

Learn to ride the

Waves

Maybe you love the sea, enjoy a little adventure and don't really fancy a desk job. In that case, maybe being a surf instructor is the perfect job for you. Priyal Kiramage is the co-founder of Shaka Sign Surf, which holds camps for would-be surfers across the island. This week, he spoke to the *Weekend Leader* about what it takes to be a surf instructor.

By Raisa Wickremetunge

Required qualifications

Lifeguard certification is important, as beginners are often nervous and inexperienced. So knowledge of CPR, for instance, is essential. There are also international surfing certificates, awarded at up to three levels. While this is not necessarily a required qualification, it can lend an instructor some legitimacy. However it is important to note that experience in surfing abroad is needed in order to get certificates, especially for the higher levels.

Experience is also important- a trainer who has been surfing at least five years is considered experienced.

Job Skills

'You have to have a passion for surfing,' Priyal says. This is important because surfing is a physically demanding sport - so being in shape is key. So is being flexible in terms of time (instructors have to be ready for tourists or students). Patience is definitely a virtue in this field, as is being friendly and sociable. But



above all, an instructor needs to be both encouraging and motivational, according to Priyal.

Starting Salary

The starting salary tends to be around 500 dollars for a trainer. Many would-be instructors also go overseas for working experience abroad (which is needed for higher level certification). In these instances it is normal for the instructor to receive accommodation and food allowances, but no salary, as in any internship.

Once professionally trained, it is possible to receive between 1,000 and 2,000 dollars a month.

to receive this certification recently - but to progress further a trip overseas is needed. Even if this is too expensive, however, the most important thing to have is experience, so simply working at a surf school can be vital.

Job Opportunities

This job gives you the opportunity to travel to other countries and meet lots of different people. For many surfing instructors, the end goal is to travel overseas, find that secret break, and strike out on their own. In other words, many instructors while starting out with a surf school would aim to become self-employed eventually.

'The main thing about this kind of job is it's not really motivated by money. It's something you want to do because you want to teach people and have a passion for it,' Priyal said. Apart from the obvious plus point of always being in good health, there is always the opportunity of setting up a surf camp - which provides food, accommodation and training packages for surfers. This provides much higher earnings - you could expect to earn around 10,000 dollars a month with a surf camp.

Many people also take up surfing instruction as a part-time job or a hobby.

Institutions offering certification

There are no authorities in Sri Lanka which can offer certification for surfing. The Sri Lanka Life Saving Association provides lifeguard training, which is vital for trainers. In terms of surfing the International Surfing Authority/ Association and the British Surfing Association offer certification, but you would need to go overseas, either to the UK or Australia. Surfing competitions do provide an opportunity for lucky instructors to receive level 1 certification - around 10 surf instructors from Arugam Bay were able

AUNTY PAT

Are you in need of advice? Do you, perhaps, have something that's bothering you which you can't share with your friends and family? Write to auntypatto@gmail.com and she will answer in her no-nonsense style, just like one of your own aunts. Feel free to write in with a pseudonym if you'd like to remain anonymous.

Hello Aunty,

Aunty Pat, you may have heard many stories like this, but is there a solution? We are a 'normal', family, or should I say were. We have an annexe which we rented out to a woman with a young child, and her husband in the Middle East. We needed the money and she paid a big advance, which is already spent. It is now 6 months since we rented it out. Of late, my husband is always in the annexe, on some pretext or the other, to fix a tube light, or look into a leaking tap and so on. So much so that when he comes home he makes a bee line to the annexe and she has a cup of tea ready for him as well! We had a huge argument over this but we can't ask her to leave till we can give the advance back. Any ideas on how to solve this problem? I'm so depressed, please help me.

Sita.

Dear Sita,

Why don't you speak to her directly and say that you would appreciate it if she comes to you with her problems with the house because you don't want your husband to have to be stressed out with these as he comes after work. Say you can find a suitable handyman and that you will pay for the repair. Also, you can always follow him into the annexe as well, they can't ask you to leave, can they? Your husband might be furious but tell him you are not willing to let him spend his spare time in someone else's company. If there is no improvement to the situation, maybe you will have to tell her that you are going to have to speak to her husband. This will also antagonize your husband. So maybe not giving them an opportunity to be alone together would be the better option. The only thing is you can't monitor people all the time, so you should discuss the matter with your husband and come to some sort of compromise.

Aunty Pat.

Dear Aunty Pat,

I am a 40-year-old fun-loving guy, who is looking for a girl with whom I can settle down. Now hang on, I'm not trying to use you as a kapuwa. All I need are some words of wisdom as to how to attract a decent young woman who wants a stable relationship leading to marriage. You see Aunty Pat, for years I have been the party animal, the guy who gets up on tables and sings loudly when a popular song comes on, the man who is first on the dance floor and the last to be dragged off, the winner of every baila competition at the end-of-year office party. And yes, I have had my fair share of one-night standers - beautiful girls who want nothing more than a quickie and breakfast. But now I'm restless and, to be honest, tired of being the star of every show. I want three kids, maybe a dog and a cat and a loving woman to come home too. Please don't tell me to advertise in the marriage columns. My mother has done that, to no avail. Every time a nice girl comes along and I turn up to meet her, she shies off. Obviously my playboy reputation has gone ahead. How do I let them know I've changed and that I'm no longer a roué?

A.J.

Dear A.J.,

Obviously you still haven't met someone you really like or you won't be asking me how to attract her! With your experience, you should know how to persist and woo until the other person weakens. So make sure that the person knows that your intentions are honourable and don't try anything physical until you get her to trust you. Just show that you want to be good friends and get to know her and no-one can object to that, can they? You can't find a life partner overnight, especially at your age, so you might have to go through a couple of relationships before finding the perfect or suitable one. Try and spend quality time together, and if she refuses to go out with you, keep calling and just talking and then she might relent. You can explain that you weren't interested in settling down until recently, and hence your past wild behaviour. Say that you want to make a change in your life. So, persist until she believes in your sincerity. This is not a quick and easy task, and you will have to try, try and try again. This kind of decision also needs time and you can't do this overnight, so start now with the new you, and I'm sure some nice woman will be out there waiting to be found by you.

Aunty Pat.