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fitness

# Awakening Your Body

Experience the *benefits* of yoga

by  
 aubrey hoover



If you have a hard time picturing yourself twisted like a pretzel chanting, “Om,” don’t rule out yoga just yet. With so many different styles of yoga out there, you’re bound to find one that allows you to experience its benefits in a comfortable, positive way.

Yoga can be for whatever you want it to be — flexibility, strength, meditation, restoration, breath control, physical challenge or relaxation. The trick is to be willing to try a few different classes to find the style that’s right for you.

The Fort Collins area is booming with yoga studios, all offering a different perspective on the practice. Most of them offer a free day or week to try them out, allowing you to experience a variety of styles and what each has to offer. Because so many choices can be overwhelming, it’s important to not only understand what distinguishes each style from the next but also what you are hoping to get out of it.

The difference between each style of yoga lies in the *emphasis*. For instance, the emphasis in **Kundalini** yoga is breath control, whereas **Bikram** yoga is practiced in a 95- to 105-degree room to encourage sweating as a way of cleansing.

**Hatha** yoga refers to a more gentle practice, in which poses are held for a period of time, whereas **Vinyasa** and **Ashtanga** are more fast-paced, flow-like practices. And **Iyengar** focuses on body alignment.

## History of yoga

The classical techniques of yoga date back more than 5,000 years, originating on the Indian subcontinent of Asia. Yoga is believed to predate Hinduism, with which it is often associated.

In ancient times, the desire for greater personal freedom, health and long life, along with heightened self-understanding, gave birth to this system of physical and mental exercise that has since spread throughout the world. The word *yoga* means “to join or yoke together,” blending body and mind in a single experience.

If you’re just starting out or looking for a gentle, restorative experience, seek out classes titled “Restorative,” “Yin” or “Hatha” yoga. For a more intermediate practice, consider Iyengar or Kundalini. For something more challenging, try Vinyasa, Ashtanga or Bikram.

*Yoga has become very popular in the past 10 years, with an estimated 16 million Americans participating.*

If you’ve been wondering about yoga, it’s definitely worth trying. Although each style is different, they all have physical benefits and, for some, a meditative aspect.

Some yoga styles are not for everyone, so ask your doctor if you have any concerns. If a class isn’t what you expected, try a different studio or a different instructor.

Yoga has withstood the test of time. So, who knows, it might be right for you, too. ✨

## Where to practice yoga

### Become Fit Spinning and Sports Yoga

[www.becomefitfc.com](http://www.becomefitfc.com), 482-3868  
 Set to high-energy music, sports yoga focuses on strength training, balance and flexibility.

### Bikram Yoga

[www.bikramyogafc.com](http://www.bikramyogafc.com), 472-5700  
 Studio at 105° F, 26 set poses.

### Breathe Yoga

[www.gotyoga.com](http://www.gotyoga.com), 223-9642  
 Vinyasa, Ashtanga, Yin, Vida (all hot or “normal”); partner yoga.

### CorePower Yoga

[www.corepoweryoga.com](http://www.corepoweryoga.com), 224-4615  
 Vinyasa style, focusing on core strength, balance and flow: hot power fusion, yoga sculpt and yoga-Pilates combination.

### Fort Collins Parks and Recreation

[www.fcgov.com/recreator](http://www.fcgov.com/recreator), 221-6655  
 Beginning yoga, adaptive yoga, yoga routine, “buff” yoga.

### Old Town Yoga

[www.oldtownyoga.com](http://www.oldtownyoga.com), 222-2777  
 The original studio in Fort Collins, all types and all levels.

### Treetop Studio

[www.treetopstudioinfo.com](http://www.treetopstudioinfo.com), 484-0828  
 Hatha, Vinyasa; classes for men, women, parents with children, teens.