

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Description:

Rheumatoid Arthritis is an inflammatory auto-immune disease affecting joints. It is still unknown exactly what causes the body's immune system to begin attacking the synovium membrane surrounding the joints, causing inflammation and wearing down cartilage and bone. It affects women three times more frequently than men. Side effects from drugs such as Levaquin can also cause RA. A close friend of mine was perfectly healthy (other than a respiratory infection), and now has severe RA.

RA is usually a progressive disease with no known cure; however, there are numerous reports of people "curing" RA with nutrition, particularly a Vegan diet. Another reported effective treatment is Lab Grade Turmeric and Lab Grade Boswellia Serrata (Freeman, 2018). My friend's physician recommended Far Infrared Sauna treatments help alleviate RA pain and inflammation. Allopathic treatments include medications commonly used in chemo treatments for cancer patients. Doctors treat RA aggressively to hopefully promote remission, so patients can lead somewhat normal lives.

Complications include higher risk of lung scarring, lymphoma, diabetes and an increased risk for cardiovascular disease caused by increased inflammation in the body. It is commonly thought to shorten a person's life span by 10-15 years; however, many live into their 80's and 90's.

Symptoms:

- Joint inflammation
- Joint pain
- Severe fatigue
- Fever
- Anemia
- Weight loss
- Skin rash
- Nerve damage

Benefits	Precautions
Connecting breath with movement promotes relaxation which is so important in helping R.A. patients alleviate stress (Schultz, 2017).	R.A. patients should avoid strenuous types of yoga such as Power Yoga, Ashtanga, Kundalini, and fast Vinyasa.
Gentle, slow moving yoga or chair yoga is recommended for R.A. patients. Slower flows help focus more on alignment of	R.A. student should obtain doctor's approval to participate in yoga.

<p>joints which is important when working with R. A. patients.</p>	
<p>Moving the body helps decrease pain in R.A. patients, improving mobility.</p>	<p>Modifications are important with R.A. patients. Ie: If it's painful for students to put weight into wrists they can modify by using the flat side of blocks and coming onto the forearms leaving the hands free. Another alternative is to use fists instead of flat hands on the floor. Most yoga poses can be adapted using a chair or wall.</p>
<p>Yoga promotes mindfulness which helps improve healthy and safe alignment in everyday movement.</p>	<p>As in all yoga, LISTEN to your body! Don't force painful movement.</p>
<p>Meditation and gentle Pranayama helps promote an attitude of peace, patience and gratitude to combat possible depression and anxiety.</p>	<p>A Yoga Therapist working with an RA client also needs to address the emotional aspect, teaching their client to be patient with themselves. Also promoting an attitude of thankfulness for what they can do to counter possible depression experienced by many RA patients.</p>

Mini Flow:

- Figure 8 Foot Trace – depending on stability, a person can do this free-standing, or holding onto the back of a chair or wall. Root down into the right foot spreading toes wide, and lifting left foot, pretend you have a marker between your toes, and imagining you are drawing a figure 8 on the floor. Then reverse direction. Repeat on left foot.
- Hand exercises:
 - Starfish hands on wall spreading fingers as wide as possible.
 - Open hands – close hands into fist, repeat.
 - Touch each finger to opposing thumb and reverse.
- Seated spinal circles
- Cat/Cow
- Seated twists
- Bridge
- Legs-up-the-wall or couch

References:

Schultz, K., April 19, 2017, "Yoga for RA: The Best Poses and Tips for Pain Relief", Retrieved from: <https://www.healthline.com/health/yoga-for-rheumatoid-arthritis-the-best-poses-for-pain-relief#3>.

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