

# Yoga for People with Hearing Loss

By Shari Eberts

**Y**oga combines physical poses with the philosophy of patience and self-acceptance. Its health benefits include developing stronger muscles, better balance, and increased flexibility. A robust yoga practice can also help people cope with the day-to-day frustrations of living with hearing loss. When combined with meditation, it can also help minimize tinnitus symptoms. People with hearing loss may be skeptical about trying yoga. They wonder if they will be able to hear the instructor well enough to follow along in a class or if their devices will fall off when performing different yoga poses. These are all real concerns, but the following tips should help you enjoy your yoga practice even when you have hearing loss.

## BEFORE YOU START

**1. Find the right studio.** Visit a few yoga studios in your area to get a sense of the classes being offered. Speak to each manager about your hearing loss. There may be other students in the same boat. Ask the manager about classes with students of different age ranges and abilities, which might make for a less intimidating setting. Try a studio that seems the most accommodating.

**2. Learn about the poses in advance.** Most studios offer new student workshops. This is a great way to learn the basic poses in a smaller setting where hearing will be easier and one-on-one attention is the norm. Familiarity with the poses will give you confidence before heading into a group class. You can also watch videos for yoga beginners at home.

## DURING CLASS

**1. Go with a friend.** If you have a friend who does yoga, ask if you can go with him or her to a class. Your friend might also be able to give you a tutorial ahead of time to let you know what to expect. During a class, you can follow along by watching your friend without feeling awkward about observing someone too closely.

**2. Before a class starts, inform your yoga teacher about your hearing loss.** This knowledge will allow the teacher to give you extra assistance if you seem to be missing something. Don't feel awkward about talking to the teacher about your hearing loss. It is typical for students to discuss physical limitations such as an injury or illness with the yoga teacher before class.



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**3. Find a central spot in the room.** This way, you can watch the people in front of you if you don't hear the teacher's instructions, and you can see other yogis behind or beside you. It is best if you can also see the teacher in case he or she demonstrates any of the poses. You can also ask the teacher to recommend a spot that would work best considering your hearing issue.

**4. Use a headband or sweatband to protect your devices.** If you find your cochlear implant or hearing aids fall off or move around too much during class, try holding them in place with a bandana or sweatband. This will also keep the sweat out of your ears and protect your devices from excess moisture.

**5. Have fun.** Hey, it's only yoga! Who cares if your downward dog could use some work or if you are slightly behind the flow of the class as it moves to the next pose? Look around the room—others probably are too. Yoga is about improving your health and mental well-being, not a competitive sport. It also gets easier the more you do it.

**6. Don't give up if the first class is a dud.** The first class you try might not be the right one for you. Try another class, instructor, or yoga style, or explore another studio. It's like trying out hearing aids or pringles—the first one you kiss might not be a good match. 



**Ms. Eberts** is a hearing health advocate, writer, and avid Bikram yogi. She serves on the board of trustees of the Hearing Loss Association of America. She has an adult-onset genetic hearing loss and shares her story in her blog, [LivingWithHearingLoss.com](http://LivingWithHearingLoss.com).