STUDIOFINDER — GUIDE

Hoop Dance for Beginners

Hoop dance moves a hoop around your body in time with music. Learn waist hooping first, then add off-body tricks. Most beginner classes lend a hoop.

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Hoop dance is a form of dance with a hoop. You keep the hoop moving around your waist, chest, arms and legs. You add steps, turns and tricks. You do not need dance training.

What a hoop is

A hoop for adults is not the same as a toy. It is usually bigger, and many beginner hoops are heavier. A bigger hoop turns more slowly, so you have more time to react. Many teachers say beginners learn faster with a larger, heavier hoop. Hoops are made of tubing, often plastic, and some have tape or a grip layer.

Two kinds of hooping

- **On-body hooping:** the hoop spins around your waist, chest or hips.
- **Off-body hooping:** the hoop moves around your hands, arms, shoulders and legs. This is sometimes called isolations or tricks.

Most beginner classes start with on-body hooping. Off-body skills come after.

What a first class covers

1. A warm-up for hips, spine and shoulders.
2. How to choose and hold a hoop.
3. How to start the hoop on your waist.
4. How to keep it turning, with a gentle push of the hips.
5. One or two basic moves, such as moving the hoop up to the chest.
6. A short cool-down.

Most students drop the hoop. That is normal. Even the teacher drops it.

Tips for the first month

- **Go slow.** A slow hoop is easier to control than a fast one.
- **Try both directions.** One direction feels natural. The other feels strange. Practise both.
- **Wear fitted clothes.** A loose top rides up. Bare or fitted skin gives better grip.
- **Expect bruises.** A heavy hoop can leave marks on your hips and waist in the first week.
- **Practise little and often.** Ten minutes a day helps more than one long session.

Choose a class

Ask these questions:

- Does the studio lend hoops?
- Is there a beginner course, or do new students join a mixed class?
- How many students are in the room? Hoops need space.
- Is there a teacher who has taught hoop dance for a number of years?

Hoop dance has no single governing body worldwide. Look at the teacher's training, history and students. Browse the hoop dance category on this site to find studios near you. Use the compare tool to check price and class size.

When to ask a doctor

Ask a doctor first if you have a back injury, a hip problem or a recent surgery. Tell the teacher about it before class. Stop if a move hurts.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to buy a hoop before my first class?

No. Most studios lend hoops for beginner classes. Ask when you book.

Is hoop dance the same as a children's hula hoop?

No. Hoops for adults are usually larger. Many beginners also pick a heavier one. A larger hoop turns more slowly, so it is easier to control.

Is hooping good exercise?

Yes. It uses the trunk, hips and legs, and you move for the whole class. The effort depends on the class and on you.