

Fighting Depression with Yoga

By Lakshmi Devi of
Supatha Yoga & Pilates



Sri Lakshmi Devi E-RYT has been practicing yoga for over 31 years; qualified at The Integral Yoga Ashram, certified by Mount Sinai School of Medicine and attended the New York College of Wholistic Health Education & Research receiving her associated degree in European Bodywork & Massage Therapy. Lakshmi is also a certified Pilates Mat instructor and certified fitness leader for The Arthritis Foundation of America. She is a Senior Member of the International Yoga Association, and is an Ordained Interfaith Minister and Reiki Master. Lakshmi is an experienced Registered Yoga Therapist with the Yoga Alliance.

If you are suffering from depression, you are not alone. According to the World Health Organization, depression affects approximately 121 million people worldwide and is the leading cause of disability; ages ranging from 15 to 44. As a society we have lost our connection to who we truly are and often feel separated and alone. It is common to feel the blues from time to time, and when this happens it can be healing to simply feel and be with your emotions. Acute feelings of depression can be a sign that your body needs rest and your mind needs a break. Take a nap, read a book, let yourself be lazy and accept what you are feeling. While anxiety (feelings of nervousness, fear and tension) is a normal reaction to stress, a constant state of worry or excessive levels of anxiety is a primary symptom is quite common, affecting about 18 percent of American adults. Depression and anxiety is complex in nature, most likely occurring as a result from a combination of genetic, environmental, psychological, and developmental factors. The stress reducing effects of yoga and meditation can greatly enhance the effects of traditional therapies. If you are experiencing depression for more than a few days, however, you may need to take action and work on moving through it. This is where Yoga can help...

and movement.

Slow, gentle yoga sequences coupled with mindful breathing techniques, meditation and deep relaxation to raise the feel good hormones oxytocin and prolactin. Studies have shown that a consistent yoga practice lowers Cortisol levels (the stress hormone). Yogic breathing exercises stimulate the vagus nerve which is a proven treatment for depression; improves circulation and sends invigorating oxygen to your brain and all your muscles. Stretching and strengthening movements flush toxins from the body as well. Guided deep relaxation and meditation practices show you how to access the strength and power of your inner self; helping you build an intrinsic support system to keep you going through all the ups and downs of your life.

A regular yoga practice will protect you from depression's debilitating effects and help you stay bright-minded. Becoming more aware and able to recognize the signals and alleviate the symptoms before they become incapacitating. Lakshmi Devi, offers Yoga classes that are structured to activate and move prana ("Breath", "Life force") in the body, open the heart center, stimulate the nervous system and help you maintain equanimity. You will begin to recognize your wholeness. "Practice Yoga regularly and it will change your life. It has changed my life and the lives of many of my students".

Breathing Practices to calm the turbulent mind... Conscious breath is the gateway to the nervous system, which leads you to more personal control and physical recovery. By learning how to control the breath we learn the process of healing both our bodies and minds. Yoga practice uses the breath in three ways: to integrate the body with the mind, to adapt postures, and as feedback in order to maintain a fully integrated connection between body and mind. By proper use of slow and even rhythmic breathing, we identify the points of resistance in each movement and adapt the postures. The major benefits that can be obtained from deliberate and smooth, conscious breathing are; improvement of concentration (or steadiness of mind), physical and mental rejuvenation, and increased range of motion, flexibility

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