

Yoga in pregnancy-the view of the obstetrician as a yoga instructor

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Objectives

To present from the point of view of an obstetrician the benefits of different elements in prenatal yoga sessions on improving breathing, strengthening the body muscles, and calming the mind of a generally anxious pregnant woman.

Design

It is a review of the elements of a standard prenatal yoga class delivered by an obstetrician.

Results

The standard 75 mins of a prenatal yoga session includes five main parts i.e. sharing circle, warm-up, asanas, stretching, and relaxation. Each part includes components that focus on a different aspect of a pregnant woman's wellbeing.

The breathing, centering, and sharing circle allows the instructor to adapt the session according to the needs of the participants. The warm-up part involves stretching postures/Asanas to release the tension in the whole body. Asanas adapted to the trimester and the fitness of the woman allows easy execution of the postures and strengthening of the muscles of the body. Visualization techniques of the fetus during yoga allow the pregnant woman to connect with the growing baby during the restorative and final relaxation part.

The combined knowledge of the changes and complications in pregnancy and the benefits of yoga practice pre and postnatally allows delivering a safe session with focus on specific needs of pregnant women during different stages of pregnancy.

Conclusion

The knowledge of physiological changes in women's bodies during pregnancy and the awareness of complications in different trimesters allows the obstetrician as a yoga instructor to tailor the prenatal yoga class to meet the individual requirements of pregnant women. A yoga class delivered by a medical professional builds confidence and helps women overcome the fear of physical activities during pregnancy and motivates them to continue practicing yoga even after delivery.

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