

Yoga Practice May Help Ward off Cold and Flu

A recent story on NPR sheds some light on evidence that may help keep you from one thing that everyone dreads- catching a cold or flu this season. The British Journal of Sports Medicine study cited found that people who exercised 5 days a week got sick for 40% fewer days than those who did so one day or less. While the exact reason why this is the case is still only speculation in the scientific community, there seems to be a clear correlation here. A similar study by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle found results that mirror these findings as well.

Dr. David Neiman of Appalachian State University adds another layer to this, saying that after 90 minutes of high exertion- like long distance running- our defenses instead go down, opening us up to sickness for up to 24 hours following exercising. So the key here is not to wear yourself out and inhibit your body's defenses.

Yoga is a great option for reaping these benefits, since each person practices to his or her own ability so as not to be hard on the body. The meditative aspect of practice serves as a one-two punch by helping to manage stress, which we know only impedes the immune system further. In addition to lowering stress levels, yoga has been lauded for centuries for improving strength, posture, flexibility, concentration, heart and lung health, and so much more.

The implications of the study are that one is exercising for at least 20 minutes on each of those 5 days, so whether you can attend an hour class or practice at home for only a half hour, most of us can certainly find the time. Even 15 minutes at the beginning and end of a busy day is great. Alternating days of yoga and cardio is also a great option to vary your routine, and in return, your fitness benefits.

Where else besides yoga class can you go to stay in shape, flu-free, and sane this holiday season? There's nowhere better.

In peace and health,

Thank You Sasha B @ Yoga Lifestyle Pages).