PENN STATE DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY

Aging & Psychology Lab News

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CONTENT:

Dr. Steriani Elavsky
26 Recreation Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802

Phone: 814-865-5606
Fax: 814-865-1275
E-mail:
aplresearch@psu.edu

Upcoming Research: Be Yoga Study

Do you have a regular yoga practice?

Beginning in February, Moé, a graduate student in the Aging & Psychology Lab, will begin recruiting participants for research on yoga.

One of the key objectives of this study will be to better understand the effects of yoga off of the yoga mat, as individuals go about their day-to-day lives.

As a part of this study, you will be asked to:

- Make two visits to the Aging and Psychology Lab at Penn State for basic physiological assessments (height, weight, blood pressure) and completion of surveys.
- Complete brief (<5 minutes) daily online surveys across 3 weeks (21 consecutive days).

Interested or have questions?

For information on this study, please visit our web-site: https://sites.psu.edu/aplab/

or contact Moé directly at mzk191@psu.edu or call: (814)-865-5606

Current Research

"Effect of yoga exercises for headaches"

- Sang-dol Kim, RN, PhD. *Journal of Physical Therapy Science*

Headaches are a common occurrence for many people. Luckily, yoga may be a helpful activity to potentially reduce headaches.

A recent study published in July 2015 analyzed the effects of yoga intervention on primary headaches, or headaches not caused by another pre-existing medical condition.

The study was comprised of 72 participants with an average age of 34 years old and primary headaches. The participants took part in a yoga

program made up of yoga postures, breathing, pranayama, and kriya. The program lasted for 3 months, 60 minutes per day for 5 days a week. A yoga therapist conducted each yoga session.

The findings of this study suggest that yoga can alleviate symptoms of primary headaches. The yoga group studied in comparison to a control group (no yoga) had less intense headaches, less frequent headaches, lower anxiety and depression, and less symptomatic medication use.

However, further research needs to be conducted to confirm and further understand yoga's impact on primary headaches.

"To keep the body in good health is a duty, for otherwise we shall not be able to trim the lamp of wisdom , and keep our mind strong and clear."

-Buddha

"The power of yoga in the classroom"

-Jessica Butternaugh, Penn State

Jennifer Frank, an assistant professor of special education in Penn State's College of Education developed an evidence-based classroom program that teaches "middle and high school student stress-management skills through the practice of yoga and mindful breathing." This program is known as Transformative Life Skills (TLS). The program incorporates yoga postures, breathing techniques and mediation as a means to cope with stress. Yoga has been proven to help students attend class more frequently, increase motivation, improve academic skills and grades, and decrease reported stress. TLS allows for schools to teach social and emotional skills in a way that students enjoy. "All of these things are things we don't really teach in schools," Frank said, "but students need to have these skills in order to be successful in their academics." Students have continued to improve in their schoolwork and life skills and researchers continue to implement more and more programs across schools.

Movement in Daily Living

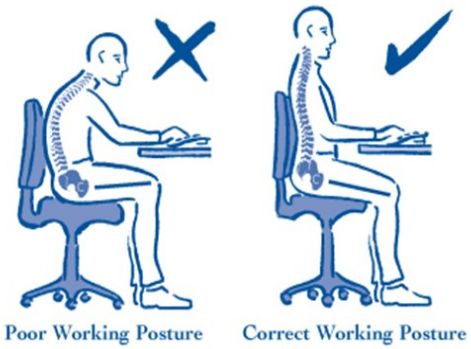
Every day we move in ways that can potentially contribute to aches and pains in our bodies. Aside from exercise through running or playing sport, we put stress on our body through the simple tasks involved in everyday life, such as sitting at school or work, carrying groceries, household cleaning, or even perusing on a cell phone! Although these activities may seem trivial in contributing to muscle and joint pain or health problems, they should not be ignored. To prevent injury and other health problems, it is important to be mindful of our body's positioning in the tasks of everyday life.

Sitting

Sitting is an inevitable function of daily life. Let's face it— we spend a large amount of our day sitting down, whether it is in the classroom, office, car, or couch. The average office worker sits for nearly 10 hours a day! Believe it or not, the simple task of sitting creates stress on our muscles and joints, especially when done improperly. Even looking down at your cell phone for long periods of time can cause neck pain, back aches, and eyestrain. We are unknowingly contributing to potential muscular and joint pain and further health problems through the necessary task of sitting. It is an overlooked activity that can cause a multitude of health problems, the most common and immediate being back and neck pain, decreased circulation, and high blood pressure. However, prolonged sitting can also contribute to long-term health issues such as higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and depression.

Proper Sitting

1. Sit with your FULL BOTTOM ON the SEAT
2. Rest both FEET FLAT on the floor
3. Relax and ALIGN your SHOULDERS straight with the rest of your body (don't *force* your shoulders back)
4. Keep your head and CHIN UP, parallel to the ground



1 CELL PHONE USE

Studies show that people with smart phones spend nearly 3 HOURS on their phones per day! Try to limit your cell phone usage to significantly less than 3 hours daily. When you do use your phone, avoid looking down at it in your lap. Instead, hold your phone at roughly eye-level away from your face.

2 SCHOOL/WORK

In school and at work, we often sit for long periods of time. Adjust your chair so that your feet reach the ground and you can easily read the board or computer screen. Many times, we begin to slouch and slide down our chair when sitting for long periods of time. Avoid slumping by taking breaks to walk around and stretch at least once every hour. Also, avoid crossing your legs! This restricts blood flow and increases nerve pressure.

PennState

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Research in the APL focuses on the study of the relationships among physical activity, health, and aging.

With advancing age, there is an increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases often leading to compromised physical, psychological, and emotional functioning. Physical activity is one health behavior shown to have the potential to reduce or prevent altogether the age-related decline in physical function, to enhance psychological well-being, and improve quality of life.

***The work in the APL aims to examine how physiological and social psychological variables interact to influence physical activity behavior and its consequences. We approach aging from a lifespan perspective, including both middle-aged and older adults as the* target populations.**

To learn more about current research, our team, and upcoming studies please visit our website!

https://sites.psu.edu/aplab/

Kinesiology Aging & Psychology Lab