

MINDFUL MOTION PROGRAM FAQs: Gentle Yoga and Pain Science based treatment for Persistent Pain

CONTENTS (Please click on the headings below for additional information)

[Why did we create this program?](#)

- ❖ To offer a novel context for pain recovery that address barriers in traditional pain care

[What can I expect and what does it include?](#)

- ❖ Gentle yoga/movement, breathing techniques, mindfulness, meditation, relaxation, embodied pain science, written activities, and group support

[Who would benefit from the Mindful Motion Program?](#)

- ❖ Anyone with persistent pain

[What is yoga?](#)

- ❖ A set of mind-body practices that support well-being

[How can a yoga-based intervention assist with pain?](#)

- ❖ Yoga can reduce pain and suffering, as well as improve functioning

[What makes Pain Science Education important for this program?](#)

- ❖ It is an evidence-based treatment for persistent pain, and can help to change your understanding of why you have ongoing pain

[Is the Program Evidence-based?](#)

- ❖ The elements of this program are backed by science, and are designed to be complementary to your other treatment

[Who will your facilitators be and what are their values?](#)

- ❖ Sarah Creamer (Pain Physiotherapist) and Hannah Tregoea (Health Psychologist)

[What if I can't get up and down from the floor?](#)

- ❖ We will have props available for everyone to support all functional capacities

[Is it a trauma sensitive program?](#)

- ❖ Yes

[Why is there a psychologist in a program for physical pain?](#)

- ❖ To offer a holistic program that addresses the broad impacts of pain

[Is yoga or mindfulness religious?](#)

- ❖ No, not inherently

[How much is the course?](#)

- ❖ The cost will vary depending on your funding model

[References](#)

Why did we create this program?

We have both worked in the persistent pain field across Australia and internationally for over a decade. We have experienced the joy of witnessing many people return to meaningful activities and reduce pain but have also noticed that there are many others who describe feeling stuck, on a medical/health professional roundabout, with limited long lasting change. We wanted to create an innovative and science based program that addresses some of the barriers to change:

1. **Context:** Traditional pain management programs are conducted in hospital or medical settings. Research shows that *context is important* in the production of pain. If you consider what you associate with hospitals/medical environments, for many people it is illness, pain, and unpleasant emotions. Perhaps for some, not the best context for recovery. We wanted to take the treatment out of the medical setting and into the wellness focused context of a yoga studio. We wanted the physical environment (e.g., sights, sounds, smells) to communicate to your system that you are safe, and able to be healthy again.
2. **Embodied learning:** Many people learn best through *practical experience*: doing rather than hearing or reading. However, pain management programs typically deliver education in a didactic, seated manner. The Mindful Motion Program aims to deliver modern pain science, in a practical and embodied manner so that participants can see their experience change in real time, reinforcing motivation to continue and creating a more positive association with movement.
3. **Accessibility:** We feel strongly that yoga can be highly beneficial for persistent pain. Unfortunately, we have heard many stories from people with pain who have tried regular *yoga classes* and have either experienced a pain flare up, or felt discouraged because they could not keep up with the pace or movements suggested. These experiences have left people feeling worse than when they started, and they have subsequently given up yoga. We wanted to create a yoga based program, that is evidence informed, pain aware and inclusive to all abilities so that people can experience the benefits of yoga.
4. **Collaboration:** Finally, many people living with pain have multiple health professionals working separately, who can at times, provide conflicting advice. This is often confusing and can negatively impact recovery. We are committed to offering a holistic, consistent approach, grounded in science, that blends their expertise in pain physiotherapy and health psychology.

This program aims to offer a different context for your recovery, using yoga as a foundation to provide evidence-based pain treatment.

What can I expect and what does it include?

This program is designed to be highly inclusive, and you can benefit, regardless of your current functional capacity. Each class will be carefully planned to create an environment that feels safe, supportive and welcoming.

You can expect a combination of:

- Gentle physical movement
- Breathing techniques
- Mindfulness skills (including body awareness practice)
- Relaxation practice
- Guided meditation
- Pain science nuggets
- Written activities & discussion

Key Details:

- Duration: 8 weeks, 2x 1.5hr classes per week (1 physiotherapy led, 1 psychology led)
- Tuesday 14:30-1600 and Friday 14:30 to 1600
- The program is a closed session, meaning the same people will be in each class each week. The maximum number of clients in a program will be 10
- Workbook/journal will be included, and participants will be encouraged and supported to complete home practices such as meditations, breathing techniques and movement therapy
- Morning Light Studio will supply all the necessary equipment for your class, though if you have a personal preference for your yoga mat or any other pieces of equipment, feel free to bring these along.

Who would benefit from the Mindful Motion Program?

This program is designed to be beneficial and accessible to the majority of people experiencing persistent pain (pain that continues past a 3-month period). People with all types, frequency, intensity and duration of pain are welcome to attend, and the facilitators will meet you where you are in your recovery and support you in this next phase of your journey.

The course would benefit people:

- seeking complementary therapy, in conjunction with their current treatment regime. Sarah and Hannah work closely with pain specialists and GPs on the Sunshine Coast, and can collaborate with your care team to provide the information they need to continue and enhance your current treatment.

- that have completed a hospital-based pain management program and would like ongoing support to implement and expand on their learned skills.
- at the end of their conventional medical journey, and are seeking an alternative therapy in a safe, knowledgeable space.
- that may want to initiate their recovery journey in a yoga-based care model, or who are curious to try a conservative style of therapy first (e.g., instead of or before more invasive or higher risk procedures).

There are no physical requirements to attend the course. We simply ask for a GP/specialist clearance and a willingness to explore new strategies to actively target your pain.

What is yoga?

Yoga, a word derived from the Sanskrit term for 'unite', is an ancient philosophy focused on creating harmony within the mind and body, rather than viewing them as separate entities. Yoga can have a positive impact on the lived pain experience through a range of techniques that connect us to states of calm, equanimity, and awareness. Yoga is a combination of physical postures (asanas), breathwork (pranayama), mindfulness and meditation, social connectedness, and philosophical inquiry (patience, acceptance and compassion), all working together to promote overall well-being. Yoga is a process of self-awareness and reflection. While it may appear that yoga is a group activity, the journey itself is an individual one.

How can a yoga-based intervention assist with pain?

Mind-body therapies such as yoga, have become more widely accepted in western medicine. Yoga can be highly beneficial for treating persistent pain, and its concepts align closely with those of modern pain science. The overall aim of the program is to down-regulate pain system hypersensitivity through experiential learning. More specifically, you'll learn to:

- **Enjoy Movement:**
 - Rediscover enjoyment and freedom of movement by reducing bodily protection.
- **Change your Pain Experience:**
 - Understand how to influence your pain experience through simple and effective practices that you can apply independently.
 - Experience impermanence and bioplasticity - pain can and does change.

- **Body Awareness:**
 - Learn body awareness cues through interoception for enhancing attention to your own needs.
- **Community & Support:**
 - Be part of a supportive community.
- **Expand Knowledge:**
 - Expand on a purely structural understanding of pain, engaging with a more evidence-based, mind-body explanation for pain.
 - Explore pain science through embodied experience.
- **Self-regulation:**
 - Learn to regulate a busy mind, unpleasant emotions and physiological responses to pain to enhance overall wellbeing.

What makes Pain Science Education important for this program?

The Neuro Orthopaedic Institute (Noigroup), a well-respected international leader in delivering pain science education, summarises that:

“Knowledge and movement are the greatest pain, stress, and disability liberators.”

Research has shown that people can enjoy a large reduction in pain, if they can change their understanding of pain. However, many people struggle to do so in traditional pain education settings (e.g., in a seated didactic format in a medical or hospital setting). Experts like the Noigroup agree that there is a need for innovative and enhanced models for pain care, to improve outcomes for people with pain.

This program is designed to meet this need, as it incorporates pain science education in a practical and experiential manner, within the context of yoga.

See [Pain Facts | Pain Revolution](#) for the essential pain facts (that inform this program) that have helped other people with pain recover.

Is the Program Evidence-based?

The evidence base for the positive effects of yoga have grown significantly in the last 20 years. Current research shows that yoga can be helpful for people living with pain in terms of improving what they can do (function), reducing pain levels and general wellbeing^{1-4,6}. Most evidence is for persistent back pain, however, benefits have also been shown for fibromyalgia, arthritis, headache/migraine, IBS, period pain, and carpal tunnel syndrome^{1-4,5,6}. Yoga has also been shown to be beneficial as a complementary therapy for psychological conditions such as PTSD, depression and anxiety^{7,8,9,10}. Yoga is now widely accepted as a helpful, complementary part of pain care, alongside care from your pain-informed treatment team (e.g., physiotherapist, GP, pain specialist, psychologist, exercise physiologist, occupational therapist). See [Yoga and Pain - Pain Management - painHEALTH](#) for a summary of evidence for yoga for pain.

The Mindful Motion Program also integrates science backed treatments for pain, including Cognitive Functional Therapy (CFT) and third wave cognitive and behavioural therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Evidence-based treatment for pain includes key elements such as interdisciplinary care (e.g., physiotherapy and psychology), which aims to address biological, psychological, and social factors that can contribute to pain, and modern pain science education. These key elements are delivered here in one package rather than accessing these individual aspects separately.

Who will your facilitators be and what are their values?

Hannah Tregea (Health psychologist) and Sarah Creamer (Pain physiotherapist) each have over ten years' experience working clinically with clients experiencing persistent pain, in individual and group based settings. They have both completed additional qualifications in yoga teaching.

As a pain physiotherapist, Sarah has an array of skills to assist clients in achieving their functional goals, and uses movement re-education, graded activity prescription, addressing fear avoidant behaviours, pain education, graded motor imagery and other pain therapy tools to support her clients. Sarah also values an integrated team approach to pain therapy, appreciating both the psychological and physical components of a pain experience. She recognises that each client will be in a different place on their pain journey and collaboratively tailors her support to meet them where they are.

Hannah is passionate about the connection between the mind and body. She enjoys working alongside people as they build on their strengths and navigate unique challenges skillfully. She draws from evidence-based psychological therapies, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Mindfulness and

Meditation based approaches. Hannah has a rich understanding of pain science that she uses to help clients to make sense of their pain, while also focusing on developing practical tools with clients to deal with and reduce pain and move toward a fulfilling and purposeful life.

What if I can't get up and down from the floor?

All participants will be provided the same props to support you with choosing options that best suit your needs. There will be Pilates blocks that provide an option for people to sit on if this is more accessible for you. Your needs will also be discussed in the individual assessment to ensure this program is suitable to you.

Yoga is not so much about the physical position you are in; it is more about your relationship to your experience.

Is it a trauma sensitive program?

Yes, this program is trauma sensitive and appropriate for anyone experiencing the range of psychological, emotional, and social impacts of pain.

Why is there a psychologist in a program for physical pain?

Pain is not just a physical experience. It impacts all areas of life, such as your relationships, the way you think about yourself and others, your sleep, your general mood, stress and worry. Psychologists that work with people in pain focus on methods of dealing with and improving the varied impacts of pain on your life, as well as psychologically based techniques to assist with the physical experience of pain. The research indicates that the best evidence for improving both pain and function, is through targeting the psychosocial impacts of pain, rather than just focusing on the physical domain.

Is yoga or mindfulness religious?

Neither yoga nor mindfulness are inherently religious. They are both widely practiced as a physical and mental discipline, rather than a religious practice. Both are fully adaptable to the personal beliefs of participants and can be practiced by people of all faiths, or none. Yoga and mindfulness are widely practiced in a secular context and have been shown to be effective tools for pain management without requiring religious or spiritual belief systems.

How much is the course?

INCLUSIONS	COSTS
INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT <i>60-minute video telehealth physiotherapy and psychology joint assessment for review of current pain approach, recommendations, and assessment of suitability for program</i>	\$290*
SMALL GROUP PROGRAM (maximum 10 ppl) <i>16 x 90-minute group sessions 8 x physiotherapy led; 8 x psychology led. Includes: Clinical report to treatment team</i>	\$1,220*
INDIVIDUAL REVIEW (optional) <i>60-minute interdisciplinary or single discipline follow up appointment post program (optional)</i>	\$210*
<p><i>*Rebates may apply if eligible under:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>GP Enhanced Primary Care Plan (assessment and review only); referral required</i> ● <i>GP Mental Health Treatment Plan (assessment, review and group psychology sessions); referral required</i> ● <i>3rd party funding (e.g., DVA, Workcover, NDIS).</i> ● <i>Private health funds (please check with your health fund if you are eligible for the codes below):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Physiotherapy - individual initial and subsequent - 500, 505/506 and group/class- 560/561</i> ❖ <i>Psychology- Individual initial (100) and subsequent (200); and/or group psychology (400)</i> <p><i>If you would like more information on medicare plans, please discuss with your GP. We are happy to assist you with further information if needed.</i></p>	

References

1. Bussing, A., Ostermann, T., Ludtke, R., & Michalsen, A. (2012). Effects of yoga interventions on pain and pain-associated disability: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of Pain: Official Journal of the American Pain Society*, 13(1), 1-9.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
2. Cramer, H., Lauche, R., Haller, H., & Dobos, G. (2013). A systematic review and meta-analysis of yoga for low back pain. *The Clinical Journal of Pain*, 29(5), 450-460.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
3. Cramer, H., Ward, L., Saper, R., Fishbein, D., Dobos, G., & Lauche, R. (2015). The safety of yoga: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 182(4), 281-293.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
4. Hassed, C. (2013). Mind-body therapies—use in chronic pain management. *Australian Family Physician*, 42(3), 112-117.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23529519>
5. Pearson, N., Prosko, S., Sullivan, M., & Taylor, M. J. (2020). White paper: Yoga therapy and pain—How yoga therapy serves in comprehensive integrative pain management, and how it can do more. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, 30(1), 117-133. <https://doi.org/10.17761/ijyt.2020.117-133>
6. Wren, A. A., Wright, M. A., Carson, J. W., & Keefe, F. J. (2011). Yoga for persistent pain: New findings and directions for an ancient practice. *Pain*, 152(3), 477-480.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
7. Brinsley et al., 2020. Effects of yoga on depressive symptoms in people with mental disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. 55:992–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2019-101242>
8. Yufei et al., 2023. Effectiveness of yoga for major depressive disorder: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. Volume 14.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1138205>
9. Gallegos et al., 2017. Meditation and yoga for posttraumatic stress disorder: A meta-analytic review of randomized controlled trials. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 58:115-124. DOI: [10.1016/j.cpr.2017.10.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.10.004)
10. Chawla et al., 2023, The Future of Yoga for Mental Health Care. *International Journal of Yoga*, 10; 16 (1); 38-41 doi: [10.4103/ijoy.ijoy_25_23](https://doi.org/10.4103/ijoy.ijoy_25_23)