Yoga and Muscular Dystrophy

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The contents of this bibliography do not provide medical advice and should not be so interpreted. Before beginning any exercise program, see your physician for clearance.

Burling, Joy E, based on advice from Dr. Frank Chandra. Epilepsy, migraine, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis: Definitions, simple precautions and exercises. 1975. IAYT holds a copy of this one-page set of notes.

For muscular dystrophy: “Such Yoga exercises as can be done will help to maintain movement of joints and avoid crippling contractures which develop rapidly otherwise. Exercise will also encourage some strength in those muscles which are not completely wasted. Meditation will give some mental and emotional stability. Breathing exercises will preserve a reasonable degree of coughing ability, when chest wall muscles are affected by the disease.”

Garcia, Carlos. Dr. Garcia answers the question: “I have a male friend with Charcot-Marie-Tooth-Disease (CMT) who has been taking yoga and has begun to regain the feeling in his feet and hands. He says he sleeps at night now, experiences much less pain and has a much greater range of motion in his legs. He also has a more positive outlook on life in general. Are you aware of any research or studies on the effects of yoga on CMT patients?” URL: http://database.azstarnet.com/html/mda/transcripts/20030625Charcot-Marie-Tooth.html.

Dr. Garcia’s reply: Yoga may be helpful since you are stretching some muscles and tendons. I do not know of any studies to confirm that. However, I think it’s a great idea for the muscle and the soul.


Paul is a Yoga teacher who has muscular dystrophy.

QUEST, magazine of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, in an article in the June – July 2002 issue titled “The Ins and Outs of Exercise—Yes, You Can” recommends the following videos by Carol Dickman as resources: Bed Top Yoga and Seated Yoga. See www.stretch.com for more information on the latter.

Starkie, Zita. Malinda Natural Healing and Teaching Centre. URL: http://www.malindi.co.uk/YogaWheelchair.htm.

From the website: Yoga, relaxation and meditation go hand in hand. Even if the body cannot move far into a posture it still connects the mind to the body and this has been
found to be very helpful in degenerative diseases such as multiple sclerosis, motor neuron disease and muscular dystrophy. Many have found that through meditation an awareness of the body is raised and links the mind to the higher self. This in turn gives a great peace of mind and can open the door to a life which is happier and more fulfilled in a spiritual way.”

Of Related Interest


“This videotape documents a dramatic improvement in one muscular dystrophy client over six months.”


“Includes an in-depth description of the School for Self-Healing’s work with muscular dystrophy.”


Contains information on Meir Schneider’s work with muscular dystrophy patients.

Wong, Christine. Learn to heal physical and mental conditions. The Golden Gate [X]press Online. Article available online: http://xpress.sfsu.edu/storys01.cfm?Story_ID=4335.

About Meir Schneider’s School for Self-Healing in San Francisco, California, and his work with muscular dystrophy patients.