



Yoga Therapy & Integrative Medicine *Where Ancient Science Meets Modern Medicine*

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Yoga Therapy & Integrative Medicine will soon become an essential reference book for the yoga therapy community. It offers a variety of perspectives on yoga therapy from myriad disciplinary backgrounds. Though some of the chapters are simple in their orientation in that they focus on a small slice of the disciplinary landscape, all the chapters taken together provide a critical foundation for thinking through the future of yoga therapy as a valuable tool that can be integrated into many clinical

practices. The book covers a spectrum of orientations: clinical, conceptual, philosophical, research, and personal experience. The timing is right for the publication of this book, which illustrates the depth and breadth of yoga therapy as a profession and provides practical demonstration of yoga therapy's utility in addressing some of the most pressing health concerns of our age.

One of the true strengths of the book is that its reference to integrative medicine does not imply simply Western allopathic medicine. Instead, each chapter covers a different area of specialization in either the holistic or allopathic medical disciplines. This design feature of the book is important in that it provides a level playing field for all the healthcare disciplines included and discusses the relevance of yoga therapy within ayurveda, Chinese medicine, naturopathy, chiropractic, orthopedics, neurology, and sports medicine, and other fields. As a result, the book achieves a sense of parity for all the disciplines, a hallmark for innovative approaches to healing our broken disease-care system. *Yoga therapy & Integrative Medicine* highlights both the health-promotion and prevention emphasis of yoga therapy, as well as discussing the role of yoga therapy as part of a curative plan of treatment. Chapters written from an allopathic perspective often discuss the role of yoga therapy as part of a treatment paradigm oriented around symptom remission and improved quality of life and well-being. This variety of perspectives enriches the reader's experience.

One of the drawbacks of the book's design is that there appears to be no obvious logic to the sequencing of chapters. It seems odd to begin a book on yoga therapy with a chapter on Chinese medicine, rather than ayurveda, which provides the historically appropriate medico-therapeutic context for yoga therapy. On the other hand, one of the book's strengths is that many of the chapters—for example, Mishra's chapter on neurology or Long's chapter on orthopedics—provide sophisticated interpretations of potential causal mechanisms for the effects of yoga therapy. It remains important that yoga therapists are conversant in discussions of causal mechanism, in order to better dialogue with other health care providers, to provide beneficial education to their patients, and to design research that is both appropriate and informative.

An important pivotal aspect of yoga therapy, woven throughout the book's chapters, is the concept of whole-person care and the need for tailoring of yoga therapy practices to the individual. The terminology of patient-centered care and personalized medicine are key terms in today's healthcare and medical research climates, yet they are traditional and ancient concepts associated with yoga therapy and associated medical disciplines, such as ayurveda. In this way, "modern medicine" seems to finally be catching up to what yogis and holistic

health practitioners have always known: we are treating the person, not the disease. *Yoga Therapy & Integrative Medicine* does an excellent job of providing a balance of information on the physiological, psycho-emotional, and spiritual techniques of the many yoga lineages. The reader is reminded throughout that yoga's ultimate goal is not so much a toned body or even freedom from disease, but a peaceful mind, self-awareness, and freedom from suffering.

Simple statements in the book that may prove most useful to laypeople illustrate some of our iconic principles and practices. For example, Richard Usatine's proposal that the breath-regulation and stress-reduction techniques of yoga therapy are a value-added benefit for any therapeutic paradigm will hopefully appeal to a spectrum of healthcare providers. Rick Morris's focus on appropriate assessment in yoga therapy sheds light on the discipline's commitment to the scientific aspects of healthcare delivery, while Jnani Chapman's claim that the goal of yoga therapy is "to maximize the possibility of connection to essence" focuses our attention on the spiritual technologies of yoga therapy and reminds us that there are some aspects of the human condition that evade scientific study.

The book also provides an overview of various schools and lineages of yoga therapy and their influence on the field, as well as a vision of what the future may hold. The overview of yoga therapy styles is instructive for yoga teachers and consumers considering what type of yoga therapy might be most effective or preferable given their personality and the condition being addressed. *Yoga Therapy & Integrative Medicine* represents a vibrant community sharing common principles and purpose, while possessing the maturity to differentiate in philosophy and practice. It is unfortunate that the chapter on yoga therapy research is buried at the back of the book, because it provides a useful introduction to the current evidence base for the emerging discipline and constructive avenues for future initiatives. The final chapter, by IAYT's executive director John Kepner, lays out the vision for continued advancement of the profession through the development of standards, credentialing, community building, research, and increased economic viability. *Yoga Therapy & Integrative Medicine* may serve to increase the accessibility of yoga therapy to more numerous and diverse populations, and in doing so, contribute to improving individual and public health.

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