

Yoga may be non-inferior to physical therapy for disability and pain at 12 weeks and both might improve function more than education in low resource adults with chronic nonspecific low back pain

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Column Header: Evidence-based Integrative Medicine Updates

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Level 2 [mid-level] evidence

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Chronic low back pain is a major cause of morbidity. In the United States it was the number two cause of self-reported disability in 2005 and was also the third most common specific cause for ambulatory office visits in 2013.^{1,2} While chronic low back pain tends to improve over time, only about 35% of patients are pain free at one year.^{3,4} Further complicating prognosis is that inadequate social support and other psychosocial difficulties predict long-term disability.⁵

Management of low back pain with oral medications such as opioids, which may decrease pain in the short-term, have significant short and long-term adverse effects and have only limited evidence for reducing disability outcomes.⁶ Therefore, non-pharmacologic effective therapies are an attractive alternative or adjunct to management. In fact, the 2017 guidelines on non-pharmacological management of low back pain from the American College of Physicians (ACP) recommend non-pharmacological modalities as the preferred initial therapy.⁷ Among these modalities are exercise programs which have been shown in systematic reviews to provide

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