

Hot Yoga Safety: Heat, Water and When to Stop

Hot yoga happens in a heated room. Hydrate, start slowly, know the signs of heat illness, and leave the room at once if you feel dizzy or faint.

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Hot yoga is yoga in a heated room. The heat is the main risk. Prepare before class, drink water, rest when you need to, and leave the room if you feel unwell.

What hot yoga is

Studios use the term for several styles. The Bikram style is a fixed series of 26 poses, taught in a room heated to about 105 degrees Fahrenheit (about 40.6 degrees Celsius) with humidity. Other hot classes use flow sequences. Temperatures differ. Read the class description or ask the studio.

Who should ask a doctor first

Ask your doctor before you start if any of these apply to you:

- You are pregnant.
- You have heart disease or low or high blood pressure.
- You have a condition that affects how you sweat, or you take medicine that affects heat tolerance.
- You have a history of fainting.
- You have diabetes or an eating disorder.

A doctor knows your health. This guide does not replace medical advice.

Before class

- Drink water through the day, not only before class.
- Eat a light snack one to two hours before, or none. A full stomach makes twists and folds hard.
- Do not come to class after drinking alcohol.
- Arrive early. Tell the teacher you are new.
- Bring a large towel, a water bottle and a change of clothes.

During class

- Take your first hot class slowly. Many new students rest for part of it. That is normal.
- Sip water when you need it. Ask the studio if it has rules about water during the class.
- Rest in child's pose or lie on your back when you need a break. You are never failing.

- Do not push into the end of your range. Heat can make muscles feel looser than they are.
- Watch your breathing. If you cannot breathe steadily, rest.

Signs of heat illness

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists signs of heat exhaustion. They include heavy sweating, cold and clammy skin, a fast and weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, tiredness, dizziness, headache and fainting.

If you notice any of these signs:

1. Stop the class.
2. Leave the hot room.
3. Sit or lie down in a cool place.
4. Sip water, only if you are awake and alert.
5. Tell the teacher.

Call emergency services at once if a person faints, is confused, does not respond or cannot drink. Do not give fluids to someone who is not awake. Get medical help if symptoms get worse, if vomiting starts, or if symptoms last more than one hour. Heat stroke is an emergency. The CDC lists signs such as a very high body temperature, confusion and loss of consciousness.

After class

Drink water. Cool down slowly. Rest before you drive. Rinse and dry your skin. Eat when you are hungry. If you feel unwell hours later, rest and see a doctor if you do not improve.

Choose a studio that takes heat seriously

A good studio does these things:

- It posts the room temperature.
- It allows breaks without comment.
- It keeps the door and water easy to reach.
- It gives new students a first-class briefing.

If a teacher pushes you to stay in the room when you feel unwell, leave.

Frequently asked questions

How hot is a hot yoga room?

It depends on the studio. The Bikram style is taught in a room heated to about 105 degrees Fahrenheit (40.6 degrees Celsius). Other studios use lower temperatures. Check the class description.

Can I leave the room during a hot yoga class?

Yes. You can leave at any time. Sit or lie down near the door, drink water and cool down. A good studio makes this easy.

Is hot yoga safe during pregnancy?

Ask your doctor or midwife. Heat is a concern in pregnancy. Many studios ask pregnant

students to avoid heated classes.

Sources

[CDC: Heat and health](https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/) — <https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/>