Yoga and Immunity
by Stacy Renz

AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS

**Description**
- Occur when the immune system, which normally attacks and protects the body from foreign and potentially harmful substances, begins to attack itself because it can no longer distinguish what is part of the self and what isn’t.
- The leading cause of death and disability in women under 65.
- 75% of those with autoimmune diseases are women.

**Why do autoimmune diseases seem to affect women more than men?**
- Women's immune systems are more sophisticated than men’s, and they tend to have stronger inflammatory responses naturally.
- Hormone fluctuations – more common in women – seem to be linked to autoimmune diseases.
- Autoimmune diseases appear to be linked to defects in the X chromosome. Since women have two X chromosomes, they have a greater risk of having the defect.
- After pregnancy fetal cells that remain in circulation in a woman's body seem to influence the development or worsening of certain autoimmune diseases.

**Causes** (from [http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/sec16/ch186/ch186a.html](http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/sec16/ch186/ch186a.html))
- “A substance in the body that is normally confined to a specific area (and thus is hidden from the immune system) is released into the bloodstream. For example, a blow to the eye can cause the fluid in the eyeball to be released into the bloodstream. The fluid stimulates the immune system to recognize the eye as foreign and attack it.
- A normal body substance is altered, for example, by a virus, a drug, sunlight, or radiation. The altered substance may appear foreign to the immune system. For example, a virus can infect and thus alter cells in the body. The virus-infected cells stimulate the immune system to attack.
- A foreign substance that resembles a natural body substance may enter the body. The immune system may inadvertently target the similar body substance as well as the foreign substance. For example, the bacteria that cause strep throat have some antigens that are similar to those in human heart cells. Rarely, the immune system may attack a person's heart after strep throat (this reaction is part of rheumatic fever).
- The cells that control antibody production—for example, B lymphocytes (a type of white blood cell)—may malfunction and produce abnormal antibodies that attack some of the body’s cells.”
Mind-Body Connection
In the case of autoimmune disorders the body is essentially attacking itself. According to Shapiro, the client with an autoimmune disorder may have any or all of the following tendencies:

- Has conflicted feelings toward herself.
- Feels as if her life doesn’t matter or isn’t valid.
- Carries guilt, shame, or blame that is negatively impacting her self-esteem and self-respect.
- Hates or at least dislikes herself.
- Hypercritical of herself.
- Undermines her enjoyment of life.
- Tends to help others but refuses to help herself.
- Frequently expresses disappointment in herself.
- Constantly puts herself down.
- May be in a relationship with someone who puts her down and corrodes her self-worth.

Mind-Body Approach
Introduce themes of clear validity of her life, releasing guilt, shame, and blame for the past, appreciation for who she is, observing the inner critic in a detached way, forgiveness and compassion for herself, clarity about her right to be here, be happy, and be free of corroding influences whether it be herself or someone else. AIFORMations may include:

- Why am I clear about my own worth?
- Why do I have a right to be here?
- Why do I release all guilt from the past?
- Why do I release all shame from the past?
- Why do I release all self-blame for the past?
- Why do I refrain from self-criticism?
- Why am I free to enjoy all life has to offer?
- Why do I help myself just as much as I help others?
- Why do I refrain from putting myself down?
- Why do I speak kindly and in an uplifting way to myself?
- Why do I deserve forgiveness and compassion?
- Why do I freely forgive myself and show myself compassion?

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Description
An autoimmune disease that inflames (but does not deform) the joints, kidneys, skin, lungs, heart, brain, and blood cells. The prognosis varies but most people can lead an active life with occasional flare-ups.

Symptoms
- Symptoms of anemia, such as fatigue, weakness, and light-headedness.
- Symptoms of kidney, lung, or heart disorders, such as fatigue, shortness of breath, itching, and chest pain.
- A rash may develop.
**Chakra Approach**
May be conflicted in terms of will and personal power at chakra 3. May alternate between deficiency and excess at 3rd chakra. During a flare-up balance 1, 2 and 4. Between flare-ups balance 1, 2, 3. Of course, assess all chakras for the full picture.

**Contraindications**
Avoid overheating during flare-ups.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
During an acute stage of inflammation balance Pitta. Between flare-ups, balance Vata through a well-balanced yoga practice emphasizing grounding and core strength.

**Physiological Approach**
During a flare use cooling, calming pranayama, and a balanced routine of supportive restorative poses to balance Pitta, calm inflammation, and relax the nervous system. Between flares, balance Vata, emphasizing grounding postures.

**Meridian Approach**
Lung, Large Intestine, Stomach, Spleen, Heart, Kidney, Pericardium, Triple Warmer.

**Sample Class**
During a flare, use poses from YTT and TPM that balances Pitta; otherwise balance Vata.
- Pranayama: Alternative Nostril Breathing
- Pranayama: Viloma Krama Breath.
- Hasta Mudra 1 – pinkies touching
- Hasta Mudra 2 – ringer fingers touching
- Hasta Mudra 6 – all finger tips touching
- Adho Merudanda – fingers curled into palm with extended thumbs toward each other.
- Prithivi Mudra – the tips of the thumb and ring fingers together with the other fingers extended. Rest the back of the hands on the thighs.

**Multiple Sclerosis**

**Description**
- A potentially debilitating disease in which the body's immune system eats away at the protective sheath that covers the nerves.
- This interferes with the communication between the brain and the body.
- This may lead to a irreversible deterioration of the nerves themselves.
- Symptoms are intermittent.
Symptoms
Symptoms vary depending on the nerves affected but may include:
  - Partial or complete blindness or pain with eye movement.
  - Double or blurred vision.
  - Electric shock feelings with certain head movements.
  - Tremors.
  - Decreased coordination.
  - Unsteady gait.
  - Inability to walk or speak.
  - Headaches.
  - Muscle spasms that lead to pain.
  - Weakness or numbness of the limbs in one half of the body at a time or just in the lower body.
  - Loss of balance.
  - Fatigue.
  - Dizziness.
  - Excessive heat in the body.

Contraindications:
Avoid overheating which can exacerbate the condition.

Chakra Approach
Balance 1 and 3. Assess all for the full picture.

Ayurvedic Approach
During a flare, balance Pitta. In between balance Vata.

Physiological Approach
Keep the client cool as overheating can exacerbate the condition. Working on the wall in helpful, both for cooling and for grounding and balance.

Meridian Approach
  - Lung if voice loss or arm paralysis.
  - Large Intestine if headache.
  - Stomach if eye problems, fatigue, or headache or for limb paralysis.
  - Spleen if fatigue, insomnia, muscle spasms, or leg weakness.
  - Heart if headache, insomnia, extreme sweating, or loss of speech.
  - Small Intestine if arm pain or paralysis, eye problems, headache, or shoulder tension.
  - Bladder if eye problems, headache, calf pain or spasm, paralysis.
  - Kidney if fatigue or insomnia.
  - Triple Warmer if eye problems, headache, profuse sweating, or shoulder pain.
  - Gall Bladder if eye problems, headache, jaw problems, irritable, paralysis, stiff muscles, neck problems, or shoulder problems.
  - Liver if eye problems.
Sample Class
Use any poses in the YTT and TPM that balances Vata.

- Pranayama – Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Pranayama - Kapalabhati
- Pranayama – Bhastrika
- Pranayama - Bhramari
- Pranayama: Viloma Krama Breath.
- Hasta Mudra 1 – pinkies touching
- Hasta Mudra 2 – ringer fingers touching
- Hasta Mudra 6 – all finger tips touching
- Adho Merudanda – fingers curled into palm with extended thumbs toward each other.
- Prithivi Mudra – the tips of the thumb and ring fingers together with the other fingers extended. Rest the back of the hands on the thighs.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Description
RA is an autoimmune disorder causing inflammation in the joints or other tissues, such as lung, nerve, skin, and heart tissue. Prognosis varies.

Symptoms
May include
- fever
- fatigue
- joint pain
- joint stiffness
- deformed joints
- shortness of breath
- loss of sensation
- weakness
- rashes
- chest pain
- swellings under the skin.

Contraindications
Avoid overheating, especially during a flare-up.

Chakra Approach
Balance 1 and 3. Assess all for the full picture.

Ayurvedic Approach
Balance Pitta during flare-up. Otherwise practice to balance Vata.
**Physiological Approach**
During a flare-up stick to a pranayama, meditation, and restorative practices that balance Pitta. Between flare-ups focus on a practice for Vata, paying special mind to joint alignment and protection.

**Meridian Approach**
- Lung (if shortness of breath).
- Large Intestine if rash.
- Stomach.
- Spleen if fatigue.
- Heart if chest pain.
- Small Intestine.
- Bladder.
- Kidney if fatigue or chest pain.
- Pericardium if rash.
- Gall Bladder.

**Sample Class**
- Vinyasa Warm-ups (YTT 7)
- Seated Warm-ups (YTT 7)
- Table Warm-ups (YTT 8)
- Standing Warm-ups (YTT 9)
- Kneeling Warm-ups (YTT 10)
- Supine Hand to Toe (YTT 22) or
- Leg Stretches Up the Wall (TPM) or
- Doorway Stretches (TPM)
- Knee to Chest (YTT 31)
- Twist Warm-Ups (YTT 42)
- Bridge (YTT 55 or TPM)
- Supine Crescent Moon (YTT 61)
- Head to Knee (YTT 68)
- Supported Inversion (TPM)
- Supported Savasana (TPM)
- Bhramari Pranayama (TPM)
- Nadi Sodhana Pranayama (TPM)
- Moorcha Pranayama (TPM)
- Sheetali Pranayama (TPM)
- Hasta Mudra 1 – pinkies touching
- Hasta Mudra 2 – ringer fingers touching
- Hasta Mudra 6 – all finger tips touching
- Adho Merudanda – fingers curled into palm with extended thumbs toward each other.
- Prithivi Mudra – the tips of the thumb and ring fingers together with the other fingers extended. Rest the back of the hands on the thighs.
Hashimotos Thyroiditis (Chronic Lymphocytic Thyroiditis)

**Description**
- An autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks your thyroid gland, causing inflammation and under functioning of the thyroid.
- It is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the US.
- Its signs and symptoms are mainly those of hypothyroidism.
- It usually progresses slowly over a number of years causing chronic thyroid damage.

**Symptoms**
- Fatigue and sluggishness
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Constipation
- Pale, dry skin
- A puffy face
- Hoarse voice
- An elevated blood cholesterol level
- Unexplained weight gain - occurring infrequently and rarely more than 10 to 20 pounds, most of which is fluid
- Muscle aches, tenderness and stiffness, especially in your shoulders and hips
- Pain and stiffness in your joints and swelling in your knees or the small joints in your hands and feet
- Muscle weakness, especially in your lower extremities
- Excessive or prolonged menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia)
- Depression
- Goiter
- Forgetfulness
- Slow thought processing

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1, 4, and 5. Assess all for the full picture.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Balance Kapha.

**Physiological Approach**
Poses that stimulate the thyroid such as wall hang, fish pose, bridge pose, and shoulder stand as well as those that bring energy upward in the body, balancing Kapha.

**Meridian Approach**
- Triple Warmer (if sensitivity to cold)
- Pericardium (if dry skin)
- Kidney (if cold in limbs or sensitivity to cold)
- Small Intestine (if puffy cheeks or pain the shoulder or hands)
• Bladder (if hip pain)
• Heart (if cold in the arms or depression)
• Spleen (if depression for fatigue)
• Stomach (if pain in the knee, fatigue)
• Large Intestine (if dry skin, shoulder pain)
• Lung (if arm pain, depression, skin problems)

**Sample Class**
A balanced practice balancing Kapha integrating the following:
• Ujaii Breathing
• Wall Hang (TPM)
• Bridge Pose (YTT 55)
• Shoulder Stand (YTT 84)
• Supported Shoulder Stand (TPM)
• Plough (YTT 85)
• Supine Boat (YTT 29)
• Supported Supine Boat (TPM)
• Supported Forward Fold (TPM)
• Head to Knee (YTT 68)
• Supported Head to Knee (TPM)
• Hasta Mudra #5 (tips of thumbs touching)
• Hasta Mudra #6 (tips of all fingers touching)
• Interlaced Mudra #5 (Tips of thumbs interlaced; gentle pressure on inhale, release pressure on exhale).
• Prana Mudra (Tips of the thumb, ring, and little fingers together; back of hands resting on the thighs)

**Graves Disease**

**Description**
An autoimmune disease in which the thyroid gland produces too much of the hormone thyroxin, significantly accelerating the body’s metabolism. It can mimic other health problems, which makes it hard to diagnose.

**Symptoms**
May include:
• Sudden weight loss, despite eating more.
• Rapid heartbeat (tachycardia) more than 100 beats a minute.
• Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia)
• Pounding of your heart (palpitations)
• Increased appetite
• Nervousness, anxiety and irritability
• Tremor — usually a fine trembling in your hands and fingers
• Sweating
• Changes in menstrual patterns
• Increased sensitivity to heat
• Changes in bowel patterns, especially more frequent bowel movements
• An enlarged thyroid gland (goiter), which may appear as a swelling at the base of your neck
• Fatigue, muscle weakness
• Difficulty sleeping
• Bulging or red swollen eyes.

Contraindications:
Avoid mudras and poses that stimulate 5th chakra or the thyroid.

Chakra Approach
Involves 5th Chakra excess. Balance 1 and 2 and assess the rest for a full picture.

Ayurvedic Approach
Balance Pitta.

Physiological Approach
Use controlled movements that engage the muscles and use excess energy but do not overheat the body. This person may need a fairly intense practice to enable them to settle into relaxation. Use poses to balance Pitta.

Meridian Approach
• Liver (if anger, temper problems, or menstrual problems)
• Gall Bladder (if irritable)
• Triple Warmer (if eye problems)
• Pericardium (if anxiety, blurred vision, hot palms, menstrual problems)
• Kidney (if fatigue, insomnia, or menstrual problems)
• Bladder (if eye problems)
• Small Intestine (if eye problems)
• Heart (if anxiety, insomnia)
• Spleen (if fatigue, insomnia, weakness in legs)
• Stomach (fatigue, eye problems)
• Lung (if anxiety)

Sample Class
• Pranayama – Ujaii Breath
• Pranayama – Alternate Nostril Breathing
• Bridge Pose (YTT 55)
• Fish Pose (YTT 59)
• Wheel (YTT 56)
• Inverted Staff Pose (TPM)
• Camel (57)
• Supported Camel (TPM)
• Adhi Mudra (fingers curled around thumbs, palms down)
• Kanishtha Sharira Mudra (thumb web space at waist level)
Myasthenia Gravis

*Description*
Myasthenia Gravis is an autoimmune disease in which the connections between nerves and muscles (neuromuscular junction) are destroyed, bringing about weakness and rapid fatigue of voluntary muscles. It is most common in women under 40 and men over 60.

*Symptoms*
- Muscles weaken and tire easily, but improve with rest.
- Progresses over time.
- Eye problems, including drooping and/or double vision.
- Speech soft or nasal sounding.
- Choke easily.
- Liquids being swallowed may come out the nose.
- Muscles used for chewing may wear out halfway through a meal.
- Facial expressions become limited.
- Weak neck, arms, and legs.
- May waddle when walking.
- May be hard to hold the head erect.

*Contraindications*
Avoid working too hard or too long, which will exacerbate the condition. Alternate work with restorative, restful poses.

*Chakra Approach*
Balance 1 and 4. Assess all for the full picture.

*Ayurvedic Approach*
Balance Vata.

*Physiological Approach*
Alternate between work and rest. Use walls and supports. Focus on grounding and balancing Vata.

*Meridian Approach*
- Lung (if voice problems)
- Liver (if eye problems)
- Gall Bladder (if eye problems or neck problems)
- Triple Warmer (if eye problems)
- Bladder (if eye problems)
- Small Intestine (if eye problems)
- Heart (if speech problems)
- Spleen (if leg weakness)
- Stomach (if jaw problems)
Sample Class
Use any poses in the YTT and TPM that balances Vata.
- Pranayama – Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Pranayama - Kapalabhati
- Pranayama – Bhastrika
- Pranayama - Bhramari
- Pranayama: Viloma Krama Breath.
- Hasta Mudra 1 – pinkies touching
- Hasta Mudra 2 – ringer fingers touching
- Hasta Mudra 6 – all finger tips touching
- Adho Merudanda – fingers curled into palm with extended thumbs toward each other.
- Prithivi Mudra – the tips of the thumb and ring fingers together with the other fingers extended. Rest the back of the hands on the thighs.

Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus

Description
Type 1 DM is an autoimmune disease that destroys the beta cells of the pancreas that produce insulin and usually requires lifelong treatment with insulin medication.

Causes
- Family history of autoimmune disorder.
- Living far from the equator.
- Exposure to Epstein-Barr virus, coxsackievirus, mumps virus or cytomegalovirus.
- Linked to possibly early intake of cow’s milk.
- Linked to low vitamin D.
- Linked to intake of nitrates.
- Linked to introducing children to cereal earlier than 3 months.
- Linked to diet low Omega 3 in diet.

Symptoms
May include
- Excessive thirst, urination, and appetite.
- Weight loss (despite increased appetite)
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurred vision

Long-term Complications (all from www.mayoclinic.com):
- Heart and blood vessel disease, including coronary artery disease, angina, heart attack, stroke, narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis) and high blood pressure. In fact, about 65 percent of people who have diabetes die of some type of heart or blood vessel disease, according to the American Heart Association.
Nerve damage (neuropathy) leading to tingling, numbness, burning or pain that usually begins at the tips of the toes or fingers and gradually spreads upward. Poorly controlled blood sugar could cause you to eventually lose all sense of feeling in the affected limbs. Damage to the nerves that control digestion can cause problems with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation. For men, erectile dysfunction may be an issue.

Kidney damage (nephropathy) that can lead to kidney failure or irreversible end-stage kidney disease, requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Eye damage, which may include blindness, cataracts or glaucoma.

Foot damage due to poor healing from cuts or blisters which may lead to infection or amputation of the toe, foot or leg.

Skin and mouth conditions, such as bacterial and fungal infections.

Osteoporosis.

Pregnancy complications, including risk of miscarriage, stillbirth and birth defects for the baby the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis, diabetic eye problems (retinopathy), pregnancy-induced high blood pressure and preeclampsia for the mother.

Hearing problems.

**Contraindications**
Be careful doing yoga where the client may sustain injuries to her feet because those with diabetes have poor healing. Lack of healing of a wound can lead to infection and even amputation.

**Chakra Approach**
Balance Chakra 1, 5 and 7. Assess all the chakras for a full picture.

**Physiological Approach**
To reduce the need for insulin engage the client in an active practice that balances (reduces) kapha, brings energy into the upper chakras, and increases circulation all through the body.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Balance Kapha.

**Meridian Approach**
Gallbladder (eyes), Triple Warmer, Pericardium (eyes, heart pain), Kidney, Bladder, Heart (heart pain, thirst), Spleen, Stomach (eyes)

**Sample Class**
Incorporate poses from YTT and TPM that balance Kapha.
Pranayama - Bhastrika Breath
Pranayama – Right Nostril Breathing
Hasta Mudra #2 (Tips of ring fingers touching)
Hasta Mudra #3 (Tips of middle fingers touching)
Hasta Mudra #4 (Tips of index fingers touching)
Hasta Mudra #5 (Tips of thumbs touching)
Hasta Mudra #6 (All finger tips touching)

**Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**

*Description*
Autoimmune disorder in which the person experiences extreme fatigue that may worsen with physical or mental activity, but doesn't improve with rest.

*Causes*
- Depression
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)
- History of allergies
- Virus infection, such as Epstein-Barr virus or human herpes virus 6
- Dysfunction in the immune system
- Changes in the levels of hormones produced in the hypothalamus, pituitary glands or adrenal glands
- Mild, chronic low blood pressure (hypotension)
- An autoimmune process causing inflammation of certain nervous-system pathways
- A viral infection complicated by a dysfunctional immune response
- A low blood pressure disorder that triggers the fainting reflex

*Symptoms*
- Fatigue
- Loss of memory or concentration
- Sore throat
- Painful and mildly enlarged lymph nodes in your neck or armpits
- Unexplained muscle pain
- Pain that moves from one joint to another without swelling or redness
- Headache of a new type, pattern or severity
- Nonrestorative sleep
- Extreme exhaustion lasting more than 24 hours after physical or mental exercise

More atypical symptoms may include:
- Abdominal pain
- Allergies or sensitivities to foods, alcohol, odors, chemicals, medications or noise
- Bloating
- Chest pain
- Chronic cough
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness, balance problems or fainting
- Dry mouth
• Earache
• Irregular heartbeat
• Jaw pain
• Morning stiffness
• Nausea
• Chills and night sweats
• Psychological problems, such as depression, irritability, anxiety disorders and panic attacks
• Shortness of breath
• Tingling sensations
• Visual disturbances, such as blurring, sensitivity to light, eye pain and dry eyes
• Weight loss or gain

Contraindications
Do not overexert as this will exacerbate the condition.

Chakra Approach
Assess all to determine which are blocked as CFS is a disruption of multiple chakras.

Ayurvedic Approach
Balance Pitta and increase digestive fire with very gentle stretches and pranayama.

Physiological Approach
Much like the Ayurvedic approach – increase digestive fire but keep stretches gentle and non-taxing.

Meridian Approach
• Lung (if chest pain or lung problems)
• Liver (if depression)
• Gall Bladder
• Triple Warmer if Diarrhea
• Pericardium
• Kidney
• Bladder (if pain)
• Small Intestine
• Heart
• Spleen
• Stomach
• Large Intestine
**Sample Class**
- Table/Cat (YTT23)
- Reclining Supported Bound Angle (YTT 34 with cross bolsters behind back)
- Reclining Hero (TPM)
- Seated Spinal Twist (43)
- Sage Bharadvaj (YTT 44)
- Marichi Twist (YTT 46)
- Reclining Abdominal Twist (TPM)
- Leg Stretches up the Wall or Doorway Stretches (TPM)
- Seated Forward fold with bolster support on belly (YTT 69)
- Hasta Mudra 3 (middle fingers touching)
- Interlaced Mudra 3 (middle fingers interlaced)
- Merudanda Mudra (fingers curled into palms and thumbs up)
- Shivalingam Mudra (right fingers curled into palm sitting on top of cupped left hand – integrates prana, udana, and sema vayus).
- Pranayama - Kapalabhati Breath (TPM)
- Pranayama Breath - Bhastrika Breath (TPM)
- Pranayama – Surya Bhedi Breath (TPM)
- Pranayama – Agni Sara (TPM)
- Pranayama – Nauli Kriya (TPM)
- Pranayama - Nadi Shodana
- Pranayama – Ujjayi Breathing
- Pranayama – Viloma Krama Breath
- Supported Savasana (TPM)

**Addison’s Disease**

**Description**
- A disease in which the adrenal glands produce insufficient amounts of cortisol and aldosterone hormones.
- Occurs in all age groups and in both sexes.
- Can be life-threatening.

**Symptoms**
May develop slowly over several months with these symptoms:
- Muscle weakness and fatigue
- Weight loss and decreased appetite
- Darkening of your skin (hyper pigmentation)
- Low blood pressure, even fainting
- Salt craving
- Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)
- Nausea, diarrhea or vomiting
- Muscle or joint pains
- Irritability
- Depression
May also develop suddenly with acute adrenal failure with these symptoms:
- Pain in your lower back, abdomen or legs
- Severe vomiting and diarrhea, leading to dehydration
- Low blood pressure
- Loss of consciousness
- High potassium (hyperkalemia)

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 and 3. Assess for a full picture.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Balance Kapha.

**Physiological Approach**
Alternate between standing postures and inversions and engage in pranayama that brings energy into the solar plexus.

**Meridians Approach**
- Liver
- Gall Bladder
- Kidney
- Triple Warmer
- Spleen
- Stomach
- Lung

**Sample Class (In this order)**
- Sun Salutations
- Reverse Process with support of the wall (YTT 86)
- Separate Leg Head to Knee (YTT 72)
- Uddiyana Bandha (work up to 4 rounds of 27 – TPM)
- Shoulder Stand (YTT 84)
  - or Supported Shoulder Stand (TPM)
- Fish Pose (YTT 59)
- Pranayama – Agni Sara (TPM)
- Seated Spinal Twist (YTT 43)
- Camel (YTT 57) or
  - Supported Camel (TPM)
- Plough (YTT 85)
- Reclining Virasana (YTT 39) or
  - Supported Reclining Virasana
- Pranayama Kapalabhati for 1 Minute (TPM)
- Pranayama Chandranuloma Viloma for 27 rounds (TPM)
- Savasana (YTT 89)
Ankylosing Spondylitis

**Description**
- A chronic inflammatory disease that causing pain and inflammation of the joints between the vertebrae of the spine and the joints between the spine and pelvis (sacroiliac joints).
- May also cause inflammation and pain in other parts of your body as well.

**Symptoms**
- Chronic pain in your lower back and hips, especially in the morning and after periods of inactivity
- Stiffness in your lower back or hip area
- Symptoms may get worse, improve or completely stop at any point.
- The pain and stiffness, which usually begin gradually, may progress up your spine and to other joints.
- You may experience inflammation and pain where your tendons and ligaments attach to bones, in the joints between your ribs and spine, in the joints in your hips, shoulders, knees and feet, or in your eyes.

In advanced stages, these symptoms may develop:
- Restricted expansion of the chest
- Chronic stooping
- Stiff, inflexible spine
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Eye inflammation
- Bowel inflammation

**Contraindications**
Avoid too much exertion, which can exacerbate pain.

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 but assess all for a full picture. It is very likely that 4 will be involved too due to restricted chest expansion.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Balance Pitta during a flare-up. Otherwise, balance Vata.

**Physiological Approach**
Work on Spine flexibility through flowing spinal movements. Do pranayama and heart openers to keep the chest expanding. Use flowing movements that do not further inflame the joints.
**Meridian Approach**
- Large Intestine
- Stomach
- Spleen
- Bladder
- Kidney
- Triple Warmer
- Liver

**Sample Class**
- Vinyasa Warm-ups (YTT 7)
- Seated Warm-ups (YTT 7)
- Table Warm-ups (YTT 8)
- Standing Warm-ups (YTT 9)
- Kneeling Warm-ups (YTT 10)
- Supine Hand to Toe (YTT 22) or
- Leg Stretches Up the Wall (TPM) or
- Doorway Stretches (TPM)
- Knee to Chest (YTT 31)
- Twist Warm-Ups (YTT 42)
- Bridge (YTT 55 or TPM)
- Supine Crescent Moon (YTT 61)
- Head to Knee (YTT 68)
- Supported Inversion (TPM)
- Supported Savasana (TPM)
- Bhramari Pranayama (TPM)
- Nadi Sodhana Pranayama (TPM)
- Moorcha Pranayama (TPM)
- Sheetali Pranayama (TPM)
- Hasta Mudra 1 – pinkies touching
- Hasta Mudra 2 – ringer fingers touching
- Hasta Mudra 6 – all finger tips touching
- Adho Merudanda – fingers curled into palm with extended thumbs toward each other.
- Prithivi Mudra – the tips of the thumb and ring fingers together with the other fingers extended. Rest the back of the hands on the thighs.

**Guillain-Barre Syndrome**

**Description**
- An autoimmune disorder in which the immune system attacks the nerves.
- This causes weakness and numbness in the extremities that quickly spreads to paralyze the whole body.
- Affects only 1 or 2 people out of 100,000.
- Most people do recover completely with treatment.
**Cause**
Unknown but often preceded by an infectious illness such as a respiratory infection or the stomach flu.

**Symptoms**
- Usually begins with weakness, tingling or loss of sensation starting in your feet and legs and spreading to your upper body and arms.
- Prickling, "pins and needles" sensations in your fingers, toes or both
- Weakness or tingling sensations in your legs that spread to your upper body
- Unsteady walking or inability to walk
- Difficulty with eye movement, facial movement, speaking, chewing or swallowing
- Severe pain in your lower back
- Difficulty with bladder control or intestinal functions
- Very slow heart rate or low blood pressure
- Difficulty breathing
- Complete paralysis can occur within a few hours

**Contraindications**
Practicing too intensely or without the support of a wall or chair for steadiness.

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 at the very least. Assess all for a full picture. I could not locate one resource that linked this disorder to a specific chakra.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Balance Vata.

**Physiological Approach**
Move the patient's joints and attempt to get muscular engagement. Advance to more active independent movement as patient's function improves.

**Meridian Approach**
- Lung
- Large Intestine
- Stomach
- Spleen
- Small Intestine
- Bladder
- Kidney
- Pericardium
- Triple Warmer
- Gallbladder
- Liver
**Sample Class**
Use any poses in the YTT and TPM that balances Vata. However, depending on the level of paralysis, you may actually have to move the patient into position.
- Pranayama – Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Pranayama - Kapalabhati
- Pranayama – Bhastrika
- Pranayama - Bhramari
- Pranayama: Viloma Krama Breath.
- Hasta Mudra 1 – pinkies touching
- Hasta Mudra 2 – ringer fingers touching
- Hasta Mudra 6 – all finger tips touching
- Adho Merudanda – fingers curled into palm with extended thumbs toward each other.
- Prithivi Mudra – the tips of the thumb and ring fingers together with the other fingers extended. Rest the back of the hands on the thighs.

**Psoriasis**

**Description**
- A chronic skin condition causing cells to build up rapidly on the surface of the skin.
- This buildup forms thick silvery scales and dry read itchy patches that can be painful.
- Symptoms are intermittent, sometimes going into remission.
- It can be disabling when associated with arthritis.

**Symptoms**
- Red patches of skin covered with silvery scales
- Small scaling spots (commonly seen in children)
- Dry, cracked skin that may bleed
- Itching, burning or soreness
- Thickened, pitted or ridged nails
- Swollen and stiff joints

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 and 3. Assess all for the full picture.

**Physiological Approach**

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Focus on balancing Vata first, then Kapha. Detoxifying through pranayama. Avoid eating dairy products with honey, garlic, radishes, or fish. In fact, avoid eating salty and sour foods altogether, including fish, radishes, and sesame seeds. Avoid sleeping in the afternoon.
**Sample Class**

Balance Vata first with poses from YTT and TPM. Incorporate the following to detoxify the body.

- Pranayama – Bhastrika
- Pranayama – Kapalabhati
- Pranayama – Bahya
- Pranayama – Anulom Vilom
- Pranayama – Agnisaar
- Pranayama – Bhramari
- Chanting – Om
- Restorative Inversion
- Supported Savasana

**Food Allergies**

**Description**

An autoimmune reaction in which the body’s immune system reacts to a protein (antigen) in food and produces antibodies to these proteins that cause symptoms in the body.

**Symptoms**

- Vomiting or nausea
- Frequent indigestion and heartburn
- Swelling of the lips and face
- Hives or irritated, itchy, splotchy, or swelling skin
- Stiffness, pain, or swelling in the joints
- Tight feeling in the chest
- Trouble breathing
- Swollen tongue
- Nasal congestion
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Cramping for feelings of faintness
- Hiccupping

**Physiological Approach**

Strengthen and tone Semana Vayu (solar plexus, 3rd chakra) through focused pranayama, twists, forward folds, and prone back bends. Samana Vayu unites upward flowing energy (pranavayu) and downward-flowing energy (apanavayu) at the navel center “to awaken and enhance the prana of transformation... Semana Vayu is a concentrating, absorbing, and consolidating force. Its main function is assimilation of prana in all its forms—like a power station, samana collects energy absorbed through breath, food, sensory perception, and mental experiences and processes it to empower all aspects of life. (Sandra Anderson, [http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/yogaplus/article.aspx?id=3654](http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/yogaplus/article.aspx?id=3654)).
**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 and 3. Balance 4 if respiratory symptoms are present. Assess all chakras for the full picture.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
Pittas are allergic to spicy, hot, and fermented foods as well as sour fruits, tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplant. Vatas are allergic to popcorn, beans, and raw vegetables. Kaphas are allergic to dairy products and cold beverages. Pittas should eat ½ cup cooked apple pulp twice a day at least an hour before meals to mitigate food allergy. Kapha and Vata should sip licorice tea throughout the day. Those with high blood pressure should drink cinnamon clove tea instead. For recipes and guidelines see (http://www.dhyansanjivani.org/food_allergies.asp).

Follow the plan to strengthen Agni presented under irritable bowel syndrome.

**Meridian Approach**
- Liver
- Pericardium
- Kidney (if diarrhea)
- Stomach (if diarrhea)
- Small Intestine (if swelling of the lips and face)
- Large Intestine (tight feeling in the chest or congestion)
- Lung (if trouble breathing or edema in the face or hives)
- Spleen (if diarrhea or constipation)

**Sample Class**
- Table/Cat (YTT23)
- Sunbird (YTT 24)
- Plank (YTT 25)
- Downward Dog (YTT 26)
- Chair Pose (YTT 27)
- Rotated Lateral Angle (20)
- Seated Boat (YTT 29)
- Supine Plank (YTT 30)
- Reclining Supported Bound Angle (YTT 34 with cross bolsters behind back)
- Reclining Hero (TPM)
- Seated Spinal Twist (43)
- Sage Bharadvaj (YTT 44)
- Marichi Twist (YTT 46)
- Reclining Abdominal Twist (TPM)
- Functional Abdominal Strengtheners (TPM)
- Cobra (YTT 51)
- Prone Boat (YTT 53)
- Bow (YTT 54)
- Seated Forward fold with bolster support on belly (YTT 69)
• Hasta Mudra 3 (middle fingers touching)
• Interlaced Mudra 3 (middle fingers interlaced)
• Merudanda Mudra (fingers curled into palms and thumbs up)
• Shivalingam Mudra (right fingers curled into palm sitting on top of cupped left hand – integrates prana, udana, and semana vayus).
• Pranayama - Kapalabhati Breath (TPM)
• Pranayama Breath - Bhastrika Breath (TPM)
• Pranayama – Surya Bhedi Breath (TPM)
• Pranayama – Agni Sara (TPM)
• Pranayama – Nauli Kriya (TPM)
• Pranayama - Nadi Shodana
• Pranayama – Ujjayi Breathing
• Pranayama – Viloma Krama Breath
• Supported Savasana (TPM)

LOW IMMUNITY DISORDERS

Description
• Occurs when the immune system, which normally attacks and protects the body from foreign and potentially harmful substances, fails to do so.
• This allows foreign substances to wreak havoc in the body, giving rise to opportunistic infections and diseases.

Symptoms
• Frequent Colds
• Frequent Flu
• Frequent Cold Sores
• Frequent Genital Herpes Sores
• Swollen Lymph Glands
• Cancer

Causes
• Nutrient deficiency from eating too much sugar or drinking too much alcohol.
• Allergens
• Cancer
• HIV/AIDS
• Inflammatory Bowel Disease
• Low White Blood Cell count (Neutropenia)
• Transplant surgery.
• Using anti-rejection drugs
• Low Stomach Acidity
• Aging
• Being pregnant
• Being a child
• Chemotherapy or steroid therapy
**Mind-Body Connection**
According to Shapiro issues with under-functioning of the thymus gland may be related to feelings of depression, loneliness, grief, or sadness or may be related to a lack of a loving support system. Issues with the lymph glands or spleen may be related to harboring old, stagnant thoughts and feelings, leading to irritability and negativity.

**Mind-Body Approach**
Focus on creating a joyful mind state, connection, releasing grief, sadness, outdated beliefs, and negativity. AfFORMations may include:
- Why do I cultivate joy in my life?
- Why do I feel connected to others?
- Why do I gladly release my grief (sadness, old beliefs, negativity) that no longer serves me?

**Contraindications**
Do not overexert.

**Physiological Approach**
Grounding, deep twists, heart openers, inversions. Stimulate the thymus gland to increase immunity and achieve deep relaxation to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system.

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 and 4. Assess all for the full picture.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
No one imbalance is responsible for low immunity. This is a case where Ayurvedic diagnostics are required. These diagnostics will be address later on in the course.

**Meridian Approach**
- Liver (if allergies or if have been on many medications)
- Triple Warmer (if colds or cough)
- Pericardium (if cough or fever or swollen lymph glands)
- Bladder (if genital disorders)
- Small Intestine (if sore throat)
- Heart (if dry cough)
- Stomach (if cough or genital problems)
- Large Intestine (if coughing or congestion or sore throat)
- Lung (if bronchitis, coughing, lung problems)
**Sample Class**

- Elegant Mansion (TPM)
- Thymus Reset (TPM)
- Standing Forward Fold with head supported (YTT 73)
- Fierce Twist (TPM)
- Wall Splits (TPM)
- Bound Bridge (TPM)
- Bridge Supported on a Block (TPM)
- Childs Pose with head supported
- Downward Facing Dog with head supported (YTT 26)
- Separate Leg Forward Fold with head supported (YTT 2)
- Head Stand (YTT 87)
- Plough (YTT 85)
- Knee Down Twist (YTT 47D)
- Chanting 4th Chakra Bij Mantra “Yum”
- Chant 4th Chakra Vowel Sound “Ay”
- Pranayama – Kapalabhati
- Pranayama - Ujjayi
- Hasta Mudra #4 (Index fingers touching)
- Haste Mudra #6 (Tips of all fingers touching)
- Madhyama Sharira Mudra (Thumbs pressing into the center of the armpits, arms parallel to ground; elbows slightly forward with the shoulder blades pulled into the back).
- Ganesha Mudra (all fingers interlaced with the back of the left hand turned toward the chest; pull the fingers into each other on exhale; release the pressure on inhale).

**HIV/AIDS**

**Description**

- “AIDS is a chronic, potentially life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). By damaging your immune system, HIV interferes with your body’s ability to fight the organisms that cause disease.
- HIV is a sexually transmitted disease. It can also be spread by contact with infected blood, or from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth or breast-feeding. It can take years before HIV weakens your immune system to the point that you have AIDS.
- There’s no cure for HIV/AIDS, but there are medications that can dramatically slow the progression of the disease. These drugs have reduced AIDS deaths in many developed nations. But HIV continues to decimate populations in Africa, Haiti and parts of Asia (www.mayoclinic.com)."
**How HIV progresses to AIDS**

As HIV destroys more and more CD4 cells that help your body fight disease, your immune system continues to weaken. It may take years to progress to having AIDS. To be diagnosed with AIDS, you must have a CD4 count under 200 or experience an opportunistic illness such as:

- Pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia
- Cytomegalovirus
- Tuberculosis
- Toxoplasmosis
- Cryptosporidiosis

**Symptoms**

Within the first few weeks

- Even though there may be no signs or symptoms at all, it is still possible to transmit the virus to others.
- May develop flu-like symptoms two to four weeks after becoming infected including fever, headache, sore throat, swollen lymph glands, and rash.

Years later

- May still have no symptoms
- Or may develop mild infections or chronic symptoms such as swollen lymph nodes, diarrhea, weight loss, fever, cough and shortness of breath, soaking night sweats, shaking chills or fever, persistent white spots or lesions on the tongue, headaches, persistent fatigue, blurred or distorted vision, skin rashes or bumps.
- Without treatment for HIV infection may develop full-blown AIDS in 10 years.

**Mind-Body Connection**

According to Shapiro, AIDS carriers tend to feel a sense of victimization and also tend to suppress their emotions. Indeed AIDS tends to be most common among those least respected in our society – the poor, drug users, prostitutes, and gays.

**Mind-Body Approach**

Issues of depression, hopelessness, self-hatred, self-abuse, anger, fear, and defenselessness should be addressed. AfFORMations may include:

- Why do I deserve unconditional love?
- Why is unconditional love available to me?
- Why do I give myself unconditional love?
- Why is it safe to release my anger?
- Why am I able to release my fear now?
- Why am I no longer defenseless?
**Contraindications**
Those with high blood pressure, heart problems, detached retina, or ear problems should not do full inversions. No overexertion, as this weakens the immune system further. Avoid heating if a red rash is apparent. Those who have had a bout of pneumocystis should probably avoid unsupported backbends and staff pose as they may be too stressful for the lung tissue.

**Physiological Approach**
Grounding, deep twists, heart openers, inversions. Stimulate the thymus gland to increase immunity and achieve deep relaxation to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system.

**Chakra Approach**
Balance 1 and 4. Assess all for the full picture.

**Ayurvedic Approach**
No one imbalance is responsible for low immunity. This is a case where Ayurvedic diagnostics are required. These diagnostics will be address later on in the course.

**Meridian Approach**
- Lung (if cough or shortness of breath, or persistent white spots or lesions on the tongue)
- Large Intestine (if headaches, coughing)
- Spleen (if persistent fatigue, diarrhea)
- Heart (if dry cough, headaches, extreme sweating, depression)
- Bladder (if headaches or blurred or distorted vision)
- Kidney (if persistent fatigue, fear, sensitivity to cold)
- Pericardium (if cold and fever, blurred vision, headache, skin problems, swollen lymph nodes)
- Triple Warmer (if chills, cough, diarrhea, eye problems, headaches, fever)
- Gall Bladder (if headaches, eye problems)
- Liver (if depression, anger, eye problems)
- Small Intestine (if blurred or distorted vision)

**Cancer**

**Description**
- Diseases in which abnormal cells divide uncontrollably and invade and destroy normal body tissue.
- Can spread throughout the body.
- 2nd leading cause of death in the US.
**Symptoms**
Depending on the body part affected
- Fatigue
- Lump or thickening that can be felt under the skin
- Weight changes, including unintended loss or gain
- Skin changes, such as yellowing, darkening or redness of the skin, sores that won’t heal, or changes to existing moles
- Changes in bowel or bladder habits
- Persistent cough
- Difficulty swallowing
- Hoarseness
- Persistent indigestion or discomfort after eating
- Persistent, unexplained muscle or joint pain

**Contraindications**
Avoid practicing too intensely which can weaken the immune system further.

**Mind-Body Connection**
According to Shapiro pertinent issues include an accumulation of stress that leads to feelings of inner alienation. This may include an emotional shock such as death of a loved one, divorce, or job loss. Any of these circumstances can undermine one’s sense of purpose and identity. Buried feelings, especially about two years before the onset of symptoms appear the most pertinent. Common personality traits of those prone to cancer are lack of self-care to the point isolation from one’s own feelings, helping others to the detriment of oneself, the inability to express negative feelings, especially anger, fear, shame, resentment, or guilt. Powerlessness, worthlessness, and hopelessness are also common traits.

**Mind-Body Approach**
Incorporate awareness and acknowledgement of emotions, self-care, connecting to her feelings, putting her basic needs first, finding her voice and expressing it, journaling on anger, fear, shame, resentment, or guilt and releasing these emotions, self-empowerment, self-worth, and hope. AfFORMations may include:

- Why is my purpose clear to me?
- Why do I care for myself so well?
- Why is it safe to feel my feelings?
- Why is it easy for me to recognize and acknowledge my feelings?
- Why do I release my anger (fear, shame, resentment, guilt)?
- Why do I feel powerful?
- Why do I have all the power I need?
- Why am I worthy of being here?
- What is my note in the symphony of life?
- Why am I hopeful?
Contraindications
Avoid overexertion.

Physiological Approach
Gently stimulate immune system through supportive restorative poses and inversion.

Chakra Approach
Balance 1 and 4. Assess the chakras to see the full picture. The other chakras involved will depend on where the cancer is in the body.

Ayurvedic Approach
No one imbalance is responsible for low immunity. This is a case where Ayurvedic diagnostics are required. These diagnostics will be address later on in the course.

Meridian Approach
- Lung (if cough)
- Large Intestine (if coughing)
- Stomach (if coughing or fatigue, leg pain)
- Spleen (if persistent fatigue)
- Heart (if dry cough)
- Kidney (if persistent fatigue)
- Bladder (if urinary problems)
- Kidney (if urinary problems)
- Pericardium (if cough)
- Triple Warmer (if cough)
- Liver (if urinary problems)

Sample Class for AIDS and Cancer

Sample Class
- Supported Bound Angle
- Virasana
- Supported Virasana
- Supported Forward Fold
- Inverted Staff Pose
- Head Stand
- Supported Shoulder Stand
- Supported Plough
- Full Bridge
- Supported Legs Up the Wall
- Supported Savasana
- Pranayama – Kapalabhati
- Pranayama - Ujjayi
- Hasta Mudra #4 (Index fingers touching)
- Haste Mudra #6 (Tips of all fingers touching)
• Madhyama Sharira Mudra (Thumbs pressing into the center of the armpits, arms parallel to ground; elbows slightly forward with the shoulder blades pulled into the back).
• Ganesha Mudra (all fingers interlaced with the back of the left hand turned toward the chest; pull the fingers into each other on exhale; release the pressure on inhale).

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