Research

Hot Yoga Cools Anxiety, Relieves Depression

Hot Yoga Cools Anxiety, Relieves Depression

Miami — Yoga is effective for reducing anxiety, depression, and stress in women at risk for mental health problems, new research suggests.

"Yoga has become increasingly popular for addressing anxiety and depressive symptoms," lead researcher Lindsey B. Hopkins DeBoer, PhD, from the San Francisco VA Medical Center, in California, told Medscape Medical News.

"I know from my own experience that practicing yoga helped me to cope with the stresses of graduate school. I started doing Bikram yoga in my second or third year, and I noticed dramatic improvement in my ability to handle those stresses. It also improved physical symptoms, such as my lower back pain, which were severe," said Hopkins DeBoer.

The findings were presented here at the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) Conference 2015.

Reduces Cortisol

"Research has shown yoga to reduce levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, but there have been very few trials of yoga, and those that have been done have had important methodological limitations," she said.

In the current study, the investigators examined the effects of Bikram yoga, which is a heated form of Hatha yoga, on depression and anxiety symptoms in a community sample of at-risk women.

The women were recruited with the help of flyers posted in places such as Starbucks and neighborhood shops, she explained.

The study included 52 women, aged 25 to 45 years, who had mildly elevated anxiety (mean Beck Anxiety Inventory score, 12.8), and moderate depression (mean Beck Depression Inventory score, 18.3) and high stress mean (Perceived Stress Questionnaire score, 0.80).

None of the women had taken yoga or had engaged in other mind-body exercises within the past year, nor had they a history of anorexia, bipolar disorder, or psychotic disorders.

The women were randomly assigned to receive two Bikram yoga classes per week or to a wait-list control group. Each class lasted 90 minutes.

Women who received the yoga intervention showed greater decreases in anxiety (P = .001), stress (P = .003), and negative affect (P = .02).

Yoga’s effects on stress and depression were somewhat greater for African American women than for non–African American women, Dr Hopkins DeBoer said.

However, the number of African American women in the study was small (11 [21%]), she noted.

"Because of the small number, I don’t think we can make any definite conclusions about yoga being more beneficial for African American women as opposed to white women," said Dr Hopkins DeBoer.

"But I think we can say that yoga could be an especially important intervention for them, given that African American women have higher rates of depression and psychosocial stressors and lower rates of mental health care use," she added.
Research Papers published on Bikram Yoga

(1) Journal Name: Cognitive Behavior Therapy
Date of publication: Online on 8 May, 2015
Title of Article: Effects of a Hatha Yoga Intervention on Facets of Distress Tolerance:
Authors: Johnna Medina, Jasper Smits, Scarlett O. Baird, Mark Powers - Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA
Lindsey Hopkins - San Francisco VA Medical Center, San Francisco, CA, USA

(2) Journal Name: Scientific Research
Date of publication: Online on 9 May, 2014 in Scientific Research
Title of Article: Optimization of Physical Activity as a Countermeasure of Bone Loss: A 5-Year Study of Bikram Yoga Practice in Females
Authors: Sophia N. Sangiorgio - Orthopaedic Biomechanics and Mechano-Biology Laboratory, Orthopaedic Institute for Children, Los Angeles, USA & Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, University of California, Los Angeles, USA.
Amr K. Mukherjee - Bikram's Yoga College of India, Los Angeles, USA
Nicole W. Lau - University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA
Apurba Mukherjee - Bikram's Yoga College of India, Los Angeles, USA
Prithwis Mukhopadhyay - Bikram's Yoga College of India, Los Angeles, USA
Edward Ebramzadeh - Orthopaedic Biomechanics and Mechano-Biology Laboratory, Orthopaedic Institute for Children, Los Angeles, USA & Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, University of California, Los Angeles, USA.

(3) Journal Name: e How (on line journal)
Date of publication: 11 August, 2013
Title of Article: The Advantages of Bikram Yoga over Traditional Methods of Health Therapy
Authors: Stacy D. Hunter, Ph.D.

(4) Journal Name: Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies
Publisher: Elsevier
Date of publication: 21 February, 2013
Title of Article: Improvements in glucose tolerance with Bikram Yoga in older obese adults- A pilot study
Authors: Stacy D. Hunter, Ph.D., Mandeep Dhindsa, M.B.B.S., Emily Cunningham, M.Ed., Takashi Tanum, Ph.D., Mohammed Alkatan, Ph.D. - Cardiovascular Ageing Research Laboratory, Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, The University of Texas at Austin.

(5) Journal Name: The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine Volume 18, Number 0, 2013, pp. 1-5.
Title of Article: The Effect of Bikram Yoga on Arterial Stiffness in Young and Older Adults
Authors: Stacy D. Hunter, Ph.D., Cardiovascular Aging Research Laboratory, Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, The University of Texas at Austin, Mandeep S. Dhindsa, MBBS, Emily Cunningham, MEd, Takashi Tanum, Ph.D., Mohammed Alkatan, MS, Nantinee Nualnim, PhD, and Hirofumi Tanaka, PhD.

Title of Article: Decreased Nocturnal Awakenings in Young Adults Performing Bikram Yoga: A Low-Constraint Home Sleep Monitoring Study
Authors: Ravi S. Kudesia, Sleep Division, Neurology Department, Massachusetts General Hospital, Wang 720, Boston, MA 02114, USA.
Matt T. Bianchi, Sleep Division, Neurology Department, Massachusetts General Hospital, Wang 720, Boston, MA 02114, USA.

(7) Journal Name: Journal of Exercise Science and Fitness, Vol 9, No 2 (2011)
Title of Article: An Examination of the Effectiveness of a 8-week Bikram Yoga Program on Mindfulness, Perceived Stress and Physical Fitness.
Authors: Zoe L. Hewett - Jaeger Circuit, Bruce, ACT 2617, AUSTRALIA, Lynda B. Ransdell - Department of Kinesiology, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, USA, Yong Gao - Department of Kinesiology, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, USA, Linda M. Petlichkoff - Department of Kinesiology, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, USA, Shelly Lucas - Department of Kinesiology, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, USA.

(8) Journal Name: Chinese Medicine (Scientific Research Journal) Volume 1, Number 1, (June 2010)
Title of Article: Bikram Yoga as a Countermeasure of Bone Loss in Women
Authors: Apurba Mukherjee, Ph.D., Prithwis Mukherjee, and Dr. Robert R. Rude, M.D.

(9) Journal Name: The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research Volume 22, Number 5, (September 2008)
Title of Article: Yoga as Steadiness Training: Effects on Motor Variability in Young Adults
Authors: Cady E.F. Hart and Brian L. Tracy, Ph.D., Department of Health and Exercise Science, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Note: You may request details regarding these research articles at research@bikrmyoga.com