

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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FOR THE MEDIA

Studies show that yoga can help patients with many types of chronic conditions. Cancer survivors report reduced fatigue, better sleep, less stress, and improved strength, mood, and quality of life.

Among less active cancer survivors, restorative yoga may be easier and also have benefits. Regular practice also increases benefits.

Both the American Society of Clinical Oncology and Society of Integrative Oncology (ASCO and SIO) recommend yoga for anxiety, stress reduction, depression, mood disturbance, and improved quality of life in cancer patients.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- Anxiety
Many clinical studies indicate that yoga can reduce anxiety.
- Depression

Studies link yoga practice to reduced depression and positive mood.

- Breathing difficulty

Yoga may help shortness of breath and anxiety in patients with COPD and lung cancer.

- Fatigue

Several studies show yoga can reduce fatigue in cancer patients.

- Hot flashes

Yoga may help cancer patients with hot flashes and related symptoms.

- Pain

Yoga can help reduce pain and inflammation.

- PTSD

Several programs show it is possible to use yoga in certain populations with post-traumatic stress disorder.

- Sleep quality and sleep medication use

A large study suggests improved sleep quality and less sleep medication use in cancer survivors with sleep problems.

- Stress

Several studies support use of yoga for reducing stress.

What else do I need to know?

What Is It:

Yoga is an ancient practice that uses breathing exercises, moving through specific postures, focused awareness, and meditation to achieve physical and emotional health benefits.

Special Point:

Cancer patients interested in beginning yoga should first ask their physician, because certain cancer treatments can cause physical limitations.

Is It Safe:

- Side effects from yoga are rare, but may occur from inappropriate regimens or practicing without supervision.
- Cancer survivors may have additional limitations due to surgery, chemotherapy, or radiotherapy. That's why [MSK offers yoga workshops](#) and our [Integrative Medicine at Home](#) program. Both help patients learn proper techniques and modifications with certified instructors who have experience working with cancer patients.
- Pregnant women and individuals with hypertension or glaucoma should use caution when practicing

certain yoga postures.

Who Can Provide this Service:

Certified instructors who have experience working with cancer patients.

Where Can I Get Treatment:

Yoga classes are offered at hospitals, major cancer clinics, and at community centers. [MSK offers yoga workshops](#) for patients and caregivers, and as part of our online program, [Integrative Medicine at Home](#) , to support recovery and well-being of cancer patients everywhere.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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