

Beware of **INJURIES** Associated With **Yoga**



By Gary Rothbart

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Interestingly, I received an article from the American Council on Exercise recently with the heading **Common Yoga Injuries and How to Avoid Them**. For many years I have had concerns about some of the exercises that are performed during yoga routines. Many of the movements are not natural and as a result force people into bad positions. This can lead to overstretching of certain areas and injury. It is a combination of the aforementioned and the long duration of each yoga movement that is contributing to these negative physical issues.

Dr. Jefferey Halbrecht, board-certified orthopedic surgeon specializing in arthroscopic surgery and sports medicine and former medical director for the Women's World Pro Ski Tour seems to agree. Dr. Halbrecht is calling on the fitness industry to take action to combat the mounting number of yoga-related injuries being observed across the country.

I do not want to dismiss yoga completely as there are many variables that need to be considered. The most important factors are the type of yoga being performed and the instructor. Certain types of yoga are more dangerous than others, while the teacher's level of knowledge is definitely an important factor. People usually get into trouble as a result of doing too much too soon and by participating in classes that are far too advanced for their level of conditioning.

Many yoga-related injuries are chronic, the result of microscopic trauma happening over time due to ongoing repetition of poor technique (Gerard 2007). Generally, I am not a big fan of yoga and, when asked by my clients about this form of exercise, I usually try to dissuade them. I find that the stretching routine that I have designed is safe and effective. It has never resulted in injury to my clients.

I do not recommend that you include yoga in your sport-specific training program. This form of exercise tends to overstretch muscles leading to over-elongated muscles. This will have a negative effect on athletic performance. Make sure that you incorporate proper stretching techniques into your sport-specific training program.

The following are the most common injuries resulting from yoga classes: shoulder girdle/rotator cuff, hamstring tears, lower-back strains, damaged knee joints and wrists, soft tissue inflammation of the pelvis and gluteus muscles (Gerard 2007).

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References:

Gerard J. ACE Fitness Matters; article Common Yoga Injuries and How to Avoid Them, 2007.

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