

Cardiovascular Benefits of Tai Chi and Yoga

CARDIOVASCULAR BENEFITS OF TAI CHI AND YOGA

We often think of exercise as movement that either raises our heart rate (aerobic exercise) or builds muscles (Strength Training). But two other factors.- flexibility and balance-are also important for a well rounded fitness program. A yoga practice has the potential to target all four factors at the same time.

Recent studies suggest that yoga and tai chi have modest positive effect on several factors linked to cardiovascular health.

3 PILLARS OF EXERCISE- Aerobic exercise that gets the heart pumping such as running, biking, swimming, treadmill, elliptical, etc. are traditionally closely associated with heart health. They increase energy and stamina. Resistance exercises, such as weightlifting, improve muscle tone and strength. Complementary exercises rely on slow, sustained movement that improve core strength and balance.

Most of the older people tend to fall not because their trip, but because they don't have the muscle strength to stay on their feet when they lose their balance.

HOW YOGA AND TAI CHI HELP- The relaxation response not only slows the heart rate and lowers blood pressure . It may also slow down inflammation and promote favorable changes in the blood vessel function that protect the heart.

As a mind -body practice, yoga, and tai chi, can achieve people to slow down and be more mindful about heart healthy behaviors, such as eating healthy and getting enough sleep. This habits along with positive emotions that yoga and tai chi aim to inspire, such as compassion and gratitude.-may also help to improve cardiovascular health

Multiple trials have shown that broad range of additional effects from tai chi and yoga. These affects appear to originate from the impact of yoga and Tai Chi on the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. Practicing yoga and tai chi helps to tone the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls, heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, urination, and other bodily functions.

At the same time, these exercises help the sympathetic nervous system keeps the “fights or flight” response in check. An hour of yoga three times a week has been shown to lower blood pressure, heart rate, systemic inflammation, and episodes of atrial fibrillation.

In patients with heart failure, Tai Chi can reduce markers of systemic inflammation, improve six minute walk distance, and help to reduce depression. In addition, both tai chi and yoga can be more effective at producing weight loss. We think of exercise as being in motion, but different muscles use up a lot of energy when you are trying to hold yourself still, during yoga and tai chi

SPIRITUAL ASPECTS- Yoga and tai Chi are called mind-body strategies because the concentration involved in tensing and flexing muscles to move slowly and maintain balance requires mindfulness. Some often call this discipline as spiritual component. As you all know, yoga required no special equipment and can be practiced indoors or outdoors.

They are safe, well tolerated and highly adaptable to a wide range of people. Both practices are feasible for individuals who may not be able to sustain the cardiac output required for running.

There are other mind, body practices, such as relaxation, meditation, bio feedback, Reiki, and others. However, they lack scientific evidence of benefit for individuals with heart disease. There is enough, high-quality evidence exist on the benefit of tai chi and yoga on patients with heart failure that the American College of cardiology felt comfortable recommending them for clinical practice.

This is a holistic way of managing heart failure

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