



MODO YOGA EAST VANCOUVER

FAQs - June 1 Dress Code Policy Implementation

Q: Why the change?

A: This is a conversation we've been having for some time. **It doesn't make sense to have gym rules for some and beach rules for others.** Most gyms have a minimum dress code requirement. Hot yoga has typically fallen between the beach and the gym in terms of dress code, and we are choosing to land squarely with fitness centres.

Q: But isn't it legal to have bare breasts in public?

A: Yes, it is. The yoga studio is not a public space, however. So, while a person with breasts may go topless at the beach or community pool (public spaces), **the yoga studio is a private space** in which we can determine the dress code we deem most suitable for our community.

Q: Why wouldn't you choose to let everybody go topless?

A: We considered removing the rule so nobody would be required to wear a top during class. Because breasts of some genders are unnecessarily sexualized in dominant culture, we realized this wouldn't be possible at this point in time. We do not support dominant culture's sexualization of the breasts of some genders and not others. We are not concerned that a teacher or student might experience discomfort upon seeing bare breasts in class. At the same time, we are trying to balance the reality that the sexualization of some people's breasts, as well as the personal discomfort that might follow bare breasts in class, may also bring negative effects to our community.

Here are some factors we considered:

- What might happen to the quality of our yoga instruction if a teacher feels ill at ease throughout class?
- What unwelcome behaviours might be exhibited by someone who is discomforted? How might those behaviours impact the greater community? For example, how might staring impact both the person choosing to go topless and the other students in the class?
- In a public space, a person of any gender has the choice to go topless. In that space, another person has the agency to move freely and either reposition or remove themselves if they feel discomforted. Because toplessness for all genders is not the norm in dominant culture, we don't see the enclosed, structured room of the yoga studio as a suitable space for this conversation to play out. Would it be great if dominant culture were different? Sure! But years of cultural conditioning just isn't that easy to shake off overnight.

Q: But sports bras are okay? Cis men don't typically wear sports bras. Isn't that a double standard?

A: We thought long and hard about requiring all students to wear a tank top at minimum and decided against it. We don't want to require some people to wear two layers of clothing. **Think gym rules. Some people wear only sports bras at gyms.**

If you aren't a cis man and you recently had top surgery, we understand it might seem like a bummer that you have to wear a shirt of some kind. We hope you'll understand why we've made the decision we've made. Our new policy is simply what we think makes the most sense and we are happy to talk more if you have further comments or questions.