

# TEN THINGS A BEGINNER SHOULD KNOW BEFORE GIVING UP ON YOGA:

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Admittedly, it took me a while to start enjoying yoga. Most classes I tried left me feeling bored or uninspired, until I heard about a new yoga studio with fun music and energetic sequencing. After the first class I was hooked, and so began my love affair with yoga. Sure, yoga is not for everyone, but sometimes it takes a bit of time to find a yoga studio, class or teacher that is right for you. If you have always liked the idea of incorporating yoga into your life but don't know where to begin, here is a guide to help you get there.

## **1. If you are keen on the idea of yoga, try at least three different yoga studios before you decide it's not for you.**

I always wanted to love yoga, but I didn't 'get' it for years because I never found a studio that sung to me. It was when I tried a fun, energetic studio that was known for playing loud music like hip-hop, that I fell in love yoga. And then from there I branched out and began to appreciate other slower styles.

## **2. Know that you don't have to be able to do scorpion pose to be worthy of attending a class**

Some people seem to be embarrassed and shy away from yoga if they are not as flexible or as strong as some of their peers. This is very bizarre, considering everyone was a beginner at some point. Don't be afraid to fall out of tree pose. Don't be afraid of the fact that you can't do scorpion. Yoga is not about how amazingly flexible, strong or balanced you are, and nobody is watching to see if you can touch your toes or not.

## **3. Don't push your body to do things it doesn't want to do.**

There is a reason that yoga teachers give so many variations on yoga poses, and that's because no single variation will suit each individual body. Listen to your body and don't push it. Quite often, you see beginners trying to do something that the person next to them has been practicing for years. This is a recipe for injury, or for turning someone off yoga because they think they "can't do anything." If you give yourself time to slowly build up to poses, you may actually enjoy class more and feel more at ease with what you can and cannot do.

## **4. It's OK if you like one teacher more than another.**

Like people, yoga teachers come in all different forms and not every teacher will please you. Try a few different teachers' classes and find the teacher that is right for you.

## **5. If you're a man, please know that yoga is not just for women!**

Many men are put off by yoga because they think it's for women, but this is certainly not the case. Ironically, yoga was designed and intended for men. There is a lot of strength involved in yoga, and coupled with deep stretching, yoga can be as much exercise as release for men.

## **6. Know that yoga can be an intense workout ... but it doesn't have to be.**

As a person that has always liked to sweat during exercise, I thrive most from a high-energy vinyasa flow. It took me a while to find out that yoga wasn't just a series of slow stretches, and now that I have experienced many types of yoga, I like the balance of powerful and gentle classes. If you like to feel sweaty at the end of a workout, chances are you will actually enjoy some of the faster paced yoga styles. Who knows, you may even find an appreciation for gentle yoga too.

## **7. Don't be intimidated by the beautiful, vegan-eating, bike-riding yogi at the studio in your neighborhood.**

It is okay to be a yogi and eat meat. It is okay to be a yogi and drink wine. It is okay to be a yogi without being a size six. Your yoga teacher is human too, and you don't have to change every aspect of your life to enjoy the fruits of regularly practicing yoga. Chances are that many your teachers enjoy coffee, wine *and* meat! Not being the perfect yogi can also apply to alignment and poses-- safety and fun should always come before skill and impressing your peers.

## **8. Don't be surprised if over time, you feel more mentally and emotionally balanced just from practicing regularly.**

You may enjoy the way your body feels and has changed from regularly practicing yoga, but the benefits run deeper than that.

## **9. Come to class for you, not to prove anything to the other students in your class!**

Don't compare yourself to those around you. This harks back to not pushing your body into doing things that it's not ready to do. Listen to your body! There is no use in comparing yourself to the person next to you. In class and on the mat, look out for yourself only.

## **10. Don't take it too seriously!**

Some teachers and students take their practice very seriously, but that doesn't mean you have to. You can still be devoted to yoga and actually have a lot of fun, so remember to smile and enjoy your practice!