

# Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP)

## 2025 Plan Perks

Harnessing the Power of  
Meditation and Yoga

June 2025



# A Brief History of Meditation



Meditation has ancient origins in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

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Meditation became popular in the Western world in 60's and 70's.

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Meditation is now a secular tool practiced globally and used for overall health and well-being.



# Benefits of Meditation

- Mental health – reduces stress and anxiety (Goyal et al., 2014)
- Chronic pain – can alter the perception of pain (Zeidan et al., 2012)
- Reduce inflammation – can lower levels inflammatory markers (Black et al., 2013)
- General health – can improve sleep quality, lower blood pressure, and improve overall wellbeing.



# Types of Meditation

**Mindfulness Meditation** – Tuning in to the present moment to ground the mind.

**Transcendental Meditation** – Allowing the mind to naturally transcend thought processes and enter a state of calm and quiet using mantras.

**Guided Meditation** – Step by step instructions given to the listener throughout the meditation. Great for beginners!

**Movement and Yoga** – Combining physical activity, breathing exercises, and meditation.



# Yoga- Let's learn more...

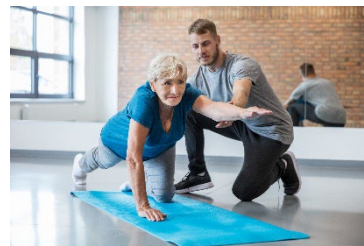
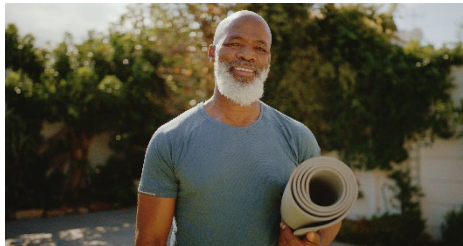
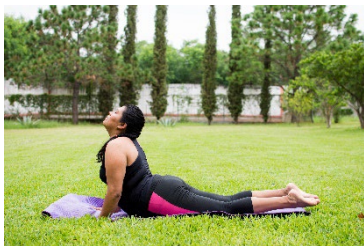
- Yoga typically combines physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation, and classical yoga includes other elements, such as a spiritual practice.
- Yoga is a Sanskrit word translated as “yoke” or “union.” To yoke means to draw together, to bind together; or to unite.
- The origins of yoga trace back thousands of years to the Upanishads, a collection of yogic texts dating from roughly 800 BC to 400 AD.
- In the West, the word “yoga” has come to mean a particular style called hatha yoga. This branch emphasizes postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), stress relief, relaxation, physical fitness and wellness.





# Yoga and Arthritis Pain

- Yoga is a way to exercise gently, as well as to reduce tension and improve joint flexibility.
- Yoga also can help a person with arthritis build muscle strength and improve balance. The ability to balance begins to weaken around 50 years old for most adults.
- Yoga's emphasis on introspective thought – pinpointing the sources of pain or anxiety and learning to relax them – can be useful for people with arthritis.
- People with arthritis who practice yoga regularly will eventually see improved physical function.





# Considerations for People Living with Arthritis

- Discuss any plans for a new yoga practice with your healthcare provider.
- Most resources highly recommend seeking out a certified instructor if you are new to yoga. These can be found at Yoga Alliance website. The John Hopkins Arthritis Center recommends a first-time yoga experience be in-person and instructor-led.
- The general rule for arthritis patients (and people in general) is that if it hurts, stop. The adage “no pain, no gain” does not apply to yoga, particularly if you have activity limitations.
- Once you have established a safe yoga practice, consider utilizing online resources for support such as John Hopkins Arthritis Center: <https://yoga-for-arthritis.thinkific.com/courses/mini-course-intro-to-yoga-for-arthritis>.



# Better Styles of Yoga for Rheumatoid Arthritis-

- **Iyengar**- this method emphasizes precision and alignment in each posture, along with breath work, and supports the use of props.
- **Hatha**- slower-moving classes where you hold each pose for at least a few breaths.
- **Restorative** (not yin yoga, which holds poses for a long time) - this practice is all about relaxation.

## You may want to avoid-

- Bikram and hot yoga-while the heat is said to facilitate stretching, it's also fatiguing.
- Vinyasa-the quick pace doesn't allow much time to alter poses that put pressure on the wrists or ankles.
- Power Yoga- Power yoga is a vigorous style that typically includes poses that are more demanding than other types of yoga.





# 5-Minute Guided Meditation with Chair Yoga





# References and Resources

- 5 Things You Should Know About Yoga <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/things-you-should-know-about-yoga>
- Yoga Benefits for Arthritis [Yoga Benefits for Arthritis](#)
- What is Yoga? [Yoga Basics](#)
- [Yoga for Arthritis : Benefits of Yoga for the Arthritis Patient](#)
- Importance of Balance As We Age [Importance of Balance as We Age - Elder Care Alliance](#)
- <https://www.headspace.com/>
- <https://www.calm.com>
- Goyal, M., et al. (2014). "Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-being: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis." JAMA Internal Medicine, 174(3), 357-368.
- Zeidan, F., et al. (2012). "Mindfulness meditation-related pain relief: Evidence for unique brain mechanisms in the regulation of pain." Neuroscience Letters, 520(2), 165-173.
- Black, D. S., et al. (2013). "Mindfulness meditation and the immune system: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials." Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1307(1), 62-76.