

## Getting Along in the Yoga Studio: Etiquette for Yogis

Yoga studios are one big happy community. But like any community, sometimes you need a few guidelines to keep everyone happy and getting along.

If you've been going to yoga for a long time, the etiquette of yoga may seem like second nature. For new students, though, there's a lot to learn about respecting the studio, your own body, and your fellow yogis.

To help us out, yoga teacher Joyce Slaughter of MosaicStarfish.com [<http://mosaicstarfish.com/>] asked the members of The Connected Yoga Teacher Facebook group [<https://www.facebook.com/groups/connectedyogateacher/>] what their top etiquette tips are. We've summarized what she found down below. Feel free to add your own thoughts in the comment section.

**Arrive early.** We recommend that you arrive 10 to 15 minutes before class to sign in and set up your mat and props. If you're running late, quietly find a spot in the back of room so you don't distract the other students.

**Take off your shoes.** Unlike working out at the gym, yoga is meant to be done in your bare feet. This helps you connect with the floor and move more easily through the poses. So leave your shoes outside the yoga room in the space provided. This also helps us keep the space clean.

**Set up mindfully.** For some people, those few minutes before class is the only quiet time in their day. So be mindful when you enter the room. If you need to talk with someone, speak softly. And set down your mat gently, especially the heavy ones.

**Practice scent free.** Many people are sensitive to smells, so avoid wearing perfume, scented lotions, or essential oils during yoga class. Warm bodies and movement will only amplify these scents. And if you love onions, garlic, and other pungent foods, save them for after class.

**Unplug and disconnect.** Yoga is all about being mindful, which is hard to do when you are checking your smartphone or taking selfies. For the sake of your own and other students' focus, turn off your phone before you enter the yoga room. If you are expecting an emergency call, let your teacher know before class, and set your phone to vibrate.

**Shower regularly.** Some teachers recommend that you bathe after your yoga practice. But if it's been a few days since your last shower or you are a little ripe from the summer heat, take a quick shower before you hit the studio. And don't forget to give your feet a good scrub.

**Avoid wardrobe malfunctions.** Before you move through all the beautiful yoga shapes, make sure you have your clothing securely buttoned, fastened, and tied. If your body parts have a tendency to pop out while you do yoga, consider a fashion makeover or try wearing something more snug underneath.

**Alert your teacher** to any mobility issues, health conditions, or current or past injuries. This allows your teacher to offer modifications for poses that might not work for you

right now. If any pose doesn't feel comfortable, stop and let your teacher know.

**Eat lightly before class.** Plan your meals so you don't eat at least two hours before class. This will make many of the poses, especially twists and inversions, more comfortable. If you need to eat closer to class time, try having a light snack rather than a full meal.

**Know that "noises" happen.** Yoga often involves a lot of bending and twisting, which can really get things moving in your intestines. So the occasional passed gas is to be expected. It's nothing to be embarrassed about. It's the same with snoring during Savasana. If you tend to snore, try propping your head up during rest.

**Respect the rest.** Most yoga classes end with Savasana or another restful pose. This is not just naptime, but is an important part of your yoga practice. So before you bail on it, give it a try for a few weeks. If you have to leave class early, be as quiet as possible so others can find their own quiet bliss.

**Ask before bringing children.** Not every yoga class is appropriate for younger children, and not all yoga teachers are comfortable teaching children. Check with your studio about childcare options or child-friendly yoga classes.

**Respect your mat.** Clean your mat regularly to keep it from becoming a breeding ground for bacteria, with their noticeable odors. If you use one of the studio's mats, ask if you should clean it before returning it. Avoid walking on other people's mats, unless you are doing partner yoga.

**Take charge.** In addition to injuries or health problems, let your teacher know if you don't want to receive any hands-on assists. You can do this before or during class. If a teacher pushes you further than your body is ready for, ask the teacher to stop. Don't be shy. This is your body and your yoga practice.