

push myself a little harder in his classes. Cristina, a native of Argentina, throws in a touch of humor — sometimes intentionally, sometimes from a slip-up with her English — that lightens the mood and tests concentration.

## Day Five

I opt for a morning session today following last night's evening class. I'm a little tired, but at the same time I feel much stronger and more limber than I have in a while. This class ends up being the best of my week so far, and I leave the studio feeling calm, but energized for the super-hectic day ahead of me.

### Bikram Basics

Each studio has its own set of rules, and each instructor has his or her own preferences, but the following are some overall tips for beginners:

- Drink lots of water throughout the day or evening, prior to class, and eat a heavy meal beforehand.
- Expect to feel some dizziness initially, especially following poses where your head is positioned below your heart. This is a natural reaction for beginners as your body gets used to the heat and postures.
- Don't push yourself too hard during the first half of class. At the beginning, just getting through 90 minutes is important.
- Pick a focal point for your resting poses. During the standing series, it will be your eyes in the mirror. During the floor, choose a spot on the ceiling.
- Drink plenty of water afterwards.

## Day Six

Going to yoga has become as routine as brushing my teeth. By this point, it's much easier to focus on myself and my postures despite the surrounding distractions. Before this experiment, I didn't know how I'd find the time to attend 90 minutes of class for a solid week. Now — like those yoga fanatics I used to roll my eyes at — I find myself looking forward to the stress relief and energy boost every day.

## Day Seven

Seven days, 10-and-a-half hours of class, and several loads of laundry later, I feel like an improved version of myself. I haven't checked the scale, but my jeans are definitely a little looser. After my final class, my friend Sean and I head out for a bite to eat. I haven't told him about my experiment, when he tells me, "You look radiant. Your skin is glowing! Have you lost weight?" I am so zen. ■

# pilates

## AT HOME



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