

[IMAGE]

Yoga Helps Lower Blood Pressure

By Editorial Staff

Yoga has been practiced for literally centuries, but it's popularity has increased in recent years with a growing awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of physical activity. One such benefit may be a reduction in blood pressure, suggests current research.

In a study involving 60 adults with slightly elevated high blood pressure, participants (average age: 56 years) were assigned randomly to practice hatha yoga – perhaps the most common form of postural yoga practiced in the West– while making lifestyle changes such as moderate aerobic exercise, eating a healthier diet and quitting smoking. Other participants were randomly assigned to adopt the lifestyle changes, but did not practice hatha yoga during the study period.

After three months, yoga participants had significantly lower blood pressure compared to the start of the study – and compared to members of the lifestyle-changes-only ("control") group. Specifically, the yoga group experienced 24-hour diastolic blood pressure and night diastolic blood pressure decreases of approximately 4.5 mm Hg, and 24-hour average arterial pressure decreases of approximately 4.9 mm Hg.

You might think those changes are small, but even small reductions in BP – as little as 2 mm Hg – can reduce some of the health risks attributable to high blood pressure, including heart attack and stroke. So why not give yoga a try? It's good for your body, your mind - and your blood pressure.

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