

YOGA for PEOPLE with MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



What is yoga?

Yoga is an ancient system of physical and mental training that originated in India. It is a holistic practice meaning it affects both body and mind and can complement other therapies and treatments. Physical (Hatha) Yoga, which is the yoga most often practised in the West, includes gentle stretching, sequences, postures, breathing techniques, relaxation and meditation. The classical postures of yoga may be modified and adapted to suit individual needs. There are many different schools of Yoga, and it is important to find a Gentle Yoga Teacher, preferably with some knowledge of MS. (See list of Gentle Yoga Teachers in SA.)

Some have attended The MS Society's Yoga and MS Training Days. You may contact the Teachers directly.)

Why should I practise yoga?

Yoga helps to relieve stress. It encourages better breathing, aids sleep and may help balance. It increases flexibility and concentration. The relaxation techniques of yoga can help to combat fatigue, and increase a feeling of well being. Yoga increases body awareness and provides practical skills to make everyday life easier.

What happens in a yoga class?

In a gentle yoga class, there is no competition and students are encouraged to work within their own comfortable limits. The class will include gentle stretching and relaxation before and after the physical work, so you often feel recharged after a class.

The class is performed on the floor on mats, sitting on a mat or chair or from your own wheelchair. The yoga is adapted and modified to suit the needs of the individual. Most classes start and end with relaxation and mindfulness is encouraged throughout the practice i.e. being in the present moment with body, mind and senses and letting go of worries and problems about the past and future. Limbers, stretches and postures are performed which work on the whole body, especially the spine. You do not need to do everything and resting is encouraged when you feel the need.

What should I wear and bring?

Wear loose, comfortable clothes that are easy to move in. Yoga is usually practised in bare feet or socks if it is cold. Do not eat a big meal just before. Mats and cushions may be provided – check with your Teacher beforehand.

Comments from participants of yoga

“Don’t give up – you need to give it a bit of time. At first I found it very hard and didn’t feel it was helping. However, now I know gentle stretching and relaxation is very important for people with MS – everyone should be doing it.” (Kim)

“If I don’t do yoga one week, I know I haven’t done it and I need to attend the next week. If you miss a week you have to loosen up everything again. It is very good for flexibility.” (Brian)

“Yoga helps concentration and aids better sleep.” (Pam)

INFO29 MS CS Yoga for People with Multiple Sclerosis

Last updated March 2011

MS House, 110 Reservoir Road,
MODBURY SA 5092

Phone 8396 0044

Fax: (08) 83 96 0184

Toll Free: 1800 812 311

Email: info@ms.asn.au

Website: www.ms.asn.au