

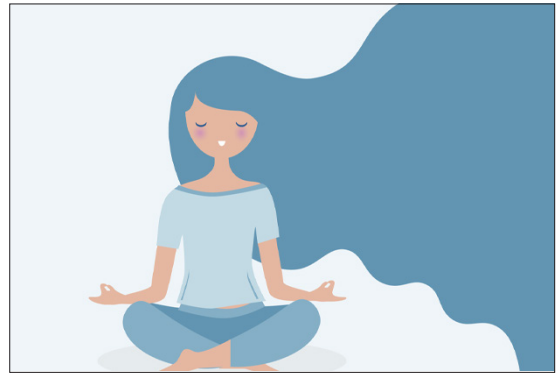
## Researchers Show Promise for Yoga, Meditation, Mindfulness in Concussion

The first-ever meta-analysis looked at the use of yoga, meditation, and mindfulness-based interventions for the effective treatment of chronic concussion symptoms in a recently published InCHIP study that aims to offer hope to those still struggling with their symptoms. The study was recently published in the journal *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being*.

For their meta-analysis, Rebecca Acabchuk, a post-doctoral fellow with UConn's Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy, or InCHIP and her team collected data from 22 different studies, including both published and unpublished work, that altogether included a total of

539 study participants and looked at the impact of the three interventions on outcome categories—including mental health, physical health, cognitive performance, quality of life, and social/occupational performance—and on specific health outcomes, like depression, attention, anxiety, and fatigue. The team then applied advanced meta-analytical methods to compile and assess the results of those studies.

"The main results that we saw were significant reductions in depression and fatigue," Acabchuk says. "Especially with fatigue, it was a large effect size, which is impres-



sive in the sense that fatigue is a difficult symptom for patients to deal with," she adds. The meta-analysis found that mind-body interventions consistently provided symptom improvement across nearly all measured outcomes.

## Music Therapy and Mental Health

For the majority of individuals, music is an integral part of daily life. Type of music differ in the types of neurological stimulation they evoke. Music may achieve its therapeutic effects in part by elevating the pain threshold. Whether an individual is passively listening to music, playing an instrument, or singing a song; there indeed is a healing power to music. Research shows the benefits of music therapy for various mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, autism, trauma, and schizophrenia. Music acts as a medium for processing emotions, trauma, and grief. Music can also be utilized as a regulating or calming agent for anxiety or mood dysregulation.

Research attests that music therapies can improve medical outcomes and quality of life in a variety of ways. The following are the examples:

- Easing anxiety and discomfort during procedures—In controlled clinical trials of people having colonoscopies, cardiac angiography, or knee surgery, those who listened to music before their procedure had less anxiety and less need for sedatives. People who listened to music in the operating room reported less discomfort during their procedure. And those who heard music in the recovery room



used less opioid medication for pain.

- Restoring lost speech—Music therapy can help people who are recovering from a stroke or traumatic brain injury that has damaged the left-brain region responsible for speech. Because singing ability originates in the right side of the brain, people can work around the injury to the left side of their brain by first singing their thoughts and then gradually dropping the melody.
- Reducing the side effects of cancer therapy-

Listening to music reduces anxiety associated with chemotherapy and radiotherapy. It can also quell nausea and vomiting for patients receiving chemotherapy.

- Helping with physical therapy and rehabilitation- A 2011 analysis of several studies suggest that music therapy enhances people’s physical, psychological, cognitive, and emotional functioning during physical rehabilitation programs.
- Aiding pain relief- Music therapy has been tested in patients ranging from those with intense short-term pain to those with chronic pain from arthritis. Overall, music therapy decreases pain perception, reduces the amount of pain medication needed,

helps relieve depression in pain patients, and gives them a sense of better control over their pain.

- Improving the quality of life for people with dementia- Because the ability to engage with music remains intact late into the disease process, music therapy can help to evoke memories, reduce agitation, assist communication, and improve physical coordination.

Music is an essential tool in mood management and can be used daily to heal people whether they are struggling with their emotions or a mental health disorder; music has the potential to bring great joy, to relieve stress, and to enable self-expression.

### Using Chinese Medicine to Treat PCOS

**E**lectro-acupuncture was developed in China as an alternative to manipulating acupuncture needles by hand. A study at Goteborg University in Sweden showed that electro-acupuncture may help some women with PCOS to ovulate. It involves the application of a pulsating electrical current to acupuncture needles as a means of stimulating the acupuncture points. During the study, one group of women with polycystic ovary syndrome received acupuncture regularly for four months. The second group of women were provided with heart rate monitors and instructed to exercise at least three times a week. The control group was informed about the importance of exercise



and a healthy diet but was given no other specific instructions.

The study showed that activity in the sympathetic nervous system was lower in the women who received acupuncture and in those who took regular exercise than it was in the control group. The acupuncture treatment brought further benefits. “Those who received acupuncture found that their menstrua-

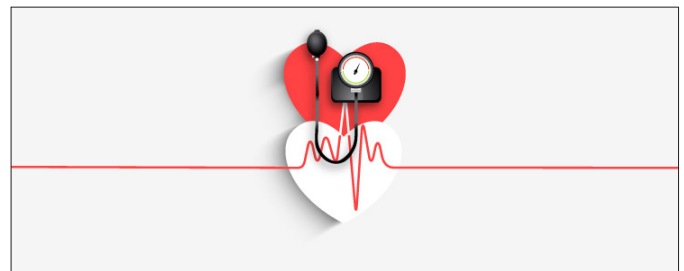
tion became more normal. We could also see that their levels of testosterone became significantly lower, and this is an important observation since elevated testosterone levels are closely connected with the increased activity in the sympathetic nervous system of women”, says Elisabet StenerVictorin, the lead researcher.

38% of women who received the electro-acupuncture experienced regular ovulation. However, the electro-acupuncture was not effective in the more severe cases (obese, highest waist-to-hip ratio, and highest testosterone and insulin individuals).

### Meditation Help to Lower High Blood Pressure

**M**editation is known to promote relaxation, shows promise as a means of keeping blood pressure in check. By using meditation to manage blood pressure, it is possible to boost the defense against heart disease, stroke, and chronic kidney disease. Meditation calms activity in the sympathetic nervous system (known to narrow the blood vessels in response to stress) and increases activity in the parasympathetic nervous system (known to promote widening of the blood vessels).

Transcendental meditation (a type of meditation that involves silently repeating a word, sound, or



phrase to stop distracting thoughts from entering the mind) may be effective for controlling blood pressure, according to a 2008 analysis of nine clinical trials.

Investigators concluded that practicing transcendental meditation may have the potential to reduce systolic and diastolic blood pressure by approximately 4.7 and 3.2 mm Hg, respectively. It should be noted that an earlier research review sized up to five clinical trials and found a lack of good-quality studies to support the use

of transcendental meditation for the management of blood pressure. Since scientists have yet to prove that meditation can significantly lower blood pressure, it's important not to rely solely on meditation as a means of keeping blood pressure in check.

## Massage Therapy Relieves Headaches

**M**assage therapy has two roles while treating migraines and tension related headaches. In a proactive role, massage treatments are performed regularly to help the body maintain an optimal level of relaxation and stress-relief. This approach reduces the chances of migraine attacks and tension headaches significantly by relaxing muscle spasms and trigger points. In a comfort role, massage is done to ease the pressure brought on during a migraine or tension related headache. By focusing on the neck, shoulders, and head, massage can decrease the pain and discomfort



brought on by migraine or tension headaches.

Recent studies showed that massage therapy recipients exhibited fewer migraines and better sleep quality during the weeks they received massage, and the three weeks following, than participants that did not receive massage therapy. Another study found that in adults

with migraine headaches, massage therapy decreased the occurrence of headaches, sleep disturbances, and distress symptoms. It also increased serotonin levels, believed to play an important role in the regulation of mood, sleep, and appetite.

Following are the benefits of relieving tension-related headaches:

- Allows one to maintain a level of relaxation and stress-relief, reducing the chances of stress-induced migraines
- Reduces muscle spasms and trigger points
- Relieves stress

## Reiki for Relieving Stress

**R**eiki is a type of complementary therapy. A Reiki practitioner puts their hands lightly on or near the body. One of the main aims is to help relax. Some people with cancer may use reiki alongside their treatment, as a complementary therapy. Reiki practitioners say that it can:

- Help to feel deeply relaxed
- Help to cope with difficult situations
- Relieve emotional stress and tension
- Help to improve overall wellbeing

Studies show that this is often because a therapist spends time with the person, and touches them. After the rush and stress of hospitals and treatment, it can be very relaxing when someone gives attention for an hour or more, in a calm setting. Reiki is sometimes used in palliative care, especially in hospices. Some people say that Reiki has helped to control the side effects of their cancer treatments, such as pain, anxiety, and sickness. They also say that it helps them cope better with their cancer and its treatment. However, it's important to bear in mind that while Reiki may help to cope with



symptoms or side effects, it is not able to treat cancer.

The aim is to move and balance the 'energy' within and around the body, to get rid of any energy blocks to encourage healing and strengthen energy. Reiki is safe for most people with cancer. There are no reports of harmful side effects.