

11 Things to Know When You Start Yoga

1. **Yoga is more than a workout.** Well you'll get a workout for sure! BUT, there is also a lot of meditation, breathwork, spirituality and yoga philosophy woven into our classes, so you get a workout for your heart and soul too!
2. **What are you hoping to get out of your yoga class?** Different classes are better for different goals. Do you want to be more relaxed? Stronger? Aware? Your yoga teacher should ask you what you hope to get out of yoga class in order to assess which class is right for you.
3. **A proper yoga class will prevent injury.** Those muscles you're building that keep your knee from slipping out of place? The muscles that keep you from falling onto your hip? The flexibility that makes you less likely to pull something? You'll learn poses that help you build that flexibility and strength to keep your body working as it can.
4. **But, a bad yoga class can cause injury.** A lot of yoga in pop culture show us that we should be lifting our legs above our heads and power through the same poses over and over again. Not only is this not true, but this is exactly what causes injury! For example, if you overstretch your shoulder without building the opposite strength, you could tear a rotator cuff muscle. Prevent injury by picking a reputable yoga studio with variation in the poses that teaches you how to align your body in every pose.

5. **No one is watching you (except the instructor of course!)** I promise. So many times I hear "I'm self-conscious and don't want people looking at me" and "I don't know what I'm doing and I don't want to look stupid."

Here's a little secret – no one is watching you. Everyone is so focused on themselves, on their mat, they're not concerned with what you're doing on yours. In Yoga, we all work toward a common goal, but it's an individual experience. This makes the sense of community in class uplifting!



Each person in class is concentrating on their own practice holding Warrior I

6. **You don't have to be a woman to practice yoga.** Yoga is more than 5,000 years old and men have been practicing just as long as women. For some reason our Western culture has come to bear that perception, but both men and women can enjoy the benefits of yoga.

7. **You don't have to be flexible to start yoga.** Building flexibility is a benefit! It doesn't matter if you can touch your toes or not. What matters is that you slowly open your body and become more comfortable in it.
8. **You won't find a mirror here.** I hear often "does this look right?" but the more important question is "does this feel right?" All of our bodies have injuries and trauma, so we all look different in poses. SO, it is shifting from looks to feel.
9. **What it means to "leave your ego at the door."** When we worry about trying to feed that little voice that tells us we have to do a certain pose perfectly to be worthy, we become less mindful of how we feel and more into hitting a challenging pose. When we force our bodies to do something it isn't ready for, we become one step closer to injury and being even further behind than we would like. Yoga is about protecting and respecting your body, exactly as it is at this moment.
10. **The value of touch adjustments.** A well-trained yoga teacher will assess when you can go deeper into a pose or need to adjust your posture to get the full benefit of the pose. She might gently guide your shoulders or your hips or foot.

Touch adjustments help a lot to understand how the pose can feel. This is what makes an in-person class lightyears more helpful than a video. If you have only ever done yoga videos, you won't know how to do the poses properly. (If you are uncomfortable with touch, let your teacher know and she will back off!)



Touch adjustments are helpful if you are comfortable with them

11. **Talk to your teacher before class!** Your yoga teacher should ask you some basic questions, especially about your previous injuries, but feel free to also mention any places on your body you sometimes feel pain or tension. Yoga can help if your teacher knows which poses will help you and what to work on while you're in those poses. It also feels great when your yoga teacher cares about helping you specifically. Communication is key to getting the most out of your yoga class.

At Beyond Yoga, you are important to us!

My personal guarantee to you:

If you don't leave class feeling centered and relaxed, we don't want your money. We believe in the quality of our instruction. So strongly that if you don't love it and think it is the best yoga class you've ever experienced, you don't pay us.

~ Melissa Kleehammer
Owner of Beyond Center for Yoga

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