

A Beginner Aerialist's Guide to Getting Started

When you first start taking aerial courses, your body goes through a period of adjustment, regardless of how “in shape” or “out of shape” you are. Whether you are working out in fitness classes, taking an occasional aerial yoga class, or used to do gymnastics; you'll most likely have sore hands, aching feet, and exhausted muscles. Aerial class is challenging for every beginner at first. Fortunately, you have coaches who will accompany you on your airborne adventure. Here are some pointers to get you started:

1) Attend Class Regularly

Similar to a regular workout regimen, once a week at the gym is not enough. Students who attend class more than once a week make much greater progress than those who only attend once every seven days. Your body, like your brain, needs repetition in order to create muscle memory.

2) Fuel Your Body

Just like a car, your body needs proper fuel and care to perform at its peak. Even if you are a very active person, aerial training will result in a muscular gain that requires more protein. Adding meats like chicken or salmon and meat alternatives such as protein powder, nuts, and eggs to your diet can be beneficial. To create and repair, your body also needs extra rest. If you find yourself sleeping a little longer than normal, don't be surprised! Include “rest days” to your fitness regimen to give your muscles time to heal. Last but not least, drink plenty of water to reduce fatigue, and increase hydration.

3) Utilize the Conditioning Learned in Class

Finding time outside of class to physically practice the positions you've learned (i.e. hollow hold, arches, cat/cow, tuck, pike) will help your body remember them. Practicing techniques you've learned will help you gain body awareness to more easily do the next trick in your coach's curriculum. Find some time to do shoulder shrugs, pull-ups, chin-ups, or dead hangs if you have access to a pull-up bar or monkey bars. Pay special attention to your alignment, breathing, and range of motion. This simple workout will strengthen your shoulders while also teaching your body to rapidly find the correct body position in the air.

4) Stretch Regularly

Flexibility is crucial if you have aspirations to become a contortionist with minimal prior experience. However, most students are not aware of how important flexibility is in trapeze, lyra, and aerial silks classes among other apparatuses. Training muscles to endure end-range positions without injury or strain is vital for aerial success. Make sure to warm up your body before attempting any passive stretching.

5) Focus on technique over getting the next “big trick” during class

The foundation of your learning must be sound before progressing to more difficult tricks. First off, the great technique makes learning safer. Secondly, rather than complicated sequences, straight legs, and pointed toes are the real indicator of experienced aerialists.

6) Preventing Injuries

Icing your hands is important. You’ll probably feel some temperature pain after about a minute of icing. This is very normal. While it may feel bad at the time, chilling your hands reduces inflammation and makes your hands feel better for the next time you hang on a bar. Make sure there is a barrier between your skin and the ice every time you ice. Ice no longer than 15 minutes at a time.

7) Keep in Mind Why You Started

Aerial is challenging. It’s easy to feel that you’re not on the same level as your instructors and other students. Give yourself slack for learning and being a beginner. You’re gaining knowledge. If you need more inspiration, following aerialists on social media who motivate you to get better technique and aerial flow can help. Accept every blunder and awkward foot tangle because every great aerialist starts there.

⇒ Please reach out to contact@kansascityaerialarts.com with any questions

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