

YOGA: A COUNTER TOOL FOR DEPRESSION

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Abstract

Yoga increases body awareness, relieves stress, reduces muscle tension, strain, and inflammation, sharpens attention and concentration, and calms and centers the nervous system. Yoga's positive benefits on mental health have made it an important practice tool of psychotherapy. Yoga is a great activity for those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or heart disease. It gives strength, flexibility, and mind-body awareness. A person gets the added benefit of a mind-body approach that can help relax and energize. It is a physical exercise that involves different body poses, breathing techniques, and meditation. The therapy may help with depression and symptoms, such as difficulty concentrating or loss of energy. Many people use yoga therapy to manage: mental and emotional problems, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

Keywords: Tension, flexibility, cholesterol, emotional

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Introduction

Yoga is a physical exercises that involves different body poses breathing techniques and meditation. The therapy may help with depression and symptoms such as difficulty concentrating or loss of energy. Many people use yoga therapy to manage mental and emotional problems, such as stress, anxiety, or depression. Yoga is a mind and body practice with historical origins in ancient Indian philosophy. Various styles of yoga combine physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation. In 5000 years of yoga history, the term “yoga” has gone through a renaissance in current culture, exchanging the loincloth for a leotard and leggings. Yoga has become popular as a form of physical exercise based upon asana (physical poses) to promote improved control of mind and body and to enhance well-being.

Depression

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home. Depression symptoms can vary from mild to severe and can include:

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed.
- Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting.
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., hand-wringing or pacing) or slowed movements and speech (actions observable by others).
- Feeling worthless or guilty.
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

Yoga Affect

More studies are using randomized controlled trials to look at the relationship between yoga and depression. Randomized controlled trials are the best ways to verify study results. According to the Harvard Mental Research Centre, recent studies suggest that yoga can:

- Reduce the impact of stress.
- Help with anxiety and depression.
- Be a self-soothing technique similar to meditation, relaxation, and exercise.
- Improve energy.

Yoga is a physical exercise that involves different body poses, breathing techniques, and meditation. Many people use yoga therapy to manage:

- Mental and emotional problems, such as stress, anxiety, or depression.
- Conditions and disorders, such as ongoing low back pain.
- Chronic or long-term pain.
- Overall health and well-being.

Yoga Therapy

Yoga therapy is a type of therapy that uses yoga postures, breathing exercises, meditation, and guided imagery to improve mental and physical health. The holistic focus of yoga therapy encourages the integration of mind, body, and spirit. Modern yoga therapy covers a broad range of therapeutic modalities, incorporating elements from both physical therapy and psychotherapy. Yoga therapy is a growing field and scientific evidence has begun to emphasize its efficacy. It is used to treat existing mental and physical health issues, but can also be used as a strategy for prevention and maintenance. Yoga therapy is well established as a treatment for depression and anxiety. A meta-analysis cited in the Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders found that yoga therapy also shows promise for the treatment of posttraumatic stress (PTSD) and schizophrenia. Additionally, yoga therapists have begun to develop treatment modalities to suit children with autism. The book *Yoga Therapy for Children with Autism and Special Needs*, written in 2013 by yoga teacher Louise Goldberg, is already considered a critical text for novice and experienced yoga therapists alike.

According to a 2012 article in Social Work Today magazine, yoga therapy is also emerging as an effective treatment for substance abuse issues. Mental health professionals point out the way yoga positively impacts the parts of the mind and body susceptible to addiction. Studies have shown that yoga boosts the neurotransmitter GABA (gamma-amino butyric acid), which is important because GABA levels are statistically low in people who experience substance abuse, anxiety, and depression. Because of its concentration on mind and body integration, yoga therapy is also used to address many physical health issues. It has been effectively used to treat back pain, heart conditions, asthma, chronic fatigue, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, and side effects of chemotherapy.

How Yoga Therapy works

Yoga therapy “can be very powerful in the treatment of depression.” Even if yoga isn’t your forte, the combination of meditation and physical movement provide two important elements for relieving depression. Meditation helps bring a person into the present moment and allows them to clear their minds. Controlled, focused movements also help strengthen the body-mind connections. Breathing exercises are effective in reducing depressive symptoms, according to one you may find yoga helpful as the exercise focuses on deep, controlled breathing.

Benefits of Yoga Therapy

Yoga therapy is practiced in a wide range of formats. Physical therapists, for example, often implement yoga techniques in their delivery of massage and other treatments. Yoga therapy practice can resemble physical therapy, rehabilitative therapy, and/or psychotherapy. Unlike a standard yoga class, yoga therapy sessions are typically conducted in one-on-one or small group settings. Yoga therapy can be provided as an adjunct therapy to complement other forms of treatment, or it can be used to directly treat a specific issue. Yoga techniques range from simple to advanced, and can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Potential benefits from yoga therapy include stress reduction, psychological well-being, improved diet, and efficient functioning of bodily systems.

To improve mood and relaxation

As exercise, yoga is a natural way to increase serotonin production. According to the Psychiatry and Neuroscience, serotonin production plays a role in the treatment of depression. Serotonin is believed to play a major role in happiness. One study also suggests people with depression have lower serotonin levels. Yoga is also especially helpful because of its gentle, calming, and fluid nature. Each pose is flexible, so people of all levels can practice. Your instructor will emphasize breathing, concentration, and smooth movement. They will also encourage you to focus on positive images to calm the body and mind.

To reduce stress and anxiety

Yoga also increases our heart rate variability (HRV), or change in time between heart beats, by increasing the relaxation response over the stress response in the body. A high HRV means that your body is better at self-monitoring or adapting, particularly to stress.

Yoga can also:

1. reduce resting heart rate
2. lower blood pressure
3. ease breathing
4. increase pain tolerance

According to Harvard Mental Health, found that people who were more stressed had a lower pain tolerance.

Pros and cons of yoga therapy

Yoga complements traditional therapies, such as medication and psychotherapy. But it's not meant to be a sole treatment. It is

- Beneficial for people who want to improve concentration
- Available in many styles for all levels
- Generally safe when practice properly

Conclusions

Studies show that yoga therapy can help with stress, anxiety and depression. Yoga is a gentle exercise that incorporates both meditation and controlled physical movements. The focus on

deep breathing and stretching your body is effective for relieving the symptoms of depression, such as sleep troubles, pain and a loss of energy.

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