



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY WHY YOGA KEEPS YOU HEALTHY

21 ways your yoga practice can improve your health. (part 4)

Here are the final six ways in this series that yoga may help to prevent a number of the most common ailments that lower our vitality and shorten our lives.

16. Control Blood Pressure

One-fifth of people who have high blood pressure don't know it. Many who do know struggle with the side effects of long-term medication. Yoga and meditation, by slowing the heart rate and inducing the relaxation response, may help bring blood pressure down to safer levels.

17. Preventing Diabetes

Researchers found that adults at risk for type 2 diabetes who did yoga twice a week for three months showed a reduction in risk factors including weight and blood pressure. The study was small but if larger, future studies show similar results, yoga could gain credence as a viable way of helping people stave off the disease.

18. Helping with the Menopause

Many women have turned to yoga to help them cope with the symptoms of menopause, such as hot flashes, sleep disturbances and mood swings. A recent analysis found evidence that yoga helps with the psychological symptoms of menopause, such as depression, anxiety, and insomnia.

19. Increase Your Sense of Well-Being

Recent studies have shown that exercise is linked with increased levels of a brain chemical called gamma-amino butyric acid (GABA), which is associated with positive mood and a sense of well-being. It turns out that Iyengar Yoga can also increase the levels of this chemical in the brain, more so than walking.






20. Strengthening Muscles

If you practice yoga regularly you will have noticed that yoga strengthens your muscles. Standing postures, inversions, and other asanas challenge muscles to lift and move the weight of your body. Your muscles respond by growing new fibres, so that they become thicker and stronger, and help you to maintain fitness and function throughout your lifetime.

21. Improve your Balance

Balancing postures are a core part of asana practice, and they are even more important for older adults. Better balance can be crucial to preserving independence, and can even be lifesaving as falls are the leading cause of injury-related death in people over 65.

POSTURES FOR DECEMBER

<p>ADHOMUKHA SVANASANA (downward dog)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilises blood pressure and heart rate • Tones and relaxes the nervous system, helping to relieve depression and anxiety • Cures breathlessness, palpitations, extreme fatigue • Reduces lower backache • Increases flexibility of the hip, knee and ankle joints • Energises the body • Helps relieve symptoms of menopause. 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTY SCONDUTO</p>
<p>JANU SIRASANA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates the liver and kidneys • Therapeutic for high blood pressure, insomnia and sinusitis. • Relieves haemorrhoids • Regulates menstrual flow and relieves menstrual disorders • Relieves lower and middle backache • Strengthens the back muscles when done without coming forward, keeping your back spine concave and front torso long. 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTIN SCONDUTO</p>
<p>TRIKONASANA (triangle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to relieve the symptoms of menopause • Tones the abdominal organs • Stimulates digestion • Alleviates backache • Reduces stiffness in the neck, shoulders and knees • Tones the ligaments of the arms and legs. 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p>PARSVAKONASANA (intense side stretch)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens and stretches the legs, knees and ankles • Stretches the groins, spine, waist, chest and lungs, and shoulders • Stimulates abdominal organs • Increases stamina • Tones the muscles of the heart • Enhances lung capacity. 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p>ARDHA CHANDRASANA (half-moon)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotates and flexes the vertebral joints, keeping the spinal muscles supple • Tones the lumbar spine, relieving backache • Corrects misalignment of the shoulders • Helps relieve sciatica • Improves circulation in the feet • Improves coordination and a sense of balance. 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTIN SCONDUTO</p>