You have to give them what they need, not what you need. If you can do that, then both you and your student, over time, will get there anyway.

Become a wellness provider, because that is great karma, and provides your broadest audience and best earning potential. There are only a few million people deeply dedicated to yoga in the US, and it looks like most of them are already teaching, training to teach, or planning to train to teach. Pretty soon, the yoga community you know and love will be a whole bunch of teachers talking to themselves, while the other 300,000,000 Americans remain suffering.

Your Students are at Home

According to the latest Yoga Journal survey of Yoga in America, about 90% of yoga practitioners prefer to practice at home. They read books and magazines about yoga, they buy, rent and download videos, they go to Youtube and a multitude of online class websites, and then they practice yoga in the family room. So, almost 20 million people do yoga, and less than 2 million of them are going to studios regularly. As a business model for yoga instructors, if all you do is teach at a studio, you are missing 90% of the people who do yoga in your neighborhood, to say nothing of the other 300,000,000 Americans not doing yoga yet.

For 95% of people who do studio yoga, it's quality of instruction that gets them out of the house. Just because those other 14 million people aren't going in search of quality instruction, doesn't mean they don't need it or want it. And they are willing to pay more for your time to have it.

As a studio owner, you want students to come in, but as a teacher, you have a great opportunity, to be out there teaching private and small group classes. Most people doing yoga could benefit from at least 3 - 5 one-on-one sessions to get the most of their home practice. It doesn't matter how great the videos are, and Wii Fit Yoga may be the coolest thing ever; every student is going to need an adjustment in one or more of the most common postures at regular intervals in their practice. Why not get it from you?

Creating a full time yoga business for yourself takes planning, and some simple, practical tools and tactics you can use to build your student base and keep it. Here's a list of strategies to get you started



Keeping Time

The number 1 reason your students will give you for not being able to maintain their practice is "I don't have time." So fitness and wellness coaches know the most important skill they can have - and teach - is time management.

When your students tell you they don't have time, what they mean is, they don't have control over their time. Having control over yours is a critical step toward managing and

growing your yoga business, as well as helping your students have more time for you, and for achieving their wellness goals.

Unfortunately, I meet a lot of yoga instructors who are not great time managers. I'm one of them. Time management is really about being organized, so you can be efficient with your time every day. It takes a little upfront effort to get started, but the time you'll create for yourself in the weeks and months that follow will make it all worthwhile.

I know a teacher who takes an extra 20 minutes to drive to a private client twice a week because she often spends the time in her car catching up on phone calls, and inevitably gets turned around and lost in the winding streets of her client's subdivision - even though she's been teaching there for 2 years. Buying a GPS device for her car and plugging in all her client's addresses would save her time, frustration, and stress each week - the best \$200 she could spend on her own time management process and her ability to earn more as a private yoga teacher.

If you struggle with being unorganized, and it eats away at your time, a few basic organizing tricks are all you need to maximize the time you spend serving your clients and making money, instead of wasting time on disorganization and distraction.

There are hundreds of great, famous books and websites out there for time management, and I'm certainly no expert on which are the best, but I've discovered a few great freebies and some leads to get you started:

Since a lot of yoga instructors are also creative people (being disorganized seems to go with that turf), I highly recommend this free e-book: Time Management for Creative People from www.wishfulthinking.uk. It's a quick and easy 26 page read that will make even the most disorganized person feel a little more in control - it is an excellent starting point for your journey to better time management - especially if you don't have time to read a whole book.

This one has a lot of specific time management tips for all areas of your life:
<http://www.businessinfoguide.com/timemanagement.htm>

After reading those, check out these websites from time management pros:
<http://www.markforster.net/blog/>
<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2005/05/how-to-become-an-early-riser/>

If you still want more, going to a used or remaindered bookstore is a great way to pick up books on organizing and time management for just a few bucks.

Once you've got your own life in order, and you hear from your private client that they just don't have time to practice, you will be able to offer an added service: helping them get their own lives organized by using these same simple tools. You'll gain a client's loyalty by helping them achieve a less stressful life, and a better yoga practice.

The Power of Three

If you only had a student for 3 classes, what would you teach them?

What could you give them, in just 3 classes, that would set them on a path to better health and well-being, and keep them coming back to you again and again?

The fact is, many students who choose private lessons don't stick much longer than 3 sessions, so I use that to my advantage with a 3 Class Package and a focus on service. Every person who has a great experience with yoga is likely to recommend 7 other people to a studio or teacher, so, the better job I do giving each private client a great experience, the more referrals I'll get, and the easier it will be to build my base. In a studio, the "great" experience is often transcendent, but at home it means achieving tangible, practical results. Your clients want you to help them meet their goals by providing a plan they can be motivated by, a practice that sticks and shows results, and then builds outward.

I find it hard to ask for money, so having a good package to talk about, with lots of pricing options for my ongoing services, makes it easier. My core introductory package is three sessions focused on their goals, their obstacles, and their anatomy. From that I create and teach a practice they can do at home to get satisfaction and results. And then, depending on their goals, schedules, and finances, they'll see me again in a month, or 3 months, 6 months, or a year - whatever. My single classes are expensive, but my multi-session packages average around \$80 a session, and I provide a bunch of options for people to pick the one that works for them. Each time we meet, I re-evaluate, add new postures or sequences, and build their practice, bit by bit.

Because I know I'm going to give them a great result, there is no pressure for me to keep selling them another package, and I don't go in there thinking I'll rock some kick ass flow and blow their minds. I'm prepared to talk to them about their wellness goals, and address them directly with postures - whether it is too much stress, a health issue, or a spiritual yearning - it's up to them to decide, and up to me to meet their objectives. I'm prepared to study their anatomical gifts and challenges, and choose the postures that will benefit them most. I teach them to breathe, to be still, and to focus. I lay out a plan using whatever tools are available - working with their Wii Fit, or helping them choose appropriate DVDs and online classes, and following up with encouraging emails and tips. I do everything I can to set them free to experience yoga, and they come back.

They just do.

The Power of Three requires a focus on service. Give your customer a great experience and set that client off on a good path to wellness, with tangible, attainable, step-by-step goals. It takes 3 x 90 minute sessions, and it is worth every penny for the client. For you, you'll see them again in a few weeks or months and take them further, and every time it'll be interesting and fun. Plus, you'll be recommended to their friends and families for more private sessions, and you'll be able to create small group classes from that same community. With the Power of Three private sessions, you will be able to achieve your goals of sharing yoga and healing people, and you won't get bored.

How to get there

Figure out your package pricing and class options. They may not be the same as mine, but feel free to check out my pricing system, and use it or adapt it to suit the conditions of your market - some pay a little higher, some a little lower. Most of my packages work out to be about \$80 for 75 - 90 minutes, which works well for both me and my clients. Money is hard to ask for, and pricing is hard to figure out - you don't want to ask too much or too little. So play with your plan until it really feels right. And let me know what you come up with - I'd be glad to know what else works out there.

Give them something extra - whether it is pictures of the postures with detailed explanations, or a recorded class, weekly emails, or all of the above. Learn as much as you can about their issues and then spend the time to figure out what postures will be best, and how to arrange them. The extra time I spend upfront is worth it for the loyalty I get in return.

Good scheduling and time management are fundamental to success here. If you keep post-it notes and notepads and a cell phone and a computer and a hand written day planner and none of them are in sync - you're in trouble, because you'll spend all your time calling people to reschedule when you've double booked. Having many private clients you see less frequently means you have to have total knowledge of your schedule. You want your students to take their appointments with you seriously, so you've got to be on top of yours. Create a great calendar system and stick to it. See *Keeping Time* for some advice on this.

Most important, you've got to be able to "show up" for your client. You've got to have the goods yourself - the knowledge of anatomy so you can assess their needs; the ability to teach the postures in ways that are easy to understand, with confident adjustments to enable them to find their ideal alignment; and the willingness to make motivating sequences and tangible end goals. This is relationship marketing. Do a good job and

they'll be back, they'll bring their friends, you'll be home free. That is the Power of 3.

Choose a You-Serving Education

Make your education part of your success strategy. Not only is that good for you personally, every dollar you invest in your own ongoing study and training is a dollar you won't have to spend on advertising - a good teacher has no trouble finding and keeping students.

So what do I mean by a you-serving education? Just one that gives you the education you need and want the most. Make your own interests the priority. I'm not judging any style of yoga or teacher training program, but keep in mind that a lot of studios and yoga companies offer teacher training instruction as an additional profit center. Ideally, they are also training their own future employees, but even then, it serves their needs first - they are going to teach you what they want you to know as an employee, not necessarily what you want to know as a yoga instructor. Lately, I notice a lot more yoga companies advertising teacher training more like an advanced student offering, with no promise of a job when it's over. That's a good indication it's a profit center, and also replaces the "advanced" classes you used to see on the studio schedule before the studio realized that "beginner" and "all-level" classes are the only profitable options for a broad schedule. Many of these programs are probably fantastic, and you may get a great education there and build a wonderful life as a yoga teacher afterwards, and that would serve you well, but it isn't necessarily a you-serving education. Look around. Choose a school that offers courses you want and need for your growth as a yoga professional. All the yoga schools are going to teach you a lot of asana, and a lot of philosophy, history, and lifestyle of yoga. Awesome. But good verbal cueing, sequence development, hands-on adjustments, lots of anatomy, and basic marketing skills are more important and valuable for actually teaching people safe, healthy yoga. It's all good to spend lots of time in headstands, but if you come out of training knowing how to stand on your head, but not how to teach effectively, you aren't serving yourself very well in the learning department.

Especially study anatomy. You should be training at the RYT 500 level, or supplementing your 200 hour education with a lot of study of how the body really works, so that when you put yourself out there to help someone create a healthy and successful yoga practice, you are capable of delivering on your promise. Outside of the studio system, working one-on-one or with groups of less than 5 adds depth to your teaching; you learn compassion, patience, and a deeper knowledge of how yoga works in different bodies over time. But you serve yourself better if you are already quite comfortable with this going in, so learn more anatomy, even though it may be hard. If your yoga school was lacking in that area, go to a community college and pick up a

basic anatomy course. Take an online course; pick up any number of dvds and books. Two I recommend highly are Paul Grilley's Anatomy for Yoga, and Mukunda Stiles' book Structural Yoga Therapy.

And don't stop studying and practicing yoga just because you've earned your certificate. You haven't learned it all, believe me. When you can afford it, go to a workshop. Build it into your business budget to attend a training quarterly if possible, and be flexible about what that means. If you can't afford to fly somewhere exotic to do yoga on the beach with Baron Baptiste this year, that's sad. Why not learn CPR in your own town? Why not take a karate class at the strip mall dojo, or a meditation seminar at a nearby temple? Make your home a learning center. I use the internet to research yoga. I use my netflix account to rent yoga dvds and I study them to make myself a better teacher. I go to used and remainder bookstores and shop amazon's huge selection of used books to get great stuff inexpensively. Remember everyone has something to teach you, even in the bargain basement.

These are the People in Your Neighborhood

Specialize.

Prenatal yoga, kids yoga, corporate yoga, yoga for golfers, the elderly and the faith-based. This list is endless. Being able to offer classes tailored to special needs students or distinct groups gives your teaching practice depth, and if you yearn to help people who really need it - they are out there waiting for you.

These are the people in your neighborhood. Within an easy drive, you will find one or more of the following:

- School. Full of students, sports teams, teachers, parents.
- Community Center. Full of community classes and activities and the people who want them.
- Church. Full of people, young and old.
- Sports Complex. Full of athletes, some with injuries.
- Library. Same as Community Center.
- Hospital, doctor's office, rehab center, halfway house, group home, clinic, specialized medical treatment facility. Full of sick people, and the people who care for them.
- Office building. Full of stressed out people in the grind.
- Industrial Park. More stressed out people in the grind.
- Park. Full of stressed out people escaping the grind.

Everywhere you look, beyond the yoga studios and gyms, there are people who could benefit from yoga. All you need is to find the right mix of clients and classes to fill your week without burning you out or leaving you stressed about money. It takes a little work

and time, but almost no money, to start teaching small groups and privates right in your own turf.

Many yoga teachers develop these specialties as they go along; many choose them purposefully, because of a desire to serve in a certain area. Once you see what is in your neighborhood, figure out what is going to fit best with you. What are you good at? What do you like? Who are you interested in helping? Working with the young and the old offers a lot of opportunity right now, and there are plenty of benefits for both you and those students. If you have a skill or interest in a sport, an activity, a community, a health issue or a species, (doga, anyone?) - creating a path to yoga through other channels is good karma yoga, and a way to give your earning potential more power, and more meaning.

It helps to pick something you are good at - and this can be anything. If you love to read, then recite beautiful poetry or inspirational quotes in your book club yoga class. If you have a great voice, introduce mantras to the church choir, or the high school marching band . If verbal cueing is your greatest gift, teach the blind. Were you a stressed out corporate climber at one time? Do you have a family member struggling with a disease, or addiction? Are you a golfer, a runner, a dancer?

Once you have selected your specialty, learn more about it. Google it. Experience it. Know something about it. Then, train yourself on the ways that yoga can benefit most directly. What specific postures are going to help this type of student? What are the benefits, contra-indications, complimentary postures? Are there any mudra specific to this group? Pranayama techniques? Design a basic sequence of poses that directly impacts the student's specific need in the first 3 lessons, and then continues to build with the student's own progress.

Become a Wellness Provider

Diversify.

Power yoga, restorative yoga, water yoga, tree yoga, hip hop yoga, slackline yoga, martial arts yoga, lovers yoga, et cetera yoga. Being able to teach in lots of different ways gives your offering breadth.

Start to think of yourself as a wellness provider. You are educated in yoga, a powerful wellness practice, you've studied and prepared for one or more specialty offerings, and now you are working on a diversified "style" set, and possibly some other complimentary skills that can help you provide more services to your audience. Many yoga teachers are also massage therapists, or nutrition specialists, herbalists, chiropractors, former athletes and personal trainers, moms and adventurers. Pooling all your skills to create a

“wellness coach” gives you many new opportunities to share yoga and wellness. And many of your private clients will be grateful to have a diversified wellness coach teaching them yoga plus wellness, especially in tight economic times.

If you are working with a tight hipped former marathon runner with a stressful corporate job and a lot of family responsibilities, spending an afternoon doing yoga in a tree can achieve much more than a typical yoga practice in the family room. According to Yoga Journal’s Yoga in America study, yoga practitioners are very likely to be interested in weight loss, so being able to give intelligent nutrition advice, help people set up an achievable nutrition plan, and provide motivating emails and follow up as part of your offering can help your students make lifestyle changes beyond the mat. That can build long-term loyalty and stability for you.

If you work with small groups or special communities, adding more skills to your diverse offering means you can build a schedule that might include teaching stressed out moms yoga in the pool on hot afternoons, a hip hop yoga class to the cheerleading squad, a martial arts / yoga fusion power class at the local karate club, or a romantic couple’s yoga class on valentine’s day at the community center. And don’t listen to anyone tell you “that’s not yoga,” because “that’s just ego.” It’s all yoga.

Stick with the Studios

Teach and practice regularly at one or more yoga studios. I think every yoga practitioner, and every yoga teacher, is better served by practicing in a studio on a regular, recurring basis. I think every teacher should teach in a studio at least once a week, and more is better. Studio classes have unique advantages: group energy, the vibration of the breath, the shared community, the opportunity to learn from other teachers, to study lots of different body types, to hone your verbal cueing skills - all great reasons for maintaining and encouraging a vibrant, healthy, studio teaching practice as part of your personal teaching business. And, it’s a great place to meet potential private clients.

When I covered the phones at a yoga studio, I got 6 - 10 calls a week from people - sometimes students of the studio, sometimes not - looking for a private teacher for prenatal, injury recovery, special needs, or “just because” instruction. It was low hanging fruit. But equally, spending time after class answering questions and giving advice is another great time for a student to approach you about private lessons - just be alert to the cues and questions, because you may not get a direct “Can I have a private lesson?” Any expressed confusion or frustration with the pace of a yoga class, not being able to see the instructor, not understanding how a pose should feel, or an “I’ll never be able to do that,” are all opportunities for you to say, “Have you ever considered a private

lesson, or a small group class?”

Without undermining the benefits of studio yoga, or “stealing” that member, (remember the studio has spent marketing dollars to bring that student in the door), explain some of the benefits of private lessons as a complement to a regular studio practice: direct, one-on-one exploration of every posture, sessions tailored to their specific needs and issues, the convenience of choosing their own class time and location, working with a small group of close friends to share the cost, having an instructor know their body well enough to know when to push and when to back off, and being more confident and competent in their studio classes.

Remember, when you teach privately, give them that. Don't use private time on advanced poses your studio student is not doing in class unless they are an advanced student - use it to better prepare them for the studio practice they already have.

If you maintain good relationships with other teachers in the studio, you can ask them to refer requests for privates to you, and remember, if the studio owner you work for knows you are interested in picking up private clients, and that you will do it without undermining the studio business, she might be glad to pass on referrals to you as well. It's a valuable customer service for her to be able to offer a referral she can count on. Keep these relationships positive and professional, be grateful for any referrals, and make a point to follow up with the leads you get - reliability is essential to building a network that continues to pay off for you.

Get Free Training, Every Day

Good verbal cueing, hands-on adjustments, sequencing, voice control, pace, timing, compassion and motivation - every teacher has something to give you in every class you attend. Make a habit of opening your heart to each other, and working for and with other teachers will become a vital part of your business.

I believe I learn something about teaching in every class I take, and I try to take classes from as many different teachers, in as many different styles, as I can. We all have our prejudices and egos to wrestle with, and I'm no exception, but even a bad teacher, in a terrible studio, in a style you don't practice, has something great for you if you want it. And I mean that in a tangible, literal way, not just feel-good affectation, but as a study tool. Your body knows the postures, you have mastery over your breath, so you can turn some attention to the teaching - the words, the energy, the adjustments, the sequence - and how it applies to your teaching.

I'm very verbal, and verbal cueing is my best asset as a teacher, so I focus deeply on

the teacher's cues, and align my body accordingly. If I hear a cue and my body moves into an "aha" position - I want to remember that cue. I will use it in my very next class, just to make sure that it sticks in my head. And when I hear something that makes no sense to my body, I make a note of my irritation, and speak more concretely in my own classes. And yet, when done well, metaphoric cueing can be a very powerful tool for emotional opening, so I pay attention to where it works and where it doesn't.

I like to give hands on adjustments in my classes, so I love to get them too, always striving to learn a new way to guide the many different body types we meet on the mats. I think about the way a teacher moves through the room, when he's on the mat, when he's off, if she's engaged in the energy of the room or leaning against the back wall barking "chata, urdhva, adho" and checking her bangs in the mirrors. Does the teacher know how to create more urgent energy, and how to back it off? Does he know how to make all the students in the room feel it's ok to be there, even the new one falling off her mat? Can she challenge a strong student in a room full of beginners without changing her planned sequence? If the teacher is very different from me, I pay attention to the kinds of students she attracts, what needs she addresses for them, what she does really well to serve an audience I'm not reaching. If I take something new into my teaching, or if I don't, I'm always learning to be a better teacher; it's all interesting.

A few months ago I got to share a silent practice with 2 ashtangis, 1 teacher and her devoted student, in a tiny town out west, and even after I got totally lost in the primary series and started doing my own thing, I was paying attention to the teacher's ability to control the energy, how she kept her student's focus and kept all three of us in sync with breath and energy, if not postures, for over 90 minutes. I don't know if I could do that, so it is something to aspire to, and always learning that there is more to learn is worthwhile.

3 Tips for Success in Privates & Small Group Classes

Consistency

What your private student wants to see is improvement, and that is easiest to recognize in postures we do over and over again, so don't think you have to come up with a completely new sequence and new poses every week to keep your students entertained. In my private practice, I focus on 10 essential poses and their variations. You might choose 12 or 15 or 30 - the number matters less than the stick-to-it-iveness. You serve your client best if you keep them focused on those core poses every week - always increasing their understanding of how each pose is working as they go deeper and deeper into it. When the poses don't change from day to day, your student will notice more deeply and immediately how the body does change. This is going to seem like blasphemy to all those free styling vini-yogis out there, but as a private instructor, one of the most important things you can do for your student is minimize choice and

confusion and maximize productivity and visible, tangible improvement. Rather than becoming bored and moving on to something else, consistency will lock your student to you, and keep your schedule full.

Simplicity

Like the poses, your sequences should be simple and consistent as well. So many postures whiz by in a 90 minute vinyasa class, the student hardly has time to find their ideal alignment, let alone sink into it, so what happens in between studio classes? Your home student needs only enough to keep them physically challenged and emotionally motivated. A beginning student especially needs only 10 - 12 poses and the sun salutation. If they understand those poses deeply and practice them repeatedly, they will improve. Teach them how to create a balanced sequence with just those poses, and they'll improve. If you eliminate confusion, you make it easier for the student to keep practicing and succeed. As your student advances, you can create more invigorating, complex sequences of the known poses, adding only 1 or 2 new poses at a time, and repeating them for a few weeks before adding more, so your student can achieve a little mastery over them before moving on.

Challenge & Inspiration

To keep things from getting stale, I use a tactic I call the Signature, Nemesis & Dream Pose Workshops. I use them to work on the pose they love, the pose they hate, the pose they wish they could do. Everyone has at least one of each of these. And sure, it's ego, but whatever. These are usually the poses with the most to teach, so I spice it up every 4th or 5th session with one of these. Every pose is made up of elements that appear in other poses. By creating a class around those complementary postures, you can help your student work toward their dream posture by opening their bodies in other poses. You can help them find comfort and understanding of their most challenging postures by experiencing those alignments in other poses, and you can use their natural strengths to take them into advanced variations of their best, easiest poses. All three classes are fun for the student, and build confidence and competence in their practice.

Make the Most of the Media Age

Yoga media is everywhere right now, and lots of it is free. Yogatoday.com offers a 60 minute class free every day, always in some beautiful setting. You can watch yoga all day long on your computer, both free and paid, and that's not even counting the major players like Yoga Journal, Acacia, and Gaiam, producing magazines, websites, and dvds by the ton.

What can you do to make the most of the bounty?

Record yourself.

Why not you? Just because you probably won't become the next Rodney Yee, and it's so cheap and easy to get it elsewhere, doesn't mean you can't do it too. You need to make a living, not a million. Think locally. Your private students have a connection with you - not Rodney Yee, and a recorded class puts you in their living room as a regular reminder of your teaching skills and compassion. It doesn't have to be high tech, since regular tech is so high these days. A basic video camera or voice recorder with a good mic, a quiet place to record, and simple computer software are more than enough to offer your own audio or video recordings.

I started with an ipod with a voice recorder attachment and I made a unique recording for new private clients. "Hello Sally, thanks for coming to the mat today...." It took some practice to get it down nicely in one take - like a live class - but eventually I could easily record a 20 - 30 minute sequence of postures they needed, put it on a disc, and ask them to practice it a couple of times a week in between our sessions. They understood that it was a home recording, without any bells and whistles, but that it was made just for them. Just to help them practice yoga more. Most of my private clients don't have a session with me every week, or even every month, but what I lose in regularity I gain in referrals and longevity. I'd rather have 40 private clients I see once a month than 10 I see once a week, because a bigger base is much more financially stable over time, so this is an easy add-on that costs nothing but time.

If you speak well, teach well, look good on camera, and have a pleasant room to shoot in - why not? A recorded class burned onto dvds is a great Christmas gift for your regular students, a give-away item to promote a class or workshop, or could be sold in your studio, or on your website, as a fund raiser for a program you support. Abundance comes in many different ways, and yoga media is definitely abundant - but it's a safe bet that if you do more, you'll get more.

Use it yourself.

A yoga teacher friend of mine suggested a monthly "Yoga Journal Magazine" workshop, where you would focus on the postures that were in the magazine that month and develop a sequence that guided your students into the poses they'd seen on the cover, or tried to figure out on their own. It's a brilliant idea, lots of fun for your students. Remember, your task as a private instructor is to make it as easy as possible for your student to maintain a home practice and succeed at their wellness goals - because of the tools you've provided. So you are there for an hour, and the magazine is there for a month - go over the tips and postures in the magazine, adjust your student's alignment, and show them how they can incorporate those poses into their daily practice for that month. You can do the same with a dvd, a book, a utube video - whatever your private

client or small group uses to inspire their home yoga practice - you should use too. Pop a favorite dvd in the machine and adjust your student in every posture. Working hands-on even once - pointing out the muscles they should focus on, the alignment of all the joints in the body, how it feels when everything clicks into place - they'll remember every time they play that dvd again, and their practice will be safer and more beneficial. It also builds the bond between you and your student by integrating multiple elements of the home practice, with you an essential part.

Business Cards & Simple Brochures

A business card, post card, or brochure is a cheap essential for picking up new clients.

If you meet someone in the grocery store or at a class or workshop and they want to call you to set up a private lesson, you should always have a card with you to hand over. This doesn't have to be a big deal. You can buy a package of clean edge business card stock at the office supply store and print some simple cards on your home computer for less than \$20 and a couple of hours of your time.

Likewise, if you offer workshops and camps and organized classes, a simple brochure or flyer you can print at home or at Kinko's allows you to add a little detail about your specific events. This is what you will post on a bulletin board or hand over to people you contact at offices, schools, clubs and clinics to set up small group classes.



I use vintage Airstream postcards and print my information on the back.

I print them as I need them, and I print a simple message about my services, or a workshop I'm offering, and a large web address. I also keep a few blank ones handy so I can write a specific message to someone I meet.

Here are some hints to make your printed materials work harder.

1. Keep it simple. Pick up other business cards and figure out what you like, and then don't fill your card with clutter and distraction. At minimum, a business card needs your name, email address/phone number, and "yoga instructor" on it.

If you want to add more, consider one or 2 of the following:

- It is better to spend time getting your RYT status from Yoga Alliance so you can put that on your card than having a fancy logo designed, especially if you are not artistically inclined.
- Add your address or studio address if you want.
- A short list of specialty offerings in simple language: yoga for adults • kids • sports teams • sports injuries
- Your studio affiliation, if you have one
- Your class schedule if it is really simple
- A special offer if it is really simple

2. Keep it mainstream. I understand the gorgeousness of the sacred symbol, and I think it looks lovely tattooed on your sacrum, but I advise against putting it on your business card. A lot of people who need yoga are coming for physical wellness, not spiritual pursuits. As tempting as it is to indulge our guru aspirations, it is not our place to force our students into the deep end of yoga; it is our place to teach them to swim there on their own. If you insist on writing Svadhistana Yoga on your business card, for 90% of America, you might as well be writing Don't Call Me.

3. Stick to it. Spend a few hours designing your card and a simple brochure and then stick to it. Changing your colors and fonts and images all the time is confusing. A person might need to see your "brand" 3 or more times before they become aware of you, so be consistent in your look, and simply change the body copy when you have something new to offer. That doesn't mean you can never change it, but try to live with your design for a year.

4. Proofread it one more time. You can't believe how easy it is for a spelling mistake, or one wrong digit in a phone number, to slip into your brochure, even though you've read it over a million times. Read it a million and 1. Make sure.

Scheduling Note: What's your Time Commitment?

Business cards will take a couple of hours to design, proofread and print. Print 40 - 60

cards at a time, and you'll only have to spend a few minutes on this every month. A brochure should take at least half a day to write, create, proofread and print.

Social Media, Websites & Blogs

Yes, you have to. Even if you are internet challenged, you should have a facebook page, free weblog and any other social networking pages you like for your professional self. To get started, spend time looking at what teachers you admire do on their social media sites. What draws you in? It's easy to get star struck, but in general, the things we admire include "authenticity." So set aside an hour or 2 to google "yoga blogs" and start to explore. Don't feel overwhelmed by how much there is out there - you still have something to add, because you'll be talking to your unique community of friends, family, students past, present, and future. Look long enough to see that there is every kind of yoga blog out there, and still room for more.

Start thinking about what you have to add to the conversation about yoga. Don't worry about whether or not your stuff is completely unique - there are only so many ways to do posture of the month, after all - so just talk about what you know to the community you serve. The advantage of having a website is when you meet someone and talk about yoga with them, you can give them much more information with a website address on your business card than any brochure or short conversation can provide. Online, you can share more about the type of yoga teacher you are, and what you offer. You can share your schedule, your specialties, and your rates and packages. Your current students can connect with you outside of class time, building community and loyalty, and you can offer guidance and support, share teachings, recommend postures, books, classes, and events. Share pictures of your classes, with smiling students of all shapes and sizes, or announce a "student of the month" or a recipe of the week, or anything else that fits your unique self.

Then, go to any one of the free weblog providers - blogger.com or wordpress.com make it easy to put a website together in an afternoon. I like weebly.com for my websites. With a folder of digital images to give your website color and energy, and a bunch of templates to choose from, even the least computer geeky among us can make an elegant website with very little effort. Here again, keep it simple and mainstream, keep your look consistent, and proofread before you post. Just share your love of yoga in a professional, respectful way, and you'll make your visitors feel welcome and at ease.

If you want to build a bigger audience for your website, either to sell product, or because you have something bigger to say, you'll want to generate traffic to your website to build your presence on the search engines, making it easier for new people to find you. This is where the social networks, like facebook, twitter, instagram, snap chat and pinterest,

etc. provide a useful tool that costs nothing but time and effort. Choose platforms that make sense for you and your target audience. If you are crafty – choose pinterest. If you like taking photos, choose instagram. The audience is global now, but people still want to pages and website every chance you get, from every computer you pass by, because clicks help the search engines choose you more often. Search for your key business terms from different devices, and scroll through google or yahoo until you find your page – then click on it. Click around your pages, link in and out of other websites - anything you do to add traffic to your website is worth the effort of clicking your mouse each day.

Scheduling Note: What's your Time Commitment?

Depending on your comfort level with computers, it may take you a few days to figure out what you want to create and get it started. Schedule 20 hours and you'll be all over it. After that, schedule 1 - 2 hours a week to maintaining it, or more if you like.

Email Newsletters

Sending a regular Email Update to your community is an easy, free way to make your students feel that you care about their wellness, and are willing to give a little extra outside of your regular class times. Loyalty to them equals loyalty to you. This doesn't mean spam them every week with a sales pitch; it means, 6 - 12 times a year, send everyone a simple newsletter with useful information on it. Being a part of their lives with regular encouragement helps them to be successful at achieving their goals, and keeps them coming back to you.

If you are sending out a newsletter on a regular basis, keep it simple and brief - just 3 or 4 things of interest. You should always try to have a theme or a reason for the letter, so you can mention it in your greeting and engage your audience. For example, back to school and spring can mean fresh starts, Thanksgiving and Christmas have food temptation, travel, colds, and stress to deal with; summer and fall are busy, active times with lots to do and great food available. This is a fun, easy, and free way to offer your unique knowledge as an added value to your students.

Design your newsletter with a few recurring topics that you know something about and are interested in - wonderful foods you recommend and where to find them for example, or holistic remedies for minor ailments, advice for 'greening' their environment, a yoga pose to practice at home, a healthy recipe, a mudra, some advice for whatever season or holiday is coming up, and a workshop or yoga camp they might be interested in. Always add your class times, website address, and email link.

Don't use these newsletters to preach or be political. Just be loving and grateful for their business.

Make it Personal

You can also send regular emails to your private clients to encourage them on a yoga challenge or diet you are coaching them on. If you are doing one-on-one wellness coaching, your personal emails will have to be written individually, but if you are working in specialized areas of yoga, it may help you to write 5 or 6 sample letters on your recurring themes, or keep a list of encouraging phrases you like, so you spend less time thinking of what to say on a weekly basis and more time getting it done. Once you've done this a few times, you'll get into a nice rhythm, but take the time to re-read and proof read your writing. Be friendly but professional in every message, and always add a link back to your website.

Scheduling Note: What's your Time Commitment?

Take your time with newsletters - that's why I recommend only 6 - 12 per year. I spend at least one day thinking about what I want to share with people and finding the best words to do it, taking the time to research the facts, check my spelling and re-read my sentences. If writing is not your thing - use a lot of pictures and recipes and ask a friend to read it over before you send it.

Depending on your student list, it should be easy to send an email to each private client if you schedule 1 hour each week.

Get a Check Up

Nearly 50% of people first tried yoga for health reasons, according to the recent Yoga Journal study of Yoga in America, and 14 million people were advised to do yoga by a doctor or therapist. 45% of all adults believe yoga would help them if they were being treated for a medical condition. So when your doctor tells her patients to go take a yoga class, is she telling them to take one from you?

Go get a check up. Talk to your doctor, and the nurses, about yoga. Do they know about it, understand it, practice it, believe in it, and recommend it? If they do, ask them to recommend you to their patients. If they don't, why not, and what can you do to change that?

Here are some options to help you walk away from your check up with a new source of potential students:

- Offer to teach a short trial series (paid) for the nurses and clinic staff so they can experience the potential benefits for their patients directly. In 3 - 4 weeks, you can leverage that into a regular weekly class on your schedule, AND get the patient recommendations.
- Offer to teach 3 private lessons to your doctor, to show her how you specifically would help her patients. This should not be a freebie, so if you find you have to

“prove” yourself, try requesting another appointment time, and then demonstrate your process, rather than give a free class right away. Sometimes it makes sense to offer your services for free, but rarely - save that for the poor, and remember that your doctor will see you as a serious professional if you value your services. Take your doctor step by step through your technique for evaluating a patient’s needs and designing a beneficial yoga program for each individual.

- Ask your doctor to recommend 3 appropriate patients to you as a trial. Later, you’ll ask those patients to provide feedback to the doctor on the experience.
- Ask if you can leave your brochures or business cards in the waiting room, and on the way out, ask the receptionist to post one in the staff lounge.

This can work with dentists, eye doctors, chiropractors, massage therapists, physiotherapists, psychics, readers, and therapists. Anyone who has patients who could benefit from yoga is someone you can approach with yourself as the solution.

Become an @ Collector

It is more important and valuable for you to get a card or email address from someone than to give them yours.

Everyone you meet is a potential customer, or a source to other potential customers, but giving them your card doesn’t make them call you or look at your website. Getting their card from them, on the other hand, is an invitation to add them to your mailing list, and your mailing list is your marketing base, so don’t leave empty-handed.

It’s pretty easy to ask someone for an email address or business card. Just promise to send them something they need or want, and then do it that same day, or the next. Whether the person you meet knows something about yoga or doesn’t, either is an opening for you to offer them your own teaching wisdom. Everyone likes to talk about themselves, so I try to find a way to ask them a personal question about their health or wellness issues or goals. If someone says - I’m too tight to do yoga, I give them a free “tip” - an easy shoulder opener, for example. Then I say, “let me email you a couple of easy poses you can do at home that will really help you with that.”

I created posture worksheets that have pictures and explanations of 3 or 4 poses, and I email those out with a little “nice to meet you” message, asking the person to keep me in mind if they ever decide to get into yoga, or know someone who could benefit from it.

Then, I continue to email them the regular newsletters that go out to my customer base, helping them to 1) learn more about yoga and wellness, and 2) keep me in mind when they think about yoga and wellness.

Talk to the People who Meet People

At a friend's wedding I attended in the desert last year, I led the bride and her maid of honor in an easy morning yoga session in the sun, and thought what a cool idea it would be to offer a service to people on their wedding day - something like a stimulating yoga flow and inversion class to detox after the previous night's stag-ette, unload some pre-wedding jitters, and get blood flowing upward to brighten and beautify the face before the walk down the aisle.

So I asked a hip, hot wedding planner in LA if that would be a useful service for her to recommend to her clients, and offered up these other ideas as well:

- A lover's yoga private session for the bride and groom
- Gift cards for a home yoga package for the mothers of the bride and groom
- Gift cards for yoga classes for the bridal party
- Bridal Shower or Stag-ette "home spa" event, with a yoga class, healthy food, do-it-yourself facials, mani-pedis, reflexology, etc.
- A post-party wind down class for "the morning after" crowd.

She said yes, which is great, because it means there is a market for your yoga services to wedding planners, event planners, facilities managers, fund-raisers, promotions coordinators, convention centers, resort hotels, small inns and b&bs, hotel concierges, corporate trainers, residence hotels and executive housing facilities. All of these people are in the business of giving their customers a great experience, and any offering that is easy to put together and doesn't cost a lot is going to be attractive. See what is happening in your neighborhood and use your imagination to tap into the "occasions" (and occasionally lucrative) industry.

For example, hotels, resorts, small inns, b&bs, executive housing and long-term stay hotels usually offer massage services, even if they are too small to employ a massage therapist full time. Why not a private yoga instructor?

Remember you are not the only person contacting these professions and clamoring to be their vendors, so this is a marketing task that might take some perseverance and planning. Amber recommends attending networking meetings for people in these industries to let them know about your services. For example, contact your local Association of Bridal Consultants or Event Planners. Get to know the reservations specialists in your small resort town, the concierge at the fancy hotels in your city, the hospitality director at the convention center, residence hotel, or corporate training facility. Be prepared to offer a pampering event for people in the industry or company to showcase your skills so they can feel confident recommending your services.

Scheduling note: What's your time commitment?

Expect to spend several hours researching the opportunities in your community and finding out who to contact. Make an effort to create a specific offering to help you stand out, and then consider this to be an ongoing task - you will need to follow up with regular reminders of your services, keep abreast of staff changes, send thank you notes for opportunities you get, collect testimonials from happy customers to pass along to the people who have recommended you, and the ones who haven't yet. Once you have established your network, schedule 15 - 30 minutes a week to keep working it.

Make your Freebies Work for You

Did your mother ever hit you with the old cliché: why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?

Mine was referring to pre-marital sex, of course, but it applies to free yoga classes too. I know many yoga teachers have classes they teach for free in parks or church basements or on Free Day of Yoga or Yoga Day USA. It's karma yoga in action, they tell me. It's bhakti yoga, they tell me. It's my dharma!

So that's fine, whatever. But sometimes, when I dig a little deeper, I discover that the teacher thought offering free classes would somehow lead to more students joining their paid classes, and it just never did, so they chalked it up to karmic obligation and kept going. Now they are stuck, spending precious time and teaching energy on something that isn't returning their investment, over and over and over.

I mean no disrespect, but people do not value what they don't have to pay for. You can shake that off, say your students love you, blah blah blah. But if you try passing around the hat one day, you might find most of them came empty handed, several would be trying to slink away unnoticed, and the next week they might not show up at all.

Here is the key: if you are doing the same basic thing in a free class as you are in a paid class, why would they pay? Why would they tell their friends to come and pay?

Free, or nearly free, yoga is easy to find. Spend an hour on the internet, or look over the thousands of dvd titles amazon has to choose from, and you will quickly understand that giving it away isn't adding much value to the effort you are putting into it.

But that's not to say you should never give a free class - just give them to the right people, in the right way, and with the right purpose in mind.

First, it should be a one-off - a workshop vs asana class; never a regular weekly event.

Second, keep it small, so you can have the maximum impact on each person. Teaching a sunrise sun salutation sequence to 2000 runners before the big marathon might sound like an amazing opportunity, but you aren't changing any of their lives. Teaching a Back Pain Relief class to 10 people has the potential to change 10 lives. And each of those 10 people has the potential to become one of your paying customers, PLUS, they will recommend up to 7 people to you, because you have slowed it down, worked hands on, taught more deeply, and impressed upon your audience the same compassion, generosity, and wisdom they could expect to get from you in a private session or a small group class.

My community has an annual fund-raising program run by the Ladies' Civic Society that is basically a season of adult education classes offered by local residents and businesses. People pay \$10 or \$15 to learn to garden, quilt, bake bread, challenge their aging brains, set up a working budget, square dance, or do yoga. The instructors work for free. Volunteering just one evening to teach my "10 essential poses for a home yoga practice" to 10 people I've never met gives me 10 leads, plus all the people they will recommend to me - up to 70 more people, if I do my job right. Here are 10 people who already know they want to practice yoga at home. I give them a slow, hands-on posture lab that covers twists, backbends, forward bends, grounding, balancing, strengthening, hip and heart opening, calming, pranayama, and a long guided meditation. I give them a photocopied worksheet of the poses, with tips for making a sequence, and a coupon for private lessons. They give me their email address. Without doing any kind of hard sell, I've added those people to my "client" list, and I'll be sending them a reminder of my value in regular emails throughout the year. If I convert even 1 of them into a paying customer, that 1 "free" hour of my time is now a paid hour.

The most important skill you need for this marketing tactic is being a good teacher. Here are a few other things to remember:

- Contribute to community-based charity fundraising events.
- Make it a one of a kind workshop.
- Get email addresses from every student.
- Get every student to sign a liability waiver.
- Give every student a take-home item, with a yoga tip and a coupon.
- Think small: limit the size so you can handle it in a very hands-on way. 10 people in a workshop is better than hundreds of people in an asana class.
- Think smart: offering 1 free private lesson in a silent auction or raffle is not as good as offering a free kids yoga party for 10.
- Follow up. Without a hard sell, everyone you teach in a fundraiser is a "client" - sooner or later, each one will pay off directly, or by recommendations.