



## Yoga: Restorative - Movement and Meditation Programs

### Intended Audience

All members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers.

### Program Description

Restorative yoga is a gentle, therapeutic, medically-based practice of relaxation and renewal. The poses require little effort, allowing the body's parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) to be stimulated, thus restoring the body's balance, and calming the sympathetic nervous system. As the body returns to its natural state of balance and harmony, energy is replenished, stress is diminished and the potential for healing is optimized.

### Benefits and Impact

Restorative yoga impacts physical, mental and emotional wellness. While studies indicate that everyone can benefit from restorative yoga, this program is particularly helpful to those with chronic ailments and high levels of stress. Measurable results include: reduced heart rate and blood pressure, less pain, increased energy, improved sleep and less fatigue. Participants also report a significant reduction in anxiety and depression and an elevated sense of peace and empowerment.

### What to Expect at a Session

Participants can expect to be gently guided through a number of restful poses using supports and props. There is no pressure to perform; this is a designated time to honour the body in its present state, without negativity or judgement. The focus is to 'just be', inviting relaxation and experiencing the meditative aspects of each poses. This class is all about replenishing energy stores and allowing the body the opportunity to heal.

### Participant Comments

*"This class is fabulous! No worries about being fit or flexible – it's gentle, relaxing and safe."*

*"The facilitator pays attention to everyone's needs; she is like an angel."*

*"This program is therapeutic, healing, calming - highly recommended for healing."*

### What the Research Says:

In several studies, yoga is cited as yielding modest improvements on sleep quality, mood, stress, cancer-related distress, cancer-related symptoms, and overall quality of life for cancer patients and survivors. In further studies yoga is named as a physical activity with significant potential in reducing cancer-related stress and symptoms (Bower J.E., Woolery A., Sternlieb B., Garet D. 2005. Yoga for cancer patients and survivors. *Cancer Control* 12(3): 165-71. Culos-Reed S.N., Carlson L.E., Daroux L.M., Hately-Aldous S. 2006. A pilot study of yoga for breast cancer survivors: physical and psychological benefits. *Psychooncology* 15(10): 891-7).

Yoga breathing is a feasible intervention among cancer patients which may improve sleep disturbance, anxiety and mental quality of life (Dhruva A et al., 2012).

#### Other Research:

- <http://www.emaxhealth.com/1506/51/34310/yoga-benefits-cancer-patients.html>
- <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/news/story/index.cfm?id=2866>
- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19242916>
- [http://www.iayt.org/site\\_Vx2/publications/articles/hlthbenefits.aspx](http://www.iayt.org/site_Vx2/publications/articles/hlthbenefits.aspx)

### Program Frequency:

**1.25 hours** per week  
**16 weeks** per program  
**1 program** per session  
 Winter, spring/summer, fall

**Optimum Class Size: 6-10**

### Related Programs:

Functional Yoga  
 Qigong  
 Tai Chi  
 Yoga For Well-Being