

Summary of Research studies on Iyengar Yoga and the skeleto-muscular system

Amin D. and Goodman M [2014] The effects of selected asanas in Iyengar yoga on flexibility: pilot study. J Body Mov Ther 18:399.

16 women who were moderately active attended one 90 min. Iyengar Yoga class a week for 6 weeks. Their lumbar and hamstring flexibility were tested before they started Iyengar Yoga and once again after 6 weeks. There was a significant increase in flexibility in the erector spinae as well as the hamstrings. The significance of this study lies in the fact that many people attend classes only once a week and even that 'little' practice can show an improvement in flexibility.

Kolansiki et al [2005] Iyengar Yoga for treating symptoms of osteoarthritis of the knees: a pilot study. J Altern Complement Med. 11: 689.

11 subjects with osteoarthritis of the knee attended Iyengar Yoga class for 8 weeks. There was reduction in their pain, stiffness and improvement in their physical function and reduction in their symptoms.

DiBenedetto et al [2005] Effect of a gentle Iyengar Yoga program on gait in elderly: an exploratory study. Arch Phys Med Rehabil 86:1830.

As people age, their strides become shorter, they tend to shuffle their feet, their hip flexibility decreases. 23 patients in the age group of 62 to 83 years were enrolled for this study. They attended two 90 min classes a week and were asked to practice at home for at least 20 min on every alternate day. There was a significant increase in their stride length and hip extension. The more regular they practiced at home, the better was the improvement in hip extension. Thus, improving their gait.

Tiedemann et al [2013] a 12- week Iyengar Yoga program improved balance and mobility in older community-dwelling people: A pilot randomized control trial. J. Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci. 69:1068.

As people age, they have issues with balance, which subsequently affects

their mobility and can lead to falls. 54 people were enrolled for this study. 27 were provided a educative booklet on how to prevent falls. The other 27, attended twice weekly 90 min classes for 12 weeks and were also provided the educative booklet. Both the groups were exposed to a series of tests, standing balance, sit to stand test, 1 4 min walk, and one legged stand with eyes closed. There was a significant improvement in all the tests in the Iyengar Yoga practitioners as compared with the controls. The attendance of the enrolled patients to the class was 83%. This study concluded, "This trial demonstrates the balance and mobility-related benefits and feasibility of Iyengar yoga for older people:."

Williams K et al [2006] Effect of Iyengar Yoga therapy for chronic low back pain. Pain. 115: 107.

Low back pain is now becoming a major problem worldwide. According to WHO, Global Burden of Disease Study, 2010, The lifetime prevalence of non-specific (common) low back pain is estimated at 60% to 70% in industrialized countries. 90 patients were enrolled for the study. Of which, 43 were randomized to practice yoga while 47 served as controls. The participants of this study attended twice weekly yoga classes for 24 weeks.. There was significantly greater reductions in functional disability and pain intensity were observed in the yoga group when compared to the control group at 24 weeks. A significantly greater proportion of yoga subjects also reported clinical improvements at both 12 and 24 weeks. In addition, depression was significantly lower in yoga subjects. When results were analyzed using per-protocol analysis, improvements were observed for all outcomes in the yoga group, including a greater trend for reduced pain medication usage. Although slightly less than at 24 weeks, the yoga group had statistically significant reductions in functional disability, pain intensity and depression compared to SMC 6-months post-intervention.