

Other than the two cited items above, we are unaware of any research or any other published information specifically related to lupus and Yoga, but we have put together the following information based on correspondence with members and others:

[begin Karen Clarke correspondence]

From: Karen Clarke <yogahelpsus@msn.com>
Subj: Lupus

I have some experience working with students who have lupus. Each person’s situation is so very different. I would be happy to offer any info that I can gather that may be helpful to you. I have a student now who has had lupus for 9 years. She’s been doing yoga for years as part of her whole health regime. She attends an intermediate level yoga but limits her movements and holding times depending on how she feels.

Fibromyalgia is quite common for people who have lupus. I worked with another student who has had lupus for 3 years. She has fibromyalgia and sleep issues. Her yoga practice has been much more restorative in nature with very gentle stretching, mostly developmental joint warm-ups. Our focus is on body awareness via a tailored body scan and guided relaxation.

A proactive approach has helped the women that I mentioned. They have used traditional and nontraditional methods including physical therapy, acupuncture, diet, herbal - vitamin - mineral supplements, sleep therapy, drugs, and yoga. I should mention that many of the PT exercises are actually yoga postures. The yoga is in the way they are done, with breath, with awareness.

I don’t know of any studies involving lupus and yoga. With a little more information, I’d be happy to offer some specifics in terms of yoga resources that may help you. There are so many ways that yoga can help, beginning with the breath.

[end Karen Clarke]

[from Joan Phalini Halpern, pahlini1@aol.com, KIN-Yoga mailing list]
I teach a student who is both a cancer survivor and a person diagnosed with lupus. I myself was diagnosed with lupus 22 years ago. It is a blessing that is no longer an issue in my life.

Basic precautions for individuals with lupus are the same as for fibromyalgia or any of the other autoimmune diseases. Work with where the student is now, lots of restorative poses, only go into the postures 80% or less, rather than 100%; hold each posture for shorter periods of time than you think you can and lots of integration time between postures. The challenge with Lupus is wanting to do more in between flare-ups. Experience has taught me staying at 80%, or less, especially when the student is feeling good, seems to work the best.

*Dirgha* and *nadi-shodhana* are great pranayamas for this condition.

Meditation is extremely helpful.

I have found from experience that gently and compassionately working with any areas that may be experiencing discomfort is extremely beneficial. At the same time if the person is on large doses of steroids, you need to differentiate the discomfort as to whether it is from the nervous-muscular systems (in the belly of the muscle) or deterioration of the joint (most common in hips) caused by the steroids. Should it be the latter, extreme caution needs to be used when involving the joints in any posture.

Yoga (especially Kripalu Yoga) is extremely beneficial for this condition.

[end Joan Phalini Halpern]

[begin Sandy, JoyfulHeartYoga@aol.com, KIN-Yoga mailing list]

I agree with what Joan said. I have a student with lupus and some other autoimmune disorders, and Yoga really helps her deal with her chronic pain. The one thing in class that she is most grateful for is the long savasana. Sometimes I guide them into a meditation where their body ‘disappears’ piece by piece, and that is her favorite. She says it’s such a relief to not feel her body for that time and to realize that she really is more than the body with the aches and pains.

[begin Functional Synergy]

Functional Synergy teaches a “Yoga for Lupus” class. For more information, see http://functionalsynergy.com/yoga_therapy.html.

[end Functional Synergy]

[The following bibliography was compiled by one of our former members who is a research librarian; she could not locate anything specifically on Yoga and lupus, but thought some of the citations on alternative therapies and lupus might mention Yoga, or otherwise be of assistance.]
Lupus Bibliography
Compiled by Jill L. Woolums
June 15, 2001

Databases searched: Biosis, PsychInfo, ePsyche, Medline, Worldcat, Dissertations Abstracts, Mags

Search terms: Lupus and yoga; lupus and stress; lupus and alternative therapy; lupus and alternative medicine.


You may also find the bibliography we have compiled on Yoga and Fibromyalgia of interest.