

Yoga Therapy Research Paper

Therapeutic Yoga and Healing after Breast Cancer
submitted to: Karen Claffey

April 2012

from Vicki Young

Table of Contents	3
Medical View:	
Analysis of Condition; causes incidents and risk factors	3
Symptoms of Condition	5
Lifestyle Assessment; contributing factors per medical view	6
Medical Treatments	7
Research on the Efficacy of Yoga and Breast Cancer	9
Yogic View:	11
Conditions relative to 5 Koshas;	
Physical	11
Energy	14
Psycho-Emotional	15
Wisdom	16
Bliss	
Yogic program to promote balance and healing	16
References	22

Introduction

Yoga has been practiced by many people around the world for many centuries. The Western world is realizing the benefits and many people have incorporated yoga into their daily lives. More recently however, yoga is being promoted for its therapeutic use in a variety of illness and diseases such as breast cancer. This paper will explore therapeutic yoga and its efficacy in managing and supporting a person with breast cancer.

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, Breast Cancer is the leading cause of death in women of all races. Breast cancer is a complex disease that will affect 1 in 9 Canadian women during their lifetime. In 2011, it is estimated that 23,400 Canadian women and 190 Canadian men will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Treatment for breast cancer is varied but as the diagnosis is traumatic and the treatments are usually invasive, patients need alternative ways to cope with the disease. Additionally, psychosocial issues including self-blame, self-acceptance, and learning to love yourself all support the need for holistic approaches. This has led the medical and yoga communities to some interesting research in the area of yoga and breast cancer.

Analysis of condition

There are two main types of breast cancer, both of which start in the tissues of the breast. Ductal carcinoma starts in the ducts that bring the milk from the breast to the nipple (most common type of breast cancer) and lobular carcinoma that starts in the lobules (that produce milk) of the breast.

Breast cancer can start in other areas of the breast but this is rare. Breast cancer can also be identified as invasive which means it has spread from the duct or lobules to other areas of the breast. If it is

noninvasive breast cancer then it has not yet spread to other tissues in the breast. The noninvasive breast cancer is called "in situ". If the diagnosis is ductal carcinoma in situ (intraductal carcinoma), the cancer is in the lining of the milk ducts and has not yet spread to nearby tissues. If untreated the cancer could spread to surrounding tissues. When the lobular carcinoma is in situ, there becomes an increased risk of invasive cancer in either the same or both breasts. (Pubmedhealth, 2010) The hormone estrogen can cause the tumor(s) to grow - this is called ER-positive cancer which means that estrogen receptors on the surface of the cells have caused the cancer to grow. There is also HER2-positive breast cancer which means there is a specific gene that sends signals to the cell to grow, divide and repair themselves. If the cells have too many copies of the gene they grow faster. Experts in the field think that this type of breast cancer is more aggressive and have a higher risk of returning.

Causes Incidents and risk factors

Breast cancer is a complex disease with no single cause. Breast cancer researchers believe that a combination of inherited and environmental causes must be present for breast cancer to develop.

Inherited causes can be thought of as internal factors. They are part of the genetic makeup we received from our parents and do not change through life. Examples of inherited causes include genetic mutations and differences in the way our bodies repair cell DNA after it has been damaged.

Environmental causes can be thought of as external factors. They affect us throughout our lives. Examples of external factors include our lifestyle and the environment we live in, for example, our level of physical activity, our use of hormone replacement therapy and our exposure to chemicals that are known to change cell DNA.

More research is needed in this area to understand better how inherited and environmental causes work together to result in the cell DNA changes that lead to breast cancer. Research helps to improve our knowledge of breast cancer, giving us a stronger understanding of breast cancer risk and ways to try to reduce the risk.

According to Pubmed, 2010 some risks that cannot be changed include:

- ⤴ Age and gender -- risk of developing breast cancer increases as you get older. Most advanced breast cancer cases are found in women over age 50. Women are 100 times more likely to get breast cancer than men.
- ⤴ Family history of breast cancer -- may also have a higher risk for breast cancer if you have a close relative who has had breast, uterine, ovarian, or colon cancer. About 20 - 30% of women with breast cancer have a family history of the disease.
- ⤴ Genes -- Some people have genes that make them more likely to develop breast cancer. The most common gene defects are found in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. These genes normally produce proteins that protect you from cancer. If a parent passes you a defective gene, you have an increased risk for breast cancer. Women with one of these defects have up to an 80% chance of getting breast cancer sometime during their life.
- ⤴ Menstrual cycle -- Women who got their periods early (before age 12) or went through menopause late (after age 55) have an increased risk for breast cancer.

Symptoms of the Conditions

Breast cancer symptoms can vary widely — from lumps to swelling to skin changes — and many breast cancers have no obvious symptoms at all. Also, symptoms that are similar to those of breast cancer may be the result of non-cancerous conditions like infection or a cyst (breastcancer.org).

Regular breast exams are important in the early detection of breast cancer as often there are no outward or obvious symptoms. As the cancer grows breast lumps are the most common symptoms.

These lumps can be found in the armpit or breast and are usually hard with uneven edges. Typically these lumps do not hurt. Additional symptoms may include a change in the size, shape or feel of the breast or nipple. This could include a change in the color or texture of the skin. Puckering, redness and dimpling may be noticeable changes in the skin. Also, there may be fluid from the nipple which might be clear, pussy or bloody in color. Men also experience similar symptoms but can also experience pain and tenderness.

When the cancer has advanced, symptoms can include bone pain, breast pain and discomfort, skin ulcers, swelling in the arm next to the breast with cancer and weight loss.

Lifestyle assessments

Other risk factors include:

- ⤴ Alcohol use -- Drinking more than 1 - 2 glasses of alcohol a day may increase your risk for breast cancer.
- ⤴ Childbirth -- Women who have never had children or who had them only after age 30 have an increased risk for breast cancer. Being pregnant more than once or becoming pregnant at an early age reduces your risk of breast cancer.
- ⤴ DES -- Women who took diethylstilbestrol (DES) to prevent miscarriage may have an increased risk of breast cancer after age 40. This drug was given to the women in the 1940s - 1960s.
- ⤴ Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) -- You have a higher risk for breast cancer if you have received hormone replacement therapy with estrogen for several years or more.
- ⤴ Obesity -- Obesity has been linked to breast cancer, although this link is controversial. The theory is that obese women produce more estrogen, which can fuel the development of breast

cancer.

- ⤴ Radiation -- If you received radiation therapy as a child or young adult to treat cancer of the chest area, you have a much higher risk for developing breast cancer. The younger you started such radiation and the higher the dose, the higher your risk -- especially if the radiation was given during breast development.

Contrary to belief, breast implants, using antiperspirants, and wearing underwire bras do not raise the risk for breast cancer. Research has concluded that there is no evidence of a direct link between breast cancer and pesticides. For additional information around risks, the National Cancer Institute has an online tool to help people figure out their risk of breast cancer.

Tests

- ⤴ Breast MRI to help better identify the breast lump or evaluate an abnormal change on a mammogram
- ⤴ Breast ultrasound to show whether the lump is solid or fluid-filled
- ⤴ Breast biopsy, using methods such as needle aspiration, ultrasound-guided, stereotactic, or open
- ⤴ CT scan to see if the cancer has spread
- ⤴ Mammography to screen for breast cancer or help identify the breast lump
- ⤴ PET scan
- ⤴ Sentinel lymph node biopsy to see if the cancer has spread

Once testing is done, the medical doctor will determine whether the cancer has spread. This is called staging which helps guide future treatment. Breast cancer stages range from 0 to IV. The higher the staging number, the more advanced the cancer.

Medical Treatments

Treatment is based on many factors, including the type and stage of the cancer, whether the

cancer is sensitive to certain hormones and whether the cancer overproduces a gene called HER2/neu.

Cancer treatments may include, chemotherapy; radiation therapy or surgery.

Chemotherapy is a type of systemic treatment. This treatment affects the entire body. Radiation is a localized treatment addressing the area affected, while surgery (lumpectomy- area specific or mastectomy - removes of all or part of the breast) removes the areas with cancerous cells.

For women with ER-positive breast cancer hormonal therapy is prescribed. This treatment blocks certain hormones that fuel cancer growth.

- ⤴ An example of hormonal therapy is the drug tamoxifen. This drug blocks the effects of estrogen, which can help breast cancer cells survive and grow. Most women with estrogen-sensitive breast cancer benefit from this drug.
- ⤴ Another class of hormonal therapy medicines called aromatase inhibitors, such as exemestane (Aromasin), has been shown to work just as well or even better than tamoxifen in postmenopausal women with breast cancer. Aromatase inhibitors block estrogen from being made.

Targeted therapy, also called biologic therapy, is a newer type of cancer treatment. This therapy uses special anticancer drugs that target certain changes in a cell that can lead to cancer. One such drug is trastuzumab (Herceptin). It may be used for women with HER2-positive breast cancer.

Most women receive a combination of treatments. For women with stage I, II, or III breast cancer, the main goal is to treat the cancer and prevent it from returning (curing). For women with stage IV cancer, the goal is to improve symptoms and help them live longer. In most cases, stage IV breast cancer cannot be cured.

- ⤴ Stage 0 and DCIS -- Lumpectomy plus radiation or mastectomy is the standard treatment. There is some controversy on how best to treat DCIS.
- ⤴ Stage I and II -- Lumpectomy plus radiation or mastectomy with some sort of lymph node

removal is the standard treatment. Hormone therapy, chemotherapy, and biologic therapy may also be recommended following surgery.

- ⤴ Stage III -- Treatment involves surgery, possibly followed by chemotherapy, hormone therapy, and biologic therapy.
- ⤴ Stage IV -- Treatment may involve surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, or a combination of these treatments.

After treatment, some women will continue to take medications such as tamoxifen for a period of time. All women will continue to have blood tests, mammograms, and other tests after treatment.

Women who have had a mastectomy may have reconstructive breast surgery, either at the same time as the mastectomy or later.

Research on the Efficacy of Yoga and Breast Cancer

In 2005 a study was conducted in Calgary Alberta to examine the physical and psychological benefits of yoga for breast cancer survivors. Four University departments and a fitness organization participated in the data gathering. Participants completed a pre and post test assessment before and after the yoga program which lasted 7 weeks.

The yoga program participants (92% female) included primarily breast cancer survivors, average age of 51, who were on average 55 months post-diagnosis. Participants were divided into a control group (put on waiting lists for the program) and an intervention group (those who participated in the yoga program). Significant differences between the intervention and the control group at post-intervention were seen only in psychosocial (global quality of life, and emotional functioning). There were also trends for group differences for the psychosocial variables of emotional irritability, gastrointestinal symptoms, cognitive disorganization, mood disturbance, tension, depression, and confusion. Finally, there were also significant improvements in both the program participants and the controls from pre- to post-intervention on a number of physical fitness variables.

overall, the results of the study concluded that the initial findings suggested that yoga has significant

potential and should be further explored as a beneficial physical activity option for cancer survivors. Future research might attempt to include a broader range of participants for example, other types of cancer diagnoses, male subjects, a larger sample size, and a longer program duration. However, overall, the study showed the benefits of a yoga program for breast cancer survivors.

In another study conducted in 2007 on women with metastatic breast cancer, the results found a regular yoga practice helped to reduce pain and fatigue and brought about higher levels of invigoration, acceptance and relaxation. (Yoga for Women with Metastatic Breast Cancer: Results from a Pilot Study, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina)

According to this study: "metastatic breast cancer (MBC) remains a terminal illness for which major treatment advances are slow to appear, it is crucial that effective palliative interventions be developed to reduce the cancer-related symptoms of women with this condition during the remaining years of their lives". This pilot/feasibility study examined a novel, yoga-based palliative intervention, the Yoga of Awareness Program, in a sample of women with MBC. The eight-week protocol included gentle yoga postures, breathing exercises, meditation, didactic presentations, and group interchange. Outcome was assessed using daily measures of pain, fatigue, distress, invigoration, acceptance, and relaxation during two pre intervention weeks and the final two weeks of the intervention. Thirteen women completed the intervention (mean age $\frac{1}{4}$ 59; mean time since diagnosis $\frac{1}{4}$ 7 years; two African American, 11 Caucasian). During the study, four participants had cancer recurrences, and the physical condition of several others deteriorated noticeably. Despite low statistical power, pre-to-post multilevel outcomes analysis showed significant increases in invigoration and acceptance. Lagged analysis of length of home yoga practice (controlling for individual mean practice time and outcome levels on the lagged days) showed that on the day after a day during which women practiced more, they experienced significantly lower levels of pain and fatigue, and higher levels of invigoration, acceptance, and relaxation. These findings support the need for further investigation of the effects of the Yoga of Awareness Program in women with MBC." (J Pain Symptom Manage 2007;33;331e341. 2007)

Both studies indicate that adding yoga to a patient's treatment/management of breast cancer can be of tremendous value in terms of managing pain and other psychosocial issues.

They also indicate the need for more research in the area in order to further study the efficacy and include other cancers in the research.

Additional research can be found on <http://lifeinsurancepal.com/web/yogaforbreastcancer/4>

Yogic View

Conditions Relative to 5 Koshas

Physical

There appears to be some discrepancy around which dosha is more susceptible to breast cancer. The following paragraphs offer a sample of the conflicting information on the internet. However, there appears to be more support suggesting that the Kapha dosha may be more prone to breast cancer than the other doshas.

"Breast cancer is a tridoshic (involving all three body humors) disorder of breast tissue, sometimes preceded by fibrocystic breast disease, a pitta-kapha (pitta and kapha are each one of the three body humors) disorder. Causes are both hereditary and acquired; the acquired causes being physical, emotional, spiritual, and environmental".

http://www.alandiashram.org/school/school_html/reviews/breast_cancer.html

"In Ayurvedic, or traditional Indian, medicine [tumors are linked to an excess of "kapha"](#) , a term used to describe people who are usually overweight, feel cold, suffer from a *poor circulation* and a sluggish metabolism. Interestingly, the Ayurvedic treatment for excess kapha is to have people do vigorous exercise and provide them with "warming spices" such as ginger and garlic. Ginger and garlic are both known blood thinners as well as known cancer inhibitors".

<http://www.nhfw.info/blood-thinners.html>

"Kapha: Kapha people are usually heavily built. They do not like to be rushed or hurried, a relaxed pace suits them better. They are strong and have wonderful endurance. They are confident, prudent

and remain calm under pressure. They are patient, reliable, and obliging. They make very good business people. When Kapha individuals are out of balance they can become greedy and luxury loving, or turn lazy and lethargic. The illnesses that they are prone to are: poor blood circulation, digestive problems, colds, bronchitis, lung and breast cancer".

<http://www.medicalintuition.com/ayurveda%20def.htm>

Tumor growth in cancer is related to an excess of Kapha. There is an accumulation of amas (toxins) and poor agni (digestive fire) indicating a deficiency of Pitta. Vata is an imbalance through fear and anxiety. (Murphy, Patel, Zwickel and Sansreget, 2004).

In summary, the research in general tends to support the fact that Kapha doshas tend to have the constitution of a person more likely to get cancer. As stated above, they lack the fire to fight off the disease and tend to have the mindset of a person 'resigned' to the fact that once they get a diagnosis of cancer they have no power to fight off the disease.

Dietary Causes

According to Alakananda Devi (2010), breast cancer has a dietary, emotional and spiritual cause. Poor diet leads to an increase in toxins in the body creating an environment that is ripe for disease. A diet of refined, processed, and artificially flavored food combined with microwaved, canned and frozen food leads to acute illnesses.

Emotional Causes

On an emotional level, breast cancer may be a result of an inability to give and receive love and nurturing. Fundamentally, it is lack of self-love that is at issue. Another significant cause of breast cancer may be hatred and resentment born towards a mother who was physically, emotionally, or sexually abusive and neglectful. In this case, the breast cancer comes as an opportunity to heal and resolve these long-stored toxic emotions.

Spiritual Causes

According to Ayurvedic tradition and beliefs, "meaninglessness and existential

despair are the spiritual causes of breast cancer. Far deeper and more basic than a woman's need for the love of a man or another woman is her need of a more-than-human love. The breasts are closely connected with the *Anahata chakra* (the heart *chakra*) the seat of *bhakti* (devotion) and *prema* (divine love). "

"A woman with breast cancer comes as a symptom of the profound soul-sickness of our times. She is a reminder to each one of us to cease serving profit, utility, and expediency, and to stop the constant gratification of transitory desires. She shows us, eloquently, that worldly pleasures turn in the end to pain. Bearing death in her body, as each of us mortals do, in fact, she reminds us to make use of this precious human birth in devotion and service to the One. Rediscovery of meaning is crucial in the prevention of breast cancer".

http://www.alandiashram.org/school/school_html/reviews/breast_cancer.html

In general, this belief that breast cancer or any disease for that matter is as a result of personal beliefs and attitudes is fairly wide spread. There are numerous websites including the sample that follows that support this belief.

Additionally, according to the website <http://www.healingcancernaturally.com/karma-life-purpose-healing.html> the following further supports the theory that disease is bred from internal beliefs and attitudes.

Structural Alignment

A study conducted in 2010 by a Polish University found that there was a significantly higher incidence of faulty body postures among women after treatment of breast cancer. The study looked at 51 women post mastectomy and 37 healthy women. All participants underwent a photogrammetric examination of body posture. Overall the study showed differences in posture of women with breast cancer.

<http://www.idellepacker.net/applications/medrehab/physicaltherapy.php>

A google search also indicated that there are numerous chat rooms and discussion blogs where women discuss their issues with shoulders falling forward due to lack of breast tissue. As yoga tones and strengthens the body and mind, there is a natural pairing of yoga and people with breast cancer as a means of working on structural alignment.

Energy

In terms of the energy body, a disease like breast cancer can be manifested as a result of lack of awareness of the breath as well as flow of energy in the body. This separation from breath, the flow of energy in the body, and the natural world are key factors in the onset of illness.

Factors that contribute to the condition are:

- Lack of breath awareness
- Low level of energy
- Depression, anxiety, fear, (also affect physical energy)
the nadis.
- Surgery and medications could impaired the free circulation of energy in the subtle body affecting the PranaVayus as well.

According to Ayurveda beliefs, breast cancer is a tridoshic disorder (involving all three doshas). It is a disorder of breast tissue, sometimes preceded by fibrocystic breast disease, a pitta-kapha disorder.

causes are both hereditary and acquired. Acquired causes being physical, emotional, spiritual and environmental.

Dietary and other physical factors can assist in the development of breast cancer, or to trigger the disease in one who already has the hereditary factors. Breast cancer, like any malignant or degenerative disease may be the result of prolonged wrong diet, lifestyle or prajnaparadh (crimes against wisdom)> Wrong regimen leads first to accumulation of doshas, then in time to acute illnesses. If those illnesses are treated improperly, for example, if the excess doshas are not expelled and ama (toxins) are not purified, then the imbalance is driven deeper resulting in chronic complaints. If these imbalances is driven deeper, they result in chronic illness. When these illnesses are not treated then the

excess doshas localize in the most vulnerable or toxic tissue, in this case breast tissue, to create a malignant tumor

http://www.alandiashram.org/school/school_html/reviews/breast_cancer.html

Psycho-Emotional Body

In relation to the psycho-emotional body, people with breast cancer appear "separate from themselves". Many or all aspects of the self are repressed or denied. These beliefs form the basis of daily living; separate from self and society; patterns where we separate from other people, even those in our family who should be the foundation of our emotional support.

Conditions found in the emotional body:

- Feelings of fear in general and anger will create separation from positive emotions.
- Inertia, self pity.
- Fear of death.
 - Depression.
 - Emotional pain.
 - Anxiety about what could happen to them and their loved ones.
 - Despair and hopelessness.
 - Shame about appearance changes (loss of hair, surgery to the breast).
 - Loneliness, feeling of being alone in the world.
 - Guilt for having put one's loved ones through so much pain
 - Inability to nurture self at the heart or through loving relationships with others.
 - Not being able to take care of the self physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.
 - Living a transition in life, the children are leaving home, divorce.

Wisdom

The wisdom kosha is the thinking aspect of the mind. It is the part of ourselves that has the ability to see the separation at the various levels and allows us to change. This kosha is the powerful wave of 'I-am-ness.' It gets co-mingled with memories, experiences and expectations. The I-am-ness can either

have a strong positive or negative effect on physical and emotional health, recovery or illness.

Conditions:

- Disconnection from ourselves
- Asking the question “Why me?”
- Is it my biology, or what I have done?
- Am I being punished? What have I done wrong?

is al

Bliss Body

The bliss body, is reflected in our denial of our true nature and the disconnection from the Spirit which is the most powerful source of healing.

Conditions in the bliss body:

- Inability of breast cancer patients to see wholeness and surrendering themselves to universal consciousness.
- Increased identity with ego and self contribute to this separation.
- Separation occurs as a result of not knowing the true essence of one’s being.

Yoga Program to Promote Balance and Healing

Food/Diet

In general, someone recovering from breast cancer should eat a health well balanced diet. The following are some guidelines:

- ✦ eat a variety of foods
- ✦ east whole grains , vegetables and fruits
- ✦ choose lower fat dairy products, lean meats and minimal fats
- ✦ maintain a healthy weight
- ✦ get plenty of rest
- ✦ Included physical exercise
- ✦ limit salt, alcohol and caffeine

The above is the minimum dietary guidelines. Additional research and consideration into changing diet to follow one that is more specific to dosha or a macrobiotic diet would be beneficial.

Pranayama

- Adhama svasa (abdominal breathing)

It is a calming breath, which brings awareness to the abdomen and thus stimulates Vata that is lacking in most cancer.

- Nadi Sodhana (alternate nostril breathing)

Balances breath and recommended immune systems disorders such as cancer Cleansing, relaxing, balances ANS.

Mudra

- Ushas mudra

Facilitates endorphin release, a sense of well being.

Increases immunity, especially in cancer.

Helpful for immune system imbalance.

Balances Kapha, Pitta, Vata.

- Garuda mudra

Respiratory and endocrine function enhancement.

Balances both sides of body.

Good for paired organs / tissues

Yoga Nidra / Visualization / Guided imagery

- Healing heart meditation

Opening Anahata chakra

Cultivating self acceptance, awareness

Meditation - daily meditation visualizing revitalizing health - also using healing colors

Journaling - daily journaling as including writing out 3 blessings per day would be extremely beneficial in helping to cope with depression

Asanas

When restarting a [yoga practice or beginning a new practice](#), start with poses that free up the shoulder area. Bring as much balanced freedom of movement to the shoulder blade, collarbone, and humerus (the head of the arm bone) as possible. The following is a basic stretching program to begin recovery from Breast cancer. It is important to learn to move the shoulder girdle through its full range of movement, which involves:

Shrug the shoulders upward, toward the ears.

Lower the shoulders downward, away from the ears.

Reach forward as though you're about to grab something. The shoulder blades will move away from the spine.

Squeeze the shoulder blades together behind you.

Raise the arms overhead.

Sweep the arms back behind you with arms straight.

Rotate the arm bone internally.

Rotate the arm bone externally.

Bring the arms toward each other, in front of you.

Lift the arms away from the body at shoulder height.

Once the person becomes familiar with the basic stretches and feels safe to expand into yoga moves, of the following poses can be added.

In a comfortable seated position:

Urdhva Hastasana (Upward Salute)—Keep the arms shoulder width apart and spread the shoulder blades away from each other, in protraction.

Urdhva Namaskarasana (Upward Prayer Position) —Teaches elevation of the shoulder girdle and external rotation of the upper arm bone.

Paschima Namaskarasana (Prayer Position behind the back)—Teaches internal rotation of the arm bone.

Gomukhasana (Cow Face Pose) — Teaches elevation, external rotation, and internal rotation of the arms. Once the hands clasp, the arm bones adduct or move toward each other.

Garudasana (Eagle Pose)—Demands that the arms move into full adduction and the shoulder blades into full protraction, thus helping to open the shoulder blades.

To open the area around the armpits, take Extended Balasana (Extended Child's Pose) with the arms reaching forward along the ground. A gentle way to open the chest while standing is to take Tadasana (Mountain Pose) and interlace your fingers behind your back (into extension). Gently lift the arms away from the buttocks and actively squeeze the shoulder blades together as you do this. This will start to release the front chest muscles and adhesions. This arm position and action can also be practiced in Prasarita Padottanasana (Wide Legged Standing Forward Bend) .

To build strength, notice the arms in standing poses— Trikonasana (Triangle Pose) and Virabhadrasana I, II, and III (Warrior Poses I, II, and III) demand holding the arms out in space against gravity.

Wait before doing poses that are weight-bearing on the upper body. Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Bow Pose) , Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana (Two-Legged Inverted Staff Pose) , and Pincha Mayurasana (Forearm Balance) can be problematic until healing occurs and strength returns.

Most importantly, the person must be very gentle. The body now and needs time to heal. The path to recovery should be slow and taken with aware steps.

Lifestyle

In summary, breast cancer is a debilitating illness which depletes the body and mind. There are many issues involved in the treatment and recovery with yoga playing a vital role. In order to heal, a person must alter their lifestyle and become more 'self-centered' - not in a egotistical way but in a more mindful and aware manner. Self care in terms of a healthy diet and exercise is vital but not effective unless the person learns to balance their physical, emotional and spiritual life.

Research has shown that yoga is an effective addition to the treatment plan however, the treatment must include meditation, self-acceptance and pranayama as well.

References

<http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001911>

www.cancer.gov/bcrisktool

<http://www.abqjournalfit.com/2011/05/20/yoga-helped-women-undergoing-radiation-treatment-for-breast-cancer/>

<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/food-health/study-yoga-breast-cancer.html>

<http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/>

<http://www.iytyogatherapy.com/yogaTherapyJournal/breastcancer.pdf>

Published online in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/pon.1021

Vol. 33 No. 3 March 2007 Journal of Pain and Symptom Management 331

Murphy, Betsy; Patel, Sharen; Zwickel, Donna; Sansregret, Locana. Yoga For Breast Cancer Patients, 2004

http://www.alandiashram.org/school/school_html/reviews/breast_cancer.html

<http://www.swamij.com/koshas.htm#vijnanamaya>

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/statistics/>

<http://www.cbcf.org/ontario/AboutBreastCancerMain/AboutBreastCancer/Pages/default.aspx#>

[Ortop Traumatol Rehabil.](#) 2010 Jul-Aug;12(4):353-61.

<http://www.idellepacker.net/applications/medrehab/physicaltherapy.php>

Yoga for Breast Cancer Patients, 2004, Murphy, Patel, Zwickel and Sansregret