

## **Yoga relieves chronic back pain**

*Also helps with depression, study says*

Tue 8 Sep, 2009, Yahoo Lifestyle

Doing yoga for 6 months is a better way to overcome chronic lower back pain than conventional treatments, according to new research, published in the journal Spine.

In the study, 90 patients were divided into two groups, with half taking 90 minute Iyengar yoga classes twice a week for 24 weeks, focusing on postures designed to relieve chronic back pain. The other patients were given conventional medical treatment. All participants were tracked for 6 months after the classes or medical treatment ended.

After six months, 29% of patients who participated in yoga classes were able to move better, and 42% felt less pain. Symptoms of depression also went down by 45.7% when compared with standard medical treatment.

"The yoga group had less pain, less functional disability and less depression compared with the control group," said Dr. Kimberly Williams, assistant professor in the Department of Community Medicine at West Virginia University. "These were statistically significant and clinically important changes that were maintained six months after the intervention."

"Proponents of yoga have long described its benefits in reducing back pain. But not everyone was convinced. This is a much bigger, much more rigorous evaluation than had been done before," Dr Williams added.

The yoga group also tended to use less pain medication compared to the other group, although the figures were not statistically significant.