

What Are the Benefits of Stretching & Yoga?



Stretching exercises and yoga are somewhat synonymous in that yoga routines include stretching movements, but you can do stretching activities without them being yoga exercises. Stretching and yoga yield a variety of benefits, including relief from chronic and acute conditions.

Flexibility

Improved flexibility, which refers to how much a muscle lengthens, is a key benefit from stretching and yoga movements. Everyday tasks like tying your shoes, reaching for items in cabinets and lifting objects can become easier. Similarly, muscle coordination can improve with regular stretching and yoga practice. All of these benefits become even more important as you get older since muscles naturally become tighter and shorter over the years. Yoga and stretching are ways to keep those muscles loose and limber.

Range of Motion

Stretching and yoga can keep the body's joints, tendons and ligaments lubricated and can improve range of motion. Range of motion refers to the distance your joints are able to move their corresponding limbs. An increased range of motion from stretching allows you more mobility and agility. Increased agility provides better balance and reaction time when dealing with instability. These benefits are important at any age, but especially critical as you get older.

Better Circulation

Stretching and yoga encourage better circulation of blood throughout the body, including to the joints and muscles. This yields quicker healing of any muscle injuries and more nutrients coming to the muscles at all times.

Pain Relief

Stretching and yoga can provide relief from back pain and arthritis. For lower-back pain, stretching the quadriceps and hamstrings as well as the hip and pelvis muscles can contribute to relief. Stretching and yoga can also ease headache pain by improving circulation and oxygen flow to the head. The relaxation aspect of stretching and yoga may also contribute to pain reduction.

Relaxation

Stretching and yoga can be antidotes to stress, as they ease and loosen tight muscles and offer a sense of well-being and tranquility. In addition to the physical ways these exercises can provide benefits, the mental calm also contributes to relaxation. Some people have used yoga to cope with issues like anxiety and depression.

Improved Posture

Better posture is another benefit to yoga and stretching activities. Tight muscles can contribute to bad posture, but stretching those muscles can improve alignment in your back and help posture. The particular areas of stretching that yield these benefits are the chest, shoulders and lower back.