

Benefits of Prenatal Yoga

Anyone who has practiced yoga knows how much of a total body workout it can be. Yoga aids in flexibility, strength, endurance, and focus. Yoga enables the stretching of muscles and connective tissues, stimulating organ systems and promoting the circulation of blood and oxygen. It's also a wonderful way to quiet down the mind using the breath.

On the top of the list of people who should give yoga a try are expecting mothers. Prenatal yoga can be a great way to not only work the body in an essential way for moms-to-be, but also provides a good preparation for the breath and mind for delivery and beyond. Some excellent benefits of prenatal yoga are as follows.

Reduces aches and fatigue in lower regions of the spine:

Through your yoga practice, you become more aware of proper body alignment. So, you can carry yourself and your belly with much better ease. This can help reduce the degree of pelvic tilt associated with pregnancy. Therefore, significantly reduce the lower back pain that a pelvic tilt can cause.

Improved rest and sleep:

For mommies to be, it can be difficult to find a comfortable space for yourself when trying to sit or sleep. This results in poor spinal alignment, causing pain and restlessness. Practicing yoga can create more fluidity in the spine. So, expecting mothers can find it much easier to find a more comfortable position when sitting, resting, or sleeping.

Reduced swelling & inflammation of joints:

A regular yoga practice promotes the healthy circulation of blood and oxygen throughout your body. This is good for transporting nutrients in your blood, and cycling out tension and toxins from your body. Thus, helping keep your joints healthy and helping reduce swelling and inflammation around your ankles and wrists.

Improves emotional well-being:

Being involved in a group prenatal yoga class provides a supportive community. You share your yoga experience with other expecting mothers who are experiencing each stage of pregnancy themselves and preparing for birth.

In addition, engaging in deep belly breathing helps move the body into the action of the parasympathetic nervous system (rest-and-relax response). The body responds to the parasympathetic nervous system by slowing the heart rate and decreasing blood pressure, while increasing the release of endorphins. When you consistently practice moving your body in a rhythmic fashion in unison with your breath, you carry with you a powerful relaxation and pain management tool. The imprinted memory of your relationship to your breath can assist in managing the pains of contractions in birth.

Aids in labor:

Many yoga poses can assist you in discovering more comfortable laboring positions. It can be helpful to have an idea of how you can position your body to help you during contractions and during relaxation.

Also, through your yoga practice, you can learn to become more aware of when you are holding tension in your body. A tense body is not going to help the birth process as easily as a relaxed body. When your body is tense, you may not breathe properly and not focus on breathing for your delivery process. As a result, a regular practice can reduce the length of your labor.

When it comes time to ride through the most powerful delivery contractions, being aware of your calm breath can be one of the most useful tools. Deep inhales and long slow exhales encourage deep belly breathing necessary for the healthy birth of your baby. Having moment by moment awareness in your yoga practice can assist you in attending to labor moment by moment, helping you better manage labor.

Overall, research suggests that yoga can have many benefits for pregnant women and their babies. Studies have suggested that practicing yoga can improve sleep, reduce stress and anxiety, increase strength and flexibility, and help with endurance in childbirth.

Regular practice of yoga can also decrease nausea, carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches, and shortness of breath. It can also decrease the risk of preterm labor, pregnancy-induced hypertension and intrauterine growth restriction, a condition that slows a baby's growth.

Yoga is also a perfect workout after you have your baby as well. After your child is born, starting out with gentle yoga movements, easy stretching, and calm breathing is a great way to start your body moving again.

Look for a yoga studio that offers gentle yoga classes with teachers that give personal attention. Some types of gentle yoga may include Yin Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Gentle Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, and Restorative Yoga. Of course, Prenatal Yoga is specific for expectant mothers. But, all gentle yoga type yoga classes can be wonderful for mommies to be and mommies with a new baby.