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Researchers find yoga and controlled breathing reduce depressive symptoms

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A new study demonstrated that individuals with major depressive disorder had a significant reduction in depressive symptoms during a 12-week integrative health intervention that included Iyengar yoga classes and coherent breathing. Participants who took three yoga classes a week were more likely to achieve lower depression scores after 12 weeks than subjects who took two classes, according to the study published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

The article entitled "Treatment of Major Depressive Disorder with Iyengar Yoga and Coherent Breathing: A Randomized Controlled Dosing Study," is coauthored by Richard Brown, MD, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (New York, NY), and John Eric Jensen, PhD, Harvard School of Medicine (Boston, MA) and McLean Hospital (Belmont, MA), and colleagues from Boston University School of Medicine, Boston Medical Center, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Biostatistical Solutions (Boston, MA), Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital (Bedford, MA), and New York Medical College (Valhalla, NY).

In the study, adults 18-64 years of age with major depressive disorder participated in either three (high-dose intervention) or two (low-dose) yoga classes per week and practiced coherent breathing at 5 breaths per minute. The researchers used a Depression Inventory measure to assess depressive symptoms in the 30 participants, at the beginning of the study and throughout the 12-week intervention.

"The practical findings for this integrative health intervention is that it worked for participants who were both on and off antidepressant medications, and for those time-pressed, the two times per week dose also performed well," says *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* Editor-in-Chief John Weeks, johnweeks-integrator.com, Seattle, WA.

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More information: Chris C. Streeter et al, Treatment of Major Depressive Disorder with Iyengar Yoga and Coherent Breathing: A Randomized Controlled Dosing Study, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2017). DOI: 10.1089/acm.2016.0140

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