



YOGA FOR PAIN CARE AUSTRALIA

Frequently Asked Questions for Health Professionals

1. WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is a physical and contemplative practice derived from ancient Indian philosophy. A typical yoga class includes yoga postures called asana, stretching, breathing and mindfulness. While yoga is not a medical treatment, it inherently includes many aspects that can yield therapeutic benefits, including musculoskeletal and psychosocial.

2. WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE FOR THE BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR PERSISTENT PAIN?

Research shows yoga helps a range of pain conditions, including fibromyalgia, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and lower back pain. Regular yoga practice can reduce the stress hormone cortisol and improve pain symptoms, sleep difficulties, and anxiety (Robert-McComb et al. 2015). In a qualitative study, Tul et al. (2011) found yoga enables people with chronic pain to rebuild a meaningful and harmonious relationship with their body.

Anecdotal evidence presented in our 2016 Social Impact Report reveals **pain-sensitive yoga helped students significantly reduce their pain, their pain medication, and visits to their GP, stay active, build confidence, feel hope, and sleep better.**

3. HOW IS YOGA FOR PAIN DIFFERENT TO NORMAL YOGA?

Yoga for Pain is a field of practice dedicated to helping people reduce pain symptoms, and live healthy meaningful lives. Most practitioners cater for people with conditions like fibromyalgia, osteoporosis, arthritis, pudendal neuralgia, multiple sclerosis, cancer pain, and knee pain at any level of dis-ability.

Depending on their level of training, **Yoga for Pain Practitioners offer a range of private consultations and classes to assist people at different stages of pain healing.** This includes small group classes just for people with pain (pain-specific classes) that focus on skills to calm the nervous system and improve movement. Those with well-managed pain progress to pain-friendly classes to increase physical activity, and participation in activities they find meaningful.

Because Yoga for Pain typically caters for people who can't access 'ordinary' yoga, it offers benefits of yoga, exercise and mindfulness they may not be able to access elsewhere.

Find out more about what we do and how to get involved:

info@yogaforpaincare.com

www.yogaforpaincare.com



4. HOW LONG UNTIL A PATIENT WILL SEE BENEFITS?

Most students experience pain alleviation after one session of relaxation and mindful movement. **Benefits, however, are only maintained with regular practice.** We recommend people start yoga when ready to commit to a term of classes, or a series of private sessions with consistent home practice. The more they practice, even for a few minutes a day, the more benefit they will see, and the more motivated they will be to continue.

5. WHAT IS THE EXCLUSION CRITERIA?

Yoga can be practiced safely by almost anyone, even when you are sick or injured - as long as it is modified appropriately. For this reason there is no exclusion criteria per se. However, for those with psychiatric or behavioural problems, group yoga classes may not be suitable. A one-on-one consultation with a Practitioner with additional training in a field such as psychology may be more appropriate.

We also don't recommend yoga for patients who are not interested in it, and advise you to encourage students to book into an appropriate class. The wrong introduction to yoga may lead to frustration and pain flares.

If you have instructed your patient to avoid certain movements, they can discuss this with their Yoga for Pain Practitioner who will endeavour to provide alternatives. In this case a private consultation may be recommended.

You can also help your patient stay safe by ensuring they have good information about how pain works and equipping them to take an active approach to their pain care.

6. WHY SHOULD I REFER MY PATIENT TO YOGA FOR PAIN OPPOSED TO PILATES?

Pilates and yoga are different practices. Pilates has a greater physical basis, with an emphasis on core strength. Yoga has a spiritual as well as physical emphasis, which aims at nourishing body and mind equally. Yoga is also great for promoting flexibility and movement.

Yoga for Pain is excellent for anyone in pain who needs gentle guidance, and to learn to accept and not judge their body and their limitations. For someone who has experienced pain for a length of time, Yoga for Pain a good way to begin yoga practice, as it will ensure they develop good practices and skills to take into their daily life.



7. WHAT TRAINING DO PRACTITIONERS HAVE?

Yoga for Pain Practitioners are up-skilled to work more effectively with chronic pain.

Yoga teachers and health professionals who have completed our 20-hour Foundations Training are registered Lo Yoga for Pain Practitioners. Many continue with additional training in arthritis or pelvic pain, and are recognised at L1 and so on.

Foundations Training includes pain science and how to teach safely and effectively to people with persistent pain, through the use of props, exploration of comfortable movement and developing self-efficacy. Advanced Practitioners offer an inquiry-based approach that helps them unravel the story a student has about their pain, and the best pathway to reduce pain and get back to things they love.

We are not an accreditation body, but as part of their registration practitioners are required to keep up their learning and abide by a code of ethics. **Ethics include working within their personal and professional limits, matching students with the right class, and ensuring students can move without a pain flare before progressing to a more physical practice.**

8. WHAT IS THE FORMAT AND COST?

Practitioners generally provide one-on-one consultations (\$75-\$150 per hour depending on experience), group classes (from \$20) or online learning (from \$38 as part of the 12-week Yoga for Pain program). **Sessions may be more more expensive than general yoga classes, but patients get a more specialist provision which can help avoid problems in the future.** Students also generally develop a home practice which can save money on classes, and many find their overall health costs reduce.

9. HOW CAN I WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH A YOGA FOR PAIN PRACTITIONER?

There are three main ways to work with a practitioner:

- 1.** Refer patients to an appropriate yoga class with a teacher on our register. **Pain-specific yoga classes** are for people who need to reduce symptoms and get back into movement. **Pain-friendly classes** are for patients who can do physical activity without a pain flare. **Private consultations** are also available. (<http://yogaforpaincare.com/find-a-teacher/>)
- 2.** Refer to a health professional on the register who can assist patients prepare for yoga.
- 3.** Get matched with an experienced practitioner to provide pain-sensitive classes at your clinic, or develop a tailored program for your clients' needs. Email info@yogaforpaincare.com.

Also see our referral guidelines and referral form available for download on the website.

Find out more about what we do and how to get involved:

info@yogaforpaincare.com | www.yogaforpaincare.com | +61 450 393 336

