



Yoga: For Well-Being - Movement and Meditation Programs

Intended Audience

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

Program Description

This program combines gentle stretching and range of motion exercises with breath awareness practices and the mindfulness-based meditative practice of Integrative Restoration (iRest®) yoga nidra. iRest® is a process of deep relaxation that helps the body with healing and trains participants to transcend stress and suffering. Yoga nidra is becoming a successful healing strategy for cancer survivors, soldiers overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder and people struggling with stress, depression and addiction. Widely gaining scientific attention, the practice is profoundly simple and deeply transformative.

Benefits and Impact

This program promotes greater ease and well-being in mind and body by equipping participants with the skills and confidence to engage their inner resources and gain mastery over daily stresses and challenges. Participants who practice iRest® yoga nidra report:

- decreased insomnia
- reduced depression, anxiety and fear
- decreased perception of chronic and acute pain
- improved interpersonal relations
- increased sense of control and comfort

What to Expect at a Session

Following a short centering meditation, participants move and stretch while lying on the floor, sitting in chairs or standing. Each class offers a different series of movements. Breath awareness exercises are incorporated throughout the class. iRest® meditations are done lying down with the use of props for support and comfort. The iRest® yoga nidra meditation portion is a 20-minute guided inquiry that blends deep relaxation with personal awareness gained through exploring body sensations, breath, emotions, thoughts and images. As participants learn to practice iRest® yoga nidra, they connect with deeper layers of their being, resulting in clarity and the true discovery of self.

Participant Comments

“Excellent facilitation and inspiration.”

“(The program) reinforces the mind/body connection and the choices we make.”

“The facilitator was very supportive and the program was a very positive experience.”

What the Research Says:

Based on results of a 2009 study, overall stress was significantly reduced in cancer outpatients following a six-week yoga nidra mediation program (Pritchard, M., Elison-Bowers, P., Birdsall, B. 2009. Stress and Health, 26(3): 233-237. Ongoing and published research can be accessed at <http://www.irest.us/programs/irest-research-and-programs>).

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., Hatley-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).

Program Frequency:

1.5 hours per week
16 weeks per program
2 programs per session
 Winter, spring/summer, fall

Optimum Class Size: 6-10

Related Programs:

Functional Yoga
 Qigong
 Restorative Yoga
 Tai Chi