



**VA Boston Healthcare System
1400 VFW Parkway
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Lifestyle Medicine Rotation Syllabus

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ADAPTIVE YOGA WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY PATIENTS

Learning objectives:

1. Describe effective relaxation techniques including deep breathing and guided visualization
2. Explain impact of relaxation techniques on stress and pain management
3. Describe three ways that yoga can be adapted for patients with a range of ability
4. Summarize the evidence base for yoga as an intervention to enhance quality of life and health outcomes in SCI

Yoga with Spinal Cord Patients

Introduction to yoga as a method of SCI rehabilitation:

1. Yoga addresses limitations of the traditional therapy model that lacks a mind-body component
 2. Yoga focuses on controlling the breath, muscle relaxation, mindful awareness of the body, and reduction of sympathetic NS activity.
 - Enhanced proprioceptive and vestibular awareness
 - Focus on keeping the mind and body in the same frame, even if the body doesn't have all of its functions
 - More efficient distribution of gravity, alignment and precision integrates the mind and body
 3. Yoga as an effective non-pharmacological treatment for pain management
- A. Overview of mindfulness
1. Intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment
 - Decrease pain

- Enhance coping
- Improve quality of life
- Decrease stress and anxiety

B. Benefits of yoga in the VA population

1. Mindful yoga therapy provides self-regulation skills to effectively manage symptoms
2. Veterans found that mindful yoga therapy helps them to:
 - Sleep better
 - Concentrate and think more clearly
 - Manage anger and aggression more easily
 - Find comfort in their own skin
3. Many veterans find mindful yoga practices to be a necessary part of their recovery

References

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