Inches Off All Over!
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SAY YES! TO SEX Even When You're Tired

How well trained is your trainer? One last secret the woman who works you out could be hiding. She may not even be qualified for the job.

Last week, your favorite instructor ran a sculpting class. This week, she's teaching yoga. What happened? She probably took a weekend course at one of the many quickie certification programs that have sprung up in recent years. There are nearly 70 certification programs for personal trainers alone, not all of them reputable or rigorous.

A couple of days of class work is not enough to master biomechanics and learn to recognize subtle mistakes, says Leigh Crews, a trainer in Rome, Georgia, who is an ACE spokeswoman. "A good yoga instructor will know about muscle structure and recognize that, for example, a woman with very tight calves is going to have a hard time in Downward-Facing Dog," Crews says. "Then she'll show the student how to modify the move. A poorly trained instructor won't recognize that, and someone could get hurt."

Don't just take the first person the gym assigns you; conduct an interview. Can she provide references of clients with fitness goals similar to yours? And how long has she been teaching? The Yoga Alliance in Clinton, Maryland, requires member yoga teachers to accumulate at least 200 hours of training before stepping in front of a class.

Finally, does she have adequate training? Look for a certificate or degree in exercise science, kinesiology, exercise physiology or physical education. Ask to see someone's level of certification—where she got it and what it involved—before letting her talk you into doing Plough pose. Trainers should also have liability insurance and know CPR. Groups such as ACE, ACSM or the National Strength and Conditioning Association in Colorado Springs make it easy to verify someone's credentials by phone or online.

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MEDICAL MISTAKES How to Avoid Being a Victim