

IYENGAR YOGA & HYPERTENSION



RESEARCH SUMMARY

Hypertension (high blood pressure) has been linked to increased risk of stroke, cardiovascular disease, and kidney disease. According to the National Center for Health Statistics nearly one in three adults (18+) in the United States have hypertension; the rate increases with age, reaching over 40% percent for adults over 40. Results of a study among adults with pre-hypertension and Stage 1 hypertension found that practicing Iyengar Yoga for 12 weeks produces clinically meaningful improvements in their blood pressure levels.

Symptoms of hypertension measured at 6 weeks and 12 weeks were compared to baseline measures taken prior to starting the program. The following measures showed significant improvement at 12 weeks:

- Lower systolic blood pressure (when the heart beats)
- Lower diastolic blood pressure (when the heart rests between beats)
- Lower mean arterial pressure

There was no significant improvement at 12 weeks for those receiving counseling on diet and lifestyle management only.



METHOD

Adults with pre-hypertension or Stage 1 hypertension were randomly assigned to either the group receiving a 12 week structured Iyengar Yoga program (IY) or the group receiving enhanced usual care (EUC). A total of 57 patients completed the study; 31 in the EUC group and 26 in the IY group.

The IY group attended two 70 minute classes a week for the first six weeks. During the second six weeks they attended one class a week and were given a 25 minute videotape for home sessions. All classes were taught by Certified Iyengar Yoga Teachers (CIYT) and followed a sequence developed with input from BKS Iyengar.

The EUC group attended a total of four 1 hour classes taught by a registered dietician. They also received two 30 minute phone contacts. The classes were designed to motivate and provide them with information about diet and lifestyle management focused on reducing blood pressure.

YOGA SEQUENCE

Savasana
Cross bolsters
Supta baddha konasana
Supta swastikasana
Bharadvajasana
Pavannamuktasana
Adho mukha virasana
Adho mukha swastikasana
Adho mukha svanasana
Uttanasana
Janu sirsasana
Upavistha konasana
Paschimottanasana
Savasana
Ujjayi pranayama

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This information is a summary of "Iyengar Yoga versus Enhanced Usual Care on Blood Pressure in Patients with Prehypertension to Stage I Hypertension: a Randomized Controlled Trial." Cohen, D. L., et al. (2011). *Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2011 (#546428). Available <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3145370/>
To find a Certified Iyengar Yoga Teacher (CIYT) in your area, click on "Find a Teacher" at IYNAUS.ORG

