

Yoga for Modern City Life: Yoga Helps Ease Modern Stress

For Gail Stuart, who is finishing a beginner's series, yoga is an antidote to the stress of her job at the Medical University of South Carolina, where she works with psychiatric research. You just walk through the whole process, and you feel yourself slipping away. It's a different workout, she says, a welcome alternative to aerobics or exercise machines, which remind her of a torture chamber.

Yoga is the most prominent form of the burgeoning mind-body health movement, which includes tai chi, qigong and other meditative forms of exercise.

The practice of yoga should integrate every aspect of human existence. While many of modern Western practitioners focus on the physical asanas, for others, yoga is an all-encompassing way of life and a path to bliss.

Considering yoga's lofty goals, it's delightfully simple and can be done anywhere, anytime. Taken to its extreme, yoga encompasses everything from a moral code and dietary practices to deep meditation. Most commonly, though, it's a combination of asanas, pranayama (breathing exercises) and some meditation.

Yoga would be an effective and relatively cheap substitute for many anxious and stressed patients, although they would probably also need to be motivated to become physically fit.