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## Yoga May Soothe Chronic Back Pain

People plagued by chronic lower backaches may find some relief in yoga class, according to recent research.

Their study of 101 adults with persistent low back pain found that a gentle yoga class seemed to be a better alternative to either general exercise or a self-help book. Though people in the exercise class eventually improved to a similar degree as their yoga-practicing counterparts, yoga class brought quicker results.

It's possible that yoga's benefits for both the body and mind explain the effects on lower back pain, the study's lead author, Dr. Karen J. Sherman, told Reuters Health.

She stressed, though, that the study participants took a slower-moving form of yoga that was designed for people with lower back problems. Vigorous styles of yoga that include more-advanced poses could potentially make chronic back pain worse.

Sherman, a researcher at the Group Health Cooperative in Seattle, and her colleagues report the findings in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* this week.

It's estimated that 14 million Americans practice yoga, often as a way to treat chronic aches and pains. But, in the Western medical literature at least, there have been no published studies on the effects of yoga on chronic back pain, Sherman said.

To look at the question, she and her colleagues randomly assigned 101 adults to take either 12 weeks of yoga class or 12 weeks of a standard therapeutic exercise class, or to follow the advice of a self-care book.

The yoga class was conducted in what's known as the vinyoga style, which goes by the philosophy that poses should be adapted to the individ-

ual's needs. The instructor was experienced in therapeutic yoga, and the class was limited to basic poses that would not put too much strain on the back, Sherman explained.

After 12 weeks, the yoga practitioners reported better back function than their peers in either of the other two groups. After another three months, those in the exercise group had improved to a similar degree as the yogis.

The findings don't clearly show whether yoga or standard, therapy-focused exercise is better for low back pain, Sherman said. But, she added, given the choice, "I'd pick yoga."

She pointed to one difference between the yoga practitioners and other two groups that remained over the long haul: At the last evaluation, the yogis were using less than half

the amount of pain medication their peers were.

Why this is, and why yoga showed a quicker benefit for low back pain, is an open question. But Sherman speculated that yoga's "mind and body effects" are at work.

Vinyoga, like other forms of yoga, focuses on coordinating movement with the breath and focusing the mind. It's possible, according to Sherman, that yoga allowed the back pain sufferers to become more aware of their habitual movements and postures that may have been contributing to their back problems in the first place.

Certain back problems, like spinal disc injuries, might not respond well to yoga, Sherman noted. But most people, she added, have "non-specific" back pain involving muscles, soft tissue and nerves, and for them, therapeutic yoga could be worth a try.

January 3-5, 2006

### Harvest Blend Regular

- Rapini
- Baby Carrots
- Fuerte Avocado
- Yellow Onions
- Russet Potatoes
- Cucumbers
- Spinach
- Green Leaf Lettuce
- Green Bell Peppers
- Jonagold Apples
- Tommy Atkins Mango
- Red Bananas
- Satsuma Mandarins
- Anjou Pears

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

### You Don't Say

**Checkuary.** (n.) The thirteenth month of the year that begins New Year's Day and ends when a person stops absentmindedly writing the old year on their checks.

"If there hadn't been women we'd still be squatting in a cave eating raw meat, because we made civilization in order to impress our girl friends. And they tolerated it and let us go ahead and play with our toys." - Orson Welles

"Who would guess that a peanut butter and bacon sandwich is so good it will bring tears to your eyes? It does. Add lettuce, and you have a complete meal, with every known daily nutrient needed by the average 200 pound man." - Roger Welsch

"You have to eat oatmeal or you'll dry up. Anybody knows that." - Kay Thompson

"Sharing food with another human being is an intimate act that should not be indulged in lightly." - M. F. K. Fisher

# Recipes

## Pizza With Rapini

- 2 12-inch prebaked pizza crusts
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bunch rapini, rinsed, tough stems removed, cut into 3-inch pieces
- 4 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 tbsp freshly grated Romano cheese
- 2 tbsp additional olive oil for top of pizzas
- salt and pepper to taste

Heat the 1/4 cup olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and sauté about 1 minute. Add the rapini and a little water for moisture. Season with the salt and pepper. Cover and steam until very tender, about 20 minutes, adding more water if needed. When it's done, remove the lid and let all of the moisture evaporate. Remove from heat and cool.

Follow package directions to use store-bought crusts. Lightly butter pizza pans or baking sheets. Spread half of the dough in each pan, making a small ridge around the edges. Top each with half of the cooked rapini. Lightly press on the greens so they will stick to the dough. Sprinkle each pizza with 2 tbsp of the Parmesan and Romano. Drizzle each with 1 tablespoon of oil. Bake until crust is lightly browned and crispy on the bottom, about 20 minutes, switching racks half way through. Transfer the pizzas to a cutting surface and let cool at least 5 minutes before slicing. This is good hot, warm or room temperature.

## Turkey Cutlets with Ravioli and Rapini

- 1 14-ounce package fresh ravioli filled with cheese, spinach or mushroom and cheese
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1/4 cup grated parmigiano-reggiano or romano
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg, freshly grated or ground
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 1/3 pounds turkey cutlets, available in packaged poultry case
- 2 tbsp fresh rosemary leaves, chopped
- salt and coarse black pepper
- fresh bay leaves, 1 for each cutlet or small dried bay leaves
- 2 lemons, zested and juiced
- 1 cup dry white wine or dry vermouth
- cooked rapini, recipe follows

Place a large pot of water to boil over high heat. Add a healthy dose of salt to boiling water to season it. Add ravioli and cook to package directions for al dente. Pour cornmeal onto a plate and combine with grated cheese, then season with nutmeg and black pepper. Heat a medium nonstick skillet over moderate heat and add 1 tbsp oil and 1 tbsp butter. Drain ravioli. Dust hot, cooked ravioli with cornmeal. Add coated ravioli to the skillet and brown on both sides, 3 or 4 minutes total.

While pasta is working, preheat a large skillet for cutlets over medium to medium high heat. Season turkey cutlets with chopped rosemary, salt and pepper. Choose small fresh or dried bay leaves or halve large leaves with kitchen scissors. Press a small bay leaf or 1/2 leaf into each turkey cutlet.

Add 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil to the pan; 2 turns around the pan in a slow stream. Turn cutlets over as you set them into the pan so that the bay leaf faces down. Cook the cutlets in a single layer, working in 2 batches if necessary. Sauté the cutlets 4 or 5 minutes on each side. Transfer to a warm plate. Add the lemon zest and juice to the pan and deglaze the pan with wine or vermouth, pulling up any pan drippings with a whisk. Add remaining tbsp butter to the pan, whisk it in and pour the pan sauce down over the cutlets. Serve the cutlets along side the fried ravioli with cooked rapini or a green tossed salad.

## Rapini with Golden Raisins

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1 bunch fresh rapini, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- salt
- 1 14-ounce can chicken broth or 2 cups water

Heat a deep skillet over medium heat. Add oil and onions and cook 3 minutes. Add raisins, rapini and season with salt. Add broth or water. Bring liquid to a bubble, then reduce heat to simmer and cover the pan. Cook rapini 12 minutes or until tender and no longer bitter. Remove lid and allow liquid to reduce by 1/2, 2 or 3 minutes. Transfer cooked rapini and plumped raisins to a serving dish.

## Grilled Avocado with Goat Cheese and Bell Peppers

- olive oil
- 2 avocados
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 green bell peppers
- 1 medium tomato
- 1 yellow hot chile
- 4 green onions
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 teaspoon sherry wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon walnut oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 ounces soft goat cheese
- cilantro, for garnish

Stem and seed peppers. Combine and dice tomato, chile, green onions, garlic, and cilantro very fine. Mix in bowl with vinegar and oil, salt and freshly ground black pepper. Set salsa aside.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Seed and julienne the bell peppers and sauté in 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat for about 10 minutes. Cut avocados in half lengthwise and remove the seeds and skin. Rub the avocado halves with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill the halves on both sides for about 2 minutes each side. Remove from the grill and place on a baking sheet. Fill the center of each avocado half with the salsa and top with 1-ounce of goat cheese. Bake approximately 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Garnish with cilantro.