

Patty's PT Tips

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September 20th & 21st, 2023

Adaptive Yoga for All Levels

Yoga is an art and a science that connects the mind, body, and spirit through the practice of physical postures (asana), partnered with the breath (pranayama), and meditation practices.

Adaptive yoga modifies traditional yoga postures to meet your body's needs, especially if you have Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's Disease (PD), stroke, arthritis, neuromuscular conditions, and/or other disabilities.

Yoga should **not** be painful-you should work within your minimal *discomfort* range and expect flexibility and strength to increase gradually over time. Safety is essential. It may be useful to discuss this with your physician or physical therapist before initiating a class or to get tips that need to be specifically modified for your body. It is important to take orthopedic limitations into account. i.e. previous knee or hip surgeries, or an unstable joint etc.

No Pain-All Gain- a motto of Yoga Moves MS

Yoga Options for People with MS

www.yogamovesms.org This is a nonprofit organization based in Michigan but has available: on-demand classes, live streamed classes, a store to purchase books, videos, and assistive equipment for classes. They accept donations to support their ongoing work as participants are able, but a donation per class is not required. They have an easy to negotiate website. Current suggested donations are \$20/mo. for on demand online recordings or \$8/class for live sessions.

Their classes include the following topics:

- Foundations of chair yoga
- Breathing Practices

From MSA's *PT With Patty* Program • Third Weds at 1:30pm via Zoom • email support@msasoco.org for a link

- On Your Seat (chair yoga)
- Mixed combination of On Your Seat, On Your Feet, and On the Earth
- Adaptive Yoga Moves Any Body Video Sequences
- Yoga with a Wheelchair series
- Meditation
- Hand Mudras
- Restorative and Gentle Yoga
- Special Workshops
- Yoga with a Care Partner

The National MS Society provides the following link from Evergreen Health for Therapeutic Yoga out of Kirkland Washington for MS videos:

<https://www.neuro-spine-ortho.com/health-services/neuroscience-spine-orthopedic-institute/neurosciences/multiple-sclerosis-care/ms-therapeutic-yoga/>

[There may be chair yoga classes available in your area through Silver Sneakers, local YMCAs or gyms. You may want to ask if they have chair yoga or a senior or adaptive yoga class available.](#)

For those who prefer a book format: Yoga and Multiple Sclerosis: A Journey to Health and Healing published in 2007 by LOREN M. FISHMAN, MD AND ERIC L. SMALL \$10 ON AMAZON KINDLE OR \$13 IN PAPERBACK. quite thorough and one of the originators of using yoga in MS self-care.

MS Chair Yoga Paula K. Strupeck Gardner Free on Amazon Kindle with photos of poses. She also has classes available on her YouTube channel.

www.mssociety.org.uk has yoga videos and education about the benefits of yoga for people living with MS. If you type yoga in their search box you will find written information about MS and yoga as well as links to yoga videos of various lengths and in various postures i.e. supine, sitting and standing.

Suggested Equipment List:

Yoga stretching straps with hard foam blocks: \$12-\$25 bundles on Amazon or Walmart websites. They are often available in-store in the sporting goods section of Walmart, Target or a variety of sporting goods outlets.

A non-slip mat or rug is helpful if your yoga is done on the floor. If seated in a wheelchair or straight chair, an additional chair for support or a wheeled walker with brakes can help with supported yoga postures. A variety of rolled towels or books may be helpful as props.

Yoga incorporates strength, flexibility, postural awareness/control and balance skills.

Yoga and MS (from National Institute of Health website)

Current empirical research has provided a large body of evidence illustrating the benefits and positive outcomes associated with the practice of yoga among individuals with MS, including reduced depression, decreased pain, reduced fatigue, increased lung capacity, improved bladder function, improved strength and flexibility, lower levels of stress, improved quality of life and muscle relaxation, and lower blood pressure.^{3,10,12,27,48-56}

By way of illustration, Doulati and colleagues⁴⁸ conducted a randomized controlled trial investigating the effects of three types of yoga on physical pain and quality of life among 60 women with MS. Poststudy analysis showed a significant improvement in physical pain management and quality of life in the case group, suggesting that yoga techniques can ameliorate physical pain and improve quality of life among individuals with MS.

In another study, Mishra et al.¹⁰ conducted a comprehensive literature review to investigate the therapeutic value of yoga in neurologic disorders, including MS. One study in their review reported that 63% of patients use some form of alternative therapy, and almost half use some form of yoga meditation. Another study reported a 17% improvement in selective attention using yoga as a complementary treatment. The overall findings from this literature review support the efficacy of yoga as a noninvasive option for treating many neurologic disorders and improving quality of life, and that improvement in neurological disorders may be attributed to the practice of yoga. Similarly, Franklin⁵⁰ conducted a qualitative study of the life experiences of individuals with MS who practice yoga and found a link between yoga and improved physical and emotional functioning, including stress reduction, increased social interaction, increased body awareness, increased motivation, and shifts in attitude and life focus.

An additional study by Patil et al.⁵² investigated the effect of integrated yoga on neurogenic bladder dysfunction as an adjunct to standard care among patients with MS. Their findings demonstrated significant improvement in postvoid residual urine scores on the Micturition Frequency Checklist, Incontinence Impact Questionnaire-7, and Urogenital Distress Inventory-6, suggesting that yoga may be a safe and effective treatment for bladder symptoms caused by neurogenic bladder dysfunction as an adjunct to standard care in patients with MS.

In a recent quantitative study, Guner and Inanici⁵⁵ investigated the use of yoga therapy for symptom management and quality of life improvement among patients with MS. Specifically, they evaluated the effects of a 12-week yoga intervention on fatigue, balance, and gait. Compared with baseline data, statistically significant improvements were found in both fatigue ($p = 0.012$) and balance ($p = 0.027$), as well as step length ($p = 0.043$) and walking speed ($p = 0.027$). This study further supports the use of yoga therapy as a safe and beneficial mind-body CAM intervention.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Overall, the findings from this paper suggest that yoga may be a safe and effective means of managing the symptoms of MS. More research needs to be conducted to determine the exact influence of yoga on symptoms that are specific to MS, including spasticity, depression, sensory disturbance, and impaired mobility. Moreover, a clear understanding of the various types of yoga and their specific uses will help facilitate a greater awareness and comprehension of the extent to which yoga may be used toward the successful symptom management of this disease. Finally, to draw more useful conclusions about the potential use and benefits of yoga in managing the symptoms of MS, future research should include more rigorously designed trials, with more diverse populations and more study participants.

Today's Lesson:

Basic yoga breathing Box Breathing Seated Mountain Pose