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Health & Fitness

Healing Yoga for Neck & Shoulder Pain: Easy and Effective Practices for Releasing Tension & Relieving Pain

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According to Philadelphia's Spine Research Lab, neck pain comprises thirty percent of all chronic pain syndromes. With increased daily use of computer technology, back and neck issues are on the rise, though neck pain remains largely unstudied. Carol Krucoff, RYT, has written a user-friendly manual for anyone yearning to understand chronic neck and shoulder pain.

Most people are not familiar with the more subtle practices of yoga that lend themselves to therapeutic application. Yoga allows for physical release and strengthening while simultaneously soothing the nerves and calming the mind. It is particularly beneficial for chronic illnesses that aren't as easily conquered with Western medical protocols.

Yoga as therapy takes a holistic approach to chronic pain, addressing lifestyle, posture, and body mechanics. As the student becomes more aware of the body and how to communicate with it through the introspection techniques of yoga, she can learn to not only manage symptoms, but get to the root causes and disrupt the cycle of pain.

Krucoff presents a concise anatomical study, easily understood by the layperson. She explores the role of posture and the impact of stress; both have great impact on the neck and shoulder region, including related areas such as the jaw. A series of practice poses with detailed descriptions are offered to help relieve neck and shoulder pain. Illustrations are simple and highly understandable. A five-step plan for recognizing habitual patterns of tension, along with a bit of yoga philosophy's perspective on pain and how to use this information are among the book's valuable offerings. The final chapter covers self-care strategies to maintain well-being and a more pain-free relationship with neck and shoulders. Although other yoga therapy books on this topic present most of the same poses, Krucoff's book offers a comfortable format.

The author knows what she is writing about: she has studied with some of the notable teachers of the day, is an experienced teacher of yoga, and works as a yoga therapist with Duke

Integrative Medicine. Krucoff's previous career as a *Washington Post* journalist yielded not only writing skill—the book features a graceful balance of detail and simplicity—but personal experience with intense neck pain, which was predominately remedied by yoga.

This manual is ideal for anyone struggling with chronic neck pain, offering gentle movements that promote awareness and healing for this aggravating condition. Prior experience with yoga, although helpful, would not be necessary for beginning this self-care series. The book is also a resource for yoga teachers, beginning students of yoga therapy, or for healthcare practitioners to suggest to patients.

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