

Yoga for Arthritis

Yoga is a great way to decrease or eliminate arthritis pain. The word "arthritis" means "joint inflammation." The Greek "athron" means joint, and the Latin "itis" means inflammation. Yoga poses help open joints to relieve tension and improve physical function. Arthritis pain can be relieved by creating more mobility in joints and increasing flexibility, while stretching and strengthening the muscles around joints. Yoga may also help prevent or minimize the erosion of cartilage that causes joint pain and swelling in arthritis. Synovial fluid in joints is distributed more effectively when joints are taken through their range of motion.

Yoga is gentle, relatively safe, and can be practiced just about anywhere. According to Johns Hopkins University, scientific studies of yoga have shown promising results for arthritis pain, including improvement in joint health, physical functioning, and mental/emotional well-being.

If you're new to yoga, you need to start slowly and gently. Regular practice of yoga can bring relief from arthritis pain if the poses are done mindfully with good body alignment. Beginning yoga classes and gentle yoga classes will teach you simpler poses first, to gradually and safely build up your strength, balance, and flexibility.

Standing poses are very good to help alleviate arthritis pain in all joints, while developing the muscles around these joints to provide more stability. To keep joints and muscles healthy and strong, they must be used. When they're not used, they become weaker and more unstable with more likely-hood of injury, more pain, and debilitation. Inactivity is terrible for someone with arthritis. So, regular yoga practice can reduce degeneration and pain of joints. Gentle movements help maintain mobility and increase blood flow. Increased blood circulation helps to reduce swelling and pain, improving the ease of daily functional movements.

Some basic yoga poses, which may be used to treat arthritis pain include: triangle pose (opens the shoulders, hips, and spine), cobra pose (opens the shoulders and improves flexibility of the back), staff pose (stretches the hamstrings and lower back) and downward facing dog pose (excellent whole-body stretch).

Many yoga students, with varying degrees of arthritis, have noticed that their joints are

more mobile and hurt less when they take yoga classes regularly. They also feel better overall. If you're interested in practicing yoga as a way to ease your own arthritis symptoms, it is important to find a good teacher. Your teacher can help you ease into the poses and modify them if necessary. Gentle Hatha Flow, Iyengar, and Yin Yoga classes are best since they provide slow stretches with lots of instruction.

To discover your own yoga practice, look for a yoga studio that specializes in smaller classes and personal attention. It is important you feel comfortable enough to tell your yoga instructor your past and current health issues. With regular yoga practice, your wellness can only improve.