STUDIOFINDER — GUIDE

Aerial Silks vs Lyra vs Aerial Yoga for Beginners

Aerial yoga is the gentlest start. Silks teach climbs and wraps on fabric. Lyra, also called aerial hoop, teaches holds and spins on a steel ring.

Updated October 27, 2026

Aerial yoga is the gentlest way to start. Aerial silks and lyra are more demanding. They need more grip, shoulder and core strength. All three take place off the ground, so safety matters more than in a floor class.

Aerial yoga

You use a soft fabric hammock. The fabric hangs from the ceiling. You sit, lean or hang in it. Many poses keep your feet close to the floor. Some classes include inversions, where your head is below your hips. Some are slow and focus on stretching and rest.

- **Best for:** students who want a low-impact start, or who like yoga.
- **What it feels like:** supported and stretchy.
- **Watch for:** the first inversion. Tell the teacher if you feel dizzy. Ask your doctor if you have high blood pressure, glaucoma or a back injury.

Aerial silks

Silks are two long pieces of fabric that hang from one point or two. You climb them, wrap your body in them, and drop or hold poses.

- **Best for:** students who like to learn technique, and who like variety.
- **What it feels like:** a mix of climbing, wrapping and balance. The fabric stretches, so your body moves in ways you do not expect.
- **Watch for:** fabric burns on skin and sore hands. Wear long, fitted clothes. See our guide on what to wear and bring.

Lyra, or aerial hoop

A lyra is a steel ring that hangs from the ceiling. It may hang from one point or two. You sit on it, hang from it and turn on it.

- **Best for:** students who like geometry, shapes and spinning.
- **What it feels like:** firm. The hoop is rigid, so the work is about hands, shoulders and body position.
- **Watch for:** bruises on the legs and hips. These are common in the first weeks. Ask the teacher about how to protect your skin.

Compare them

	Aerial yoga	Silks	Lyra
Apparatus	Fabric hammock	Two long fabrics	Steel hoop
Starting difficulty	Low	Medium	Medium
Main skills	Stretching, support	Climbs, wraps, drops	Holds, spins, shapes
Feels like	Soft	Flowing	Firm

Safety questions to ask the studio

- Who rigs the apparatus, and how is it inspected?
- How high is the ceiling? What are the crash mats below the apparatus?
- How many students does each teacher watch?
- What are the weight and health limits? A studio may ask about pregnancy, recent surgery and certain medical conditions.
- What is the teacher's training? Aerial arts have no single governing body worldwide. Ask about training, first aid and years of teaching.

Try before you commit

Book an intro class in two disciplines. Ask the studio about its intro offer. Our guide on intro offers explains how packs work. A good beginner class includes a safety talk, a warm-up and slow progress. If the class skips these steps, choose another studio.

Frequently asked questions

Which aerial class is easiest for a first-timer?

Aerial yoga is usually the easiest start. You often keep your feet close to the floor, and the fabric is a hammock. Silks and lyra need more grip and upper-body work.

Do I need to be strong to try aerial silks or lyra?

No. A beginner class builds the strength step by step. Expect sore forearms, shoulders and core after the first class.

Is aerial training safe?

Aerial arts carry real risk, such as falls and rope or fabric burns. Choose a studio with trained teachers, a safe rig, crash mats and a clear safety briefing.