



## ***Letter to the editor***

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Refers to the following text of the Journal: [2011;37\(1\):70-76](#)

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In reviewing the article, Hartfiel, et al (1), I noticed several challenges that seem to occur in research studies examining yoga and its benefits: lack of definition of parameters for the control group, lack of thorough description of yoga, and finally lack of fidelity in the intervention. While I am pleased to see research increasing in the field, if we are to stress evidence-based practice, I believe consistency and more detailed controls are often necessary including a more defined and thorough understanding and explanation of what yoga is.

First, I was first struck by the lack of control for the control group, which received “neither intervention, instructions, nor restrictions”. I imagine that, without guidelines, waitlisted participants who had expressed an interest in a yoga study very likely could have begun attending yoga class elsewhere or pursued another form of physical activity. Another limitation in this regard was whether or not anyone was practicing meditation and if researchers considered this when setting the baseline or determining who fit inclusion criteria.

Second, this study utilizes specific aspects of a whole system of yoga and a form of yoga I have not seen utilized in other studies assessing the effectiveness of the practice of yoga. The lack of consistency in the form and definition makes it difficult to interpret the results and difficult to generalize the findings beyond the participants of this specific study. Yoga has a long, deep history and is a healing tradition, with eight limbs

or tenants of the practice, which contribute and work in conjunction with one another to increase well being.

Third, there is a lack of fidelity in the intervention between study participants, which may pose a limitation or challenge to the study results. Participants were able to take anywhere from one to three lunchtime classes, and were given a video to take home and practice at their will. These factors allows for great variation in the intervention. The class structure and content also seems relatively vague.

In collecting data, the timing would seem to me to have potential to impact the survey results. Different results may occur if a person were to take the survey before or after class, in anticipation of taking the class, or if they were reflecting back over the week.

## References

1. Hartfiel N, Havenhand J, Khalsa SB, Clarke G, Krayner A. The effectiveness of yoga for the improvement of well-being and resilience to stress in the workplace. [Scand J Work Environ Health. 2011;37\(1\):70–76.](#)

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