

# Beginner Yoga: 10 Tips to Help You Get Started

## How to choose a yoga class that's right for you.

By Susan Bernstein

Looking to get started with a yoga class? Find the right instructor who not only understands that you have arthritis and shows you how to modify the moves, but also fits with your goals, advises Linda Howard, a yoga instructor in Baltimore, Md., and the creator of a new beginner's yoga DVD, *Easing Into Yoga*.

If you are not interested in the mind-body connection or meditation aspect of yoga, but more on the physical poses and flexibility benefits, find an instructor or class that focuses on what you need. "That's why it can be difficult for people to find the right yoga practice for them," says Howard.

Howard offers some suggestions for finding the right yoga class if you have arthritis:

- Find an instructor who makes you feel comfortable and will modify poses to your needs.
- If just starting yoga, classes for beginners, for seniors or those billed as gentle may be preferable.
- Make sure props, chairs or supplies are available at the class.
- Ask ahead of time what supplies you may need to bring, such as mats.
- Smaller classes are preferable as you may need the instructor's attention to modify poses.
- Take one class before committing to a series of classes.
- Take a friend or spouse with you if possible – exercising with a partner motivates you to keep up with it.
- Choose Iyengar or other gentle forms of yoga over Bikram, Astanga, Body Pump or power yoga.
- Do 60 percent of what you feel capable of doing at first, and then build up the degree of stretching or speed.
- Avoid poses that involve balancing on one foot, like the tree pose, or bending the knee more than 90 degrees, like the frog pose. Modify these poses to fit your flexibility limitations.

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