

Yoga & Chair Yoga For Caregivers and Loved One's (Dementia/Alzheimer's)

Many doctors and care facilities are encouraging Yoga and Chair Yoga for their patients. A vast amount of recent research supports “Exercise is extremely beneficial to the function of our brains”. For those with D/A, regular exercise improves cognition, fine motor skills, posture, and quality of life.

Yoga and Chair Yoga is an easy way to move and get exercise, nearly anywhere. “Integrating a mindfulness practice” into your exercise regimen will enhance mood, improve memory and promote calmness.

The Benefits of Yoga On The Body And Mind

- improves core stability, overall strength and balance
- promotes mobility and improves flexibility
- increases oxygen intake and develops lung capacity
- helps to promote feelings of well-being and overall stress reduction
- lowers blood pressure
- it is possible for all levels of mobility to participate
- gives meaning to every day through activity
- creates a sense of well being

The Latest Research on Yoga and Chair Yoga for D/A

A recent study examined whether or not patients with moderate-to-severe dementia would benefit from Yoga and Chair Yoga. The 8-week “Sit and Fit” program involved twice weekly 60-minute classes. First, there was 20 minutes of breathing (pranayama) to help center the mind. Next, they did 30 minutes of physical postures (asana). Each class finished with 10 minutes of guided meditation. All nine participants attended 100% of the classes and experienced remarkable changes. Furthermore, the authors of the study noticed increased balance and a greater general sense of well-being. In addition, they saw all patients complete “all aspects of the

program, and did not lose interest in participation.” While this is a small sample size, the initial data is promising.

Be Prepared

If you plan on bringing your loved one to a Yoga or Chair Yoga session,

- Make sure they are in the right clothing.
- Some Yoga classes often have no shoes,
 - But some poses might cause the risk of slips and falls. Gripper socks or slip resistant socks will allow them to participate properly as a yoga student while remaining safe.
- Make sure they have stretchy elastic waist pants, so that they are not constricted when doing the poses.
- Finally make sure they are comfortable, with clothes that will keep them covered even if they have to bend over or sit down.
- Be prepared with lots of water in case they need a break.
- Even a sweater in case you enter a center with air conditioning.
- The first time, expect the unexpected.
 - Things may not work on the first try, don't be disheartened if it's a bit rocky at first.

Yoga and Chair Yoga at Home

- If you are the caregiver for your loved one, you can use the resources below to create a practice.
- Practicing alongside them, also reaps the benefits of Yoga and Chair Yoga for yourself. It's a great bonding and connecting experience.
- You will need a sturdy chair in an area where there are no sharp edges in case of a fall. Make sure that the space is safe.
- Maybe dedicate a portion of a room to Yoga and Chair Yoga.
- Use proper footwear with a slip resistant sole.

*****Please note that you should always talk to your doctor before starting this or any exercise program.**

Use the following YouTube links for follow along videos and step by step instructions to guide your own practice at home:

Sherry Zak Morris - Somewhere Over the Rainbow Chair Yoga Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2OW7HGXwqs>

20-Minute Chair Yoga Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ts01MC2mlo>

30-Minute Chair Yoga Video

Chair Yoga for Seniors: Reduce Pain and Improve Health [Video]

List and Instructions for 7 Chair Yoga Poses

<https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness-exercise/chair-yoga-for-seniors#1>

List and Instructions for 10 Yoga Poses

<https://www.verywellfit.com/chair-yoga-poses-3567189>