

# Yoga and Mindfulness: What's the Evidence From CADTH?

## **Yoga:**

*A type of complementary alternative medicine believed to enhance the interaction between the body and the mind that generally consists of poses or postures, breathing techniques, and/or meditation. Common forms of yoga practised in Western countries include Hatha, Iyengar, Sudarshan Kriya, and meditative.*

## **Mindfulness:**

*An integrative mind-body–based intervention that aims to change the way people think and feel about their experiences by bringing a non-judgmental, conscious awareness to the present moment. Mindfulness may involve the use of meditation, breathing techniques, and yoga.*

The popularity of complementary alternative medicine (CAM) therapies continues to grow as people seek out non-pharmacological ways with which to manage their health. Yoga and mindfulness-based interventions represent two such CAM therapies, which have become increasingly mainstream and even actively promoted by some health professionals as supportive therapies for a wide spectrum of physical and mental health conditions. Knowing what the evidence of effectiveness is for yoga and mindfulness-based therapies in the context of a variety of health conditions would help clinicians and policy-makers make informed decisions about the appropriate use of such interventions.

The Rapid Response program at CADTH has been fielding inquiries about yoga and mindfulness over the past few years. We have compiled a repository of summary reports to help provide the evidence piece to the decision-making puzzle.

Report Topic	Type of Report
<b>Yoga</b>	
<a href="#">Yoga (any type) in PTSD, GAD, depression, or substance abuse</a>	Summary with Critical Appraisal, 2015
<a href="#">Motor Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children</a>	Summary of Abstracts, 2014
<b>Mindfulness</b>	
<a href="#">Mindfulness interventions in PTSD, GAD, depression, or substance use disorders</a>	Summary with Critical Appraisal, 2015
<a href="#">Chronic Pain Management</a>	Summary with Critical Appraisal, 2012
<a href="#">Weight Loss in Obese Adults</a>	Summary with Critical Appraisal, 2012
<a href="#">Visual and Literary Art Therapy in Adult Females with Depression</a>	Summary of Abstracts, 2011
<a href="#">Counselling or Psychotherapy Interventions for Patients with a History of Sexual or Physical Assault</a>	Summary of Abstracts, 2013

GAD = generalized anxiety disorder; PTSD = post-traumatic stress disorder.

## Yoga:

### Yoga for the Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depression, and Substance Abuse

Summary with Critical Appraisal (June 2015)

**Technology:** Yoga (any type)

**Issue:** Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), depression, and substance abuse are mental health disorders in which pharmacological therapy is a cornerstone of treatment. However, not all patients achieve an adequate response to pharmacotherapy, while others may develop troublesome side effects or decide to forego standard treatment strategies altogether. Yoga, a popular form of complementary alternative medicine, is thought to enhance the interaction between body and mind, which potentially makes it an attractive option for the treatment of some mental health disorders.

**Key Findings:** Yoga may be beneficial as a monotherapy or adjunctive therapy for treating depression, of limited benefit in GAD and substance abuse, and of uncertain value in PTSD. Three of five evidence-based guidelines suggested that yoga may be useful as an adjunctive treatment for treating depression, PTSD, and GAD.

### Motor Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children

Summary of Abstracts (August 2014)

**Summary of Findings:** Two studies were identified that specifically looked at yoga interventions in children with autism spectrum disorder: one, a case-control study of a yoga program called "Get Ready to Learn" and the other, an uncontrolled, pre-/post-test study that examined yoga, dance, and music therapy. Both studies reported a benefit of the yoga intervention.

## Mindfulness:

### Mindfulness Interventions for the Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depression, and Substance Use Disorders

Summary with Critical Appraisal (June 2015)

**Technology:** Mindfulness (any type)

**Issue:** PTSD, GAD, depression, and substance use disorders (SUD) are mental health disorders in which pharmacological therapy is a cornerstone of treatment. However, not all patients achieve an adequate response to pharmacotherapy, while others may develop troublesome side effects or decide to forego standard treatment strategies altogether. Mindfulness — an integrative, mind-body-based intervention that aims to change the way people think and feel about their experiences by bringing a non-judgmental, conscious awareness to the present moment — potentially offers an attractive option for the treatment of some mental health disorders.

**Key Findings:** Mindfulness-based interventions may be beneficial as monotherapy or adjunctive therapy for treating depression, of limited benefit in substance use and heavy drinking, and of uncertain value in treating PTSD or GAD. Of the six evidence-based guidelines reviewed, four recommended the use of mindfulness interventions in depression, one in PTSD, and one in SUD.

## Mindfulness Training for Chronic Pain Management

### Summary with Critical Appraisal (January 2012)

**Technology:** Mindfulness training (any type)

**Issue:** People who are obese have an increased risk of a variety of chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and liver disease. Obesity has been recognized as a complex problem that is influenced by behavioural, physiological, environmental, social, and economic factors. Interventions that seek to modify the dietary and exercise behaviour of people who are obese often fail to achieve long-term weight reduction. Mind-body therapies have been proposed as a possible weight-loss intervention.

**Key Findings:** Overall, the evidence was found to be either unsupportive or insufficient to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of mindfulness training in weight loss.

## Mindfulness Training for Weight Loss in Obese Adults

### Summary with Critical Appraisal (January 2012)

**Technology:** Mindfulness training (any type)

**Issue:** People who are obese have an increased risk of a variety of chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and liver disease. Obesity has been recognized as a complex problem that is influenced by behavioural, physiological, environmental, social, and economic factors. Interventions that seek to modify the dietary and exercise behaviour of people who are obese often fail to achieve long-term weight reduction. Mind-body therapies have been proposed as a possible weight-loss intervention.

**Key Findings:** Overall, the evidence was found to be either unsupportive or insufficient to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of mindfulness training in weight loss.

## Visual and Literary Art Therapy in Adult Females with Depression

### Summary of Abstracts (May 2011)

**Summary of Findings:** A single randomized controlled trial of women with various cancers found a benefit of mindfulness-based art therapy compared with control on symptoms of distress and quality of life.

## Counselling or Psychotherapy Interventions for Patients with a History of Sexual or Physical Assault

### Summary of Abstracts (June 2013)

**Summary of Findings:** A single, brief, pilot study of women with sexual distress and a history of childhood sexual abuse found a benefit of mindfulness-based therapy compared with cognitive behavioural therapy on subjective ratings of sexual arousal.

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CADTH receives funding from Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments, with the exception of Quebec.

*Ce document est également disponible en français.*

September 2015

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Driven.

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