

Yoga Therapy

What is yoga therapy

Yoga therapy is taught by yoga teachers who have additional training and experience in the therapeutic applications of yoga for individuals with impaired health or compromised well being.

Tailored practices are developed to meet an individual's needs based on established yoga models. These models help the therapist analyse and address the needs taking into account physical, energetic, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Practices may include: posture work, breath work, meditation, reflection, relaxation, use of sound and short supportive phrases, and visualisation.

A yoga therapy session

When visiting a yoga therapist, a medical history will be taken. The body, posture, simple movements, and the breath may be observed. Issues and concerns will be discussed. The practitioner will then plan and teach a practice tailored to the needs of that individual and direction for a programme of practices will be proposed.

Patients may be taught one-to-one or in a therapy group setting and practice sheets or other support materials will be given for set home practices. A number of sessions will be needed to confirm safe and appropriate practice, and then to develop and refine the practice to meet the needs of the individual.

How yoga therapy may help

Practices tailored for the individual by a yoga therapist may help a wide range of disorders including: stress related problems; physical ailments including back and joint issues; breathing disorders; issues for women during PMS, pregnancy and menopause; mental and emotional issues such as anxiety, depression; postural and balance problems.

Yoga may help patients recovering from injuries, surgery, and illness. It may also enhance the quality of life for patients with chronic diseases.

Choosing a practitioner

It is important to choose a qualified practitioner who has undertaken all the necessary training to understand the theory and practice of yoga therapy.

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), which is supported by the Department of Health, can help when choosing a practitioner who meets the national standards of practice in yoga therapy: it has established a voluntary register for complementary healthcare practitioners who all meet the required levels of competence and practice.

Further information and registered practitioners can be found on the CNHC website www.cnhc.org.uk