

GUIDE

Your first yoga class: what to expect

A practical guide to your first yoga class, from what to wear to how to handle adjustments.

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A first yoga class is simpler than it looks. Here is what to expect, based on MedlinePlus (reviewed 2026-07-22) and Yoga Journal's beginner guide (updated 2026-11-12), both fetched on 2026-11-13.

Before you go

- **Pick a beginner class.** MedlinePlus says to start with a beginner class and tell the instructor about injuries or health conditions. Yoga Journal suggests classes labelled foundational, gentle, beginner, restorative or yin.
- **Book ahead.** Most studios take reservations online so classes are not overbooked.
- **Wear what moves.** There is no dress code. Stretchy pants, shorts or a workout top all work.
- **Bring little.** Water is the main item. Many studios lend mats and provide wipes. Arrive a few minutes early.

During class

Most classes run 45 to 90 minutes and have three parts (MedlinePlus): breathing, poses, and a short meditation or rest at the end, often called Savasana. A teacher may guide breathing exercises such as Ujjayi. Poses range from lying on the floor to balancing. If a pose is too hard, ask for a modification.

You can decline hands-on adjustments. Yoga Journal's etiquette notes say teachers may offer adjustments and that you have the right to say no; some teachers ask students to signal if they do not want to be touched.

Listen to your body

MedlinePlus advises not pushing beyond your comfort level and stopping if you feel pain or fatigue. Drink water during and after class; this matters most in heated rooms. Cleveland Clinic (fetched 2026-11-13) recommends easing into hot yoga only after some regular classes, and leaving the room if you feel dizzy or cannot breathe deeply.

After class

Soreness the next day is common and usually fades. If pain lasts or worsens, see a health professional. Try a second class within a week or two while the sequence is still familiar, then settle into a weekly rhythm.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need my own mat?

No. Many studios lend mats and provide sanitising wipes. Yoga Journal notes that some teachers say a mat is optional at all.

What if I cannot do a pose?

Ask the instructor for a modification. MedlinePlus advises choosing a class at your level and asking for help with any pose.

Sources

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