

## Yoga and Injury

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Yoga is an all-body wellness routine. Some postures require more strength, others flexibility, and some poses have a mix. There's a balance to yoga in how we enter in and exit each pose depending on our bodies.

Like any physical activity, it's important to talk to your doctor and listen to your body. Your practice depends on what you come into class with—this can, and likely will, change every day. Take for example someone with shorter hamstrings: their forward folds will look different than someone who is very flexible or has longer muscles. If you have a hip injury, you'll need modifications in any posture that lengthens or strengthens your hips. But none of this means that if you practice yoga, you'll get injured.

Most yoga injuries occur when students come into class with underlying conditions and do not ask for or listen to modifications. Most does not mean all, because it is possible to overstretch or to move in a way that pulls or pops something. Typically, there are warning signs before these occur in the student's body, and why teachers say to "listen to your body" to find the pose.

Our bodies were not made to fit into yoga postures. Yoga postures help us get into our bodies. Yoga was originally a practice for young, pre-pubescent boys whose bodies weren't done growing and could be molded easier into shape such as lotus pose. If you've seen a video of a child and how flexible they are, you know how different our bodies become after adulthood. Most of us are not children practicing, we're well in our adult years. We need to make these poses work for us because our bodies don't always work in each and every pose.

Most doctors recommend yoga to their patients. I work in a studio and we have people coming in all the time with injuries or permanent changes in their health. As teachers, we do not recommend everyone do the same type of yoga. There is gentle yoga, power yoga, hot yoga, yin yoga, and so many other types of yoga that each serve a purpose. Any class should offer modifications, but you may never go to a hot or power class. There is nothing wrong with you if you can't or don't practice the most intense yoga possible.

If you do have an injury or something pre-existing, let your teacher know about it after you get the go-ahead from your doctor. If you get injured in yoga, take a break or try a gentler class. If you got injured running, you wouldn't go back out the next day. We have control over what we do with ourselves, and we can say "No" to a pose altogether.

Practice smart, and always ask for advice if you have questions. However, know that your teacher is not a doctor. We are trained in the postures and want to help you as much as we can. Yoga is not the answer to every question. I just like to think it's the answer to most of them.