

Part Ten:

HEALTH, AILMENTS, CONTRAINDICATIONS, INJURY, STRESS

How to Address All Walks of Life

Over 120 Physical Ailments

How to Address All Walks of Life

It is impossible to diagnose a medical condition without a medical background. If you are desiring this kind of knowledge, then I suggest medical training. However, as a Yoga teacher, your students will constantly ask you for a diagnosis and remedy for their ailments. The ideal setting is a private consultation, so you, the teacher, can focus solely on the student. Realistically, most students do not come to you one-on-one. A Yoga class is more affordable. So, as mentioned previously, treat all students who walk in the door as broken students. Treat everyone gently. A vigorous and dynamic class can compassionately as well as enthusiastically empower the students to take responsibility for their own experience; however in an acute or painful condition, slow and gentle is more appropriate. And Yoga cannot help everything! Often a change in diet, lifestyle, and habits is necessary, as well as seeking out other holistic help such as massage, chiropractic, chinese medicine, acupuncture, herbs, essential oils, etc.

In general:

“pain in the lower back”:

bend knees and tuck tailbone toward the pubic bone

“back spasm”

lie on the ground, on your back, with knees bent until spasm is over, then roll to one side to slowly get up

“stress in the neck”:

relax and completely release the head toward the floor, letting it hang with gravity

“stress in the knee”:

un-bend and/or make space within the knee joint with your hands, as much as possible, and padding/elevation might help

“pinching in the shoulders”:

come out of the pose until the pinching stops and then try to rotate the arms a little differently while moving back into the pose. If pinching continues, try shrugging the shoulders while moving the arm back into the pose, range of motion exercises like big circles, or traction of the arm. Always back off from any pinching

“burning in the hamstrings”:

back off of the forward fold (but try not to bend the knees unless a back injury is present)

“pain/pulling in the hip area or groin”:

bring the knees closer together or lessen the width of the thighs

“any inflammation or word ending in -itis”:

RICE: rest, ice, compression, elevation

Injuries are the body's way of forcing us to take a break. However, because most of us are on overdrive, it is very difficult and humbling to just stop all forms of exercise. But if we don't stop, we will just continue to aggravate and irritate the injury, delaying healing and possibly inviting more pain and injury. Here is a rough timeline for most of the basic injuries that are presented in a Yoga class: (these times can be even longer if there is no rest!)

—For muscle tears, the most common being a hamstring tear at the upper attachments near the sit-bones, the average healing time is 3-9 months.

—For tendon tears, the average healing time is 6-12 months.

—For ligament tears, the average healing time is 1-5 years.

—For post-surgery, the average healing time is 2-12 months.

—For post-partum, the average healing time is 2-6 months.

—For knee injuries or knee pain, modify the pose with extra padding under the knee for support.

—For wrist injuries or wrist pain, modify by dropping down to the elbows - NEVER support the weight by the knuckles! Extra padding to elevate the wrists with the fingers lower can help. Try wrist exercises twice daily.

Over 120 Physical Ailments

Below is a quick reference chart to help guide you as a teacher, or as an injured student, towards poses that can help to rehabilitate. Please use common sense: if there is pain, STOP. When deep breathing and/or meditation is recommended, any of the first three pranayama and all four meditation exercises described in Part Three are appropriate.

LIABILITY WARNING:

This is not medical advice. These are not intended to cause further injury or pain, so please be extremely mindful and slow when first trying out the poses. Please seek out the approval of your physician before embarking on the following Yoga practices if you suffer from any of the following conditions.

<u>PATHOLOGY</u>	<u>RECOMMENDED PRACTICE</u>	<u>CONTRAINDICATIONS</u>
<u>abortion</u> spontaneous or intentional dislodging and removal of the embryo resulting in vaginal bleeding, cramping, and emotional distress	forward folds, child's pose, reclining twists, legs up the wall, restorative poses, warmth, relaxation, deep breathing	inversions, sun salutations, vigorous asana during bleeding time
<u>AIDS</u> acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (also called HIV)	if pain free: forward folds, child's pose, reclining twists, legs up the wall, restorative poses, warmth, relaxation, visualization, deep breathing	vigorous asana, inversions
<u>anemia</u> indicates a shortage of red blood cells or hemoglobin, usually nutritionally related, manifesting as pallor, fatigue, shortness of breath, low immunity	mild to moderate asanas including sun salutations with strong emphasis on breathing, increase vitamin B-12	vigorous asana, hot Yoga
<u>ankle sprains</u> the ankle has been twisted in a way to cause the ligaments to overstretch or tear, leading to pain, redness, swelling and loss of movement	rest, ice, compression and elevation are recommended, restorative poses, visualization, gentle range of motion after swelling has subsided	all standing poses or weight bearing poses on the ankle
<u>ankle spurs</u> an abnormal bone growth occurring on the ankle bone, resulting from excessive pulling or stretching of the calcaneal periosteum by the plantar fascia, sometimes due to flat feet or poor orthotics	if not painful, all Yoga is recommended	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the site
<u>anorexia</u> starvation due to misperception and morbid fear of obesity, often resulting in amenorrhea (loss of regular menses)	mild to moderate asanas including sun salutations with strong emphasis on restorative poses, breathing, visualization, and relaxation	vigorous asana
<u>atherosclerosis</u> hardening of the arteries due to fatty deposits that have accumulated in and under the lining of the artery walls	gentle Yoga: forward folds, child's pose, reclining twists, legs up the wall, restorative poses, warmth, relaxation, visualization, deep breathing	unsupported inversions, sun salutations, vigorous asana
<u>arthritis (osteoarthritis)</u> degenerative wear and tear on the joints (usually large joints like hip, spine or shoulder), resulting in swelling and pain during or after use, or before a change in the weather	being extra gentle and mindful at the site(s) of inflammation—if pain free, mild to moderate asanas, including sun salutations and range of motion at the site	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the site
<u>asthma</u> constriction of bronchial tubes due to excess mucus resulting in coughing wheezing and difficulty breathing, has psychological causes as well	all Yoga is recommended, special emphasis on deep breathing, restorative poses, supported poses, and relaxation	inversions, sun salutations, vigorous asana when there is difficulty breathing, retention of the breath

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bladder problems can result in irritation of bladder or urethra, incontinence, bladder prolapse, achiness, fever	often nutrition can help more than asana, forward folds, twists, and inversions are especially helpful, agni sara	if pain is present, try restorative poses, especially legs up the wall, pranayama, savasana
bone spurs an abnormal growth of bone, usually due to poor posture or unevenly weighted stance	all Yoga as long as it's pain free at the site, especially standing poses, balance poses, and asanas involving foot and ankle flexion	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the site
broken bones includes all fractures resulting in swelling and pain over the break	with doctor's permission, once the bone has healed, mild to moderate asanas including sun salutations, with longer holds where there is scar tissue built up	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the site
bronchitis this is a chronic upper respiratory infection involving coughing with mucus and shortness of breath	classroom participation not encouraged due to possible contagiousness. At home, rest is recommended, restorative poses, deep breathing, relaxation	unsupported inversions, sun salutations, vigorous asana, retention of the breath
bruise purple discoloration beneath the skin due to vascular bleeding between muscle sheaths - deep bleeds may not be visible and are excruciatingly painful	if not severe, all Yoga as long as its pain free and avoiding putting pressure at the site	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the site
bulimia recurrent episodes of binge eating and immediate self-induced vomiting or laxative abuse due to fear of body image and of appearing fat	mild to moderate asanas including sun salutations with strong emphasis on restorative poses, breathing, visualization, and relaxation	vigorous asana
bursitis inflammation of the bursa or sack-like fluid surrounding a joint, usually the elbow, hip, knee, shoulder, or big toe	in general, it is not recommended to stretch during inflamed stage, as this aggravates the inflammation. If no inflammation present, work range of motion at the site—all Yoga	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the site
cancer a proliferation of cells whose unique trait results in unregulated growth, lack of differentiation, local tissue invasion, and metastasis	if pain free: supported forward folds, child's pose, reclining twists, legs up the wall, restorative poses, warmth, relaxation, visualization, deep breathing	unsupported inversions, sun salutations, vigorous asana, retention of the breath
carpal tunnel syndrome irritation or compression of the medial nerve as it passes under the transverse carpal ligament into the wrist, causing tingling, numbness, and weakness in the hand	no pressure on wrists: shoulder openers, standing poses, forward folds, twists, hands in prayer position and reverse prayer, arms extended, eagle arms, cows head arms, relaxation	if pain is present, avoid poses that cause pain at the wrists like down dog or kneeling poses