



# The Effects of Yoga on Anxiety and Stress

Amber W. Li, PharmD and Carroll-Ann W. Goldsmith, DSc

## Abstract

Stress and anxiety have been implicated as contributors to many chronic diseases and to decreased quality of life, even with pharmacologic treatment. Efforts are underway to find non-pharmacologic therapies to relieve stress and anxiety, and yoga is one option for which results are promising. The focus of this review is on the results of human trials assessing the role of yoga in improving the signs and symptoms of stress and anxiety. Of 35 trials addressing the effects of yoga on anxiety and stress, 25 noted a significant decrease in stress and/or anxiety symptoms when a yoga regimen was implemented; however, many of the studies were also hindered by limitations, such as small study populations, lack of randomization, and lack of a control group. Fourteen of the 35 studies reported biochemical and physiological markers of stress and anxiety, but yielded inconsistent support of yoga for relief of stress and anxiety. Evaluation of the current primary literature is suggestive of benefits of yoga in relieving stress and anxiety, but further investigation into this relationship using large, well-defined populations, adequate controls, randomization and long duration should be explored before recommending yoga as a treatment option.

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