

TIPS AND YOGA ETIQUETTE

EATING

As a general rule, avoid eating a meal within at least two hours before you practice. This will make many of the poses, especially twists and inversions, more comfortable. Practicing yoga with a full belly can cause stomach ache, gurgling, bloating and gas! Furthermore, as you move in to some poses, you may feel as though your meal is going to come back up again! If you need to eat, try having a light snack rather than a full meal.

HAND CREAM

Applying hand lotion just before doing yoga can make your hands slip on the mat and make some poses seem near impossible. Keep them clean and dry.

PERFUME & DEODERANTS

You may be surprised to hear that many yoga studios have a 'no perfume' policy. This is because in a 'mindful' state the senses become heightened making perfumes and deodorants incredibly powerful during class. As warm bodies and movement begin to amplify these scents they can become very distracting and unpleasant (particularly given that students are guided to breathe through their noses and focus on the breath through the entire class). For some students, fragrances (particularly strong, chemical-based scents) can trigger allergies. So, given that fragrance is not appropriate in most yoga situations, it's important to wear neutral scented deodorants and avoid perfumes or heavily scented lotions.

On the same topic, good hygiene is appreciated by everyone in class. If you know you are prone to strong body odour, take a quick shower before you hit the studio and use a good neutral deodorant. Pungent body odour, like strong perfumes, become overbearing in a confined space.

ARRIVE EARLY

Take the time to get to class on time. Some studios won't accept participation once class starts. Arriving late can be a distraction for the teacher as they begin to weave their magic for class, as well as other students who may be trying to switch off from life outside of themselves. It's a good idea to check the policy of late arrival with the studio you are attending if you think you may at times be late.

MOBILE PHONES

Yoga is all about being mindful, which is pretty hard to do when someone's phone is ringing. Turn your mobile *off* before you enter any studio, or better still, leave the it in your car. (Of course, if you are expecting an emergency call, let your teacher know before class, and set your phone to vibrate).

QUIETUDE & PERSONAL SPACE

Many studios consider the yoga practice area to be a 'sacred space', and many students feel the same way about their mat. Take the time to feel into the energy of the studio and respect 'the vibe'. That often means honouring a quietude on entering, during and after class, and giving others the physical space on their mat to be uninterrupted.

BARE FEET

Unlike working out at the gym, yoga is done bare foot. This helps you connect with the floor and move more easily through the poses. If practicing in a studio, there will usually be a designated shoe area where you can leave your shoes.

INJURIES, ILLNESS, OR POSTURAL CONCERNS

Be sure to advise your teacher about any medical concerns prior to class. This way your teacher can offer modifications for poses that might not work for you in that particular class. If any pose doesn't feel comfortable, stop and let your teacher know. If you have undergone recent or major surgery or if you have any serious medical conditions be sure to get your physician's approval before starting yoga.

BODY LIMITS

Yoga is all about learning to honour your body's limits. Yoga should always be done to one's own capacity, without straining. Practicing postures and breathing techniques in a relaxed manner provides maximum benefit to all systems of the body.

SAVASANA

A thorough yoga practice will end with Savasana (a pose of quiet relaxation). This is not just nap time, but is an important part of your yoga practice. It might not seem like much is happening in this time, but gradually you will come to know the importance of this final pose. So, to experience the full benefit of yoga, be sure to 'respect the rest'! (If you do have to leave class early, advise your teacher at the start of class, and then be as quiet as possible when you leave so you don't disrupt other students who are resting blissfully).

PROPS

Whether practicing at home or in studio return your props (objects used to aid your yoga practice) neatly and mindfully at the end of each session. Returning yoga props diligently after class is an extension of your practice.