



Yoga for Depression & Mental Health

What is Yoga and how does it work?

Yoga is a systematic method for increasing and maintaining physical and emotional health. It uses postures, breathing exercises and simple forms of meditation.

Yoga can be very effective in helping to come to terms with some of the routine and more challenging experiences of life.

How can it help?

Yoga enhances self-awareness, both on the physical and the mental level, enabling us to observe our thoughts and feelings whilst not having to identify with them: "that thought is present" and not "I am that thought". It encourages you to feel the feeling rather than identifying with the thoughts.

With each session we aim for the student to build on their inner strength and awareness. This will help to break through old patterns, past conditioning and limiting self beliefs. Students of yoga will be able to face their challenges with more acceptance and compassion.

Greater awareness enables empowerment which can also help break the isolation often associated with depression and leaves one feeling more connected: to self, others and nature.

Yoga can lead to elevated moods and a sense of well being, reducing anxiety. It does this partly through increasing alpha waves, promoting a more optimistic outlook and reducing the stress hormone cortisol. In turn it increases the feel-good hormones prolactin and oxytocin.

On a physical level it brings you much more in touch with how your body is allowing you to become more conscious and actively engaged in your health.

In short it can provide a proactive and empowering set of tools for self management of physical and psychological symptoms. It gives us greater self awareness and self acceptance, activating our innate healing capacities and deepening our sense of inner power and ease.

CALM THE MIND. STRENGTHEN THE BODY. DEEPEN THE BREATH.

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About The Sessions

We begin the sessions by bringing our attention into the present moment by guiding the mind away from its daily thoughts, using the physical sensations of the body and the rhythm of the breath.

This sets up the foundation for the rest of the session. This consists of a series of easy postures adapted to each individual's requirements so that they remain comfortable and steady throughout. Each session contains a mixture of postures designed to:

- Bring flexibility and strength to the body and therefore the mind.
- Cultivate groundedness helping us feel connected to the body.
- Build up core stability.
- Open the front of the body so that the shoulders are more open and the breath can move more freely.
- Have a restorative effect which helps to nurture and heal the hormone system.

I feel that this combination covers a wide scope of the issues faced in mental health. The techniques are easily learnt so that the clients will have a routine and a set of tools that they can take and use out in the world leaving them feeling looked after, rested and empowered.

About Christina Sage

I have studied and taught yoga for 15 years and it has played a vital role in my life. I have used it to face both the harder and the daily challenges that life throws up. If it had not been for my practice I would not have found the strength and stability I enjoy now. It is because of this that I would like to share these tools with others, encouraging and enabling deeper peace.

The methods I teach have developed whilst I have been working within the mental health and substance misuse field, with groups from Oxfordshire MIND, Dominion Housing, Cranstoun and Restore.

“Christina’s Yoga is gentle and effective with a number of our clients reporting positive and beneficial effects” Conroy Harris, Acorn MIND

***“Very relaxing and could be of use to me in the future. Found the tutor very helpful”
Client from Dominion Housing***

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