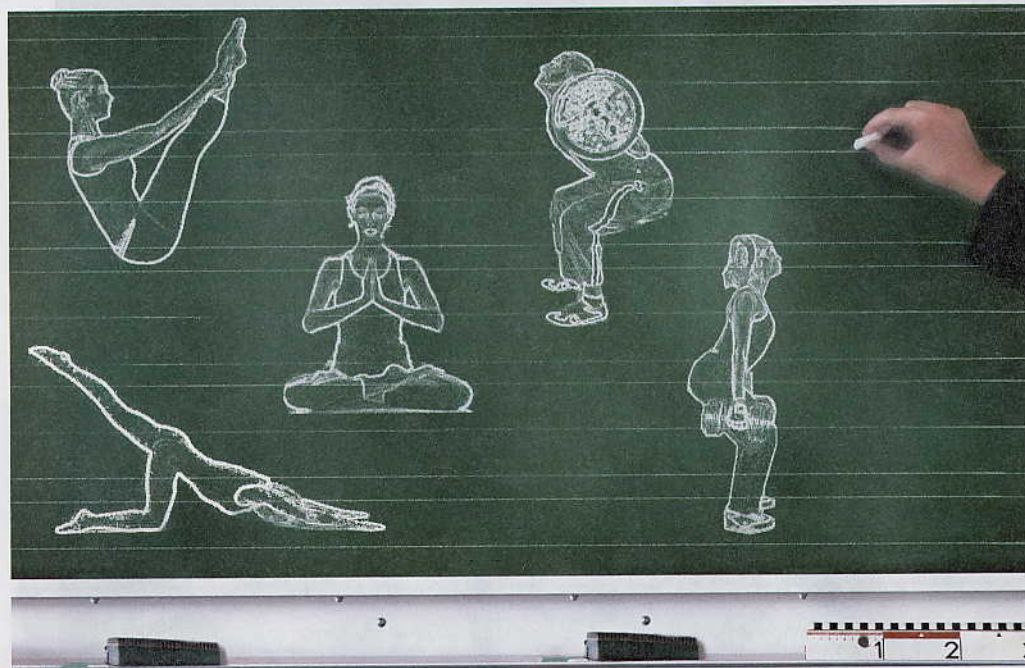


Mind & body

Physical education

You'd think it would take much more than a rock-hard six-pack to qualify as a *real* fitness guru—but in a generally regulation-free industry, that's not always the case. Learn how to distinguish a legitimately trained professional from a posturing novice. By **Emily Weiner**



yogis must study from 7am–11pm daily to complete a curriculum covering everything from twisting and hands-on assisting to Sanskrit and political activism. 841 Broadway between 13th and 14th Sts, second floor (212-353-0214, jivanuktyoga.com). 300 hours; \$6,150 plus housing fees.

With 14 studios scattered across the country, Yoga Works has helped establish yoga instruction as a bona fide career (their employees actually get a 401K plan). Their 200-hour teacher-training program in NYC is just as official, covering asanas, anatomy and meditation in a course that, according to senior teacher Chrissy Carter, “instills trainees with the skills they need to guide students safely through postures and design intelligent sequences for their classes.” 138 Fifth Ave between 18th and 19th Sts (212-647-9642, yogaworks.com). 12-week format or one-month intensive; \$2,950.

Pilates

Who they hire:

“There is a huge range of programs out there today that profess to teach Joseph Pilates’s work as he meant it, but very few that truly uphold the philosophies and dynamics of his system,” says Brooke Siler, owner of **re:AB Pilates**. Most reputable studios (**re:AB**, **Erika Bloom Pilates** and **Power Pilates** are among the best) will only hire an instructor accredited through an equally reputable school, such as **Kelly Kane** (kaneschool.com) or **Romana’s Pilates** (romanaspilates.com).

The gold standard:

Siler, who trained under Pilates’s protégé Romana Kryzanowska for 12 years before branching out on her own, now offers a certification course divided into seminars, practical observation, hands-on assisting and practice teaching. “The program is grueling,” she explains. “I won’t graduate any student unless they become a teacher with whom I would train.” **re:AB Pilates**, 33 Bleecker St at Mott St, suite 2c (212-420-9111, reabnyc.com) 720 hours; from \$4,500.

Surprisingly, there are almost no federal standards for accreditation in the world of fitness instruction. Which means that, beyond paying someone to ensure that you actually show up at the gym or yoga studio, you can’t be sure that they actually know what they’re doing or can keep you from injury. Below, find those who deserve your money and trust, as well as the best resources if you want to go pro.

Personal Training

Who they hire:

Before a trainer can get an interview at top gyms like Equinox, Reebok Sports Club or Crunch, he’ll have to obtain basic certification through an organization such as the National Academy of Sports Medicine (nasm.org), the American Council on Exercise (acefitness.org) or the American College of Sports Medicine (acsm.org). For a fee, they’ll send study materials including textbooks and DVDs to get you prepped for an exam, administered—much like the SATs—at designated locations across the country. While these certifications prove some knowledge of anatomy and program design,

they demand no hands-on training. **Equinox** and **Bally Total Fitness** are two of the very few gyms that require new hires to take a formal, in-house course, ensuring that trainees get practical experience before they lay hands on clients.

The gold standard:

After being shocked that his nine-year-old son was able to certify himself through an online program, celebrity trainer Harry Hanson opened the **American Academy of Personal Training**, the only New York State–licensed school in Manhattan dedicated strictly to personal fitness. His curriculum, which requires mock training sessions and student presentations in addition to extensive textbook study, has turned out reputable trainers from the start: “This industry is in a huge state of disarray,” laments Hanson. “Anyone who wants to be a trainer can just go online and get certified with no physical training.” Hanson has graduated more than 90 students since the school’s inception in December—every pupil has been placed, so you’re likely to find an AAPT grad at a gym near you. 138 W 14th St between Sixth and Seventh

Aves (212-242-AAPT, aaptschool.com). 260-hour course (completed with weekday classes in three months or in six on weekends); \$4,950.

Yoga

Who they hire:

For selective yoga centers like **Go Yoga** in Brooklyn, hand-picking teachers comes down to experience: “I look for alignment, breath and physical prowess in an instructor’s own practice,” says Go’s founder, Lilia Mead. “I also look for how long they’ve been teaching and where they were certified—The longer the training, the more in-depth.”

The gold standards:

OM Yoga and **Alison West** have great reputations for training teachers, though the in-house programs at **Jivamukti** and **Yoga Works** are arguably the most highly-regarded. While Jivamukti’s three-week residency is held at the breathtaking Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York, it’s far from a relaxing getaway. “It’s definitely not for the dilettante,” says cofounder Sharon Gannon, who explains that