

Alternative and Complementary Therapy: Yoga for Infertility

Defining yoga is not all that simple. The Yoga Society says "*Yoga is essentially a path of discovery, discovery of the self and discovery of the light of Divinity*" -- but don't let that scare you! You might also consider it a healthy form of stretching and breathing exercises, as in Hatha yoga. There are several forms of yoga practice, some requiring more physical exertion than others, and all involving a focus on the breath.

While no direct correlation has been documented (through scientific research) between yoga and fertility, the effects of yoga on the body and mind are time-tested and irrefutable.

In general, it may be said that the most powerful effect of regular yoga practice on a person's fertility is through the calming, restorative effects on the mind and body. A quiet, stable mind and body promote fertility, and psychologist Alice Domar has provided us with research to back up that claim. For a brief and simple discussion of meditation, see mylifepath.com's "The Healing Power of Meditation".

According to Samuel K. Wasser, PhD, author of "Hormonal Pathways of Preterm Birth" (1999), physicians overlook or disregard the evolutionary trait of mammals to experience high reproductive failure rates during environmental hardship as an adaptive mechanism. More simply put, our bodies are hormonally predestined to be more reproductive when everything around us is optimally primed to bring an infant into that environment; hence, our bodies detect *our* stress to be a danger signal, and reproduction is hampered.

Through Alice Domar's research specifically on the effect of mind/body work in infertile couples, Wasser's conclusions about the effects of stress and hence, of stress reduction, on fertility are further validated. Even the American Society for Reproductive Medicine supports the idea of using yoga and other techniques to reduce stress in an effort to enhance fertility.

While some advanced yoga poses are indeed physically challenging, the most basic positions are relatively much easier. The simple act of taking the time to reward yourself with the experience of a yoga class is nurturing and horizon-broadening. Regardless of one's physical ability, deciding to try yoga and then following through can be uplifting in and of itself, lending a feeling of control over one's reproductive destiny.

More References

Ferin, M. Clinical Review 105: Stress and the Reproductive Cycle. J Clin Endocrinol Metab - 1999 Jun; 84(6): 1768-74.

Wasser, S. Hormonal pathways of preterm birth. Am J Obstet Gynecol 1999;180:S272-4.

<http://www.infertilitycentral.com/fertility/alternative-and-complementary-therapy-yoga-for-infertility.html>

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