

# **Yoga**

## **Integrated and Complementary Medicine**



### **What is Yoga?**

Yoga is a mind-body technique that incorporates physical postures (or in yogi speak, "asanas"), breathing, and meditation. In recent years, yoga has become more popular and many military installations offer different types of yoga courses. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey, 8.4 percent of American adults participated in yoga in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

### **Why is it used?**

Yoga may be used for a variety of reasons including exercise, improving balance and flexibility, and finding relaxation. Because yoga is low impact and provides for modified movements and poses based on ability, it can be a great form of exercise for service members recovering from an injury. Yoga can be an effective tool to help you get back to your optimal fitness level and decrease stress and anxiety. Before you start doing yoga, be sure to check with your health care provider to ensure it would be a useful part of your recovery plan and seek out classes taught by a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT).

### **Benefits**

Several reports have shown that yoga can help reduce depression and anxiety, but the studies are not conclusive and further research is required to validate yoga's well-being and healing benefits. Despite a lack of scientific evidence, yoga is being offered as a treatment option for wounded, ill, or injured service members, particularly as a way to reduce anxiety and PTSD symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

### **Availability**

Be sure to check with your healthcare provider to ensure yoga is an appropriate part of your recovery plan. Many base gyms and fitness centers offer yoga classes and you can contact your Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) coordinator about availability and different classes that may suit your abilities and specific interests.

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### **How can I learn more?**

- [National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#)
- [Using Yoga to manage PTSD and TBI Symptoms](#)

### **References**

1. Peregoy JA, Clarke TC, Jones LJ, et al. Regional variation in use of complementary health approaches by U.S. adults. NCHS data brief, no 146. National Center for Health Statistics. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db146.pdf>. Published April 2014. Accessed June 2014.
2. Mind Body Skills for Regulating the Autonomic Nervous System. Defense Centers of Excellence For Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. <http://www.dcoe.mil/content/Navigation/Documents/Mind-Body%20Skills%20for%20Regulating%20the%20Autonomic%20Nervous%20System.pdf>. Published June 2011, Version 2. Accessed 10 July 2014.