

Tips for yoga beginners

Though it might once have been considered a trend, yoga has long since moved on from trendy territory to become a more widely accepted discipline that is practiced by millions for its positive impact on mental and physical health. Though yoga is an ancient practice, only recently has it become so popular in the western hemisphere, where Sports Marketing Surveys found that roughly 20 million Americans over the age of 18 practiced yoga in 2012. That's a considerable increase from just four years earlier, when just under 16 million Americans admitted to practicing yoga.

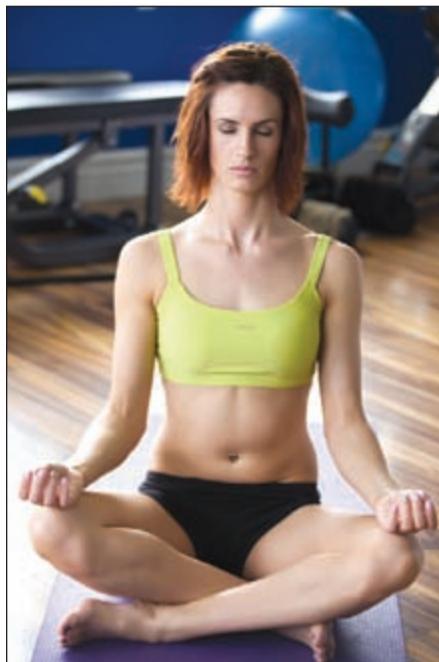
The growing popularity of yoga likely comes as no surprise to its many practitioners, who often credit yoga with relieving stress and improving overall fitness. In addition, yoga can also help alleviate chronic pain and, according to the Mayo Clinic, reduce risk factors for chronic conditions such as heart disease and high blood pressure.

While yoga is beneficial in many ways, it's important that men and women not mistake yoga for medical treatment. Though yoga may be part of an individual's treatment plan, it's still necessary that men and women with medical conditions rely on their health care providers for treatment. For example, doctors may recommend yoga to individuals dealing with elevated stress levels, but doctors also may want their patients to take certain medications in order to lower those stress levels. Yoga on its own may be effective, but men and women should still seek professional medical treatment when dealing with health problems.

It's also important that men and women beginning a yoga regimen not take it lightly. Though the atmosphere in a typical yoga studio tends to be serene, yoga is a physically demanding discipline, and those unprepared to deal with such demands often find themselves suffering from injuries. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, injuries to the neck, shoulders, spine, legs, and knees are possible when practitioners of yoga do not exercise proper technique and caution. So it pays for beginners to heed the following warnings when beginning a yoga regimen.

- **Work with a professional.** No matter how long your neighbor insists he or she has practiced yoga, it's still best that you learn the discipline from a certified instructor. Your neighbor might know all of the poses, but an instructor with credentials can help men and women with preexisting medical conditions avoid poses that can exacerbate such conditions. Novices might not know that certain poses can increase injury risk for sufferers of osteoporosis, spinal problems and high or low blood pressure. When trying yoga for the first time, always work with a professional, making sure to discuss any preexisting medical conditions before your initial session.

- **Take things slowly.** Its reputation as a



calming discipline often gives beginners the mistaken impression that yoga is an easy discipline to grasp. However, it's best for beginners to take things slowly before attempting to perform difficult stretches and poses. Yoga is not a competition, so give yourself adequate time to learn proper breathing techniques and figure out ways to maintain your balance. Once you have mastered such techniques, you can then begin to try your hand at more advanced poses.

- **Warm up before each session.** Men and women should warm up before beginning any exercise regimen, and yoga is no exception. Stiff, cold muscles can lead to serious injury whether you're playing basketball or stretching into a yoga pose. Warm up your muscles with a few minutes of light cardiovascular exercise before beginning a yoga session to reduce your risk of muscle tears or pain when you start stretching or posing.

- **Dress appropriately.** Flexibility is essential when practicing yoga, so make sure your clothing is not restrictive. Women can buy pants made specifically for yoga that stretch easily, making it easier to perform various poses and stretches. Men may also be able to find pants made specifically for yoga, but if not, athletic shorts or track pants can work just as well.

- **Stop if you feel any physical problems.** It is not uncommon, especially for beginners, to experience feelings of dizziness or feel as if your body is becoming overheated during yoga. In such instances, stop immediately, as yoga is supposed to be a pain-free discipline. Ask the instructor for help the moment you start to feel faint, dizzy, overheated, or injured. Physical problems during yoga may be a byproduct of dehydration, so be sure to begin your session fully hydrated and remain so throughout your workout.

Ingrown Toenails: A permanent solution is available

Ingrown toenails are the most common complaint Dr. Post-Vasold treats. On a daily basis, ingrown toenails are removed and resolved. Ingrown toenails affect all age groups and genders.

There are several causes of ingrown toenails. Trauma to the nail, the shape of the nail, and improper cutting are among the most common. Pressure from a shoe or too tight of a sock can cause an ingrown toenail. Not cutting the nail straight across and slanting the edges back can cause an ingrown toenail. Sometimes, the way pressure is on the big toe when walking can cause an ingrown toenail.

Common at home treatments include self surgery, soaking, antibiotic ointment, cotton under the nail, relief cuts in the nail. It is very difficult to remove an ingrown toenail yourself. The majority of the time the nail is too far down in the nail groove and becomes too painful to remove. The surrounding skin typically becomes swollen making the nail even further embedded into the skin. Dr. Post-Vasold does not recommend self treatment for ingrown toenails.

Ingrown toenails should be treated sooner rather than later. At first notice of redness and swelling the nail should be seen by a podiatrist. At that time, he can evaluate the nail and decide on the treatment. Most likely the

ingrown portion of the nail should be removed. Utilizing local anesthesia for pain free removal, a podiatrist can give you relief the same day. Potential use of oral antibiotics may be necessary. The nail can be removed and allowed to grow back or potentially a narrow portion of the nail can be removed permanently so the ingrown nail will never be a problem again.

If left untreated, ingrown toenails can turn into bad localized infections. If infections are left untreated, the nearby bone can get infected leading to hospitalization with IV antibiotics or potentially an amputation.

In conclusion, ingrown toenails are a very common problem with a promising treatment and resolution. Dr. Post-Vasold treats and cures ingrown toenails on a daily basis. With early recognition and prompt treatment, ingrown toenails can be resolved and fixed permanently for a pain free future.

Dr. Post-Vasold and his partners welcome new patients to both practice locations.

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