

Health Benefits of Yoga

You know that exercise is good for you. You've probably heard it a thousand times on television, and maybe your doctor's told you to get more exercise too. There are few fitness programs that offer broad scope health benefits. Running, for example, strengthens your cardiovascular system and strength training builds muscle. Yoga is one of the few fitness programs that can accomplish both and much more.

#1 Mobility and Flexibility

As you age, and we're talking about once you've passed that 25-year mark, your body begins to lose some of its mobility. Your muscles can become short and tight. Your tendons can stiffen and your joints may often feel sore. When this happens, simple day-to-day movements can become painful or difficult. You may not be able to touch your toes.

When you walk long distances you may notice that your back aches. And if you try to reach over your head to put something away you may feel pain in your neck or shoulders. This is due to a lack of mobility.

Yoga can improve your mobility, meaning it can help lengthen those tight muscles and tendons. It can give you a better range of motion so that when you move your body, you do it in the most efficient and effective way possible. Not only will you feel better, you'll stop having those awful aches and pains.

#2 Strength

Yoga often requires you to hold a position for a long period of time. And in most cases you're supporting your full body weight. This requires you to build great strength. Most yoga positions recruit strength from your large muscle groups, your core muscles for example. As these muscles increase in

strength you'll find it expands to other areas of your life. Your posture will improve. You'll be stronger, physically, and thus able to lift and carry more than you used to. And you'll build muscle which burns fat and looks pretty darn fantastic too.

#3 Reduced Stress

Yoga requires a few things that impact and reduce your stress level. The first stress-reducing component is breathing. Many yoga styles have a structured breathing protocol. When you focus on your breathing, it automatically lowers cortisol (a stress hormone) and it lowers your heart rate.

Additionally, yoga requires great focus. Some poses not only ask you to hold your body in a balanced position, they also ask you to pay attention to your body and make slight adjustments to improve the pose. You're looking inward and focusing solely on your body and the very moment you're in. This focus reduces stress. It's akin to meditation and it's wonderful for the health of your body and your mind.

There are numerous other yoga health benefits: improved breathing, better posture, and weight loss are just a few more to consider. If you're looking for a new fitness program to try, you just can't go wrong with yoga.