

The Sports Academy's Weekly Fitness Tip

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First timer's guide to Yoga



You've probably heard about the health benefits of yoga- muscle toning, improved posture, increased flexibility and stress relief- but are you a bit nervous about making the transition from the treadmill and weights to the mat? Here are some tips to make your first yoga class smoother and more successful. Yoga isn't just for flexible young women or crazed hippies, it can be beneficial for men and women of all ages.

1. Yoga isn't a cult

Don't be spooked by the chants, mantras or breathing techniques sometimes used in yoga classes. Think of it instead as something to focus on while going through the flow of yoga. Most importantly, focus on the physical aspects and techniques of yoga, and take what you'd like from the rest.

2. Wear what you have

Don't break the bank- wear what you already have. However, do wear less baggy clothing so the instructor can see the shape of your body to direct you in your poses. Avoid germs by purchasing your own mat.

3. Start in the middle

As a new student, place your mat in the middle of the room towards the back so you can see the teacher and other students.

5. Breaks are okay

It's okay to take a break. Rest in child's pose (lie face down on the mat with your feet kneeling underneath you) and just breathe.

6. Hydrate

Yoga is relaxing, but don't be deceived- it's also hard, sweaty work. Drink water before, during and after to stay hydrated.

7. Don't slip

Yoga mats can get slippery; in order to avoid having your feet slip out from underneath you, place a towel over your mat to prevent sliding.

8. Help from blocks

If your flexibility isn't quite up to par, grab foam blocks (or phonebooks at home) to help you compensate if you can't reach the ground in standing poses. This will allow you to stretch deeper and align better.

Check online at www.sportsacademy.com for a schedule of our yoga classes.

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