

Choosing a Yoga Teacher

Find a Style That Suits Your Lifestyle

When choosing a [yoga style](#), think about what you hope to gain from your yoga class. Helpful questions to ask yourself include:

- Do you want a vigorous practice that builds strength or would you prefer a gentle, restorative practice to help you relax?
- Is meditation or a spiritual focus important to you?
- How do you feel about practicing in a heated room?
- Is yoga a cross-training part of a larger workout regimen?
- Are injuries, joint problems or other health conditions an issue?

You might ask to observe a class before participating or enrolling. Most teachers and studios offer drop-in classes and some may allow you to attend a trial class, perhaps at a reduced rate, before committing. Health clubs often include classes in their membership fees so you can try yoga in a familiar setting. It's a good idea to spend some time trying different styles, different teachers and different studios to determine where you feel most comfortable.

Choose Your Teacher Carefully

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Here are a few to discuss with your prospective teacher:

- **Do they practice themselves? How often?** A dedicated, committed teacher practices regularly – at least four times a week.
- **How long have they been practicing yoga?** At least three years of regular practice is important prior to teaching. This allows aspiring teachers to acquire the experience and knowledge base that helps them to become effective teachers.
- **With whom did they train and for how long?** Training as a yoga teacher takes a great deal of time and effort. How did your prospective teacher obtain his or her training? Ask about training schools or programs completed and who their primary teachers have been.
- **Does the teacher have specialized skills?** If you have special needs or a particular health condition, you will want to seek out a teacher trained to work with your needs or condition. This may include prenatal yoga, seniors yoga and even yoga for kids (teachers should be well-versed in the needs of their growing bodies). The International Association of Yoga Therapists (www.iaiyt.org) is the professional organization for yoga teachers who focus on therapeutic practice.
- **Are they still studying yoga?** Yoga offers lifelong learning and it's important that teachers continually broaden their vision by attending classes or seminars taught by more senior teachers. Yoga Alliance requires teachers to complete such continuing education in order to remain registered.
- **Could your teacher become a mentor?** Teachers bring more than just their asana instruction to the mat. They bring their approach to yoga including their philosophy and tradition. Make sure you study with someone you can trust and respect.
- **Are they registered with Yoga Alliance®?** An RYT® designation is a symbol of experience, dedication and commitment on the part of your teacher.

Yoga offers tremendous variety and you may find you enjoy more than one style and/or teacher. Take the opportunity to attend workshops and seminars. These can help you broaden your vision and expand your practice.

