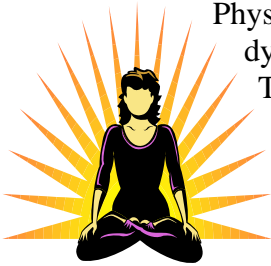


PHYSICAL THERAPY

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YOGA IN PHYSICAL THERAPY



Physical Therapy is a dynamic profession. The goal of physical therapist is to enhance movement and function. This is accomplished by evaluating and treating dysfunction and disability, as well as educating individuals on prevention of future problems. In recent years, various complimentary therapies have been studied and utilized in conjunction with western medicine in the treatment of dysfunction and disability. These therapies include Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, The Feldenkreis Method and Reflexology... This article will focus on Yoga as a complimentary therapy in physical therapy.

YOGA

Yoga means "union" in Sanskrit, the classical language of India. Yoga is an integrated system of education for the mind, body, and spirit, essentially away of life. Developed in India over 5000 years ago, Yoga has evolved over the centuries and divided into 4 different paths: Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Raja.

Raja yoga is the path commonly practiced by most individuals. This form is based on a practical system of concentration and control of the mind, which is achieved via good conduct, steady posture, breath regulation, and

withdrawal from the senses. Hatha yoga is a form of Raja yoga which emphasizes Asanas (postures) and Pranayama (breath control).

Yoga emphasizes self-discipline via simple living and high thinking. The Yogic path believes in order for the body to function smoothly, one must perform the following;

- Asana = Proper Exercise/Posture
- Pranayama = Yogic Breathing
- Relaxation
- Positive Thinking & Meditation
- Vegetarian Diet

ASANAS are gentle stretching exercises and postures, which lubricate joints, muscles, ligaments, and tendons in the body. They also help tone the nervous system, increase circulation, release tension and improve flexibility.

PRANAYAMIC BREATHING is a deep breathing technique to cleanse and nourish the body. Inhalation supplies an abundance of oxygen to each cell in the body and exhalation expels the impurities. Pranayama taps into the Solar Plexus and releases Vital Energy (PRANA) for physical and mental rejuvenation. Pranayama cleanses and strengthens channels in the body called NADIS & CHAKRAS which are astral bodies where the Nadis cross.

RELAXATION techniques should be applied to all three, the physical, mental, and spiritual being. Physical relaxation can be attained via the asanas, mental relaxation via pranayama, and spiritual relaxation via meditation & positive thinking. Meditation can balance the mind, help one focus and concentrate on any task at hand, as well as achieve oneness, which helps destroy negative emotions such as anger, hatred, and jealousy at their roots.

Physical therapists can utilize Yoga in their treatments to improve their patients'

- Muscle tone, flexibility, strength & endurance
- Improve circulation
- Stimulate the Immune system

- Reduce Stress & Tension
- Lower body fat
- Create a sense of well being

Research has shown Yoga has helped manage and often control anxiety, arthritis, asthma, back pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, headaches, heart disease, depression, stress and various other conditions.

Yoga can be practiced for both its spiritual path and psycho and physiological benefits. Whatever reason you choose to engage in Yoga, you will discover its many rewards.