

117 Health Conditions Helped by Yoga

(as found in scientific studies as of June 2019)

A green silhouette of a person in a yoga pose, specifically a standing forward bend (Uttanasana), is centered in the background. The person's arms are reaching down towards their feet, and their head is tucked in towards their knees. The silhouette is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be visible through it.

ALCOHOLISM AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE • ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE • AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS • ANXIETY • ASTHMA • ATRIAL FIBRILLATION • ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) • AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER • BACK PAIN, CHRONIC • BALANCE PROBLEMS • BREAST CANCER • BURNOUT • BURNS • CANCER (GENERAL) • CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME • CEREBRAL PALSY • CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME • CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (E.G. EMPHYSEMA) • COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT • COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME • CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE • CYSTIC FIBROSIS • DEPRESSION • DIABETES • DIABETIC LUNG • DRUG WITHDRAWAL • DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY • DYSFUNCTIONAL UTERINE BLEEDING • EATING DISORDERS • ENDOMETRIOSIS • EPILEPSY • FATIGUE • FIBROMYALGIA • FRACTURES • FROZEN SHOULDER (PERIARTHRITIS) • GAIT (WALKING) PROBLEMS • GESTATIONAL DIABETES • GUILLAIN-BARRÉ SYNDROME • HEART DISEASE • HEMOPHILIA • HEMORRHOIDS • HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE • HIV/AIDS • HYPOTHYROIDISM • INFERTILITY • INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD) • INGUINAL HERNIA • INSOMNIA • IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME • KIDNEY DISEASE, CHRONIC • LUNG CANCER • LYMPHEDEMA • LYMPHOMA • MENOPAUSAL (AND PERIMENOPAUSAL) SYMPTOMS • MENSTRUAL DISORDERS (DYSMENORRHEA) • MENTAL DEVELOPMENTAL IMPAIRMENT • METABOLIC SYNDROME • MIGRAINE AND TENSION HEADACHES • MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS) • MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY • MYOFASCIAL PAIN DYSFUNCTION SYNDROME • NECK PAIN, CHRONIC • NEUROCARDIOGENIC SYNCOPE (FAINTING) • NEUROSES (E.G. PHOBIAS) • OBESITY/OVERWEIGHT • OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD) • ORGAN TRANSPLANT • OSTEOARTHRITIS (DEGENERATIVE ARTHRITIS) • OSTEOPOROSIS • OVARIAN CANCER • PAIN, CHRONIC • PANIC DISORDER • PARKINSON'S DISEASE • PELVIC ORGAN PROLAPSE • PELVIC PAIN • PERFORMANCE ANXIETY • PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY • PERIODONTITIS • PLEURAL EFFUSION (FLUID IN THE LINING OF THE LUNG) • POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME • POST CORONARY ARTERY BYPASS SURGERY • POST-HEART ATTACK • POST IMPLANTABLE CARDIOVERTER DEFIBRILLATOR • POST-JOINT REPLACEMENT • POST-OPERATIVE RECOVERY • POST-POLIO SYNDROME • POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) • PREGNANCY (NORMAL AND COMPLICATED) • PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS) • PRENATAL/POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION • PRE-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION • PRESSURE ULCERS • PROSTATE CANCER • PSORIASIS • PULMONARY HYPERTENSION • RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME • RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS (RA) • RHINITIS (INFLAMMATION OF THE NOSE) • SCHIZOPHRENIA • SCOLIOSIS (CURVATURE OF THE SPINE) • SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION • SEXUAL TRAUMA • SINUSITIS • SKELETAL MUSCLE PAIN SYNDROME • SMOKING CESSATION • SOMATOFORM DISORDERS • SPINAL CORD INJURY • STRESS • STROKE • STUTTERING • THORACIC HYPERKYPHOSIS • TINNITIS • TOTAL KNEE ARTHROPLASTY (REPLACEMENT) • TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY • TREMOR, ESSENTIAL • TUBERCULOSIS • URINARY INCONTINENCE

117 Health Conditions Helped by Yoga*

A Bibliography of Research

by Timothy McCall, MD

Compiled June 2019

Introduction

Welcome to the 2019 update of “Health Conditions Helped by Yoga (as Shown in Scientific Studies).” This all started out in 2007 with the publication of my book *Yoga as Medicine: The Yogic Prescription for Health and Healing*. In the “Science of Yoga” chapter, I included a list of 43 conditions that medical studies suggested yoga benefitted.

In the 12 years since *Yoga as Medicine* appeared, the amount of scientific research of the ancient Indian practice has exploded, growing at an ever-increasing rate. According to my colleague Dr. Sat Bir Singh Khalsa of Harvard Medical School — arguably the leading authority on yoga research in the United States — the quality of that research has also improved.

There are now numerous randomized, controlled trials (RCTs), considered the “gold standard,” in the scientific investigation of medical treatments, as well as dozens of metaanalyses, studies that combine the results of RCTs. This growth in yoga research allowed Dr. Khalsa and I — along with Dr. Lorenzo Cohen of the MD Anderson Cancer Center, and India’s Dr. Shirley Telles, the most prolific yoga researcher in the world — to co-edit the 2016 medical textbook *The Principles and Practice of Yoga in Health Care*.

Due to the expanding research base, when I updated Health Conditions Helped by Yoga in 2010, the list had grown to 54 conditions. When I added research through 2012, I was amazed to see it had jumped to 75 conditions. By late 2016, it was 101 conditions. Now it’s 117.

The irony is that in yoga therapy, we don’t treat medical conditions per se. We treat individuals. We help them de-stress, stand and sit with better posture, breath more efficiently, calm their nervous systems and boost their immune function. We give them practices that help them sleep better, feel happier, find greater peace of mind and a heightened sense of meaning and fulfillment in

*as shown in scientific studies

their lives. By doing these things (and much more), yoga can help almost any health condition, mental or physical, to improve. More precisely, the people with these conditions can feel better and function better — whether from a medical standpoint they can be cured or not. This is what holistic health — which considers every aspect of mind, body, spirit and environment — is all about.

A further irony is that the research showing so many benefits of yoga, almost certainly underestimates the discipline's healing powers. There are many reasons for this but a big one is that in order to fit into the rules of medical research, yoga studies assign standardized yoga routines based on the person's western medical diagnosis. This is the antithesis of what good yoga therapists actually do. The best yoga isn't "one-size-fits-all" based on the health condition (or one of them in those people have more than one). State-of-the-art yoga therapy is tailored to individuals and their unique, and ever-changing, situations. If truly personalized yoga is ever studied scientifically, I believe it will almost certainly be shown to be more effective (and likely safer) than the standardized protocols currently favored in research. My latest book, *Saving My Neck: A Doctor's East/West Journey through Cancer*, explores this issue in detail.

Whatever its limitations, yoga research has been enormously helpful in making the case that yoga heals. It has helped win over many doctors, skeptical journalists and tens of millions of members of the general public. For this we owe yoga researchers an enormous debt of gratitude.

This bibliography includes dozens of pages of references, as well as hyperlinks to study abstracts and, where available, free full-text articles. We will also be giving it away on various eBook platforms. I publish these lists as a service, so please feel free to share this PDF on your web page, post it on social media, and copy and distribute it to anyone who might be interested — perhaps even your doctor!

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Timothy McCall, MD



Timothy McCall, MD is a board-certified internist, *Yoga Journal*'s medical editor since 2002 and the author of three books including the Amazon #1 bestseller *Yoga as Medicine* and his latest *Saving My Neck*. Dr. McCall practiced medicine in the Boston area for a dozen years before devoting himself in the late 1990s to yoga therapy. His articles have appeared in dozens of publications, including *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *JAMA*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Nation*. From 1996 to 2001, his medical commentaries were featured on the public radio program *Marketplace*. In addition to contributing to and co-editing a medical textbook on yoga therapy, he serves on the editorial board of *The International Journal of Yoga Therapy*. Timothy is the founder and director of the Yoga As Medicine® Seminars and Teacher Trainings. He lives in Burlington, Vermont and lectures and teaches around the world.

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(as found in scientific studies as of June 2019)

1. Alcoholism and Other Drug Abuse
2. Alzheimer's Disease
3. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
4. Anxiety
5. Asthma
6. Atrial Fibrillation
7. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
8. Autism Spectrum Disorder
9. Back Pain, Chronic
10. Balance Problems
11. Breast Cancer
12. Burnout
13. Burns
14. Cancer (General)
15. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
16. Cerebral Palsy
17. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
18. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (e.g. Emphysema)
19. Cognitive Impairment
20. Computer Vision Syndrome
21. Congestive Heart Failure
22. Cystic Fibrosis
23. Depression
24. Diabetes
25. Diabetic Lung
26. Drug Withdrawal
27. Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy
28. Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding
29. Eating Disorders
30. Endometriosis
31. Epilepsy
32. Fatigue
33. Fibromyalgia
34. Fractures
35. Frozen Shoulder (Periarthritis)
36. Gait (Walking) Problems
37. Gestational Diabetes
38. Guillain-Barré Syndrome
39. Heart Disease
40. Hemophilia
41. Hemorrhoids
42. High Blood Pressure
43. HIV/AIDS
44. Hypothyroidism
45. Infertility
46. Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
47. Inguinal Hernia
48. Insomnia
49. Irritable Bowel Syndrome
50. Kidney Disease, Chronic
51. Lung Cancer
52. Lymphedema
53. Lymphoma
54. Menopausal (and Perimenopausal) Symptoms
55. Menstrual Disorders (Dysmenorrhea)
56. Mental Developmental Impairment
57. Metabolic Syndrome
58. Migraine and Tension Headaches
59. Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
60. Muscular Dystrophy
61. Myofascial Pain Dysfunction Syndrome
62. Neck Pain, Chronic
63. Neurocardiogenic Syncope (Fainting)
64. Neuroses (e.g. Phobias)
65. Obesity/Overweight
66. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
67. Organ Transplant
68. Osteoarthritis (Degenerative Arthritis)
69. Osteoporosis
70. Ovarian Cancer
71. Pain, Chronic
72. Panic Disorder
73. Parkinson's Disease
74. Pelvic Organ Prolapse
75. Pelvic Pain
76. Performance Anxiety
77. Peripheral Neuropathy
78. Periodontitis
79. Pleural Effusion (Fluid in the Lining of the Lung)
80. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome
81. Post Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery
82. Post-Heart Attack
83. Post Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator
84. Post-Joint Replacement
85. Post-Operative Recovery
86. Post-Polio Syndrome
87. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
88. Pregnancy
- (Normal and Complicated)
89. Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
90. Prenatal/Postpartum Depression
91. Pre-Operative Rehabilitation
92. Pressure Ulcers
93. Prostate Cancer
94. Psoriasis
95. Pulmonary Hypertension
96. Restless Leg Syndrome
97. Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
98. Rhinitis (Inflammation of the Nose)
99. Schizophrenia
100. Scoliosis (Curvature of the Spine)
101. Sexual Dysfunction
102. Sexual Trauma
103. Sinusitis
104. Skeletal Muscle Pain Syndrome
105. Smoking Cessation
106. Somatoform Disorders
107. Spinal Cord Injury
108. Stress
109. Stroke
110. Stuttering
111. Thoracic Hyperkyphosis
112. Tinnitus
113. Total Knee Arthroplasty (Replacement)
114. Traumatic Brain Injury
115. Tremor, Essential
116. Tuberculosis
117. Urinary Incontinence





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Compiled by Timothy McCall, MD (Updated June 2019)

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