

## Yoga on Geriatric Rehabilitation

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In addition to the fact that yoga has various influences on health, its greatest particularity is that it is accessible for individuals from all age groups and of different physical levels. Increasing old population has enhanced the existence of yoga programme in sport centres, nursing homes and supportive life centres [1-4].

Diseases such as cardiac disease, high blood pressure, which affect the health condition in a negative way, decreased flexibility, arthritis, and osteoporosis are health problems which can be avoided and prevented. However, aging makes this process inconvenient and increases the resistance against the exercise. Taking all of these facts into consideration, it is necessary to prepare exercise programmes, to ensure participation and to modify these programmes for individuals [4-7].

Yoga is particularly beneficial to the old person, because it enhances strength and flexibility and prevents pain and injuries [4-6]. However, in order to avoid risk factors, yoga should be practised by experienced trainers, just as in the exercise programmes.

Decreased mobility or high blood pressure restricts the practise of yoga positions in old people. As a result of osteoporosis or sedentary life style, bad posture can prevent the practise of flexion and extension moves in yoga positions. It is necessary for the trainers to be aware of these situations and to modify the exercises and to prefer the positions intended to increase the flexibility and to ameliorate the health [4-9].

### Benefits of the geriatric yoga:

- Yoga provides a good balance, blood stream and tissue liveliness thanks to the enhanced flexibility and core stabilization. If the person attends the geriatric yoga programme regularly, many problems, which are caused by age, can be prevented [1,5].
- It is of high importance in terms of recovery in relaxation, memory deficiency and brain functions.
- It is possible to reload the most essential brain functions with the relaxing characteristic of yoga.
- It increases physical fitness.
- It decreases fatigue.
- The person gains experience with his own existence, body and mental performance during the sessions in yoga practises. He learns to control his body. He analyzes his emotional status about his problem. He gains ability to cope with the symptoms faced.
- It reduces sympathetic activity with relaxing techniques. Pain, fatigue, depression and stress decrease with relaxing response. Memory becomes retentive.

Yoga to be practised by old people should have several characteristics. Yoga can successfully be practised owing to the fact that it's slow particularly in the beginning, that it can be modified personally with the asana focused on concentration to relax the body,

that breath exercises improve body awareness and that it provides mental control. People gain ability to attend more serious and long term asana by progress of the sessions, flexibility increases. Muscle strength and balance improves, optimum movement level is reached and the painless-free movement border becomes wider. Relaxing is provided. Awareness becomes even more meaningful [4-11].

Yoga has found a place as an alternative medicine approach within geriatric and rehabilitation programmes in developed countries in Europe and in the US owing to its countless beneficial effects and it has started to be practised to improve physical health, to inform, to cope with and to support in various supportive programmes; to help people on issues such as pain, fatigue, stress, nutrition, exercise, sleep and patient caring [11-13].

Yoga will increase the success of rehabilitation with regards to the rehabilitation team, will resolve the systemic problems of geriatrics and will reduce home dependency, will enable social participation and decarceration by means of its practise in geriatric rehabilitation programme for its countless benefits. There are many actions which the societies can take for the old population. It is hard but not impossible to provide a life opportunity to the old people by reason of their health problems, including the intense ones.

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