

No harm in yoga: But not much help for asthma sufferers

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Yoga has long been promoted as a method for improving physical and mental well-being. And although yoga is often suggested to asthma sufferers to help alleviate symptoms, a new study found little evidence that yoga will improve symptoms.

Researchers of the [report](#), which is published in the June issue of *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, the scientific journal of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), examined 14 previously published studies to determine the effectiveness of yoga in the treatment of [asthma](#).

"Many people practice yoga for its health benefits, including [asthma sufferers](#)," said Holger Cramer, PhD, lead author of the study. "We reviewed the available data to see if it made a difference and found only weak evidence that it does. Yoga can't be considered a routine intervention for patients with asthma at this time. But it can be considered an alternative to breathing exercises for asthma patients interested in complementary interventions."

In the review, 824 adults were part of 14 studies examined for evidence that yoga improves control, [symptoms](#), quality of life and lung function in patients with asthma. Participants in the studies were from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. Because only one trial included children, the effects of yoga on children couldn't be evaluated.

"Many asthma sufferers look to complementary therapies, such as yoga, to help relieve their symptoms," said allergist Michael Foggs, MD, ACAAI president. "If yoga helps them to feel better and breathe better, patients should by all means practice it. At the same time, we don't advise that [yoga](#) be recommended to asthma sufferers as a treatment."

According to ACAAI, prevention is always the best strategy in controlling asthma symptoms. Asthma sufferers should work with their board-certified allergist to determine situations that prompt attacks and avoid these situations whenever possible. Asthma triggers can include exposure to allergens, respiratory infections and cold weather. If asthma attacks are severe, unpredictable or flare up more than twice a week, then asthma treatment with a long-term control medication is recommended. Long-term medications are preventive, taken daily and can achieve and maintain control of asthma symptoms. For people with allergic asthma, immunotherapy ([allergy](#) shots) may offer relief from symptoms prompted by allergens that act as triggers and cannot be avoided.

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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