

## Special Article - Treatments that Intersect Yoga and Physical Therapy

# The Intersection of Yoga and Physical Therapy is Found in Breath Awareness

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## Editorial

“Yoga is known by the world as a set of esoteric exercises” - Dr. Brig B. Agarwal.

### Toward greater breath awareness in physical therapy sessions

Practitioners should pay close attention to the use of breath in Yoga poses and in physical therapy modalities to ensure greater healing. Yoga tends to be thought of as a form of personal expression. While, physical therapy is associated with repairing the body from physical injury. It is through the intentional use of breath that yoga and physical therapy intersect in order to heal the mind and body. It would be interesting to follow patients who were engaged in yoga and in physical therapy at the same time focusing on breathing techniques. Naturally, the goal would be to increase the patient's breath awareness with the goal of spreading oxygen freely to muscle mass.

### Yoga involves personality and uniqueness versus regulated physical therapy modalities

The role of breath is to relax and to distribute oxygen to the areas of the body which should lead to greater relaxation of the mind [1]. Every breath that we take distributes nourishment to our muscles helping us to move with greater ease. Our movements are calculated as we bend our bodies into various yoga poses. Perhaps, we are less conscious of our breath during physical therapy modalities which tend to be more rote and less expressive of our personalities. Also, physical therapy modalities tend to be more painful to the patient who is recovering. Of course, physical therapy modalities are subject to norms and guidelines that are set forth by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and yoga poses are not regulated. However, it might be beneficial to ask our physical therapy patients to begin to be more mindful about their breathing while carrying out their modalities. And this could even take the form of a brief meditation with eyes wide open. The health benefits of meditation have a history of being lauded by experts [2]. Yoga and physical therapy have the same goal which is to heal. In this manner, physical therapy can help to heal the body faster through monitored and regulated breaths during modalities.

### Breath and intention are of equal importance in yoga and physical therapy

As certified Yoga instructors, we teach our students to develop a keen sense of awareness in terms of the breath. For many certified

yoga instructors, breath awareness is a central goal. Meanwhile, it is believed that physical therapists and physicians want more information about alternative forms of treatment for their patients and physicians have different goals for their patients [3]. The awareness of breath is meant to be conscious and is even practiced so that it can be perfected [4]. During yoga sequences, we strive to calm our minds and slow our breath for greater equanimity or to try to be close to the creator [5]. Physical therapy sessions relate to patient goals and outcomes are consistently measured to make sure that the patient is getting results from the treatment [6]. Meanwhile, in yoga, controlling the breath relates to the physical and what is considered metaphysical. Yet, in yoga as in physical therapy consistency leads to positive outcomes [7]. The person who is dedicated to the practice of yoga who aims for one hour sequences each day will also begin to experience greater breath awareness when directed to [8]. And the patient who embarks on a course of physical therapy can deliberately try to increase breath awareness which may make the modalities less painful since oxygen will flow to the muscles [9,10].

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