

# Wisdom Art: Mind, Body, Spirit

*for a Healthier Mind, Body and Life*

## Help to Defeat Chronic Pain with Yoga Poses

[www.doyou.com](http://www.doyou.com)

Chronic pain can consume your life, debilitating the body and distracting the mind. Multiple studies have shown that a yoga practice can help lessen the effects of chronic pain, reducing muscle stiffness and joint pain, as well as strengthening the body, improving range of motion and flexibility.

Research also suggests that yoga counteracts chronic pain on a neural level, improving the longevity of grey matter in the brain. The researchers found that when yoga practitioners anticipated pain, the parasympathetic nervous system was activated (think the “tend and befriend” response) vs. the sympathetic nervous system (the “fight or flight” response). This indicates that yogis process pain differently than non-yogis. And when practiced mindfully, yoga can help you deal with chronic pain by strengthening the body and the mind.

Yoga may be the last thing you want to do if you’re experiencing pain, so work into a practice with these easy poses. Check with your doctor before starting a yoga practice, and adjust poses to suit your physical and mental needs

### Savasana with a Body Scan



Savasana or Corpse Pose is the perfect pose to relax and release in. Adding a full body scan helps create awareness of your body and the pain and sensations in it. Begin lying

in Savasana, and imagine a white light at the top of your head. Allow this white light to move down the body, highlighting every area slowly and mindfully.

Notice points of discomfort and pain, and imagine the white light entering these areas with your breath. Complete the scan 1-5 times.

### Standing Side Stretch



Side stretches are a great way to explore balance in the body, as well as lengthen through the arms, core, and psoas muscle. Begin in Tadasana (Mountain Pose) and reach the hands upward, bringing palms together. Push the hips toward one side, and reach the palm toward the other, stretching the entire side body. Alternate sides, matching your movement with the breath.

### Legs Up the Wall



This pose is a great way to support tired feet, and help alleviate low back pain. Let your head rest on a pillow, and bring your bum to the wall. Bring the feet up and allow your body to rest. Focus on your breath and be aware of the sensations in your body.

## Supine Twist



This twist is great for the entire back, and also helps to stretch the neck. Begin lying on your back and bring the knees into the chest. Extend one leg out, and gently guide the bent knee to the opposite side, extending the arm out. Gaze upward out toward the extended hand.

## Bridge Pose



Setu Bandha Sarvangasana or Bridge pose activates the core and back, providing a good stretch for the quads and chest, and relief for low back pain and menstrual discomfort. Place a block under the low back for additional support

## Warrior II with a Chair



Especially good for knee pain and strengthening the lower body, Virabhadrasana II with a chair is a great way to build strength in a safe and supported way. Begin sitting on a chair, and bring one leg around, pressing the foot into the ground. Extend the other foot to the outside, pressing the side of the foot into the ground. Extend the arms and find your alignment.

## What are the experts saying?

Effect of integrated yoga therapy on pain, morning stiffness and anxiety in osteoarthritis of the knee joint: A randomized control study

Integrated approach of yoga therapy is better than physiotherapy exercises as an adjunct to transcutaneous electrical stimulation and ultrasound treatment in reducing pain, morning stiffness, state and trait anxiety, blood pressure and pulse rate in patients with OA knees. Relieving pain and stiffness and improving physical function are the important goals of present-day therapy for OA. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

Yoga is proven to help people with arthritis improve many physical symptoms like pain and stiffness, and psychological issues like stress and anxiety. People with various types of arthritis who practice yoga regularly can reduce joint pain, improve joint flexibility and function, and lower stress and tension to promote better sleep.

Many people turn to yoga as a way to exercise gently, as well as to reduce tension and improve joint flexibility. Yoga also can help a person with arthritis build muscle strength and improve balance, says Sharon Kolasinski, MD, a professor of clinical medicine and a rheumatologist at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In addition, yoga offers people with arthritis a form of exercise that is enjoyable enough to do regularly. [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)