

The Effectiveness of Regular Yoga on Balance, Flexibility and Functional Capacity among the Healthy Older Adults: a systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Yoga is a mind-body practice first found in India, which is now widely used to improve the physical fitness. Yoga is low impact, thus suitable for all age population and highly modifiable for older adult practitioners. The primary aim of this review is to determine the effectiveness of regular yoga on balance, flexibility and functional capacity among the healthy older adults. Relevant articles were identified from the Cochrane Library, PubMed, the Physiotherapy Evidence Database (PEDro) and The Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) up to March 2018. Randomized controlled trial studies that measure the effectiveness of yoga on balance, flexibility and functional capacity of healthy older adults were reviewed. Eligible studies were included if they meet the inclusion criteria. Three randomized controlled trial studies were included in this review. All three articles attained low risk of selection and reporting bias. All the included studies were at high risk of performance bias. There is minimal effect of yoga on balance among the older adult. The results showed better improvement in lower limb flexibility compared to upper limb flexibility. There was slight improvement in functional capacity from the findings of included studies. Yoga may be effective for healthy older adult. There is insufficient evidence to confirm effectiveness of yoga on improving balance, flexibility and functional capacity among the healthy older adult. Further high quality research is required.