

# What to look for in a yoga studio . . .

We encourage our students to visit other studios in the area as well as out of town whenever possible to have the opportunity to experience different instructors and styles of yoga. Sometimes, it can be a bit intimidating to walk into a new studio.

It is always a good idea to call the studio ahead of time to speak with the owner or an instructor. This way, you can ask questions without taking time away from other students before or after a class. Oftentimes, a studio owner will offer to meet you at the studio between classes to show you around and answer any questions. This is a good opportunity, and I highly encourage you to take it. If time cannot be arranged or is not offered, ask any pertinent questions now, before you invest the time in driving to the studio for your class.

You will, no doubt, have questions specific to your own individual needs, so take time to jot those down and be sure to ask those first. Here are a few other questions that you may not have considered.

Ask the owner if the teachers are certified instructors? Did you know that you do not have to be certified to teach yoga? It is true. This is your investment in time, money, and most importantly, your body and health, so ASK! Hopefully, they will have instructors who have completed a 200 or 500 hour certification program recognized by the Yoga Alliance. This means that the instructor has had many hours training in anatomy, physiology, alignment, yoga history & philosophy, as well as hands-on teaching experience with certified professionals.

Before entering the studio, take a look at the outside environment of the studio itself. Is it in a safe location? Is parking easily accessible and well-lit in the event you come out after dark or during inclement weather? Is the area well maintained? What other businesses are located nearby? In general, does it have a welcoming feel?

Once inside, take time to look around and note if the studio is clean and well-maintained. Are props set up for easy access or tossed about the room from previous classes? Check the flooring. Remember your mat is going to be there! Ask the policy on cleaning props and borrowed mats. Check the ceiling –sounds silly until you are lying on your mat and looking up at mold growing on the tiles above your head. In general, do you feel that things are being kept up to the standards you have at home and do you feel safe and comfortable practicing there?

Most importantly, how do you feel? Trust your gut. Chances are, you will encounter really lovely instructors at studios. For the most part, owners do their best to provide safe, healthy environments for their students. Remember, this is YOUR practice. Explore. Meet new people. Try new things. Enjoy!