

Yin Yoga and Fertility

By Sarah Powers

I want to choose a yoga class with the best possible benefits to aid fertility and conception. I do have a fertility video on yoga but was wondering if Yin yoga would be a good choice.

—*Jasmin, Hong Kong*

Sarah Powers' reply:

Yoga is an excellent practice for balancing all the systems of the body and preparing it for the arduous and beautiful transformation of pregnancy.



The only style of Hatha Yoga that would harm the potential for pregnancy is one in which the woman is practicing very vigorously, every day for years. This would imbalance the life force (also known as prana or chi), specifically the Yin chi, because athletic yoga emphasizes the Yang chi by focusing on the muscles, or superficial tissues. I have known strong athletic women who, through their obsession with Yang activity, have caused the cessation of their moon cycle. It was through a change in both attitude and activities that they assisted their flow to reemerge, and pregnancy soon followed.

Yin yoga is based on the Taoist principles of Yin and Yang, where Yin is more calming and passive, and Yang is more active, excited, and upward-moving. The physical effects of the Yin practice result in lubricated and lengthened connective tissue, whereas Yang practice focuses more on strengthening and stretching the muscles.

Yin yoga is also a wonderful practice for both quieting the active mind and encouraging the prana to consistently flow through the six main meridians in the legs, which are connected to the health of these major organs (the spleen/pancreas, liver, kidney, urinary bladder, stomach, and gall bladder). A body with balanced chi and healthy organs is of course more likely to become pregnant and sustain a healthy pregnancy.

Another fertility benefit from Yin practice is the emphasis on forward bending. The pressure to the lower belly stimulates prana flow there as well. This region in the lower abdomen is the location of the major energy center, or chakra, called the Svadhisthana, which controls the reproductive organs. The great yogi Hiroshi Motoyama emphasizes that the more energy that is drawn to this chakra, through both pressure and stretching—as well as focusing the mind there—the greater the benefit both before and during pregnancy.

"The Svadhisthana Chakra oversees the actual working of sexual energy and the sexual act, the initial formation of a child, and the subdivision of the sexual cells, which causes the child to grow within the mother. The Svadhisthana Chakra is the chakra responsible for sexual reproduction, cellular division, and the formation of the human body at the physical level."

Needless to say, I recommend you find a Yin yoga teacher, read Paul Grilley's book *Yin Yoga*, and/or use my practice video *Yoga with Sarah Powers, Yin and Vinyasa Flow* to supplement your other fertility choices.

Sarah Powers blends the insights of yoga and Buddhism in her practice and teaching. She incorporates both a Yin style of holding poses and a Vinyasa style of moving with the breath, blending essential aspects of the Iyengar, Ashtanga, and Viniyoga traditions. Pranayama and meditation are always included in her practice and classes. Sarah has been a student of Buddhism in both Asia and the U.S. and draws inspiration from teachers such as Jack Kornfield, Toni Packer, and Tsoknyi Rinpoche. Sarah also draws inspiration from the Self Inquiry (Atma Vichara) of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. She lives in Marin, California where she home schools her daughter and teaches classes. For more information go to www.sarahpowers.com.

http://www.yogajournal.com/practice/814_1.cfm