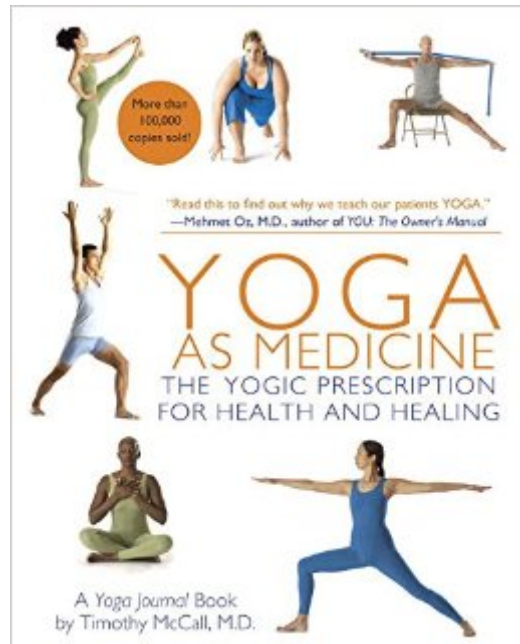


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Yoga As Medicine: The Yogic Prescription For Health And Healing



Synopsis

The definitive book of yoga therapy, this groundbreaking work comes to you from the medical editor of the country's premier yoga magazine, who is both a practicing yogi and a Western-trained physician. Beginning with an overview of the history and science of yoga, Dr. McCall describes the many different techniques in the yoga tool kit; explains what yoga does and who can benefit from it (virtually everyone!); and provides lavishly illustrated and minutely detailed instructions on starting a yoga practice geared to your fitness level and your health status. Yoga as Medicine offers a wealth of practical information, including how to:

- Utilize yogic tools, including postures, breathing techniques, and meditation, for both prevention and healing of illness
- Master the art of becoming more in tune with your body
- Communicate more effectively with your doctor
- Adopt therapeutic yoga practices as either an alternative or a complement to surgery and to expensive, sometimes dangerous medications
- Practice safely

Find an instructor and a style of yoga that are right for you. With twenty chapters devoted to the work of individual master teachers, including such well-known figures as Patricia Walden, John Friend, and Rodney Yee, Yoga as Medicine shows how these experts have applied the wisdom of this ancient holistic practice to twenty different conditions, ranging from arthritis to chronic fatigue, depression, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, infertility, insomnia, multiple sclerosis, and obesity. Defining yoga as "a systematic technology to improve the body, understand the mind, and free the spirit," Dr. McCall shows the way to a path that can truly alter your life. An indispensable guide for the millions who now practice yoga or would like to begin, as well as for yoga teachers, body workers, doctors, nurses, and other health professionals.

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Customer Reviews

I have been anticipating the release of this book ever since I saw an ad for it in Yoga Journal. It was touted as "indispensible" and for once, an ad delivered what it promised. Written by the medical editor of Yoga Journal, Timothy McCall M.D., "Yoga As Medicine" offers so much more than a regular book of asanas. McCall starts by going into some detail about the science behind yoga - giving examples of how yoga can help heal the body. Although he is clear to state that yoga should not take the place of a doctor, he invites the reader to complement their current treatment with yoga. The author also gives good common sense strategies to doing yoga safely (I especially like the cautions about hands on adjustments - I have witnessed people being injured by overly assertive yoga instructors trying to "bend" people into a pose before the body was ready). I also enjoyed reading the chapter on choosing a style and a teacher. Here, McCall lists some of the most well known styles and gives some really good advice to help the reader choose a system that is suited for them. The third part of the book is the real 'meat' - there are twenty chapters on specific health issues (ex: asthma, IBS, obesity, MS). For each chapter, an experienced yoga teacher (ex: Judith Hanson Lasater, Gary Kraftsow, Patricia Walden) gives their perspective on the issue and how they may have dealt with a student who had the condition. Real life examples are in the book but the author also states that these approaches may not necessarily be right for your condition (for instance, on page xii, he states that Lasater, who wrote the chapter on back pain, was using a case study with sciatica as her example - and may not recommend the featured routine for another student with back pain). Speaking of routines, each chapter also has a specific yoga routine for each condition with full illustrations as well as contraindications, modifications, suggestions, and an overview of the condition from a Western doctor's perspective. These details make the book comprehensive and well rounded. Other nice features: an appendix on avoiding injury, details on anatomy, a plan for starting your home yoga practice, meditation techniques, and a sanskrit glossary. I also liked that he used not only famous yoga instructors, but a few lesser known but equally valuable teachers. McCall studies with Patricia Walden and there is a bit of a slant towards Iyengar style yoga, but other styles that have a therapeutic bent such as Viniyoga and Anusara are featured here too. I heartily recommend this book not only to yoga instructors but to any practitioner, new or old! There is not another book like it and I'd rate it 10 stars if I could!

Dr. McCall is the medical editor of Yoga Journal and many readers are familiar with his excellent

articles in that prestigious publication. In 2002, Yoga Journal asked Dr. McCall to write a book on yoga therapy, but he was already working on Yoga as Medicine for two years. The author is a board-certified specialist in internal medicine and was a practicing physician for more than 12 years in the Boston area. At the beginning, Dr. McCall says that he approached yoga "in the same spirit that I'd brought to salsa dancing and tai chi", but then, as he was deepening into his practice, he began to notice important changes in his posture, his breathing, and many other aspects of his daily life. In 2000, he decided to devote himself full-time to investigate the value of yoga as a therapeutic instrument. He has visited many yoga centres and ashrams in the United States and India, exploring, asking students and instructors about the therapeutic value of their yoga practice, and collecting valuable information that is very difficult to access. The book consists of three parts. Part 1: "Yoga as Medicine", makes a succinct presentation of the scientific basis of yoga and its contributions to health care. Part 2: "The Practice of Yoga", has numerous tips on how to establish a safe practice, how to choose a safe yoga style, and how to select a teacher. Part 3 "Yoga Therapy in Action", has 20 chapters devoted to a large array of conditions (arthritis, asthma, back pain, cancer, depression, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, and many others). Dr. McCall, with information provided by leading yoga therapists, offers a brief overview of each condition, discusses in detail the scientific evidence of the contribution made by yoga to the treatment of the condition, and concludes with a series of recommended exercises appropriate for each condition, highlighting the benefits and the contraindications of each exercise. An appendix is devoted to the prevention of yoga injuries. This book offers an unusual view of yoga. Dr. McCall uses crisp and clear language, his book is lucid and easy to understand, and scientific proofs are fully documented. Being both a competent physician and a skilled yoga practitioner who has explored many yoga traditions, Dr. McCall has the authority to disregard false claims from both sides and insists that a correct perspective is to recognize the complementarities of both approaches. He insists that yoga therapy is not a "magic bullet", but asserts that the characteristics of such therapy (being holistic, with increased effects over time, positive side effects, requiring patient's participation, major emphasis on prevention, etc.) makes yoga therapy ideal for the treatment of some chronic problems, such as diabetes, or arthritis. Dr. McCall is not hesitant to use many of the classical yoga terms (asanas, Pranayama, nadis, etc.), but he alerts us by affirming: "If notions like chakras and prana turn you off, just think of them as metaphors. We use this kind of metaphorical thinking in the West all the time... Good metaphors can help us understand, as yogis put it, 'what is' ". Many people remember his sense of humour from the video, Yoga Unveiled, which has a section on "Yoga as Therapy"; he mentions that on one occasion he was asked: "Will smoke get in the way of yoga?" and he replied

"No, but if you are a smoker, yoga might get in the way of smoking."The book is a treasure of information. It contains photographs of the exercises recommended for each condition. It has a comprehensive index, a list of Sanskrit words and names for the asanas, and a comprehensive list of sources of information, including the web sites of yoga therapists and institutions. This work is the best of its kind and it is the principal source of reference for those interested in discovering the therapeutic value of yoga. On the front cover of the book you will see the opinion of Dr. Mehmet Oz, Director of the Cardiovascular Institute of the New York Presbyterian Hospital: "Read this to find out why we teach our patients YOGA".

I've found an incredible tool here--one that gives hope to a middle-aged, out of shape person that there are real alternatives to western medicine. The scope is encyclopedic but not daunting. The individuals who demonstrate the exercises and poses did not step off a fashion runway; there are real people of all sizes. And unlike the recent article about yoga in Vanity Fair, McCall clearly recognizes that African-Americans practice yoga too. Perhaps if more people read Dr. McCall's book, the failing health system Michael Moore documents in his most recent film would at least be failing a smaller number of people. Thank you, Dr. McCall, for what will be an invaluable resource.

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