

Yoga's Holistic Treatment For Arthritis

There are a great many people who are in the unfortunate position of having to live with painful aches and pains caused by severely damaged or inflamed joints. For some people it is a discomfort, and that is bad enough, but for others arthritis can turn them into a virtual cripples. Arthritis has been something that has affected people throughout history since prehistoric times, but it is only recently that we have begun to understand it.

Arthritis is a joint disease that can cause problems in any area of the body where two or more bones intersect. The arthritis itself can affect the joint in a number of different ways, targeting different areas such as the synovium, the muscles or tendons or the cartilage. Cartilage is the soft protective material that protects the ends of the joints from rubbing against each other and the entire joint is encased in a type of capsule that is lined with the tissue synovium.

Arthritis is a broad term which we use to describe a group of over 100 disease that effect these area of the body. Wherever there is a problem involving inflammation around the joints and associated discomfit in movement we refer to it as arthritis despite the multiple different causes that can lead to this. The other common name that is used in the same broad fashion is rheumatism.

Because it affects so many people arthritis is a very public problem and is discussed openly and frequently. Roughly one in every seven Americans is thought to have arthritis in some form and relieving the pain of Arthritis is a primary concern for all people suffering from it. Some people take medication, but others have found relief from the pain in exercises performed at a gentle pace and intensity. Yoga is the perfect example of this type of exercise.

Yoga is a very old art originating in India up to 4000 years ago. It uses poses or postures along with deeply controlled breathing exercises that lead to benefits to the body mind and spirit. Yoga is a very versatile form of exercise and meditation and it is used, in different forms, to treat a very wide range of medical conditions and injuries including such diverse areas as fibromyalgia, arthritic, migraine headaches, chronic pain, and sports injuries.

The common misconception with using Yoga for arthritis pain is that it will mean contorting and bending the body in unnatural ways in an effort to force the body to accept the pain and develop some level of comfort. The core attributes of a Yoga for Arthritis Program are still going to be breathing and meditation but the exercises are specially catered to the individuals level of movement and comfort. Stretching will still be involved but they are a part of Yoga's core

statement of developing balance and harmony between the body and mind and enhancing the bodies strength and flexibility. Each pose or position assumed during a Yoga workout has a specific purpose and a specific physical benefit. Sometimes the poses will be done in rapid succession to create heat in the body, a style known as Vinyasa Yoga, and sometimes they are performed more slowly to increase the level of stamina, perfection in the pose and core strength through holding the pose. The poses themselves remain the same but how they are entered and approached will vary greatly from discipline to discipline and teacher to teacher.

The Yoga poses can be tailored specially for specific joints or combinations of joints. For instance a common area for arthritis to strike is the hands and knuckles and in this instance there would be a series of poses that straighten and lengthen the fingers, although the level of comfort in the arthritis sufferer always dictates the extent of this. Stretching the hands also feed energy to that area of the body and over time will assist the arthritis in the fingers. The heat generated by these movements is proven to be very beneficial for sufferers of arthritis.

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