



## **Yoga for Back Care**

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Eight out of 10 Canadians will suffer from back pain in their lifetimes. Back pain has been identified as the most common cause of activity limitation in adults under 45 years of age, and is second only to arthritis in those 45 to 65 years of age. Yoga improves the body and specifically the spine by building strength but also flexibility to provide back support. A person who has experienced back pain is about 10 times more likely to have another backache than someone who hasn't. Back pain has a high rate of re-injury so it is important to prevent back pain in the first place or its reoccurrence by regular exercise and effective daily movement habits. Yoga helps create body awareness by helping us tune-in to our natural spinal curves and how our body moves. Yoga practice can help you develop effective movement patterns on a daily basis by teaching you to engage the proper muscles with proper timing. Yoga will align your body using proper posture, which can then be incorporated into your everyday life.

Yoga is a form of exercise that helps with weight maintenance. As weight increases compression on the discs of the spine increases especially in the low back. Yoga speeds up food transit to eliminate constipation which can increase back pain. Yoga improves sleep quality which is important for the healing process in back pain.

Yoga makes us aware of our breathing and teaches us how to control our breath. Controlled breathing helps reduce heart rate, blood pressure, muscular tension, flow of adrenaline and increases relaxation which in turn combat the effects of stress on the body from pain. Healing requires relaxation. Yogic breathing or pranyama can help you relax and focus on the recovery process rather than the pain and anxiety that you feel from back pain. Yoga helps us maintain a relaxed and positive mental attitude to create the inner peace required to adjust to life's daily stressors without engaging unnecessary back strain and tension.

If you have back pain, consider committing to regular yoga practice. It is worth it to invest in a lifestyle that supports your back because after all, your back supports you!