

5 Tips for a Better Yoga Experience



by Pam
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Whether you practice yoga regularly, or just starting out, I hope this article will help answer a few questions you probably have regarding yoga class. Hopefully, it will also help you make the most out of your yoga practice. Here are a few tips and answers to the most common questions I come across.

1. What should I bring to class?

All you really need is a yoga mat and I recommend some water. Many places will allow you to use or rent a mat, but if you do purchase your own keep the following in mind:

How thick should the mat be?

Depending on your sensitivity to the floor you may want a thicker mat.



Make sure your mat is at least 68" long.

How sticky is the material?

Yoga classes put you on your hands and bare feet a lot. The stickier the material feels, the better it will be at keeping you in place and freeing your mind from thoughts of sliding

off your mat.

How long should the mat be?

Pilates and yoga mats differ in length. Make sure your mat is at least 68" long.

2. What should I wear to yoga class?

Wear comfortable, breathable and fitted clothes. When practicing yoga, your head is often lower than your hips causing your shirt to ride up. Make sure you can comfortably tuck in your shirt, or wear something form fitting that won't move on you. Pants can fit a little less tightly, but when wearing shorts take the time to lift your leg and see if you expose anything you wouldn't want other people to see (please). It may be a good idea to wear bike shorts underneath your regular shorts.

3. Be respectful.

For most people yoga is a time to relax, reflect, and let go of some stress. There is nothing worse than sitting next to a "chatty Kathy" throughout your whole practice. Sorry Kathy, I don't really want to know that your cat is sick or that you are cooking potpie for dinner. Of course, sometimes something funny comes up and you laugh and talk about it, but let it go and try not to let it get in the way of other people's practice.



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flexibility and strength.

4. Don't over do it.

Everyone practices with different levels of flexibility and strength. Don't let your idea of having to perfect a pose get in the way of an otherwise great practice. My yoga instructor told me once that just because someone can do a headstand doesn't make him or her a better person. Try new things, but don't get to the point where you injure yourself or go past your edge. Know when to back off and enjoy what you can do that practice.

5. Have fun.

Stop thinking too much. It doesn't matter if you can't touch your toes, breath through your nose the whole class, or even keep up with the person next to you. All you have to do is be open minded, respectful of yourself and others, and be able to laugh at yourself.

Join me Tuesday nights all summer at Fort Taber in New Bedford for Sunset Yoga class. 6:30-7:30, \$5 a person. Please arrive 15 minutes early to get a parking spot and to walk over to the grass field behind the fort. All you will need is a mat or large beach towel, water, and sunglasses/sunscreen. Classes start June 5th. Head over to www.southcoastyoga.net for more details. Also, check out my other articles here on New Bedford Guide!