

# THE FUNCTIONAL YOGA TEACHING INSTRUCTION FOR ELDERLY LEARNER: DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE POSTURES WITH ACCESSORIES

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## BACKGROUND

Yoga has been shown to improve the physical and mental health of elder adults: reducing insomnia and anxiety, and increasing vitality, feelings of emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. It follows that yoga exercise-training programs directed generally at muscle strength, endurance, softness and reconditioning are especially appropriate for the elderly. Physical aging and deconditioning, along with poor muscle strength, endurance, and softness, may be a limiting factor in yoga training. However, muscle dysfunction in the elderly may be more than just a matter of muscle strength, endurance or softness. Instead, the problem may be one of the changes in the neuromuscular control mechanism that affects the muscle stability of the trunk and movement efficiency, which is likely to cause injury and termination of exercise. Therefore, as a yoga instructor, it is necessary to design a series of safe and effective yoga training guidelines for the elderly to solve the above problems. Although several studies have shown that objective strength testing is an effective portrayal of movement ability, this study considers learners' subjective self-physical awareness to be more important. Purpose and Methods: Based on self-determination theory and functional fitness, this study attempts to help elderly apply various yoga accessories to find suitable alternative postures for their own (different degrees: high, medium and low) by observing the interaction between instructor and learners. 38 women and 7 men took part in the study, functional yoga classes were held once a week for 60 minutes over a period of 2 months.

In-class instructor demonstrates standard yoga movements (eg. baby, cat, cobra, plank, downward facing dog, sun salutation, raised mountain, tree, warrior, eagle pose etc.), instructing the subject to perceive their own ability and use various yoga accessories as needed and mark feasible postures and comfortable movements as alternative postures. Results and Conclusions: The individuals in the functional yoga group reported that yoga is no longer a difficult exercise. They can choose simple and feasible movements with their current awareness, and feel more competent and confident in their physical ability. They also enjoy class with their classmates. Based on the results, this study then establishes a comprehensive set of yoga teaching guidelines to provide reference for yoga instructors.

**KEYWORDS:** Elderly, yoga, functional fitness, spiritual well-being.

(Received 10/10/2019, Reviewed 05/11/2019

Accepted 25/11/2019

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