



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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## YOGA THERAPY

### STRENGTHENING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM-PART 2

During this difficult time, many people are suffering with anxiety, experiencing fear about getting sick, and are concerned about being exposed to a virus. This can result in elevating stress levels which can weaken the immune response.

Many people who are under stress are more likely to develop cold symptoms. Lowering stress levels will not only improve quality of life, it will reduce the risk of contracting an infection.

When people experience anxiety, the body releases stress hormones that stimulate production of inflammatory molecules. These can damage cells and disrupt normal body functions. It is important to lower stress levels and so reduce inflammation. Prolonged inflammation increases the risk of cognitive impairment and depression.









People who experience disrupted sleep also tend to have a weaker immune system.

Yoga is highly effective at lowering stress levels. Having a regular yoga practice can help to counter the disorders caused by stress. Yoga is much more than just practising the asanas (postures). Pranayama (yoga breathing) includes many different breathing techniques which help to reduce stress levels. Another aspect of yoga is meditation. Just 10 minutes of daily meditation can have a significant impact on lowering your stress levels.

#### **To get started with meditation, just follow this exercise:**

- Sit in a comfortable chair resting your hands on your thighs with palms facing up.
- Slowly close your eyes.
- Begin taking slow breaths in and out through your nose. Follow your breath in and follow your breath out.
- If your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your breath. Avoid judging yourself when your mind wanders. The process of noticing it and bringing your mind back is an important element of the relaxation response.
- Feel your body relax as your mind becomes peaceful.
- Continue for five to ten minutes, then open your eyes and notice how relaxed you feel.

## YOGA POSTURES TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

<p><b>TADASANA (mountain posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves blood circulation</li> <li>• Reduces stress and tension</li> <li>• Increases your energy level</li> </ul>	
<p><b>UTKATASANA (chair posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works the muscles of the arms and legs</li> <li>• Stimulates the diaphragm and heart</li> <li>• Stimulates the abdominal organs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>VRKSASANA (tree posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves balance and stability in the legs</li> <li>• On a metaphysical level, it helps you to achieve balance in all other aspects of life</li> <li>• Establishes pelvic stability</li> </ul>	
<p><b>BALASANA (child's posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calms the brain</li> <li>• Helps to relieve stress and fatigue</li> </ul>	
<p><b>SETUBANDHA (bridge)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends blood to the brain and helps alleviate stress and mild depression</li> <li>• Calms the flow of thoughts, soothes the mind</li> <li>• Reduces anxiety, fatigue, backache, headache, and insomnia</li> </ul>	
<p><b>BHUJANGASANA (cobra posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional texts say that Bhujangasana increases body heat and destroys disease</li> <li>• Helps relieve stress and fatigue</li> </ul>	
<p><b>DHANURASANA (bow posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces fatigue and anxiety</li> <li>• Strengthens back muscles</li> <li>• Stimulates abdominal organs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>USTRASANA (camel posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boosts energy and fights fatigue</li> <li>• Builds confidence</li> <li>• Improves posture</li> </ul>	
<p><b>MATSYASANA (fish posture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens upper back and neck</li> <li>• Opens the shoulders and stretches the chest</li> </ul>	