

Yoga and Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy for breast cancer can be a stressful time for patients. In a randomized trial, Stages 2 and 3 breast cancer patients receiving radiation were divided into a yoga group and a control group that received brief supportive therapy prior to starting radiation. The yoga group received intensive yoga instruction and practiced yoga regularly throughout their radiation therapy. At the end of the study, the yoga group was found to have significantly less anxiety and depression, lower perceived stress and significantly lower levels of cortisol than the control group. Cortisol, a stress hormone, is a measure of the body's response to stressful situations. This study suggests that yoga may be helpful in managing the stress of radiation therapy.

Rao et al. Effects of a yoga program on cortisol rhythm and mood states in early breast cancer patients undergoing adjuvant radiotherapy: a randomized controlled trial. *Integrative Cancer Therapies* 2009; 8(1):37-46

To summarize: A randomized trial showed that breast cancer patients who performed yoga during radiation therapy had lower levels of anxiety, depression, stress and cortisol, a stress hormone, compared to control patients.