

Evidence Shows Yoga is Good for the Brain

A review finds evidence that yoga enhances many of the same brain structures and functions that benefit from aerobic exercise. The review, published in the journal *Brain Plasticity*, focused on 11 studies of the relationship between yoga practice and brain health. Five of the studies engaged individuals with no background in yoga practice in one or more yoga sessions per week over a period of 10-24 weeks, comparing brain health at the beginning and end of the intervention. The other studies measured brain differences between individuals who regularly practice yoga and those who don't. Each of the studies used brain-imaging techniques such as MRI, functional MRI or single-photon emission computerized tomography. All involved Hatha yoga, which includes body movements, meditation and breathing exercises.

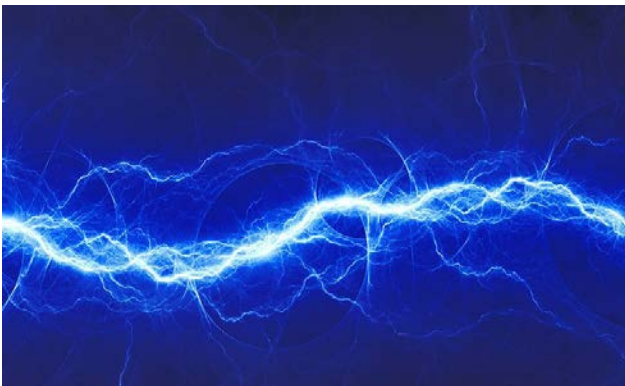
The research also points to other important brain changes associated with regular yoga practice, Damoiseaux said. The amygdala tends to be larger in yoga practitioners than in peers who do not practice yoga. The prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex and brain networks such as the default mode network also tend to be larger or more ef-



ficient in those who regularly practice yoga. The studies also find that the brain changes seen in individuals practicing yoga are associated with better performance on cognitive tests or measures of emotional regulation. "In one of the previous studies, we were looking at how yoga changes the cortisol stress response and found that those who had done yoga for eight weeks had an attenuated cortisol response to stress that was associated with better performance on tests of decision-making, task-switching and attention," Gothe said.

PEMF Therapy: Much More Than a Little Boost of Serenity

Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF) therapy can be used for taking better care of brain to help fight anxiety, depression, brain fog, and other conditions. Research and reviews on PEMF therapy for brain-health and neuro-wellness has shown it's effectiveness as a mood booster and also major depressive disorders. PEMF technology has proven anti-depression effects which are more effective than antidepressants.



This therapy when applied using applicators such as PEMF pads or pillows provides effects studied using transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS). Brain stimulation using pulsating magnetic fields improves the circulation and modifies neuro-chemical imbalances that cause depression. By enhancing cellular respiration and nutrient intake, PEMF balances hormonal functions including serotonin, dopamine and cortisol.

PEMF has the ability to provide mental and cognitive performance enhancement. It has anti-inflammatory effects on the brain tissues too. Research suggests that brain fog may, in fact, be reversible with PEMF therapy. Frequency of 10 Hz is simple and proven for long-term neuro-regenerative effects. PEMF therapy for depression has long-term neuro-wellness effects. It can thus easily be used to improve motivation without relying on antidepressants and at the same time it has life-extension effects too. PEMF therapy is the next gen-

eration electrotherapy modality with higher effectiveness and a contact-less approach as PEMFs can travel deeper into the body and so can be used at home or therapy centres quite easily.

By applying PEMF therapy, it becomes possible to stimulate the cells, neurons and tissues damaged in a stroke to recover faster. Research suggests that PEMF therapy not only improves the recovery, but

also makes it possible to achieve levels of recovery not previously possible. Researchers have also said that extremely low-frequency PEMF therapy improves the effectiveness of post-stroke rehabilitation by improving neuroplasticity. The neuroprotective effects of PEMF therapy also suggest that it might be possible to delay or avoid a stroke event if PEMF is utilized regularly.

Benefits of Tai Chi in Improving Quality of Life

Tai chi combines a series of set movements, such as “wave hands like clouds”, with relaxation and breathing. It’s a mind-body exercise because it requires concentration on posture, relaxation and breathing. “Tai chi is recommended in the rehabilitation and recovery process in a person having a heart attack or



stroke, or is affected by another heart condition. There are physical benefits like improved balance and it’s good for mental health,” said study author Dr Ruth Taylor-Piliae of the University of Arizona. The findings have been published in the *Eu-*

ropean Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing in which the research team combined analysis of clinical trials examining the effect of tai chi on psychological wellbeing in adults with coronary heart disease, heart failure, hypertension, and stroke.

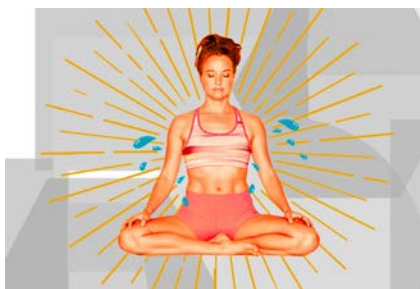
The study found that tai chi was also associated with a better quality of life. This included mental health quality of life and physical health quality of life. “Tai Chi is the synergy between postures and breathing. During tai chi, a person has good body posture, and research has shown that this enhances mood,” Taylor-Piliae said. “Tai chi is well suited for people of any age or exercise ability and can be safely adapted for anybody,” the authors concluded. Tai chi is generally considered to be a safe exercise with few side effects.

Hot Yoga Study Shows Benefits for Lowering Blood Pressure

Taking hot yoga classes lowered blood pressure in a small study of adults with elevated or stage 1 hypertension, according to preliminary research presented at the American Heart Association’s Hypertension 2019 Scientific Sessions.

Hot yoga is a modern practice, typically offered in a hot, humid atmosphere, with room temperatures around 105 degrees Fahrenheit.

Stacy Hunter, Ph.D., study



author and assistant professor and lab director of the cardiovascular physiology lab at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas and colleagues recruited 10 men and women, between ages

20 and 65 years. Participants had either elevated blood pressure or stage 1 hypertension. These adults were not taking any type of blood pressure medication and had been sedentary for at least six months before the study.

The researchers looked at average 24-hour blood pressure readings, as well as perceived stress and vascular function of participants in both groups. At 12 weeks, they found that systolic blood pressure dropped to 121

mmHg after hot yoga. Average diastolic pressure also decreased to 79 mmHg in the hot yoga group. Average blood pressure did not change among the adults

in the control group. Stress levels fell among those in the hot yoga group but not in the non-yoga group. While waking systolic and diastolic pressures fell in the

hot yoga group, blood pressure readings taken during sleep did not change.

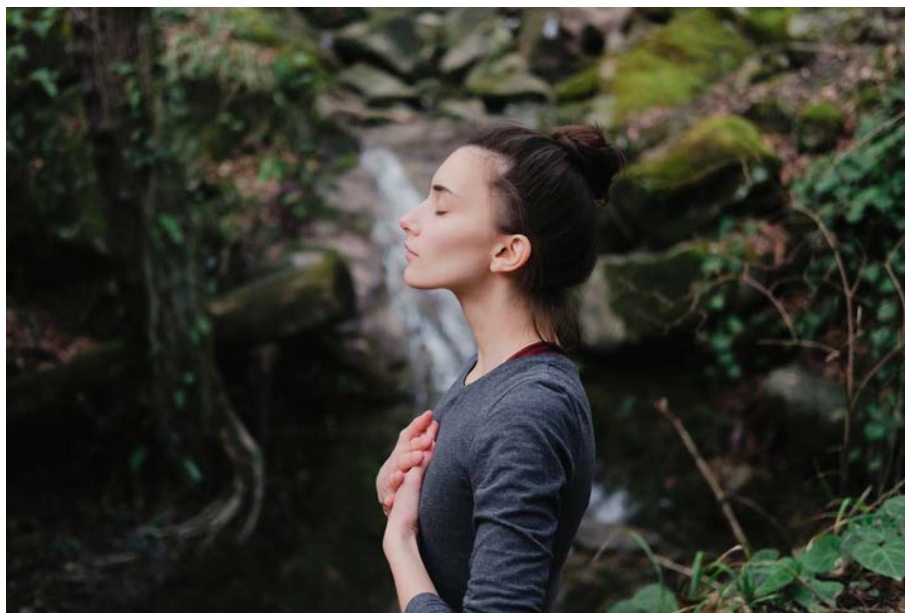
Mindful Hypnotherapy Helps in Coping with Stress

A new treatment for stress combines mindfulness with hypnotherapy has shown positive results in a Baylor University USA pilot study.

"Mindfulness is a type of meditation that involves focusing attention on present moment awareness. It can help people cope with stress, but can require months of practice and training," said researcher Gary Elkins, Ph.D., director of the Mind-Body Medicine Research Laboratory at Baylor University. "The study's basic premise is using hypnosis to deliver mindfulness goals and that could have many advantages," Elkins said.

"Combining mindfulness and hypnotherapy in a single session is a novel intervention that may be equal to or better than existing treatments, with the advantage of being more time-effective, less daunting and easier to use," he said. The study is published in the *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*. Elkins noted that while mindfulness by itself can be an effective treatment for stress and anxiety for some people, it typically is provided in eight weekly sessions that last two hours or more each week and include an all-day retreat of eight or more hours. That amount of time may be a burden in cost and time for some people.

For the study of mindful hypnotherapy, the Baylor research team recruited 42 individuals with



self-reported high stress. Half took part in an intervention of one-hour weekly individual sessions that included hypnosis inductions and suggestions for greater mindfulness. Participants also were given self-hypnosis audio recordings lasting about 20 minutes, each with suggestions for a hypnotic induction, relaxation and greater mindfulness. The second group did not take part in the intervention. At the end of the study, the intervention group reported a large decrease in stress and a significant increase in mindfulness. Most were highly satisfied with the number of sessions, the ease of home practice and the clarity of content, Elkins said. The average participant practiced almost every day, and overall satisfaction with the intervention was 8.9 on a scale of 10. In comparison, those who did not participate in the intervention reported no significant difference between pre- and post-study stress level.