

Yoga: An Alternative Diabetes Treatment

Yoga is an ancient practice of moving the body into different poses (asanas) to achieve a healthy body, an attentive mind, and a relaxed spirit. Yoga can be used to help treat many different illnesses, including diabetes. There have been numerous clinical studies that prove the benefits that yoga has for diabetics, because many yoga poses can positively impact circulation and help regulate body systems.

Like with any other exercise regime, when you begin yoga, begin slowly at your own pace. Don't push yourself too hard. If you find a pose difficult, maintain it for a shorter length of time. Increased flexibility and strength will come from practice. Monitor your blood glucose levels before and after any period of exercise. If you feel lightheaded, or experience any unexpected symptoms during exercise, stop to monitor your blood glucose and act accordingly.

Here are a few poses that have been found to be beneficial for people with diabetes.

Yoga Mudrasana: the symbol of yoga

Sit up straight with your legs crossed. Clench your fists and place them on both sides of the abdomen, just below your bellybutton. While exhaling, bend forward as low as you can, pushing your fists against your abdomen. This pose is good for helping your nervous system and preventing possible complications of diabetes. This pose can be held for three minutes once you have had much practice. Begin by simply holding it for ten seconds, however.

Dhanurasana: the bow pose

Lie on your stomach. Lift your feet towards your knees, and reach back to grasp your ankles. Lifting your legs, chest and head, arch your back into a bow. Hold for five seconds to begin, and work your way up to thirty seconds or more at later sessions. Repeat this action four or five times. Once you have mastered this pose, try rocking gently forwards and backwards, and from side to side. This pose massages your organs. This pose is of moderate difficulty.

Uddhiyana Banda: the stomach lift

Stand with your feet spaced shoulder width apart. Lean forward at your waist and place your hands on your knees. Inhale deeply by pushing your abdomen forwards, then exhale deeply by pulling your abdomen in. Pause for five to ten seconds. Inhale deeply by pushing your abdomen forwards, then exhale deeply by pulling your abdomen. During this pause, rapidly push your stomach in and out while you are not breathing. Repeat three or four times. Stand and resume normal breathing. This pose strengthens your abs, massages your organs, and assists your nervous system.

Halasana: the plow pose

This pose is one of the most used yogic poses. It is complicated and so should not be attempted right away. Begin by lying on your back. Raise your feet to a ninety-degree angle to your body. If you are just beginning this pose, stop here, and hold your feet. If you are more advanced, lower your feet towards your head. Your pelvis will curl up and your lower back will lift from the floor. Touch your toes to the floor behind your head. If you cannot reach your toes to the floor, then simply hold the stretch where it is comfortable. Support your lower back with your hands if necessary. Once you no longer need to support your buttocks or lower back with your hands, place your hands on the ground beside your body. This pose can be held for around four minutes once you are an expert. In your early tries, begin with ten seconds or however long feels comfortable for you. This pose is not for any woman who is menstruating. This pose stretches the spine, and so helps the central nervous system. It is beneficial to all areas of the body.

At the end of any yoga practice, particularly if you are diabetic, it is important to do Savasana, the corpse pose. This is a pose of total relaxation. Lie on your back, with your eyes closed, your legs slightly spread, and your feet dropping to the sides, completely relaxed. Allow your arms to rest comfortably at your sides. Relax, simply focusing on your breathing for one to three minutes. This pose helps you focus after a yoga session and relax the muscles that you have worked.

The Sun Salutation is also recommended for diabetics. It is a series of yoga asanas. You can find many variations of the sun salutation. Try one that works best for you.

If you are uncertain about trying yoga, go to a gym or alternative medical practitioner to see if there are any yoga classes being offered in your area. There are often many classes, and you can probably go to the first class free. You can also join a pay-by-class gym where you can stop by if you want. Tell your instructor that you have diabetes, and your instructor will be able to assist you by teaching you the above poses, and by suggesting other poses such as Paschimottanasana, the sitting crane, Padangusthasana: the standing crane, Bhujangasana the serpent pose, Sarvangasana: the shoulder stand, Ardha-matsyendrasana: the spinal twist, Chakrasana: the wheel pose, and Shalabhasana the grasshopper pose. There are other poses that are beneficial to diabetics, or that will be able to help you prevent or manage any complications you might encounter.