

## Study: Even short-term yoga training good

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Scientists at Thailand's Khon Kaen University say 18 short yoga sessions can provide significant improvement to one's respiratory function.

"This research suggests short-term yoga exercise improves respiratory breathing capacity by increasing chest wall expansion and forced expiratory lung volumes," said lead researcher Raoyrin Chanavirut.

"These findings may benefit people suffering from illnesses that affect breathing, including asthma."

The researchers chose five Hatha Yoga positions designed to improve chest wall function, including the cat, tree and camel positions.

Fifty-eight healthy volunteers of approximately 20 years of age participated in the 6-week study. Half did five positions of Hatha Yoga during 20-minute sessions, three times a week. The control group volunteers didn't exercise, but continued their usual lifestyle, and did not smoke or drink.

The researchers found volunteers who practiced yoga during the 6-week period significantly improved their chest wall expansion.

"Chest wall expansion allows individuals to get more air to the base of the lung," Chanavirut explained. Greater expansion of the chest wall provides more oxygen with each breath and requires less effort to breathe, she said.

The study was presented Tuesday during the Experimental Biology 2006

conference in San Francisco.

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