

# THE IMPORTANCE OF YOGA FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

## STRESS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

College can be very stressful. Attending college is often a time full of changes where responsibilities are increased, eating habits change, and sleep decreases or is not restful. Overall, it can be hard to meet all your needs and juggle all your obligations independently. It's not surprising that 82% of college students have reported feeling overwhelmed by their workload and new responsibilities and 60% of college students have reported feeling above-normal levels of stress (1). Because of this pressure, it is important to create habits and practices that reduce stress and increase wellbeing. Yoga is one option.

## WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is a practice that connects your mind and body. Using a range of different poses and physical movements, yoga can help build strength and flexibility. The combination of yoga movements, meditation, and breathing techniques help you build awareness of your body. Many people find yoga to be beneficial for both physical and mental health and can help build self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-compassion.



## **MINDFULNESS**

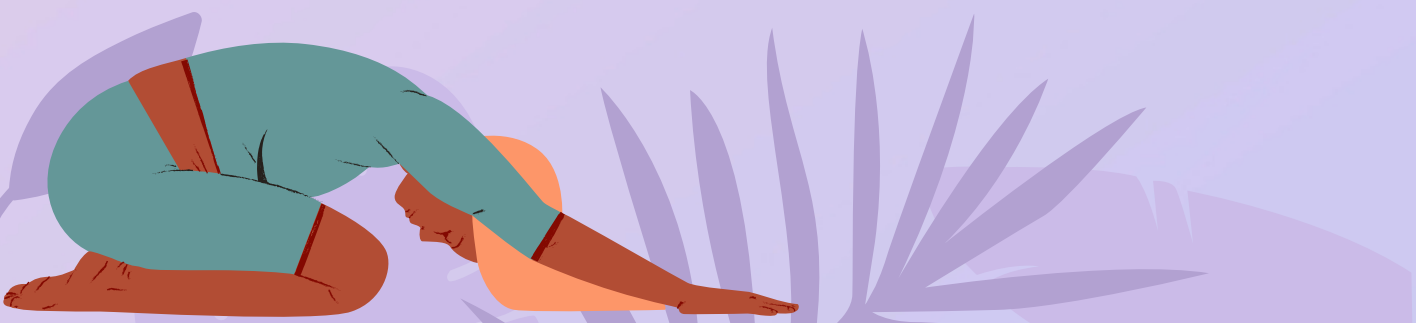
Mindfulness is the ability to be present-- fully aware or engaged in what you are doing. Yoga helps with mindfulness, since the practice of yoga requires includes being fully focused on movement, breathing, and attending to body sensations. Mindfulness can help relieve stress and anxiety by helping to be in the moment instead of reliving the past or worrying about the future. People find that mindfulness can also help improve sleep, which is often a problem for college students.

## **MENTAL WELLNESS BENEFITS**

Yoga can help you become more aware of your own emotions and feelings. When practicing yoga, you connect with yourself which can help you manage difficult emotions and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Many have found that yoga helps to create a sense of inner peace and helps to have compassion for self and others. While practicing yoga, you are intentionally aware of what you are feeling, which can increase self-awareness and self-compassion. This can contribute to better self-esteem, positive self-talk and overall, an improved sense of wellness.

## **PHYSICAL WELLNESS BENEFITS**

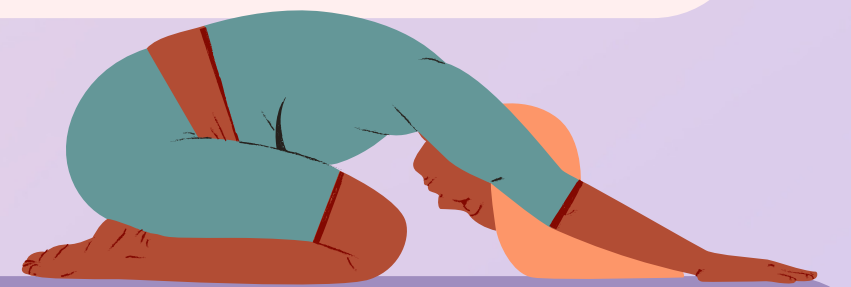
Not only does yoga do wonders for your mental health but it is also great for your physical health. Yoga can increase muscle tone and strength, increase flexibility, improve posture, improve sleep and energy, and increase cardiovascular health.





## OVERALL BENEFITS OF YOGA

- Regulates breath and energy
- Reduces symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression
- Increases ability to concentrate and pay attention
- Enhances sense of inner peace, positive thinking, and self compassion, conflict and resolution
- Respect for self and others
- Increases self-awareness and mindfulness (2)



## Resources at Rutgers

Weekly yoga classes are offered at all four Rutgers campuses. These classes provide an opportunity to build your physical and mental health and can be a great opportunity to meet peers! See what fits best with your schedule by checking the list of available classes at: <http://recreation.rutgers.edu/fitness-wellness/classes/>

### FOOTNOTE

(1) Gorvine MM, Zaller ND, Hudson HK, Demers D, Kennedy LA. A naturalistic study of yoga, meditation, self-perceived stress, self-compassion, and mindfulness in college students. *Health Psychol Behav Med*. 2019 Nov 18;7(1):385-395. doi: 10.1080/21642850.2019.1688154. PMID: 34040857; PMCID: PMC8114396.

(2) Khatun, S., Ansary, K., & Adhikari, A. (2022). ATTITUDE TOWARDS YOGA EDUCATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*.

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<https://alcoholstudies.rutgers.edu/research/wellness-self-care-lab/>.