

Yoga Research Findings

In survey after survey, Americans identify stress as their number one health concern today. More than 50 % of adults in the U. S report high stress on a daily basis. Untreated, stress can seriously affect performance, health, and well-being.

Mind/Body Medical Institute: <http://www.mbmi.org>

Reporting in the Journal of American Medical Association, a team of researchers from five universities argue that stress can lessen a person's immune response and that change can make them more susceptible to infectious disease. They also say that increased stress may lessen the effectiveness of certain vaccines...

The Ohio State University "Research News"

After practicing one hour of yoga per day including 20 minutes of relaxation techniques for a period of no less than six months, this study found that over 80% of the women who participated in the study lost weight and with continued practice kept the weight off.

Dr. Suneeta Vaze and Dr. Asha Damodaran

In recent research, it was found that patients who suffered from anxiety and short-term panic attacks showed not improvement with medication but improved significantly with the help of breathing techniques.

Author of The Relaxation Response

Dr. Herbert Benson

Meditation can be good for the soul, but apparently it is also good for our physical health and well being. Researchers here define mindfulness meditation as being able to focus one's attention on the moment and noting thoughts and feelings as they begin to occur but without judging or acting on those thoughts and feelings. The goal of the meditation is to deepen one's awareness of the present and to cultivate positive emotions in the here and now. Findings for 25 subjects who received training in mindfulness meditation for one hour per day found that there was an increase in the left side of the frontal region of the brain which is often associated with a more positive emotional state. Also this group of subjects showed a significantly higher level of antibodies versus the control group.

UW-Madison research team with Jon Kabot Zinn

7) Reciting prayers or mantras is beneficial for your health! Researchers found that 23 women and men who recited Om mane padme hum and the Ave Maria prayer slowed their breathing to a rate of about 6 breaths per minute compared to spontaneous breathing and random talking. According to Mehmet Oz, MD, the average person's breath is between 16 to 20 breaths per minute. What this suggests is that prayer or mantra chanting slows the "internal metronome" lessening the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Slowing the breath rate to 6 breaths per minutes appears to synchronize breathing with cardiovascular rhythms that also have a 6 per minute cycle. It is suggested that in the Christian culture where body consciousness was not encouraged, the rosary prayer may have taken hold because it was a method of slowing the breathing and increasing concentration thus synchronizing cardiovascular rhythms and creating a sense of calm and well-bein.

Bernardi L. British Medical Journal. 2001; 323:1446-9.

"Om is Where the Heart Is"

Alison Rose Levy

8) At the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Medicine, a yoga-based program designed for strengthening, stretching and balancing each joint in the upper body was found in a clinical trial study to be more effective than wrist-splinting or no treatment at all in relieving symptoms of carpal-tunnel syndrome.

Study on the impact of Yoga on Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

10) Tension is the leading cause of back pain. Tension inhibits the circulation of blood, which contributes to oxygen deprivation, causing pain in muscles and tendons. In 1946 the New England Journal of Medicine reported that 4% of Air Force personnel with complaints of backache were related to structural problems alone. 96% were related to psychological factors.

Mind Over Back Pain by John Sarno, M.D.

11) According the Dr. Dean Ornish, the perceived feeling of isolation is the number one cause of heart disease.

Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease

12) In a study conducted at Carnegie Mellon University, Dr. Sheldon Cohen found that stress is associated with increased susceptibility to illness induced by viruses, including cold and influenza.

From the NIH Record, Dec. 2, 1997; reprinted on-line at <http://stress.about.com>

13) Studies show that men whose blood pressure rises in response to stress have an increased chance of developing a stroke compared with men whose blood pressure does not react in stressful situations.

Stress Management Newsletter; <http://stress.about.com>

14) Studies show that between 60-90% of all physician visits are for stress-related complaints.

Mind/Body Medical Institute; <http://www.mbmi.org>

15) After a 5 minute period of stress induction, Yoga breathing exercises were shown to lower systolic blood pressure more quickly when compared to classical music and natural sounds. (In other words, breathing was more effective than even calming music)....

American Journal of Hypertension; http://yogamoment.com/yoga_benefits.shtml

16) Results from a Japanese study published found increase alpha-brain waves and decreased blood serum levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, in 7 yoga teachers.

Perceptual and Motor Skills. 90(3 Pt 1): 1027-32, 2000 June

17) Dr. Dean Ornish developed a 4 year yoga program for 1,800 elderly Americans in 1999 as an alternative to heart surgery..."A mutual of Omaha study showed that for every \$1 spent on the Ornish program, \$6 was saved in the needs for surgeries and hospitalization."

Summarized in Namaste Newsletter San Diego Union Tribune October 2, 1999.

18) 53 patients with asthma underwent 2 weeks of integrated yoga exercises including breathing exercises, suryanamaskar, yogasana, pranayama and meditation for 65 minutes every day. Results demonstrated efficacy of yoga in reducing symptoms of bronchial asthma.

Yoga for Bronchial asthma: a controlled study.
National library of medicine

19) Dr. Walford's research on caloric restriction found that the oldest population of people live in Africa and in studies with chimps and rats, animals that ate 2/3 less calories live 30% longer.

www.walford.com

20) Physiological Benefits

*Stable autonomic nervous system equilibrium, with a tendency toward parasympathetic nervous system dominance rather than the usual stress-induced sympathetic nervous system dominance

*Pulse rate decrease

*Respiratory rate decreases

- *Blood pressure decreases
- *Galvanic Skin Response increases
- *Alpha waves increase
- *Theta, delta, and beta waves also increase during various stages of meditation
- *Cardiovascular efficiency increases
- *Respiratory efficiency increases
- *Gastrointestinal function normalizes
- *Endocrine function normalizes
- *Excretory functions improve
- *Musculoskeletal flexibility and joint range of motion increase
- *Posture improves
- *Strength and resiliency increase
- *Endurance increases
- *Energy level increases
- *Weight normalizes
- *Sleep improves
- *Immunity increases
- *Pain decreases

Psychological Benefits

- *Somatic and kinesthetic awareness increase
- *Mood improves and subjective well-being increases
- *Self-acceptance and self-actualization increase
- *Social adjustment increases
- *Anxiety and depression decrease
- *Hostility decreases
- *Psychomotor functions improve
- *Grip strength increases
- *Dexterity and fine skills improve
- *Eye-hand coordination improves
- *Choice reaction time improves
- *Steadiness improve
- *Depth perception improve
- *Balance improve
- *Integrated functioning of body parts improves

AARP, The magazine from July/August 2005, article "10 Secrets of a good, long life".

A study done at University of California at San Francisco has confirmed that stress really does age you. Constant stress causes the telomere (tiny caps on cells chromosomes that govern cell regeneration) to get smaller. When cells telomeres get too short, the cell stops dividing and eventually dies. It is not just having stress in one's life. **Shorter telomeres were also correlated with an individual's perception of their own stress levels.** According to Thomas Perls, M.D at Boston University director of the New England Centurion Project "It isn't the amount of stress that matters but how you manage it".

Journal of Alternative and Complimentary Medicine, April 2005.

Dr. Narendran from the Vivekananda Yoga Research Foundation in Bangalore studied 169 pregnant women who were trained in the integrated approach to yoga and 166 "controls" who received routine prenatal care. The yoga training included various loosening exercises, postures, relaxation and deep breathing exercises and meditation for 1 hour daily. 14 % of deliveries were premature in the yoga group compared with 29 percent in the controls. The yoga training also showed increased blood flow to the placenta, decreased transfer of maternal stress hormones, and decreased premature release of hormones that trigger the onset of labor.

In a research project conducted at the Defense Institute of Physiology in Delhi, India, the effect of training in Hatha yogic exercises on aerobic capacity and stamina was performed on 40 young men who were recruited in the Indian army. These soldiers, age from 19-23 initially worked out to maximal exercise capacity on a bicycle ergo meter. The oxygen consumption, carbon dioxide output, pulmonary ventilation, respiratory rate was studied and compared with a group that practiced Hatha yogic exercises for 1 hour every morning for six months. Tests showed that those who engaged in the daily yoga practice aerobic capacity improved and did not get as tired after heavy physical exertion as those who just did regular exercises.

Non-research based findings

Multiple Sclerosis: A Self-help guide to its management by Judy Graham

In a non-research based finding, Howard Kent from the Health Foundation in Bedfordshire, England found that tension created by having MS can seize up the solar plexus, interfering with the movement of the diaphragm. The best place to learn to breathe correctly is under the supervision of a good teacher. Yoga relaxes the body, opens up the diaphragm and frees the energy flow. Then the bodies own self-healing mechanism slows down the onset of imbalances or diseases. There are other tremendous benefits including stilling the mind, increasing energy and counteracting fatigue. Yoga lifts the mood and counteracts depression. Yoga lastly has a good effect on the functioning of the endocrine glands and the circulatory and respiratory systems and improves well-being.

The Relaxation Response by Dr. Herbert Benson

Fight or flight, or frozen is an evolved survival mechanism-the body's response to stressful situations. Hormones are released-adrenaline and noradrenaline or epinephrine and norephinephrine-to increase the heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, metabolic rate and pulls the blood from the extremities back toward to center of the body causing poor blood circulation.

The relaxation response is also a natural evolved survival mechanism. It is the opposite-physiologic changes associated with correct breathing. It can prevent or compensate for damage done by nervous reactions. It is in the state that we heal and rejuvenate. There is evidence to support that the relaxation response brings about a marked decrease in the body's oxygen consumption, lowers the blood pressure and causes a decrease in blood lactate which is responsible for the anxiety levels in the body.

Ode, Volume 3, Issue 5 June 2005 "A Change of Heart Changes Everything"

There is a stress epidemic.

Everyday about one million Americans fail to come to work due to stress.

The European Union estimated in 2000 that the annual price tag of stress, in the form of healthcare costs and lost of productivity amounts to some three to four percent of the European Union's gross domestic product.

One in three adults in Europe and North America has high blood pressure which stress is an important causal factor as well as heart disease and stroke

Stress is also a major factor in depression and burnout.

Through breathing correctly, we can lower stress, negative emotions, and change our heart-rate from chaotic to smooth or coherent. The electromagnetic field of the heart (electrocardiogram) can be measure from between 2 and 3 meters away from the body. It has been discovered that if someone has a coherent heart rhythm, it has a demonstrably positive effect on other people in close proximity to him or her.

Fall, 1998

MA Erik Hoffman BINDU

Scandanavian school of yoga and meditation

Yoga as a powerful natural anti-depressant and Why?

Yoga and meditation offer some of the same benefits as antidepressants without the side effects. Each year, more than 25 million Americans are treated with antidepressants. Yoga practitioners experienced a significant drop in cortisol levels after a single yoga class. High cortisol levels are characteristics of stress and serious depression.

Better than Prozac?

Yoga Journal July/August 2001

Yoga for Chronic Low Back Pain

Objective was to determine whether yoga is more effective than conventional therapies exercise or a self-care book for patients with chronic low back pain. After adjustments, back related function in the yoga group was superior to the book and exercise groups at 12 weeks. At 26 weeks, the yoga group was superior to the book group. In the US, 1 million people practice yoga for low back pain. (There has been little research on the mechanisms by which yoga practice might relieve back pain).

Karen Sherman PhD & Cherkin, PhD December 20, 2005

Yoga has become increasingly more recognized as a method of dealing with anxiety disorders. Lisabeth Roemer, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, has developed a treatment plan for anxiety that combines "cognitive behavioral therapy with the mindfulness program of yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques developed by Jon Kabot Zinn. The acknowledge-and-let-go thought process decreases the power of anxiety and the yoga postures and breathing "re-teaches" the individual to learn what a relaxed state feels lie, thereby alleviating the anxiety.

Spine Savers

Effects of Yoga on Pregnancy Outcome

In an Indian study 335 women between 18 and 20 weeks pregnant were divided into two groups to study. About half were placed in the Yoga group and the other half in a control group where they walk 30 minutes twice a day until delivery.

The results found that the “Yoga group” had significantly lower amounts of preterm labor and their babies had significantly higher birth weights. Complications were also significantly lower in the “yoga group” as well.

The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine
April 2005

Yoga Works!

In a recent article, Elaine Lipson found that yoga is much more comprehensive than just preventing or treating disease and that there are proven research today which indicates that yoga is the capacity to reconnect to the body as a way to face the reality of pain in our life and grow more accepting and be with our lives in a fuller way.

www.yogajournal.com/health/115.cfm

Yoga Tackles Teen Obesity (Fox News)

Studies show that 60 high school teenagers that practiced yoga three to four times per week for 3 months helped teens lose weight. The teens were taught 40 minutes of yoga asanas and breathing exercises and lost on average 6 pounds.

www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,186799,00.html

Yoga: Minimize Stress, Maximize Flexibility and More

According to the Mayo Clinic, in addition to increasing flexibility and helping with weight loss, yoga can release stress in those who are caregivers for Alzheimer’s patients and patients coping with cancer. Practicing breathing exercises and asanas helps boost the mood and help people sleep better through the reduced stress. Additionally, the increased balance achieved through yoga can help elderly people avoid falls and hip fractures.

www.mayoclinic.com/print/yoga/CM00004/METHOD=print

Yoga Students Have Healthier Body Image and Eating Affect

According to a study perform at the Center for Women's Health Research at the University of North Carolina, women who practice yoga have a healthier body image and are less likely to develop eating disorders.

<http://72.14.205.104/search?q=cache:Ma8gWZB1NMYJ:www.cwhr.unc.edu/genPage/ind>.

Mind-Body Fitness and Disease Management (Fitness Management Magazine)

In a study of how yoga practice affected patients with Asthma, the findings demonstrated that within two weeks of beginning a daily yoga practice, the patients had an improved peak flow and reduced rate of attacks.

Carpel Tunnel Cure

By Angela Pirisi

Yoga may be the last thing a person with Carpal Tunnel would want to attempt, but teachers in the Iyengar School recommend patients do yoga in order to heal. Improper body alignment has been linked to make Carpal Tunnel worse for patients, Iyengar yoga helps teach patients how to improve their body alignments in and out of the studio which in turn helps prevent and cure Carpal Tunnel.

The Journal of the American Medical Association, the study tracked 42 people with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome who practiced a yoga-based regiment comprised of 11 postures for strengthening, stretching, and balancing upper body joints, as well as relaxation twice weekly for two months. Compared to a control group who did not practice yoga, the yoga group showed better grip strength and a reduction in pain.

Yoga and High Blood Pressure- Yoga for getting rid of High BP

By Yogacharya Vishwas Mandlik

www.yogapoint.com

There are a number of physical reasons that cause high blood pressure. The physical reasons include poor functioning kidneys, heart disease and

diabetes. When these causes are treated, the person's blood pressure returns to normal. In 80% of people who have high blood pressure, there is no physical cause for high blood pressure. When there is no physical reason for high blood pressure, the person is diagnosed with essential hypertension.

Essential hypertension in many cases can be traced back to causes of mental strain or high stress. In these situations, medical doctors treat the symptoms of high blood pressure, but are not treating the medical cause of the hypertension. When the patient takes the blood pressure medication, the effects lessen, but once the medicine wears off, the effects return. The best solution is to treat the cause of the blood pressure, the mental strain and stress the person is under. Treating a cause of the problem and not just the symptoms gives the patients a greater chance of recovery.

Yoga helps people cope with stress and deal with mental strain there are under on a day to day basis in better ways, than internalizing it. Yoga postures and meditation will give the patient mental peace and therefore help reduce Hypertension.

Yoga helps every muscle in the body relax. The requirement for blood and oxygen required for the body is reduced. Yoga also helps the mind become stable and focused which helps give people a break from the stress and strain going on in their daily lives. The twists and stretched postures improve the functioning of endocrine glands, digestive organs, and heart. Yoga, when practiced on a regular basis, reduces high levels of blood pressure in patients.

“The Impact of Modified Hatha Yoga on Chronic Low Back Pain: A Pilot Study”

Summary:

In a pilot study conducted by a Program in Physical Therapy at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, 22 adults with chronic low back pain were observed for six weeks. Half the group did yoga twice weekly and the other half did not.

The group who performed yoga reported the group intervention motivated them and that yoga fostered relaxation and new awareness and learning. The yoga group also had improved balance as well as decreased disability and depression. More research with a larger group was recommended by the researchers.

Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine Journal, March/April 2004.

“Rapid Stress Reduction Among Distressed Women as a Consequence of a Three-Month Intensive Yoga Program”

In a study conducted at the University Duisburg-Essen in Germany, 24 emotionally distressed women were divided into two groups. One group participated in two weekly 90 minute Iyengar yoga classes for three months. The other group served as a waiting list control group.

The study revealed that the women in the yoga group demonstrated significant improvements in perceived stress, state and trait anxiety, well-being, vigor, fatigue, and depression. Their physical well-being increased and salivary cortisol decreased significantly. Women from the yoga group who suffered from headache or back pain also reported relief from these symptoms after participating in the classes.

The Medical Science Monitor, November 24, 2005

“A Yoga Intervention for Young Adults with Elevated Symptoms of Depression”

A study conducted at the University of California, Los Angeles randomly divided 28 young adults experiencing mild levels of depression into two groups. One group was placed in a wait-list/control group. The study found the subjects in the yoga course reported significant decreases in depression and trait anxiety. By the end, the yoga group also reported a decrease in negative mood and fatigue following the yoga classes.

Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine, March/April 2004.

Good Stress vs. Toxic Stress

Dr. Pamela Peeke an expert in nutrition and health, medical director for the National Womens Resource Center, has found that Toxic stress and fat are silent but deadly killers. She has found that yoga can be used as a life-saving skill by fighting toxic stress and fat.

Long Summary:

According to an article published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, yoga was clinically proven to alleviate lower back pain and “surpassed even traditional physical therapy exercises”. Of the three study groups, those participating in a daily yoga routine had “less pain and better function and they needed fewer pain medications”. Because yoga can be customized to suit particular needs, there is a pose that can alleviate almost any type of back pain.

“Worry Thwarts” and “Spine Savers”
Melanie Haiken, Yoga Journal March 2006

Practice of Yoga Reduces Chemotherapy Side Effects

A study by the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy found that when yoga practice accompanied chemotherapy, the physical and mental/emotional side effects were reduced. Not only did the yoga study group have an increased amount of natural killer cells and higher pain thresholds, but they were also less preoccupied with death and had fewer negative, distressed psychological side effects.

Newkerala.com/news4php?action=fullnews&id=46551

Sore no More

According to an article in *AARP the Magazine*, arthritis sufferers can psyche out pain in as little as three minutes by practicing abdominal, diaphragmatic, breathing. Patients are urged to practice this belly breathing daily for five minutes so that they can use this method to relax away pain when it strikes. They were also encouraged to include a well-rounded flexibility program, like yoga, from an instructor trained to work with arthritis sufferers, to increase their ability to stretch and to strengthen their muscles.

“Sore No More”, by Kelly Griffin, AARP the Magazine,
November/December 2006

Yoga for Weight Loss?

In 2005, medical research and practicing yogi Alan Kristal, DPH, MPH, set out to do a medical study on the weight-loss effects of yoga. With funding from the National Cancer Institute, Kristal and colleagues at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle led a trial involving 15,500

healthy, middle-aged men and women. All completed a survey recalling their physical activity (including yoga) and their weight. Their results found that the ability to oversee what is happening internally in a non-reactive way helps change the relationship of mind to body and eventually to food and eating. Essentially, in yoga you learn your body is not your enemy, and that conscious awareness of the body increases better appetite control, more loving and self accepting attitudes toward their bodies and improve better decision making regarding what you eat.

By Colette Bouchez

www.webmd.com

Mind-Body workout may help women make peace with their bodies.

According to a study completed by Jennifer Daubenmier, PhD. Of California's Preventive Medicine Research Institute, yoga may make women feel better about their bodies, steering them away from eating disorders. Dr Daubenmier compared women who practiced yoga regularly with those who did other forms of exercise. Women who hadn't done either form of exercise for at least two ears were also included in the study.

She found that those who practiced yoga expressed healthier attitudes about their bodies and had less disorder eating behaviors. Whereas those spending more time on aerobic forms of exercise were associated with greater disorder eating attitudes. This is not to say that women had eating disorders instead they had the inclination toward disorder eating such as dieting behaviors. Dr. Daubenmier explains the reason this may be yoga's mind body aspect. This study suggest that "women may have intuitively discovered a way to buffer themselves against messages that tell them that only a thin and beautiful body will lead to happiness and success."

Miranda Hitti

WebMD Medical News

www.webmd.com/balance/news/20050520

Sleep Disorders and the Functioning of the Autonomic Nervous System

There is evidence for the theory that chronic insomnia (chronic trouble in initiating and maintaining sleep) may not be an actual sleep disorder, but

rather a disorder of hyper arousal, usually associated with sustained activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. There is also evidence that yoga reduces this type of activation and arousal in part by inducing a response that opposes the “fight or flight” response. In a pilot study published in 2004, Dr. Shalsa found significant improvements in most sleep-related outcome measures in participants with chronic insomnia who had practiced a 30 or 45 minute yoga treatment once a day for 8 weeks.

Sat Bir A. Khalsa, PhD
Clinical Studies Content Area
Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston

Yoga improves sleeping habits

Harvard Medical School found that yoga’s soothing effect on the central nervous system helps chronic insomniacs significantly reduce their tossing and turning time. The author, Sat Bir Khalsa, PhD goes on to report that most types of yoga, practiced regularly at any time of day, should bring on increased sleep patters.

Body and Soul Magazine, May 2007

Dry Eye

“Dry Eye” appears to be the main contributor to the symptoms of computer vision syndrome. Regular breaks and the use of artificial tears or certain eye drops are some of the options to reduce visual discomfort. A study in the December 2006 issue of *Head and Face Medicine Journal* revealed that a combinations of yoga practices have been shown to reduce visual strain in persons with progressive myopia. After 60 days of regular yoga practice of 1 hour daily for 5 days per week, the participants reported a significant decrease in visual discomfort. Whereas compared to a group of individuals who practiced their usual recreational activities reported an increase in visual discomfort.

Telles, S., Naveen K., Dash, M., Deginal, R., and Manjunath, N.
Head and Face Medicine, 2006 December 3; 2:46.

Carpal Tunnel Cure

Yoga may be the last thing a person with Carpal Tunnel would want to attempt, but teachers in the Iyengar School recommend patients do yoga in order to heal. Improper body alignment has been linked to make Carpal Tunnel worse for patients, Iyengar yoga helps teach patients how to improve their body alignments in and out of the studio which in turn helps prevent and cure Carpal Tunnel.

The Journal of American Medical Association, the study tracked 42 people with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome who practiced a yoga-based regiment comprised of 11 postures for strengthening, stretching, and balancing upper body joints, as well as relaxation, twice weekly for two months. Compared to a control group who did not practice yoga, the yoga group showed better grip strength and a reduction in pain.

By Angela Pirisi
Yoga Journal

Back Builders

By Nell Lake

www.yogajournal.com

At some point in their lives approximately 80 percent of Americans experience lower back pain which can be debilitating, painful, and difficult to treat. Traditional Medicine does not always have successful results when treating lower back pain with medicine or surgery. Doctor's are now recommending yoga, which may prevent disk injuries and dramatically speed recovery.

A Study conducted by Vijay Vad, MD who is a specialist in sports medicine at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, in which patients participated in a program called "back Builders," an exercise program which combined yoga, breath work, and Pilates. The goal of Back Builders was to build core strength and flexibility and lengthen the spine to create space between the vertebrae, thus minimizing pressure on the disks and allowing them to heal.

80% of those in the Back Builder program experienced markedly decreased pain, compared with 44% of those on medications only. The yoga also seemed to help in preventing recurrences: Only 12% of the yoga

practitioners experienced another acute episode of their injury, compared with 56 percent of those on medications alone. The pain medication used by patients doing yoga declined by 40%.

Yoga Therapy for overcoming Insomnia

Insomnia is the single most prevalent sleep disorder with an estimated ten percent of the American population having insomnia nightly. Yoga is a recognized exercise technique with established healing effects. Now Yoga has been applied to treating insomnia with a therapeutic regimen made accessible for the non specialist general reader through the collaborative efforts of practicing primary care physician Peter Van Houten and Rich McCord, the worldwide director of Ananda Yoga. *Yoga Therapy for overcoming Insomnia* articulately discussed the types, causes, and treatments of insomnia, as well as providing expert instruction on postures as an aid in treating and preventing insomnia, along with useful conventional and alternative treatments to supplement the utilization of yoga in combating insomnia. Enhanced with a variety of additional “tips, techniques, and tools,” *Yoga Therapy for Overcoming Insomnia* requires no prior knowledge of, or expertise with, yoga in order to quickly benefits from the advice and instruction provided.

Van Houten & McCord, 2005://www.yogarticles.net

Oil that creaky back. Nothing makes you feel old before your time like a stiff back; back pain is the most common reason for missed workday, right behind colds and flu type illnesses. So as not to go all grandma, ease into these yoga moves: which “relieve tightness in the back by stretching and strengthening the muscles along the upper, middle, and lower spine”, says Baxter Bell, MD a Hatha yoga instructor who leads back care workshops in Northern California.

Fix It With Yoga

By Nicole Beland

MSN Health & Fitness November 11th, 2006

Benefits of yoga with Learning Disabilities. Listed are four out of nine benefits. As yoga poses are done with the right and left side of the body equally, right and left brain connections are reinforced and concentration is developed by performing the correct sequence of movements in the poses.

Learning Disabilities Site by Susan Kramer
November 2006

Are You Feeling Hot?

Just like the face turns red when one is angry, the stomach lining turns red too. And it pours out large amounts of acid and enzymes. Anger, fear, jealousy, anxiety, tension etc. are emotions, which influence not only the quality and quantity of secretions in the stomach and intestine, but also alter the blood flow and the motility of the intestine. Many ailments of the digestive system starting from the mouth to the rectum are traceable to stress and the modern lifestyle.

Dr. R. Nagarathna, MD and Dr. HR Nagendra, PhD
Yoga Exercise...The Complete Plan, November 2006

Yoga:Not Just an Exercise

According to Stephen Cope, MSW, LICSW, a psychotherapist and author of *Yoga and Quest for the True Self* (Bantam, 1999), Hath Yoga's postures improve moods by moving energy through places in the body where feelings of grief or anger are stored. "Hatha is an accessible form of learning self-soothing", he says. These blocked feelings can be released very quickly, (creating a) regular, systemic experience of wellbeing." Not all mental health practitioners are convinced of yoga's healing powers, but many agree it can be helpful combined with more traditional treatments such as therapy and medications.

Psychology Today, Nov/Dec 2000

This study explored the use of meditation as a strategy for healing the physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual impact of intimate partner violence. The women in this study were recruited from a domestic violence agency. The study included an instructional session followed by six weeks of once a week group meditation and were encouraged to meditate for 20 minutes a day on their own.

The author observed 9 main themes in the semi-structured interviews with participants"

- 1) The women were motivated by a desire for change and viewed meditation as a vehicle for change.
- 2) The women experienced challenges learning to meditate, and many experienced frustration.
- 3) The women experienced changes in practice over time that can best be described as a lessening of the struggle to control the process of mediation.
- 4) Many of the women had sensory experiences related to heaviness or weightlessness, and one experienced an increased awareness of the pain related to previous injuries/violence.
- 5) The majority of women preferred meditating at home over the group's sessions, and many experienced self-consciousness during the group practice.
- 6) The women experienced greater well-being (peace, relaxation, focus) following mediation
- 7) The women noticed sustained changes in mindfulness and staying "centered" in everyday life.
- 8) The women experienced a greater connection with the self or spiritual connection.

Kane, K. E

The Phenomenology of Meditation for Female Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

Violence against Women, 12(5), 501-518.

The Healing Effect of Yoga on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

By Sharon Steffensen

<http://www.yogachicago.com/mar07/yoganidra.shtml>

In a recent study conducted at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., the beneficial effects of Yoga Nidra on military personnel suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder were impressive. During the study, a total of seven men and women (US active-duty soldiers experiencing PTSD from their experiences in the Afghanistan and Iraq war zones) were chosen to participate in a nine-week study that included 18 classes and a daily home practice using compact disks provided by the instructor. Changes in health status such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, pain and locus of control were assessed over the course of the study using pre, post and follow up data. The results were so overwhelmingly positive that the Samueli Foundation, which sponsored the original study, is now setting aside funding for a 200 subject, multi-site, in depth research study using Yoga Nidra with active duty soldiers experiencing PTSD. The follow-up study is projected to begin in 2008.

The Beneficial Effect of Yoga on Diabetes

Nepal Medical Collage Journal

Department of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences and Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital, Delhi.

Twenty mild to moderate diabetics in the age group of 30-60 years were selected from the out patient clinic of Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital in Delhi. They were on a 40 day asana regime under the supervision of a yoga expert. By measuring the levels of insulin and glucose before and after practicing yoga asanas, the following specific Yoga asanas were found to be helpful in glucose utilization and fat redistribution: Surya Namaskar, Trikonasana, Tadasana, Sukhasana, Padmasana, Bhastrika, Pranayama, Paschimottanasana, Ardhamatsyendrasana, Pawanmuktasana, Bujangasana, Vajrasana, Dhanurasana and Shavasana. The team conducting the study concluded that Yoga asanas may be used as an adjunct with diet and drugs in the management of Type 2 diabetes.

It's official: Yoga improves memory

Indo-Asian News Service

New Delhi, September 18, 2006

Studies conducted by the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN) have shown that Vipasana meditation and Pranayama play a beneficial role in improving individual's intellectual faculties like memory and learning. During a six month long study, children with poor attention and memory span were explained the significance of meditation and were taught how to concentrate on a particular point through controlled breathing. They were also subject to meditation therapy for 30 minutes on a daily basis. Follow-up studies covered the neuropsychological, psychological and biochemical aspects. A comparison of the initial and final findings revealed a vast improvement in both short and long term memory, reflex memory, attention span and reduction in mental fatigue.

Yoga in Modern Medicine

By Carol Krucoff

<http://health.ivillage.com/active/ayoga/0,,6w1h-p,00.html>

Since 1990, when The Lancet published researcher Dean Ornish's findings that lifestyle changes, which include yogic stress management techniques, could reverse heart disease, the medical community has begun to acknowledge and embrace the use of yoga as a form of complementary medicine. Ann Thomas, a yoga therapist at MedStar-Georgetown Medical Center in Washington, D.C., has seen a vast increase of yoga referrals by physicians over the past ten years. Patients with ailments that range from insomnia and back pain to cancer and diabetes are now being sent to her for what she likes to call "adjunctive treatment[s]"—treatments that work simultaneously with traditional medicinal remedies. Though it is yet to be confirmed whether yoga can be the sole cure for some ailments, widespread acceptance has come amongst the medical community that "at the very least—it does no harm" (Kathryn Arnold).

Improve Sexual Intimacy with Yoga

By Leslie George

<http://health.ivillage.com/active/ayoga/0,,8wxc74pq-p,00.html>

In his book *Yoga of Heart: The healing Power of Intimate Connection*, George examines how practicing yoga for 20 minutes a day can have a significant affect on a couples' sex life. Because of yoga's focus on the breath, how it moves through the body, and how it stimulates the entire body, yoga is a powerful aphrodisiac. Though yoga alone will never replace genuine love and affection between partners, it does have the ability to intensify the sexual experience when the aforementioned elements are present. By shifting the focus during sex from the genitals to the whole body, a couples' sexual encounter has the ability to become more intense and gratifying physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Teaching Yoga to Children with Disabilities

By Sonia Sumar

<http://www.yogamovement.com/resources/disabilities.html>

In this article, yoga instructor Sonia Sumar discusses her work with a young girl Luisa who had been diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome, a disease that left her easily agitated, hyperactive, and distractible. When Luisa first came to see Sonia, she was unable to walk up and down stairs alone, unable to remain silent for any significant length of time, and could not sit upright. By designing a yoga practice focused primarily on breathing exercises and meditation, Sonia was able to begin Luisa on the path to practicing a more traditional western form of yoga. Within a few months of beginning her practice, Luisa developed the ability to silence herself during her classes as well as perform and remember asanas. By the end of the first year, Luisa was able to

use the stairs unassisted. With continued years of practice, Luisa's seizures have decreased dramatically, and she has improved to flexibility exponentially. Additionally, the focus yoga taught her has allowed her to learn to both read and write. On the whole, the effects of yoga on Luisa have been so profound that her doctors have had to reassess her diagnosis, as she no longer exhibits many of its signs nor has she developed any new symptoms of the disorder.

Tennis and Yoga Hit It Off

By Sherry Roberts

<http://www.yogamovement.com/resources/tennis.html>

Both John McEnroe and Jeff Tarango have touted the benefits of yoga on their tennis game. Yoga allows tennis players to learn techniques, both physical and mental, that are capable of giving them a competitive edge on the tennis court, says Sherry Roberts, a tennis player herself. The breath control and meditation practices of yoga allow players to more easily access the focused mind frame, often referred to as "the zone," needed to succeed on the court. Additionally, the asanas of yoga enhance players' physical strength, stamina, and flexibility. Working both mind and body off the court gives amateur and professional tennis players the tools to succeed under the most extreme of pressures on the court.

AIDS Patients See Benefits with Yoga

By Bliss Foster

<http://www.yogamovement.com/resources/aids.html>

Because of its physical and physiological benefits, yoga is gaining acceptance as a vital complementary treatment of HIV/AIDS. With the devastating affects if these diseases have on the bodies immune system, it is essential that those infected keep themselves as stress free as possible, a tall order when one considers the magnitude of the disease with which they're coping. Practicing yoga allows patients to calm their minds and bodies, while also working through their anxiety in a setting of students experiencing a similar situation and all with the intent of supporting one another and keeping themselves healthy. HIV/AIDS specific yoga classes offer assistance and sanctuary to a group of people who have long been ignored and vilanized by mainstream culture.

Yoga and Naturopathic treatment reduces drug addiction relapse

By ANI

<http://www.newkerala.com/news4.php?action=fullnews&id=48865>

A study conducted by researchers in New Delhi at the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN) has shown that a regiment of yoga and naturopathy is more effective in the detoxification of drug addicts than allopathic or medicinal treatments. For a period of three years, a total of 305 drug addict cases were examined. The findings concluded that those patients who practiced yogic techniques such as pranayama breath control and asana postures had a greater success rate than those patients who used traditional medical detox treatments.

Yoga has been found to be more effective than traditional exercise or an educational book in improving function and pain in patients with chronic low back pain. A study was done over 12 weeks in patients between the ages of 20-64 who experience chronic low back pain. The participants in the yoga group participated in a weekly 75 minute class over 12 weeks and were found to have better back-related function over the aerobic, strength, stretching group which were practiced once a week over the same period, and better function than the group given an educational book for improving function and pain.

Annals of Internal Medicine. 20 December 2005; 143 (12): 1-18.

Short-term yoga improves breathing capacity. According to a study by Khon Kaen University participants attended only 18 yoga sessions and showed significant improvement in multiple respiratory functions. Yoga increases the chest wall expansion, which allows individuals to get more air to the base of the lung, providing more oxygen and requiring less effort to breathe as well as improving the amount of air an individual can forcibly blow out.

Paper Presentation, April 4, 2006. Airway Mechanic and Mechanotransduction in the Lung, 767.1/board #C676, Department of Physical Therapy, Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand.

After just 8 weeks of Hatha yoga a person with no prior fitness program will have marked increases strength and endurance, improved balance and better flexibility.

Dawn Boehde & John Porcari, Ph.D, Human Performance Laboratory, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse. 2006.

Practicing yoga for one hour per hour a day during the second term of pregnancy has shown to reduce preterm births or low birth weight babies. The study focused on for women between 18-20 weeks of pregnancy in two study groups 1) Yoga group, consisting of breathing exercises, meditation, and poses suited for pregnancy vs. and 2) the control group that walked 30 minutes twice per day until date of delivery, both groups performed up until delivery day. The yoga participants experienced 50% fewer preterm and 37% fewer underweight babies than the walking group.

Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine. 2005; 11:237-44.

In just months Transcendental meditation (TM) reverses the risk of diabetes and heart disease. In a study with the average participant age of 67, using the TM twice a day for 20 minutes each over a period of four months, TM was shown to decrease insulin resistance, lower blood pressure and decrease heart rate variability.

Archives of Internal Medicine, June 12 2006.

Yoga is beneficial for breast cancer patients recovering from surgery and currently undergoing radiation therapy. Patients report feeling stronger, less fatigued, experiencing less day time sleepiness and in better general health with 2 yoga sessions a week.

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, 2006.

1. Cancer Patients Aided by Yoga.

Stobbe, Mike A.P., Deseret News (Salt Lake City), Jun 5, 2006

Researchers at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center focused on 61 women who had surgery for breast cancer and now were getting six weeks of radiation treatment. Thirty women were assigned to a test group that took twice-a-week yoga classes. The others did not. At the end of six weeks, study participants filled out detailed questionnaires grading their ability to lift groceries, walk a mile and perform other physical activities. They were also asked about feelings of fatigue, their sense of well-being and other aspects of their quality of life. Their scores were converted to a scale that ranged from 0 to 100. The researchers found the yoga group consistently had higher scores in almost every area. It was most pronounced in physical function—the yoga group had a mean score of about 82, compared with 69 for the other group. Participants said they were in better general health, were less fatigued and had fewer problems with daytime sleepiness.

2. Study Shows Greater Breathing Capacity After 6 Weeks of Yoga

Chang, Louise, MD, Experimental Biology 2006, San Francisco, April 1-5, 2006

The study comes from Khon Kaen University in Thailand. The researchers included Raoyrin Chanavirut of the university's physical therapy department. Their findings were presented in San Francisco at the Experimental Biology 2006 meeting. The study included 58 healthy young adults who were about 20 years old. First, they took several tests related to breathing capacity. The researchers used a tape measure to gauge chest expansion as participants breathed. They also checked how much air participants could forcibly blow out after one second and after full inhalation, as well as the average speed of air leaving participants' lungs midway through exhalation. Next, Chanavirut's team split participants into two groups. The researchers assigned one group to do hatha yoga three times a week for six weeks. Each session lasted 20 minutes and featured five yoga poses that engaged chest muscles. For comparison, the second group attended the yoga sessions but didn't do yoga. After six weeks, the yoga group could expand their chest wall more during breathing and blow more air out of their lungs faster than before yoga training. But the amount of air they typically inhaled and exhaled didn't change. The comparison group had no changes in breathing capacity, the study also shows. The study didn't check whether yoga has the same effect on people with breathing problems or lung disease.

3. Yoga May Prevent Weight Gain in Middle Age

Kristal, A. *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, July/August 2005; vol.11

- Study shows that normal weight adults who practiced yoga regularly gained an average of 3 pounds less between the ages of 45 and 55 than those who didn't practice yoga. Meanwhile, overweight adults who practiced yoga lost an average of 5 lbs and those who didn't gained about 14 lbs during the same time period. Researchers say men and women between the ages of 45 and 55 typically gain about a lb per year, as their energy needs decline, without a similar decrease in the number of calories they consume. They say it's the first study to look at the effects of yoga on weight loss and suggest that overweight people may have the most to gain from regular yoga practice. In the study, researchers examined the impact of yoga on weight change in a group of 15,550 adults aged 53-57. The participants provided information on physical activity (including yoga) and weight change between age 45 and 55. Normal weight men and women who practiced yoga regularly (at least one session of 30 minutes or more per week) for four or more years gained an average of 3 pounds less than those who didn't practice yoga (9.5 vs. 12.6lbs). Among overweight men and women, those who practiced yoga regularly lost an average of 5 lbs from ages 45-55; those who didn't practice yoga gained about 14 lbs.

4. Comparing Yoga, Exercise, and a Self-Care Book for Chronic Low Back Pain
Sherman, Karen J. PhD, MPH, Cherkin, Daniel PhD; Erro, Janet RN; Miglioretti, Diana L., PhD; Deyo, Richard A. MD, MPH
20 December 2005, Vol. 143, Issue 12, Pg 849-856

Authors recruited patients who had a recent primary care visit for low back pain and randomly assigned 101 to yoga or a self-care book. Patients in the yoga and exercise groups reported good adherence at 26 weeks. Compared with self-care, symptoms were milder and function was better with yoga. The exercise group had intermediate outcomes. Symptoms improved between 12 and 26 weeks only with yoga.

5. Randomized controlled trial of yoga and exercise in multiple sclerosis
B.S. Oken, MD, S. Kishiyama, MA, D. Zajdel, D. Bourdette, MD, J. Carlsen, AB, M. Haas, DC MA, C. Hugos, MS PT, D. F. Kraemer, PhD., J. Lawrence, BS, and M. Mass, MD
Neurology, February 11, 2004

Objective: To determine the effect of yoga and of aerobic exercise on cognitive function, fatigue, mood, and quality of life in multiple sclerosis (MS). Sixty-nine subjects were recruited and randomized. Twelve subjects did not finish the 6-month intervention. Subjects with MS participating in either a 6 month yoga class or exercise class showed significant improvement in measure of fatigue compared to a waiting-list control group. There was no relative improvement of cognitive function in either of the intervention groups.

6. Yoga for cancer patients and survivors.

Bower JE, Woolery A, Sternlieb B, Garet D.

Cancer Control. 2005 Jul;12(3):165-71.

University of California, Los Angeles Cousins Center for
Psychoneuroimmunology, Los Angeles

Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years to improve physical and emotional well-being. Empirical research on yoga has been ongoing for several decades, including several recent studies conducted with cancer patients and survivors.

Methods: This review provides a general introduction to yoga and a detailed review of yoga research in cancer.

Results: Nine studies conducted with cancer patients and survivors yielded modest improvements in sleep quality, mood, stress, cancer-related distress, cancer-related symptoms, and overall quality of life. Studies conducted in other patient populations and healthy individuals have shown beneficial effects on psychological and somatic symptoms, as well as other aspects of physical function.

Conclusions: Results from the emerging literature on yoga and cancer provide preliminary support for the feasibility and efficacy of yoga interventions for cancer patients, although controlled trials are lacking. Further research is required to determine the reliability of these effects and to identify their underlying mechanisms.

Rapid stress reduction and anxiolysis among distressed women as a consequence of a three-month intensive yoga program.

Andreas Michalsen¹ABDEF, Paul Grossman²CDE, Ayhan Acil¹BDF, Jost Langhorst¹AE, Rainer Lütke³ACD, Tobias Esch⁴DE, George B. Stefano⁵DE, Gustav J. Dobos¹AG

Background: Emotional distress is an increasing public health problem and Hatha yoga has been claimed to induce stress reduction and empowerment in practicing subjects. We aimed to evaluate potential effects of Iyengar Hatha yoga on perceived stress and associated psychological outcomes in mentally distressed women.
Conclusions: Women suffering from mental distress participating in a 3-month Iyengar yoga class show significant improvements on measures of stress and psychological outcomes. Further investigation of yoga with respect to prevention and treatment of stress-related disease and of underlying mechanism is warranted.

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Progressive muscle relaxation, yoga stretching, and ABC relaxation theory

Shahyad Ghoncheh, Jonathan C. Smith*

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This study compared the psychological effects of progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) and yoga stretching (halha) exercises. Forty participants were randomly divided into two groups and taught PMR or yoga stretching exercises. Both groups practiced once a week for five weeks and were given the Smith Relaxation States Inventory before and after each session. As hypothesized, practitioners of PMR displayed higher levels of relaxation states (R-States) Physical Relaxation and Disengagement at Week 4 and higher levels of Mental Quiet and Joy as a posttraining aftereffect at Week 5. Contrary to what was hypothesized, groups did not display different levels of R-States Energized or Aware. Results suggest the value of supplementing traditional somatic conceptualizations of relaxation with the psychological approach embodied in ABC relaxation theory. Clinical and research implications are discussed. © 2003 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. *J Clin Psychol*.

Published Online: 5 Nov 2003

Journal of Clinical Psychology

A pilot study of yoga for breast cancer survivors: physical and psychological benefits

S. Nicole Culos-Reed^{1*}, Linda E. Carlson^{2,3}, Lisa M. Daroux¹, Susi Hatley-Aldous

Background: Physical activity provides a number of physical and psychological benefits to cancer survivors, including lessening the impact of detrimental cancer-related symptoms and treatment side-effects (e.g. fatigue, nausea), and improving overall well-being and quality of life. The purpose of the present pilot study was to examine the physical and psychological benefits afforded by a 7-week yoga program for cancer survivors.

Results: The yoga program participants (*M* age=51.18 (10.33); 92% female) included primarily breast cancer survivors, on average 55.95 (54.39) months post-diagnosis. Significant differences between the intervention and the control group at post-intervention were seen only in psychosocial (i.e. global quality of life, emotional function, and diarrhea) variables (all *p*'s <0.05). There were also trends for group differences, in the hypothesized directions, for the psychosocial variables of emotional irritability, gastrointestinal symptoms, cognitive disorganization, mood disturbance, tension, depression, and confusion (all *p*'s <0.10). Finally, there were also significant improvements in both the program participants and the controls from pre- to post-intervention on a number of physical fitness variables.

Published Online: 23 Dec 2005

Psycho-Oncology

Yoga for Cancer Patients and Survivors

Julienne E. Bower, PhD, Alison Woolery, MA, Beth Sternlieb, and Deborah Garet, MPH

Background: Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years to improve physical and emotional well-being.

Empirical research on yoga has been ongoing for several decades, including several recent studies conducted with cancer patients and survivors.

Results: Nine studies conducted with cancer patients and survivors yielded modest improvements in sleep quality, mood, stress, cancer-related distress, cancer-related symptoms, and overall quality of life. Studies conducted in other patient populations and healthy individuals have shown beneficial effects on psychological and somatic symptoms, as well as other aspects of physical function.

Submitted January 25, 2005; accepted April 26, 2005.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in Relation to Quality of Life, Mood, Symptoms of Stress, and Immune Parameters in Breast and Prostate Cancer Outpatients

Linda E. Carlson, PhD, Michael Speca, PsyD, Kamala D. Patel, PhD and Eileen Goodey, MSW

OBJECTIVES: This study investigated the relationships between a mindfulness-based stress reduction meditation program for early stage breast and prostate cancer patients and quality of life, mood states, stress symptoms, lymphocyte counts, and cytokine production.

RESULTS: Fifty-nine and 42 patients were assessed pre- and postintervention, respectively. Significant improvements were seen in overall quality of life, symptoms of stress, and sleep quality. Although there were no significant changes in the overall number of lymphocytes or cell subsets, T cell production of IL-4 increased and IFN- γ decreased, whereas NK cell production of IL-10 decreased. These results are consistent with a shift in immune profile from one associated with depressive symptoms to a more normal profile.

Psychosomatic Medicine 65:571-581 (2003)

**A yoga intervention for young adults with elevated symptoms of depression.
University of California, Los Angeles, USA.**

OBJECTIVE: To examine the effects of a short-term Iyengar yoga course on mood in mildly depressed young adults.

PARTICIPANTS: Twenty-eight volunteers ages 18 to 29. At intake, all participants were experiencing mild levels of depression, but had received no current psychiatric diagnoses or treatments. None had significant yoga experience.

INTERVENTION: Subjects in the yoga group attended two 1-hour Iyengar yoga classes each week for 5 consecutive weeks. The classes emphasized yoga postures thought to alleviate depression, particularly back bends, standing poses, and inversions.

RESULTS: Subjects who participated in the yoga course demonstrated significant decreases in self-reported symptoms of depression and trait anxiety. These effects emerged by the middle of the yoga course and were maintained by the end.

Changes also were observed in acute mood, with subjects reporting decreased levels of negative mood and fatigue following yoga classes. Finally, there was a trend for higher morning cortisol levels in the yoga group by the end of the yoga course, compared to controls. These findings provide suggestive evidence of the utility of yoga asanas in improving mood and support the need for future studies with larger samples and more complex study designs to more fully evaluate the effects of yoga on mood disturbances.

2004 Mar-Apr;10

Sudarshan Kriya Yogic Breathing in the Treatment of Stress, Anxiety, and Depression: Part II—Clinical Applications and Guidelines

Richard P. Brown, Patricia L. Gerbarg. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. August 1, 2005

Yogic breathing is a unique method for balancing the autonomic nervous system and influencing psychologic and stress-related disorders. Part I of this series presented a neurophysiologic theory of the effects of *Sudarshan Kriya Yoga* (SKY). Part II will review clinical studies, our own clinical observations, and guidelines for the safe and effective use of yoga breath techniques in a wide range of clinical conditions.

Although more clinical studies are needed to document the benefits of programs that combine *pranayama* (yogic breathing) *asanas* (yoga postures), and meditation, there is sufficient evidence to consider Sudarshan Kriya Yoga to be a beneficial, low-risk, low-cost adjunct to the treatment of stress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, stress-related medical illnesses, substance abuse, and rehabilitation of criminal offenders. SKY has been used as a public health intervention to alleviate PTSD in survivors of mass disasters. Yoga techniques enhance well-being, mood, attention, mental focus, and stress tolerance. Proper training by a skilled teacher and a 30-minute practice every day will maximize the benefits. Health care providers play a crucial role in encouraging patients to maintain their yoga practices.