

Benefits of prenatal yoga practice during different trimesters of pregnancy

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Objectives

To describe that Yoga in pregnancy does not only include practising specific postures /Asanas/. To present benefits of yoga practices on pregnant women in different trimesters of pregnancy. Prenatal yoga is a learning process of how to connect body, spirit and mind and to start building a relationship between mother and her growing baby.

Design

It is a review of various postures and paranayama /breathing/ techniques recommended during different trimester of pregnancy.

Results

Different trimesters in pregnancy pose different challenges to women's pregnant bodies.

During first-trimester, yoga class should include meditation, learning different breathing techniques and postures helping to adapt to the changes of the body at the beginning of the pregnancy. Lengthening and deepening the breath in sukhasana (easy pose) with hands rested on the abdomen relieve the nausea. Tranquillity breathing allows achieving emotional balance. Meditation with affirmations and visualisation calms the mind, centre yourself at the beginning of the day and helps relax fully at night.

Strengthening the body, pranayama techniques and building a stronger connection with the developing fetus are of major importance in the second trimester. Standing postures with and without wall support are essential to strengthen paravertebral muscles and balance the whole body.

Breathing practices – alternate nostril breathing, abdominal and chest breathing and below breathing allow creating space for the growing fetus, refreshes mind and body. Asanas focusing on the neck, shoulders and back muscle areas are very important in the third trimester. Exercises targeting on strengthening pelvic floor muscles and preparing for delivery should be included in every yoga session and in particular second and third trimesters.

Stretching and restorative poses are essential at the end of each yoga class. Twisting and compressing the abdominal muscles asanas, backbends and heated yoga are contraindicated during pregnancy.

Conclusion

Yoga practise Ideally should be customised based on the physical fitness of the women and the trimester of pregnancy. Of a major importance is to follow everyone's own pace and listen to the rhythm and voice of the body.

The different components of a prenatal yoga session improve the general well-being of pregnant women. Asanas affect positively the balance of the body and strengthen all the muscles. Restorative poses calm the mind; breathing techniques increase lung capacity. Meditation reinforces the connection with the growing fetus.

Prenatal yoga has a holistic effect on the pregnant woman with a positive influence on her body, mind and spirit. The knowledge of yoga benefits in pregnancy allows the health caregivers to guide women to practice without fear or misconceptions.

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