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Yoga in menopause may help insomnia, but not hot flashes

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Taking a 12-week yoga class and practicing at home was linked to less insomnia—but not to fewer or less bothersome hot flashes or night sweats. The link between yoga and better sleep was the only statistically significant finding in this MsFLASH (Menopause Strategies: Finding Lasting Answers for Symptoms and Health) Network randomized controlled trial.

"Many women suffer from insomnia during menopause, and it's good to know that yoga may help them," said lead author Katherine Newton, PhD, a senior investigator at Group Health Research Institute. She e-published these findings in *Menopause*, ahead of print.

"Hormone therapy is the only Food and Drug Administration-approved treatment for hot flashes and night sweats," Dr. Newton said, "and fewer women are opting for hormone therapy these days." That's why MsFLASH tried to see whether three more "natural" approaches—yoga, exercise, or fish oil—might help ease these menopause symptoms. The study assigned 249 healthy, previously sedentary women at multiple sites, including Group Health, to do yoga, a moderate aerobic exercise program, or neither—and to take an omega-3 fatty acid supplement or a placebo.

Exercise seemed linked to slightly improved sleep and less insomnia and depression, and yoga also was linked to better sleep quality and less depression—but these effects were not statistically significant. The omega-3 supplement was not linked to any improvement in hot flashes,

night sweats, sleep, or mood.

Provided by Group Health Research Institute

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