

Why Do I Teach Curvy Yoga?

I teach Curvy Yoga because I know how it feels to walk into a yoga class and be the largest student in the room. To have that extra obstacle of internalized body shame to have to overcome on my mat before I can bring my attention to my own experience, the real work of yoga practice. I teach Curvy Yoga because I've been in yoga classes where the teacher



encouraged us to sweat, and to sculpt our “bikini bodies.” The bikini comment never fails to tear my attention away from my practice, and back to my body’s perceived failings. I teach Curvy Yoga because I've been in yoga classes where I was encouraged to take variations on poses that my body wasn't ready for, because the teacher thought I wasn't pushing myself hard enough.

These experiences are not yoga. We don't have to change ourselves to practice yoga. We don't have to be thinner, or fitter. Students who come to Curvy Yoga describe the class as a relief. Isn't that what yoga class is supposed to be? A relief from all our internalized narratives about what we ought to be doing and how we ought to be? In Curvy Yoga, there are no ideal poses to strive for, and no “better” body to sweat our way toward. We learn that our bodies are already yoga bodies, and we learn to practice yoga postures in ways that work for our bodies, rather than striving for a nonexistent “ideal” shape. Yoga doesn't ask us to change anything about ourselves, but it does invite us to appreciate our own experience, which is something that many of us are taught not to do. When our bodies are larger, or softer, than they're “supposed” to be, we're taught that our bodies are wrong, and our experience of them is not something to value, that paying attention to our experience will lead us astray. The teachings of yoga say that this could not be more wrong. Yoga, and Curvy Yoga, take the radical view that our experience, through our bodies, is valuable. In fact, it's all we have.

I teach Curvy Yoga because I'm a radical. Come practice with us. Bring your body.

– Abby Foster, July 2017