

Inside Integrative Medicine

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Integrative Medicine Virtual Group Classes

Yoga Nidra and Pranayama, How These Less-known Yoga Practices Can Help You During and After Cancer Care

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More than 2,000 years ago, Patanjali outlined in the Yoga Sutras a philosophy that, when practiced, is designed to achieve a calm state of mind resulting in good health, happiness, and being at peace. The yoga that is commonly practiced today, with an emphasis mainly on the physical aspects of the practice, incorporates only a small aspect of what was recommended by Patanjali. In fact, Patanjali placed more emphasis on the importance of breathing exercises (pranayama) and meditation (dharana, dhyana).

The word Pranayama is a combination of 2 words, prana, which refers to life force or energy, and ayama meaning expansion or control. Pranayama is the regulation and expansion of breath, roughly translated as breathing exercises. These breathing techniques have health benefits, such as decreasing the harmful effects of stress on our bodies, both physically and mentally. Unlike yoga postures, most pranayama practices can be practiced quietly anywhere. Even brief (5-10 minute) exercises can have important benefits, regardless of our physical abilities.

Studies have found that pranayama practices create a relaxed state, reducing stress, stress hormones, heart rate, and blood pressure. Research shows pranayama may benefit people with asthma, lung disease, heart disease, anxiety, and other disorders. For individuals with cancer, pranayama can help decrease fatigue, pain, anxiety, and depression, as well as improve quality of life.

There are many different types of pranayama practices; examples involve slow/deep breathing, breath-holding, and humming. Some practices are relaxing, some energizing, and others simply calm the mind in preparation for meditation. Choosing a practice that works for you and practicing, even a little, every day can have long-lasting benefits and change how you typically react in stressful situations. The goal of regular pranayama practice is to help achieve a peaceful state of mind and to be able to return to this state more easily when it is disturbed by stress. While most pranayama practices are safe, it is advisable to consider your physical condition and learn safe techniques from an experienced yoga therapist.

What is Yoga Nidra?

Yoga Nidra means “psychic sleep” or “conscious rest.” Yoga Nidra is a guided meditation designed to lead the practitioner into a profound state

of relaxation and inner awareness. It is a technique used to access a state between sleep and awareness while listening to a guide. While specific yoga postures can be challenging for some, Yoga Nidra is something everyone can do and takes about 30-45 minutes.

Yoga Nidra has been widely used to manage stress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, and sleep disorders in veterans and other populations. In individuals with cancer, Yoga Nidra can be beneficial in managing pain, anxiety, fatigue, and sleep and improving quality of life.

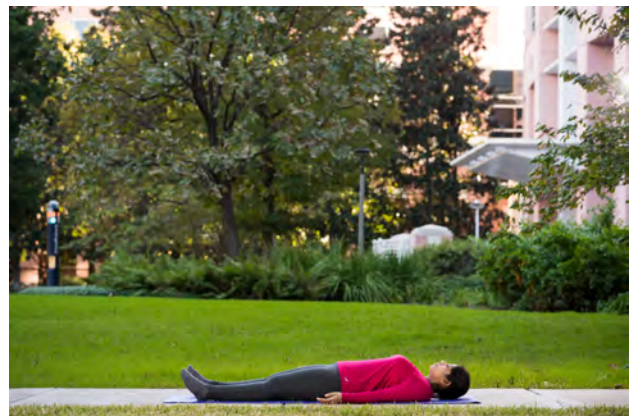
A Variety of Yoga Programs Are Available in Person and Virtually

All programs are taught by a certified yoga therapist (CIAYT) specializing in cancer care. All group yoga and meditation services are offered virtually through MyChart/Epic Zoom.

Yoga for Health is a virtual group-based yoga class. This beginner/intermediate yoga program is offered three times a week (25 maximum participants). We are excited to expand our group classes to include twice monthly *Yoga Nidra* and *Pranayama*. All group classes are available for patients and caregivers for FREE and do not require a referral.

In addition to group classes, one-on-one Yoga/Meditation consultation sessions are also available for inpatients and outpatients at \$50 per session. A referral is required. All aspects of the program are personalized to meet your unique needs. If you are interested in learning more about this consultation, please contact our center.

We look forward to seeing you “on the mat”!



Integrative Oncology Consultation

Our physicians can give guidance on achieving a comprehensive and integrative approach to your cancer care via MyChart/Epic Zoom.

Exercise/Physical Activity Consultation

A senior physical therapist provides recommendations on achieving safe and optimal exercise during each consultation via MyChart/Epic Zoom.

Oncology Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture is a safe and often effective medical treatment that can be used to manage side effects from cancer and related treatments, including nausea and vomiting, pain, neuropathy, hot flashes, fatigue and dry mouth. Treatments range from \$65 & \$75

Oncology Massage Treatment

Oncology massage may help patients address anxiety, relieve pain, decrease fatigue and improve sleep quality. Treatments are \$55

Health Psychology Consultation

A licensed clinical psychologist will provide both evaluation and interventions to help with lifestyle change and address symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression via MyChart/EpicZoom.

Yoga/Meditation Consultation

Yoga/meditation lowers stress, depression, and anxiety, improves sleep, memory, physical functioning, and overall quality of life, as well as increasing spiritual well-being. A yoga/meditation therapist would provide interventions via MyChart/Epic Zoom. Cost: \$50 per session.

Music Therapy

Individual music therapy is provided by a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC) and involves engaging in music interactively in a variety of ways, with outcomes including anxiety reduction, fostered well-being and exploring ways of reconnecting to music for daily quality of life. Cost:\$50 per session.

Prices for IMC services may be subject to change depending on insurance coverage.

View audio and video resources online:
www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter

How to Register for our Virtual Group Classes:

1. Call Integrative Medicine Center at 713-794-4700.
2. All classes are free.
3. Complete e-update *liability waiver and telemedicine consent in MyChart at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled class.

April 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30	Connect & Reflect with Music 1:30-2:30	Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30	Pranayama/Breathing 10:30-11:30 1st Thurs.	Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30
Healing Through Writing 2:00-3:00 2nd Mon.	Yoga Nidra 3:30-4:30 2nd Tues. 5:00-6:00 4th Tues.		3:00-3:30 3rd Thurs. Connect & Reflect with Music 1:30-2:30	

Group Class Descriptions:

Yoga for Health: Features a gentle form of yoga, including stretching, breathing, relaxation, and meditation techniques.

Connect & Reflect with Music: An interactive and supportive music group led by a Board-Certified Music Therapist, using music engagement and conversation to enhance well-being and encourage connectedness. No music experience is required. **The last class will be April 6th until further notice.**

Yoga Nidra: This is a guided meditation in the supine position to bring you into a state of deep rest.

Healing Through Writing: Using expressive writing as a tool to identify and process difficult emotions in a supportive environment.

Pranayama/Breathing: The practice of pranayama involves breath regulation through various breathing exercises.

Green Juice

Total Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4

Website: <https://atthetable.mdanderson.org/recipe?id=127>

Ingredients:

- 3 raw apple(s)
- 1 stalk(s) celery
- 1 cup(s) spinach
- 1 inch piece ginger root
- 1/2 fennel bulb
- 1/2 cup parsley
- 1/2 whole cucumber (peel and seeds included)
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil
- 6 whole macadamia nuts

Instructions:

1. Pass all ingredients except nuts and flax oil through a juicer.
2. Place in blender and add remaining ingredients. Note: here you can add 1 tablespoon of tocotrienols and 1 tablespoon of your favorite nutrient/mineral powder if you wish.
3. Blend, taking care to leave nuts chunky for a bit of crunch.

Notes: You can replace the macadamia nuts here with any other nuts you enjoy.

