

# SHAPE

## 7 Things to Do Before Trying New Fitness Classes

Whether it's your first time cycling, running, boxing, or lifting at a Crossfit class, we've got a few universal truths you need to know before you go



We've been there: super psyched (and nervous) to try a new workout class, only to arrive and find that we're totally unprepared (read: wearing the wrong gear, not understanding the lingo, or being able to keep pace with the instructor). Then you spend the whole class thinking about said unpreparation. And that workout? You're barely going through the motions.

Turns out, it takes more than a couple duhs (looking up the studio's website and address) to do what we came there for: get a good sweat. We asked three NYC fitness instructors what to do before going to *any* class so you can enjoy and excel at a new workout. #Frontrow on the first class? Totally doable—as long as you follow these tips.

**1. Ask about the studio's surfaces.** "Find out what kind of surface you'll be working out on, so you know what shoes to wear." says Alonzo Wilson, founder of [Tone House](#). It may not be as obvious as a cycling class, and wearing the right pair can aid in performance and prevent injury. "If it's an Olympic lifting class you want to have flat shoes, if [the ground is] turf where you're sprinting and pushing sleds, you'll want turf shoes or cross trainers," he explains. (Not sure where to start? These are the [Best Sneakers to Crush Your Workout Routine](#).)

**2. Be mindful about class time.** Not only for punctuality's sake, but for the crowd you'll be sweating with. "Participants in a 6 a.m. class tend to be very serious about their workouts," Wilson says. "Midday is usually a good time to try a new workout for the first time."

**3. Hydrate and eat light.** Seriously, this is not something you want to mess with. You never know how your body is going to react to a particular exercise or temperate, says Jason Tran, instructor at [Swerve Fitness](#). "When taking a cycling class, you're bound to sweat and burn hundreds of calories! Therefore, it's extremely important to hydrate before and during class. I also recommend avoiding a heavy meal right before." If you eat too much before your workout, your body will want to devote its energy to digesting instead of performing to the demands of the workout, and it may feel nauseous in response. No bueno. (Check out a nutritionist's picks for [What to Eat Before a Workout](#).)

**4. Dress appropriately.** And no, we don't mean pulling on your fanciest designer athleisure gear. Think about the actual moves you'll be doing. It's easy (especially in the morning) to blindly throw workout clothes into the gym bag without a thought to your performance needs. Opt for dri-fit gear that hugs close to your body, especially for a cycling class. "Avoid wearing baggy [shorts](#) or loose fitting t-shirts," says Tran, as they can get caught on any equipment you might be using. If you don't know what you'll be using, call the studio the day before you pack and ask what they recommend.

**5. Tell the instructor about any pain or injuries.** Not just so everyone in class knows you're a gimp, but so the instructors can help you improve your workout and maximize benefit. "[Instructors] are then able to plan ahead and provide proper substitutions for your specific situation without interrupting you during the class," says Brian Gallagher, co-founder of [Throwback Fitness](#).

**6. Have an open mind.** Once when you're there, be present. A studio's moves or music may not be what you're used to, but don't try to hold your expectations against it. "Be willing to let loose and go with the flow. Every class will have their own unique offering, so allow yourself to follow along and experience what makes each one different," says Gallagher. If you're using all your head space to hate everything around you, you won't be able to focus as much on your movement and get more of the feel-good endorphins from breaking a sweat.

**7. Bring a friend.** A surefire way to make sure your workout at a new studio will be good no matter what? Bring someone you know. "A new place will be less intimidating and the experience will be more fun if you go with a workout buddy," says Wilson. (Bringing a friend can also help you [Burn More Calories!](#))