



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY WHY YOGA KEEPS YOU HEALTHY

21 ways your yoga practice can improve your health. (part 3)

Over the past two months we have looked at ten ways that yoga may help to prevent a number of the most common ailments that lower our vitality and shorten our lives. Here's a few more.

11. Immune Activity

Many studies have suggested that yoga can strengthen the body's ability to prevent illnesses. Now one of the first studies to look at how yoga affects genes indicates that a two-hour programme of gentle asana, meditation, and breathing exercises alters the expression of dozens of immune-related genes in blood cells. So yoga may have the potential to influence how strongly the genes you're born with affect your health.

12. Your Spine on Yoga

Researchers scanned the vertebral disks of a group of yoga teachers and compared them with scans of healthy, similar-aged volunteers. The yoga teachers' disks showed less evidence of the degeneration that typically occurs with age. The bending and flexing in yoga helps to nourish the spinal disks which keeps them healthier.

13. Keep Your Heart Healthy

Studies have shown that yoga and meditation may help reduce many of the major risk factors for heart disease and that yoga is a safe and effective way to boost heart health. In a study this year the subjects who participated in twice-weekly sessions of Iyengar Yoga significantly cut the frequency of episodes of heart-rhythm disorders that increases the risk of strokes and can lead to heart failure.






14. Joint Support

By gently taking joints—ankles, knees, hips, shoulders—through their range of motion, asanas help keep them lubricated, which researchers say may help keep you moving freely in athletic and everyday pursuits as you age.

15. Watch Your Back

In a study involving more than 200 people with persistent lower-back pain, some were taught yoga postures; the others took a stretching class or were given a self-care book. At the end of the study, those who took yoga and stretching classes reported less pain and better functioning. Another study of 90 people with chronic low-back pain found that those who practised Iyengar Yoga showed significantly less disability and pain after six months.

POSTURES FOR NOVEMBER

<p>WARM UP YOUR JOINTS</p> <p>Ankles - Rotate both feet in unison, first clockwise and then anticlockwise.</p> <p>Knees - Make large circles with your lower left leg, straightening the leg at the top of the circle, if you can. Repeat with the right leg.</p> <p>Elbows and Shoulders - Rotate your elbows through the full range of motion.</p> <p>Wrists - Bend your hands backward from the wrists Then, fold the hands forward so that the fingers curl in toward the chest. To finish, make your hands into fists and rotate wrists in both directions.</p>	
<p>SUPTA BADDHAKONASANA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulates blood pressure • Tones the kidneys • Gently massages the heart and helps open blocked arteries • Improves blood circulation in the abdomen • Relieves sciatica • Relieves indigestion • Corrects a prolapsed uterus 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">CHRIS ANDRE</p>
<p>USTRASANA (camel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tones the spine, relieving lower backache and arthritic pain in the back • Enhances resistance to infection • Stimulates the adrenal, pituitary, pineal and thyroid glands • Increases lung capacity • Tones the liver, kidneys and spleen 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">CHRIS ANDRE</p>
<p>UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieves backache and neck sprains • Corrects misalignment of the shoulders and shoulder blades • Makes the hip joint and spinal column supple • Strengthens the knees and legs, particularly the hamstring muscles • Stretches and tones the abdominal and pelvic organs 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p>PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energises the heart and lungs • Reduces depression and boosts confidence • Soothes the brain and the nervous system • Tones the abdominal organs • Strengthens the knee joint and opens the hips • Relieves stress-related headaches and fatigue 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">RORY EARNSHAW</p>