

# FACT SHEET

# New options for managing chronic pain



Around **1 in 5** Australians experience persistent pain. The condition not only affects their physical health, but is linked with poorer psychological, employment and socioeconomic outcomes.

In recent years the management of chronic pain has shifted from a simplistic biomedical model. Links between thoughts, emotions, stressors and experience of pain are now being explored: pain affects mood and mood affects pain.

It is clear that pharmacotherapy, especially opioid pharmacotherapy, cannot be considered a core component of management. There is emerging evidence that complementary interventions such as yoga are both safe and beneficial in ameliorating chronic pain - when tailored to the individual in terms of their capacity and life priorities.



## Yoga for Pain Care Australia

takes an evidence-based approach in designing pain care programs to meet the specific social and economic needs of individuals and communities.



## CONTACT US!

Contact Yoga for Pain Care Australia for information on yoga-based programs in your community.

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# SOME OF THE EVIDENCE FOR YOGA AND PREVALENT PAIN CONDITIONS

## LOWER BACK PAIN



Yoga may offer similar benefits to standard Physical Therapy treatment. A 2017 study of 320 adults provided 12 weekly yoga classes, 15 PT treatments, or educational literature. Those in the yoga and physical therapy groups showed similar improvements in pain levels and activity limitations.

Saper, R, et al. (2017). Yoga, physical therapy, or education for chronic low back pain: a randomized noninferiority trial. *Annals of internal medicine*, 167(2), 85-94.

## NECK PAIN



Yoga has short-term effects on chronic neck pain and related disabilities, quality of life, and mood. The authors of a 2017 study involving 188 patients concluded Iyengar yoga may be considered a safe and effective complementary form of exercise for patients with this condition.

Cramer H, et al. Effects of yoga on chronic neck pain: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical rehabilitation*. 2017 Nov;31(11):1457-65.

## KNEE OSTEOARTHRITIS



A review of 6 studies assessed the effects of yoga on pain, mobility, and quality of life. Pain relief and function improvement were seen after two-weeks of intervention.

Kan L, et al. The effects of yoga on pain, mobility, and quality of life in patients with knee osteoarthritis: a systematic review. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. 2016;2016.

## FIBROMYALGIA

'Meditative movement therapies', such as Qigong, Tai Chi and Yoga were found to reduce sleep disturbances, depression and fatigue in a 2013 meta-analysis of 7 studies.

Langhorst, J, et al. (2013). Efficacy and safety of meditative movement therapies in fibromyalgia syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Rheumatology international*, 33(1), 193-207.

## CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF PAIN

Yoga may not cure chronic pain, but there is evidence it helps manage it. When tailored, yoga can also offer appropriate physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social interaction. Participants in an 8-week Hatha yoga program became more aware of how their cognitive and behavioural habits exacerbated pain and more accepting of their body.

Tul, Y, et al (2011). Yoga for chronic pain management: a qualitative exploration. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 25(3), 435-443.

## OVERCOMING PATIENTS' RELUCTANCE

A fear of further pain or injury, and negative attitudes towards yoga, are common reasons patients are reluctant to accept yoga referrals. Researchers have recommended a focus on providing accurate information about yoga, promotion of its benefits and addressing patient concerns about injury.

Combs, M. A., & Thorn, B. E. (2014). Barriers and facilitators to yoga use in a population of individuals with self-reported chronic low back pain: a qualitative approach. *Complementary therapies in clinical practice*, 20(4), 268-275.



More references available at  
[www.yogaforpaincare.com](http://www.yogaforpaincare.com)