

Yoga Instructor interview questions

careers.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Interviews for yoga instructor roles usually mix a practical assessment of teaching ability with conversation about how you handle real classroom situations. Expect the panel (often a studio owner or senior instructor) to probe both your technical knowledge and how you read a room of mixed-ability students.

- **Process/technical:** Questions about how you plan and sequence a class, choose pacing, and structure warm-up through to cool-down.
- **Safety and contraindications:** Questions checking you know when to modify or avoid poses for injuries, pregnancy, or medical conditions.
- **Behavioural (STAR):** Questions asking you to describe a specific past situation, such as handling a difficult client or a class emergency.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical situations testing how you'd respond in the moment, for example a student pushing through pain.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about building rapport, retaining clients, and managing bookings or studio operations.

Most interviews open with general background and qualifications, move into a discussion of teaching philosophy and class planning, then often include a short practical component (teaching a mini-sequence or demonstrating a pose) before finishing with scenario and client-management questions.

1. Walk me through how you'd plan and sequence a 60-minute class for a mixed-ability group.

Why they ask

Tests whether you understand class structure and can pace a session that works for beginners and experienced students in the same room.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through structure: describe warm-up, build phase, peak postures, cool-down and closing relaxation in order, noting how you'd adjust timing or intensity along the way.

Example answer

"I'd start with five minutes of breath work and gentle joint mobilisation to settle the group and check in on any injuries. From there I'd build through standing postures, offering a modification and a more advanced variation for each pose so beginners and experienced students can work at their own level. I'd sequence toward one or two peak poses around the 35 to 40 minute mark, then wind down with seated stretches and a longer final relaxation, finishing with a short cue to notice how their body feels compared to the start of class."

2. What would you do if a student showed you a recent lower back injury just before class started?

Why they ask

Checks practical safety knowledge and whether you can adjust a plan quickly without singling the student out or ignoring the risk.

How to structure your answer

Judgement-under-pressure structure: state the immediate decision, the reasoning behind it, and how you'd follow up during and after class.

Example answer

"I'd thank them for telling me and quickly ask what movements aggravate it, then quietly suggest they avoid deep forward folds and any twisting postures for that session. During class I'd offer alternatives for those poses without drawing attention to them specifically, and check in briefly afterward to see how they felt and whether they should see a physio before their next class."

3. Tell me about a time you had to manage a student who wasn't following your instructions or was disruptive to the class.

Why they ask

Behavioural question probing classroom and behaviour management skills under real conditions.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"In a Saturday morning class, one regular kept pushing into advanced variations I hadn't cued, distracting nearby students. My task was to manage it without embarrassing them mid-class. I spoke to them quietly during a transition, acknowledged their strength but explained the sequence was designed for the group's safety that day, and offered to show them the advanced version after class. They accepted it well, stayed in step with the group for the rest of the session, and I ended up giving them a short private tips session afterward, which they appreciated."

4. How do you decide whether to offer a modification or tell a student to skip a pose altogether?

Why they ask

Tests depth of anatomy and contraindication knowledge, a core safety competency for this role.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation structure: state the general rule, then give a concrete example showing how you apply it.

Example answer

"Generally I offer a modification if the issue is flexibility, strength or mild joint sensitivity, and I recommend skipping the pose if there's acute injury, recent surgery, or a condition like high blood pressure where inversions are contraindicated. For example, with a pregnant client in her second trimester I'd swap deep twists for open twists and skip lying prone postures altogether rather than trying to modify them."

5. How do you build and keep a regular client base, especially in a market with a lot of studios and online options?

Why they ask

Client-facing question checking retention skills and commercial awareness relevant to studio or freelance work.

How to structure your answer

Direct experience structure: describe your usual approach, then a specific example of it working.

Example answer

"I focus on remembering names, injuries and goals so each student feels the class is tailored to them, and I follow up after someone's first class to see how they found it. At my last studio I started a simple check-in message after a new student's third class, which noticeably lifted how many converted from casual visits to regular bookings."

6. Describe a time you had to teach a class that didn't go to plan. What happened and what did you do?

Why they ask

Behavioural question testing adaptability and composure when things go wrong mid-session.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"I once turned up to teach a class where the booking system had double-booked two groups with different experience levels into the same slot. My task was to run a session that worked for both without cancelling anyone. I quickly restructured on the spot, offering two variations for every pose and running a slightly slower pace than planned so beginners weren't left behind. Feedback afterward was positive, and I flagged the booking clash to management so it didn't happen again."