

What you could do when you are struggling

Dr Maggie Lawrence

Professor of Stroke Prevention

Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland, UK



Disclosure statement

I have no
conflicts of
interest to
declare



Image by Silvia from Pixabay



Brief overview of Yoga and Mindfulness



Therapeutic benefits



People's experiences



Brief mindfulness meditation

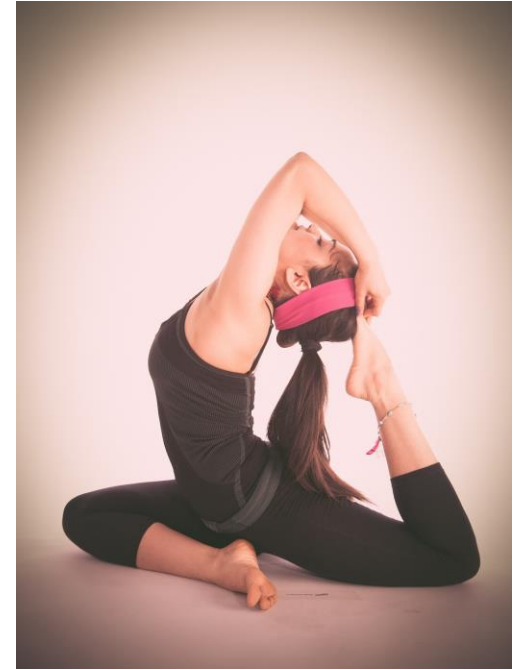
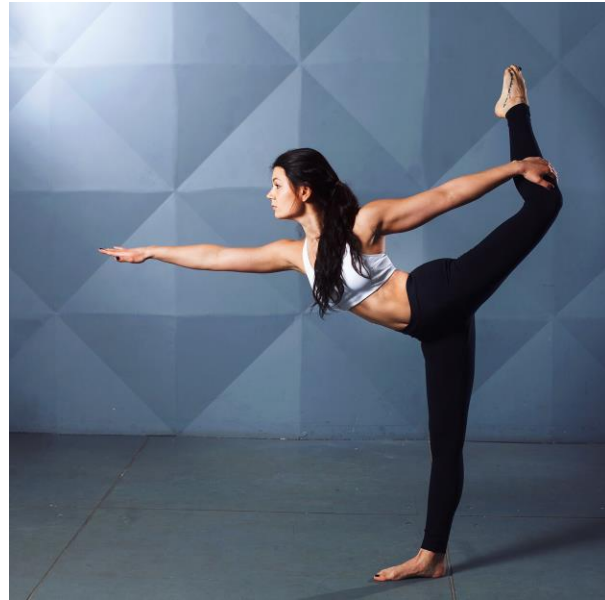


A stroke-specific mindfulness course: HEADS: UP

What I'm
going to talk
about

Yoga

What do people think when they hear the word 'yoga'?



Yoga

What is it?

The term yoga stems from the Sanskrit root 'yuj' meaning to 'yoke' or 'join together' – alluding to the desired **bond between mind, body, and spirit.**

Yoga practice in the West tends to be limited to physical postures (asana), breath control (pranayama) and meditation (dhyana).

Yoga

What is it?

Yoga is a group of physical and spiritual practices which originated in ancient India.



One of the forms of yoga most commonly practiced in the West is **hatha yoga**.

Often, it is practiced as a form of **physical exercise**, but it has a **spiritual** and **meditative** core.

Yoga

How might
it help after
a stroke?

Yoga is being used to treat

- Cardiovascular disease
- Low-back pain
- Asthma

Yoga and stroke

- 2 randomised controlled trials;
72 participants
- Significant improvements in
 - memory
 - anxiety
- But **very low grade** evidence

Yoga

What is it like to practice yoga?

Expectations of yoga

- *... could do no harm*
- *[it] sounded like a good thing to try*
- *... to break the stress of daily activities*
- *[My aim is] to run like my life depended on it*

Yoga

What is it like to practice yoga?

Improved relaxation

- *It helped me relax and ... gave me focus ... really paying attention to breathing, and relaxing*

Improved abilities & capacities

- *I still have fatigue, but I think I have improved my endurance*
- *I'm not sure how it [yoga] works, but ... I got my arm over my head*
- *I think I can walk easier and go faster*

Yoga

What is it like to practice yoga?

Yoga experience

- *The teachers were excellent. They had a good understanding of people's limitations.*
- *... there was no pressure or judging . . . it was gentle. They [teachers] said if it hurt you shouldn't be doing it.*

Physical outcomes

- *I have become more aware of my body ... my [affected side] was totally dead; there was no feeling in half of my body, so yoga has helped*
- *My toes were numb ... but ... yoga has enabled me to differentiate between my toes ... my toes would curl but now I can take 6–7 steps with everything nicely flat on the ground.*

Yoga

What is it like to practice yoga?

Psychosocial outcomes

- *Yoga has made an amazing difference to my **confidence & my calmness**. It has improved my ability to **think clearly & talk to people and explain myself**. The **breathing & meditation is powerful stuff** that has changed me, & that is why I will continue.*
- *Yoga has helped me catch up emotionally. I have pushed myself physically for the last 20 years ... I **am feeling more committed to myself**. When I am stressed I don't eat. I can go for days and not realise. I am much more in control of that ... yoga has made me feel supported, I am OK. I can listen to that calm, yoga is supporting this. I still stress from time to time but it doesn't feel as bad ... I think the **emotional side of yoga has been really more important than the physical**.*

Mindfulness

What do people think when they hear the word 'mindfulness'?



Mindfulness

What is it?

*Mindfulness means paying attention
in a particular way; on purpose,
in the present moment and
non-judgementally*



Mindfulness

What is it?

- Mindfulness is about being more fully present in our lives, embracing all our experiences and, importantly, **changing the relationship we have towards our suffering.**
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is delivered as a standardised self-management intervention.
- 2.5 hour sessions, weekly for 8 weeks, with one 6-hour silent retreat in week 6
- Skills taught in class are practiced 'at home'

Unleash
your super
power

Short video



Why Mindfulness is a Superpower

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

How might
it help after
a stroke?

Developed to treat untreatable chronic pain

Review findings: stroke
4 studies; 160 participants

Positive trend across a range of outcomes

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Mental fatigue
- Blood pressure
- Perceived health
- Quality of life



Mindfulness

What is it like to practice mindfulness?

Experience of Mindfulness

- *... I found it interesting. Very informative, and very relaxing*
- *... you've got to be very focused. It's actually very hard to do - that's the impression I get*
- *If we're talking about 2 hours of mindfulness practice then, yeah, it's too much*

Organisation of MBSR sessions

- *If someone feels they're physically able, then they might need it [for] the anxiety*
- *... for someone else who maybe needs ... physical rehab first, then maybe it's further down the line ...*

Mindfulness

What is it like to practice mindfulness?

- *Mindfulness is not golf. You don't have to go and find a [golf] bag and, then, however many clubs to stick it out. And, then, find a [golf club] membership and then book a tee time it's... you can do it anywhere. And, it's [mindfulness] not, it's not expensive ... it's accessible*
- *But I still think, at home, you wouldn't do it [mindfulness]*
- *... it's giving me a wee bit of 'me-time', you know, just to get away from everybody and ... see the [thoughts] that are giving me a rough time, [I] just block them out*



Practising mindfulness in the long-term



HEADS: UP

Helping Ease Anxiety and Depression after Stroke



Stroke
Association

HEADS UP participants

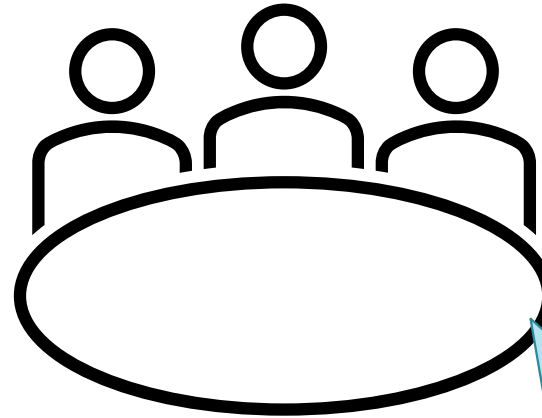
How did it help
6 months later?

LESS ANXIOUS

[mindfulness has] helped to focus my mind to keep positive rather than letting the negative side of things takeover

MORE CONFIDENT

*HEADS: UP was a bit of a turning point ... everyone has [gone on to do] more things ... [it] gave us a bit of a **jump start***

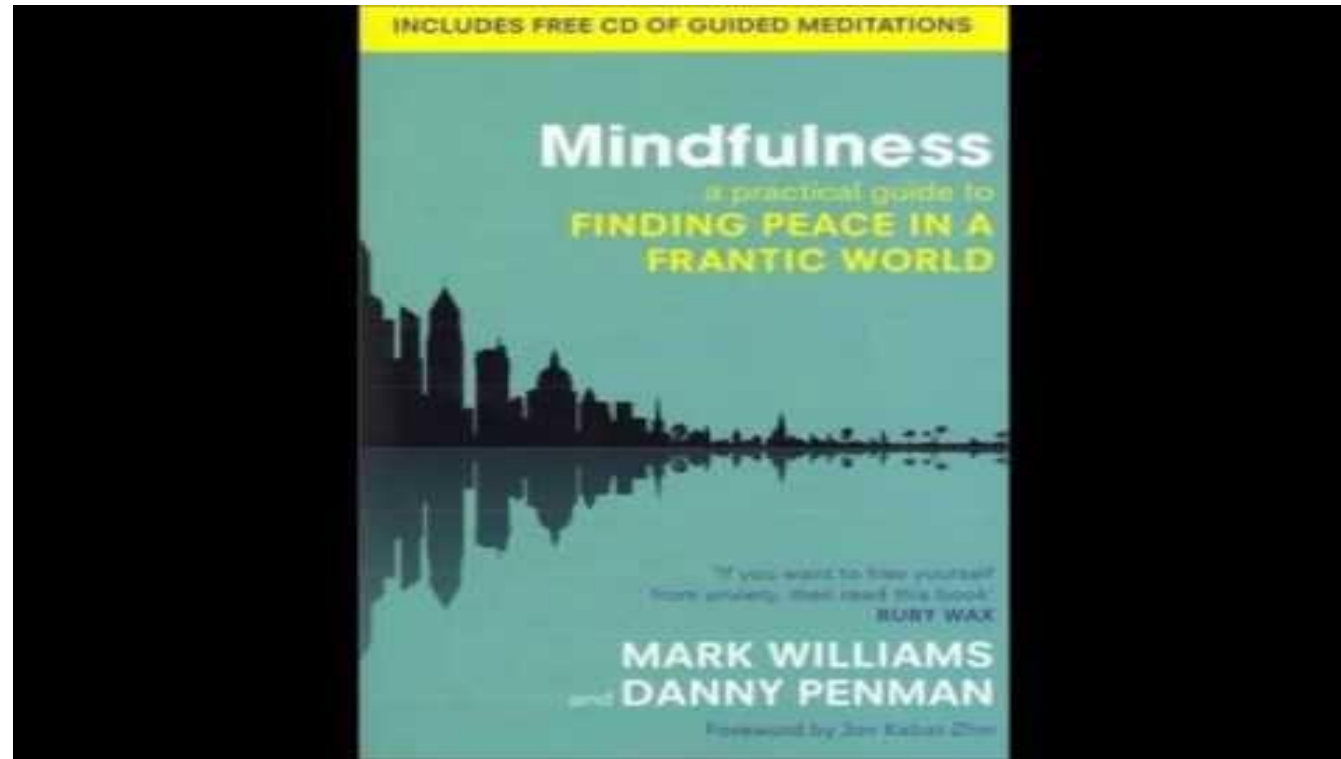


BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

I have been listening to the Loving Kindness [audio] and trying to be more kind to everyone in my family and a bit wider. I feel like my relationships... have got better

A short mindfulness practice

led by
Mark Williams



References and Resources

References

- Alter et al. 2017. Yoga ... self-management. doi: 10.1177/0308022617690536
- Garrett 2011 et al. Experience of yoga. doi: 10.3109/09638288.2011.573058
- Jani 2018 et al. Acceptability of Mindfulness. doi: 10.1186/s40814-018-0244-1
- Kabat-Zinn, J. 2013. Full Catastrophe Living. Bantam Books: New York
- Lawrence et al. 2017. Yoga ... review. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD011483.pub2
- Lawrence et al. 2012. Mindfulness review. doi: 10.1111/ijjs.12135
- Lawrence et al 2023. HEADS: UP development research. doi: 10.3390/healthcare11030355

Resources

- Selfhelp4stroke.org
- www.mindfulnessscotland.org.uk

ove
ers

Stroke study using mindfulness to fight anxiety and depression

Meditation and visualisation will help survivors deal with 'invisible disabilities' caused by brain condition, finds
ROHESE DEVEREUX TAYLOR

MINDFULNESS techniques will be deployed to manage anxiety and depression in people who have had strokes. The Heads-Up study at Glasgow Caledonian University will run over nine weeks, employing techniques including meditation, visualisation and gentle physical movement to help alleviate mood disorders – common after strokes with up to 50 per cent of people still living with compromised mental health five years later.

The practical programme developed by Dr Maggie Lawrence is based on Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), a method created by the American mindfulness teacher in the 1980s and widely used across the NHS including in the treatment of eating disorders and multiple sclerosis.

Dr Lawrence, who has a background in neurological rehabilitation, said: "There's very little support when someone's had a stroke. They might be in hospital for a few days and then have a few weeks of follow-up with outpatient rehab but after that [they are] left to their own devices. "Part of the problem is that medical services are geared up to what is physically obvious or apparent so if you have an invisible disability such as problems with cognition or memory, or mood disorders such as depression and anxiety there's really very little help."

Heads-Up aims to change that by arming stroke patients with a toolkit to help them identify and manage ongoing mental health difficulties.

The 14 stroke patients will be joined by a partner, friend or carer in the study, which will start at the end of October, with all 28 participants learning the techniques to support their own mental health and encourage each other to practice the programme.

Dr Lawrence said: "Quite often relationships break down because there

low, they are able to automatically draw on their new skills."

The £365,000 three-year project is funded by the Stroke Association, who estimate that more than 120,000 people live with the effects of stroke in Scotland with numbers projected to double in the next 20 years.

Around 13,000 people suffer a stroke every year in Scotland and some 4,000 die. In July campaigners called for a move towards centralised, specialist stroke units after evidence from England showed more patients survived and were less disabled long-term if they were rushed to regional centres run by experts, instead of relying on local hospitals.

Last year the Stroke Association said



Heads-Up lead researcher Dr Maggie Lawrence, back, researcher Naomi Clark, front right, and project manager Bridget Davis, front left.

“Mindfulness is already well recognised as having a positive impact on many people with anxiety issues

“Quite often the diagnosis of depression and anxiety is not recognised by health professionals or the people themselves or the people they're living with ... so they can often not know that it is part of their problem and if they have treatment that might help them to engage better with their rehabilitation.”

As well as standard mindfulness techniques such as breathing exercises and meditation, Heads-Up will teach participants visualisation skills so even if they're living with limited physical ability, they can still reap the benefits of the full programme.

Dr Lawrence said: "People after a stroke can be affected in many different ways so if a walking meditation or movement is

well enough, it would have the same effect."

Dr Lawrence sees the final Heads-Up offering as community-based, the tailored programme delivered by trained facilitators, clearly signposted and accessible to all those who need it.

The pilot study, carried out earlier this year was such a success that NHS practitioners have expressed interest in seeing Heads-Up become standardised as part of Scottish stroke rehabilitation services.

Richard Francis, head of research awards at the Stroke Association said: "We know stroke survivors face a battle with depression, anxiety and loss of confidence, yet they are not getting the support they

Nurse is suspended following 'banter'

A NURSE who put his hands down a female colleague's trousers, told her she had a builder's bum and dubbed her "Neil", has been suspended.

Police launched an investigation after women made complaints about nurse Iain Scott's inappropriate "ward banter" at the Victoria Hospital in Eile.

In one incident he touched the bottom of another colleague while they were at work.

A disciplinary panel heard he also repeatedly made comments that a female nurse looked and walked like a man. He would call her Neil and tell her she had a "builder's bum".

Despite being cleared in a criminal court of harassing his colleagues, Scott has now been suspended for 12 months by a Nurse and Midwifery Council tribunal in Edinburgh.

It was heard Scott had been working at the Victoria Hospital, where the incidents were said to have taken place, between September 2014 and January 2017. He was finally reported to management after two years of comments about a woman, referred to as Colleague A, looking like a man.

Bosses at the hospital immediately suspended him as they launched an investigation and the police were brought in.

A report of the hearing said: "The panel concluded that a suspension order is the appropriate and proportionate sanction."

"Accordingly, the panel determined to impose a suspension order for the period of 12 months."

Parents are snared NHS