

Pain and yoga application paper

Sport & Tourism



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Yoga Application Paper Kristen Sullivan Immaculata University Yoga

Application Paper Originated in ancient India, Yoga typically means 'union' between the mind, body and spirit. It involves the practice of physical postures and poses. As the name suggests, the ultimate aim of practicing Yoga is to create a balance between the body and the mind and to attain self-enlightenment. In order to accomplish it, Yoga makes use of different movements, breathing exercises, relaxation technique and meditation. Yoga is associated with a healthy and lively lifestyle with a balanced approach to life.

It increases the lubrication of joints, ligaments and tendons of the body. Studies in the field of medicine suggest that Yoga is the only form of physical activity that provides complete exercise to the body, because it massages all the internal organs and glands. This in turn reduces the risk of many diseases. Yoga can create a positive permanent difference to the lifestyle of anybody practicing it on a regular basis (Weil, n. d.). The whole system of Yoga is built on three main structures: exercise, breathing, and meditation.

The exercises of Yoga are designed to put pressure on the glandular systems of the body, thereby increasing its efficiency and total health. The body is looked upon as the primary instrument that enables us to work and evolve in the world. Breathing techniques are based on the concept that breath is the source of life in the body, gently increasing breath control to improve the health and function of both body and mind. These two systems of exercise and breathing then prepare the body and mind for meditation, in turn finding an easy approach to a quiet mind that allows silence and healing from everyday stress.

Regular daily practice of all three parts of this structure of Yoga produce a clear, bright mind and a strong, capable body (Weil, n. d.). The tradition of Yoga has always been passed on individually from teacher to student through oral teaching and practical demonstration. The formal techniques that are now known as Yoga are, therefore, based on the collective experiences of many individuals over many thousands of years. The particular manner in which the techniques are taught and practiced today depends on the approach passed down in the line of teachers supporting the individual practitioner. As more has become known about the beneficial effects of Yoga, it has gained acceptance and respect as a valuable method for helping in the management of stress and improving health and well-being (Weil, n. d.). A study in the journal *Spine* (Williams et al. , 2009) indicates the benefits of yoga as a treatment for back pain and confirms the importance of staying active when rehabilitating the spine and seeking pain relief, a point that may initially seem counterintuitive to patients but should not be lost.

In the study, 90 back pain sufferers (aged 23 to 66) were split into two groups, with one group performing 90-minutes of Iyengar yoga twice a week for six months and the other maintaining their regular treatment over that time period (Williams et al. , 2009). At both the third and six months, the yoga participants noted significant improvements in both pain and functioning, and were also less likely to be depressed (Williams et al. , 2009).

Pain levels were measured via questionnaires assessing the amount of pain medications being taken, difficulties performing certain tasks, and other metrics (Williams et al. , 2009). Previous studies have noted how extensive yoga programs have resulted in improvements in strength, flexibility and

endurance for patients with back pain, and now this research seemingly adds more credence to the effectiveness of yoga and its emphasis on relaxation, flexibility and core strengthening as a treatment for these symptoms.

While the principles of yoga may still be foreign to many people, patients should keep an open mind when exploring treatment options. While exercise may prompt initial worries of exacerbating pain, such activities can often have wonderful therapeutic effects, not only physically but spiritually. Physical therapists, doctors of chiropractic, physiatrists and many other medical professionals may prescribe yoga programs, and are good sources to learn more about the benefits of physical activity – as opposed to immobility – for chronic back pain sufferers.

A proposed plan to implement yoga as an alternative therapy and to evaluate its effectiveness could include gathering a sample group of people who are patients at a pain management practice for chronic back pain. Often these patients are on various pain medications and muscle relaxers to minimize their pain and discomfort. Of the sample group, half of the patients would be weaned off of their medications under the supervision of the doctor. This half of the sample group would then be started on a 12-week yoga program instructed by a trained yoga instructor while taking no medications. The other half of the group would continue on the current prescribed medications and given a basic stretching regimen to follow by a physical therapist. The participants will complete a questionnaire prior to beginning the study, as well as at 3 week intervals to assess their pain levels. At the end of the study the results of the questionnaires compared between the 2 groups will show if the yoga program has been effective or ineffective.

This study will also show the comparison of pain levels between pain medications and the yoga program to provide information on the effectiveness of the medications. References Weil, R. (n. d.). Yoga. Retrieved from [www. medicinenet. com/yoga/article. htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/yoga/article.htm) Williams, K. , Abildso, C. , Steinberg, L. , Doyle, E. , Epstein, B. , Smith, D. , ... Cooper, L. (2009, September 1). Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficacy of Iyengar Yoga therapy on chronic low back pain. *Spine*, 34(19), 2066-2076. [http://dx. doi. org/10. 1097/BRS. 0b013e3181b315cc](http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/BRS.0b013e3181b315cc)