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Mobile Physical Therapy August 2011

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--APTA: American Physical Therapy Association Geriatrics Section--Wellness Promotion

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Mobile Physical Therapy is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) is a individual membership professional organization representing more than 77,000 member physical therapists (PTs), physical therapist assistants (PTAs), and students of physical therapy. The APTA has several Sections, including the section on Geriatrics, which promotes the knowledge of PT in older adults.

In the section on geriatrics in a group which focuses on wellness: Health Promotion and Wellness Special Interest Group (HPW SIG) of the Section on Geriatrics. Every month they look at various forms of wellness and exercise programs --which have been examined scientifically --to encourage all of us to exercise. This month's topic is *yoga*.

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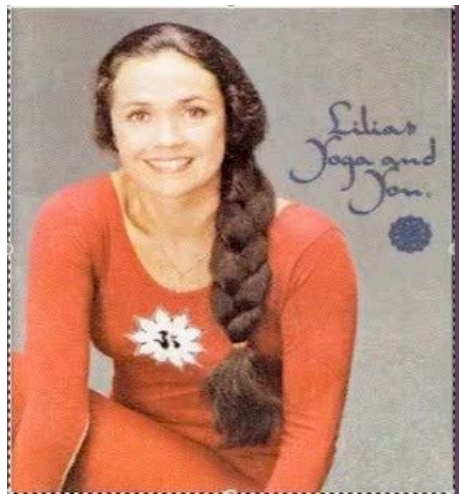
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IN-HOME FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM

--Yoga for Older Adults: Is it Good for Me?



Do you remember Lilia and her yoga show on PBS during the 1970's?

Many people are becoming interested in yoga, including older adults. That can be a challenge because older people have varying abilities and health problems. Is it safe for older adults to do yoga?

That is a good question, and the answer depends on who you talk with. Maybe your neighbor loves yoga but your best friend says it hurts too much. Some people react differently to different types of exercise. Physical Therapists and other health care professionals are trying to look scientifically at whether or not Yoga can help maintain fitness for older adults. I will summarize a couple of research articles that hope to answer the question: does it help older

adults?

The first study looked at a several articles published about yoga. Some of hte articles looked at how well some people were performing (walking, strength) etc.) before and after taking a series of classes.

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It included 10 studies with 544 participants (average age 69 years). But large variability in yoga styles and measurements made it challenging to interpret results across studies. Studies reported moderate improvements for walking, balance, upper/lower body flexibility, lower body strength, and weight loss.

[For an abstract of this article, click here.](#)

So, it appears, at least from these studies, that yoga is of at least some benefit for older adults, in the 60-75 year old age range.

Another research article took a different approach. They decided to ask older adults who had been taking yoga classes for 6 months what they thought of yoga exercise. The people, who lived either in the community or in a nursing home, were taking a program called "Silver Yoga".

The Silver Yoga program had four phases: warm-up, hatha yoga, relaxation and guided-imagery meditation, and the abdominal breathing technique.

The researchers interviewed each participant individually and here's what they found out: The program was fairly acceptable, feasible and helpful for community AND nursing home elders. The warm-up, relaxation, guided-imagery meditation and abdominal breathing are fairly easy to follow and perform. However, the postures in hatha yoga phase were relatively challenging but still manageable for both groups.

[For and abstract fo this article, click here.](#)

So based on these two scientific research articles, yoga has some fitness benefits and is tolerated by a wide range of abilities, including even those in nursing homes. Don't forger, the exercise program can be modified to each person's ability. Do what you can do, but at least do something...

For some resources on yoga see below.

--Yoga Resources

As you read in the article above, yoga can be modified so that all age groups and abilities can participate. I have provided a few of my favorite yoga resources below. I really like videos that people can use at home if they have a hard time getting to a class.

For people who have a back problems: Check out this video created by a physical therapist especially for people who have back problems.

Safe Yoga for Low Back--Vicki Simms, PT

<http://www.amazon.com/Safe-Yoga-Back-Renee-Field/dp/B002G9CVMI>

There are also videos which are designed to be done sitting in a chair. The following is a link to a video I like. If you are unable to do the poses which require a second chair, just skip them.

Chair Yoga with Ann Richmond

<http://www.amazon.com/Chair-Yoga-Practice-Ann-Richmond/dp/B001AMSG1M>

Here is an additional written for Yoga teachers or health care professionals who may want to incorporate yoga for older adults into their practice.

Teaching Yoga to Seniors

[http://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/3303/280739600012.pdf?
sequence=1](http://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/3303/280739600012.pdf?sequence=1)

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