

BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR FERTILITY

Most people have heard that yoga is good for your overall health and in fact, many of you may have taken up yoga in the past for relaxation, to strengthen your posture and for flexibility. But did you also know that it can help you to get pregnant? Like many natural health practises, yoga helps to bring different body systems into alignment, and where fertility is concerned, it supports and strengthens the endocrine (your body's hormonal centre), and reproductive system.

Lisa Attfield of Fertility Yoga endured a 10 year journey to have her children, and in this time she trained as a British Wheel yoga teacher and designed her own fertility yoga programme to help de-stress and improve her reproductive health and wellbeing. She has kindly offered to share with My Fertility Specialist reader the benefits of yoga for fertility, interesting information from various studies on this subject and some yoga poses that you can try right now!

Five main benefits

- Increase energy and blood flow to the pelvic area
- Stimulates the reproductive system
- Balances your hormones
- Reduces stress, calms the mind of negative thinking
- Connection of mind and body awareness

"Trying to conceive naturally, especially at a more 'advanced' age, can prove to be stressful and you may experience a rollercoaster of different emotions on your fertility journey. One of the best ways to de-stress whilst trying to conceive is with a Fertility Yoga programme. Fertility Yoga focuses on specific yoga postures to encourage blood flow to the reproductive area and relaxation techniques that de-stress the mind and body. This helps provide you with the inner strength and confidence to continue on your journey to

parenthood, either with or without assisted reproductive technology (ART), such as IVF". (Text from my Fertility Yoga chapter in the book "Integrated Approaches to Infertility, IVF and recurrent miscarriages" Justine Bold and Susan Bedford, Singing Dragon 2016).

A study published in the journal Fertility and Sterility stated: "That women with high levels of the stress hormone cortisol and alpha-amylase (which circulates an enzyme around a body under stress), in their saliva, had more difficulty conceiving than those women with a lower level of stress. The results of the study stated their fertility rates were up to 12 per cent lower each cycle¹". In fact "Levels of the stress hormone epinephrine, known as adrenaline, are found to be higher in women experiencing unexplained infertility, and those with elevated levels of epinephrine may have constricted blood flow to the uterus²".

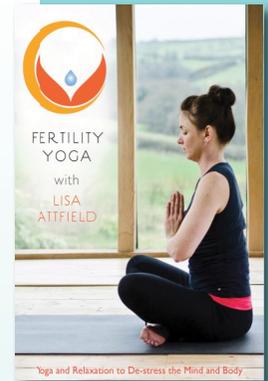
"Fertility patients who practice yoga specifically tailored to reduce stress may increase their fertility by as much as 35 per cent" another study founds. "According to the data from 2000, 55 per cent of participants of a yoga-oriented, mind-body-based fertility program at the Benson-Henry Institute of Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital conceived during the first year in the program" states this study⁴.

References

- 1 Stress reduces conception probabilities across the fertile window: evidence in support of relaxation. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20688324
- 2 Stress and Infertility www.webmd.com/infertility-and-reproduction/features/infertility-stress
- 3 Yoga: a new tool against infertility? www.cbsnews.com/news/yoga-a-new-tool-against-infertility/
- 4 Yoga, Stress and the Fertility Link www.yogajournal.com/article/health/fertile-ground/

Lisa quit her stressful job in London to live "the good life" with her husband, setting up a small farm in rural Devon and practising yoga. She had trouble conceiving in her late 20s and after 8 years, the National Health Service (NHS), finally agreed to investigate; both she and husband had fertility issues and their only option was to pay privately for ICSI. After three cycles of ICSI they had their daughter Josephine born in 2008 when Lisa was 36. After another two cycles of ICSI, twins Dexter and Isabelle were born in 2011.

To find out more about how yoga can help with fertility or practice yoga at home using Lisa's DVD 'Fertility Yoga'
www.amazon.co.uk/Fertility-Yoga-Lisa-Attfield/dp/B00GK10JFY/ref=sr_1_1
 contact Lisa at
www.fertilityyoga.co.uk, mobile 07767 616293, lisa@fertilityyoga.co.uk.



Universal spinal twist pose (Shava Udarakarshanasana)



The benefits of this pose are to relieve tiredness and tightness, especially in the lower back. The pelvic and abdominal organs are toned and massaged through the movement.

Lie on your back with legs and feet together, stretch your arms out at shoulder height. Bend the right leg and place the sole of the foot on top of the left thigh.

Place your left hand on the outside of right bent leg and exhale as you draw the right knee to the left, towards the floor. The closer the knee gets to the floor the deeper the spinal twist. Look towards the right hand and keep the right shoulder relaxed on the floor, breathe for five slow breaths. Focus on the relaxation of the back. Inhale, bring the right leg back to the centre, release the leg. Flatten your back to floor and repeat with left leg bent and left foot onto the right thigh, right arm on outside of left leg and exhale to the right. Left arm at shoulder height, look to left hand, breathe for five slow breaths.

Nose to knee pose (Supta Pawanmuktasana)



This posture strengthens the lower back muscles and loosens the spinal vertebrae. It massages the abdomen and digestive organs. The pelvic muscles and reproductive organs are massaged so it's a great therapeutic yoga pose to improve fertility.

To practice this posture, lie down on your back and bend one knee to your chest, clasping your hands around your shin. Exhale and slowly raise your head/nose towards the knee of the bent leg. The abdomen will be in contact with the thigh massaging this area, increasing blood flow and releasing any energy blockages. Inhale and slowly release your head back so it's resting on the floor. Repeat five times each side.