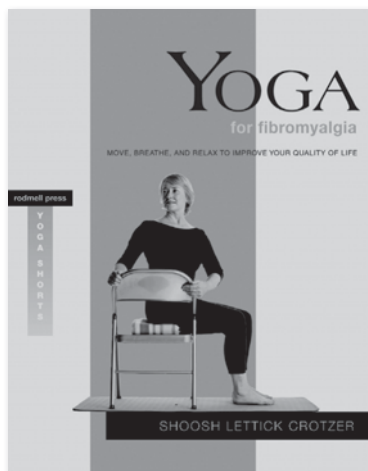


but they are not. They are integrated principles applied to individuals with a variety of concerns and aspirations. There are so many issues that come up in clinical situations, and the therapist simply has to be able to adapt to many different unforeseen situations on the spot.

That said, this is a well-developed and uniquely tested program that can be taught and practiced in many situations. It has the potential to relieve the suffering and improve the well-being of literally millions of people through the unique methods of movement, breath, and awareness. As Rothenberg says in her booklet, “Yoga works from the inside out. By slowing movement down, deepening the breath, and consciously using the breath to link movement with breath, we begin to dismantle many of the tightly woven patterns of contraction that created the imbalance in the first place.”

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Shoosh Lettick Crotzler. *Yoga for Fibromyalgia: Move, Breathe, and Relax to Improve Your Quality of Life.* Rodmell Press, 2008. Paperback, 128 pages. \$14.95. Reviewed by Judi Bar, E-RYT.

I had the distinct pleasure to review Shoosh Lettick Crotzler's book *Yoga For Fibromyalgia*. As a Yoga

therapist, I am always looking for other therapists' opinions on how they handle a particular challenge, and I appreciated this opportunity to read her book.

In Part 1, “Fibro-myalgia and Yoga,” Crotzler gives a brief description of fibromyalgia and how Yoga may benefit people with fibromyalgia. She also offers guidelines for practice, starting with the important reminder that “you are responsible for your own body.” Crotzler describes some ideas that will particularly help the new Yoga student. For example, she explains the difference between a tight muscle and a tense one, and why it's important to relax a tense muscle before stretching it.

Part 2, “Yoga Poses for Fibromyalgia,” clearly presents 26 poses. The order of the postures presented builds nicely, as in a Yoga class. Crotzler lists the physical benefits of each pose, along with how the posture supports the breath and relaxation. The posture is described just as if you were lis-

tening to your favorite teacher guide you through the pose. Crotzler gives modifications for the pose (for instance, what to do if you can't get down on the floor that day). She also describes the role of the breath in the posture.

Crotzler's years of experience in teaching students with special needs shows in each description of the pose and breath. The instruction for each pose includes “Practice with Care,” which describes any contraindications, as well as instructions for the use of props. Throughout the book, Crotzler advises caution whenever there is doubt or pain. Her guidance is quite beneficial for the new Yoga student, who may not be seeing a Yoga therapist. With comments like, “Rest until you feel ready to repeat on the other side,” the gentleness comes right out of the page to you.

The harder poses for students with challenges would be cobra and downward-facing dog, and Crotzler provides modifications for these poses after the instructions and photos for the traditional versions. I was glad to see the adapted versions, but perhaps it would have been better to put the easier version first, to develop confidence and comfort.

Crotzler's photos are done well, especially with regard to alignment and use of props. Each photo accurately portrays the props or modifications that a typical fibromyalgic student would need to support him or herself comfortably in the pose. The model in the photos has fibromyalgia and practices Yoga, which makes the presentation even more authentic.

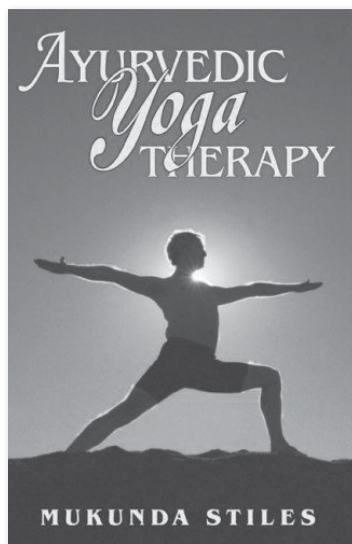
Part 3, “Practicing Yoga for Fibromyalgia,” answers many of the questions that one might have about Yoga and how to practice. The section includes descriptions of eight sequences that Crotzler created, including four for pain relief, one for the healing breath, one to improve sleep and reduce fatigue, and three for maintaining general flexibility. The postures are all taken from the 26 postures in the prior section. This is a very handy feature of the book for both the student and Yoga therapist.

The book concludes with Part 4, a concise and helpful section called “Living With Fibromyalgia.” This section provides basic information about the importance of sleep, nutrition, exercise, movement in daily life, and psychological well-being. This section presents Yogic principles in terms that are easy, gentle, supporting, and inviting to the reader.

This book is a wonderful resource and tool for those who have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. The care that Crotzler has put into this book, and her many years of experience with special needs students, is evident. It is easy to read, user-friendly, and presented in a safe way. It is also a valuable tool for newer Yoga therapists to use as a reference to familiarize themselves with the challenges of assisting students with fibromyalgia. I am glad to have it in my library,

and would suggest that all teachers interested in expanding their knowledge base pick up a copy for themselves.

Judi Bar, E-RYT, is a Yoga therapist and Reiki Master specializing in chronic pain. She is the director of HeartLight Yoga in Cleveland, Ohio, and the coordinator of the Yoga programs for the Cleveland Clinic Center for Integrated Medicine.



Mukunda Stiles.
Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy.
Lotus Press, 2008.
Paperback, 280 pages.
\$19.95. Reviewed by
Felicia Marie Tomasko,
RN, E-RYT-500.

When discussing the intersection of Yoga and Ayurveda, it is tempting to take a reductionist viewpoint and categorize practices in terms of their effects on the *doshas*. But just as Yoga is much more

than the mechanics of posture and position, so is Ayurveda much more than *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. A full investigation of the interplay of these two sciences is much more complex, multi-layered, and subtle. In *Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy*, Mukunda Stiles eschews a reductionistic or mechanical approach to the application of Ayurvedic principles to Yoga. He takes instead a wider-lens view that examines the role and movement of *prana* in health and healing.

Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy is distilled from Stiles' decades of teaching experience and study with a diverse group of teachers. Reading the book, one can imagine Stiles sitting with an array of texts spread out in front of him, dog-eared to well-worn and considered passages. Stiles refers to the *Charaka Samhita*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, the *Gheranda Samhita*, *Yoga Viaistha*, *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, and other texts.

The *Charaka Samhita* is a Sanskrit text of Ayurveda, dated to approximately 2,000 years or older. Ayurvedic practitioners, even in modern-day programs, refer back to the wisdom contained in those verses to apply therapeutic interventions—including Yoga practices—based on the *doshic* constitution and present imbalances in a person, along with the time in life, season of the year, and other factors.

As Stiles points out, the *Charaka Samhita* does not specifically mention Yoga *āsana*, but it does provide recommendations for physical exercise. These recommendations, Stiles observes, are similar to those found in the *Yoga Sutra*. In his own exploration of the role of *āsana* in Ayurvedic Yoga therapy, Stiles goes beyond simply stating the *doshic* effect of a given *āsana* and grouping *āsana* into *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* poses. He breaks down any specific *āsana* into the three stages of its performance and the *doshic* effects of each of the stages. These stages are: assuming the *āsana* or initiating movement, which relates to *vata*; remaining in the *āsana*, relating to *pitta*; and concluding the *āsana*, which relates to the sense of completion—a *kapha* quality. Stiles also looks at larger patterns of movement and *vinyasa* (movement with breath).

Prana is the focal point for Stiles' therapeutic and Ayurvedic approach to Yoga practice. He discusses *prana* in terms of our life force, which is discussed in what Stiles refers to as the rarely translated fifth chapter of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. In the *Pradipika*, cultivation of awareness of *prana* is a method to alleviate disease. Stiles provides information on how to affect the five *subdoshas*, or subdivisions of *vata*—the winds of the body—through *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, *kriya* (cleansing techniques) and other practices. These are also referred to as the five types of *prana* because they govern movement including circulation, movement through the digestive system, and movement of nervous system impulses.

Stiles includes detailed discussions and descriptions of the practices he recommends. While he acknowledges that different teachers and traditions sometimes have vastly different approaches to these practices, he outlines a thoughtful sequence that builds upon skills to create the greatest therapeutic benefit.

Stiles avoids jargon and explains all his rationale clearly for his assertions. His conversational style and depth of understanding of the interplay of the two disciplines makes this an interesting and engaging read, providing new insights for this reader, who has been studying Yoga and Ayurveda for more than fifteen years. *Ayurvedic Yoga Therapy* is appropriate for practitioners and teachers new to an understanding of Ayurveda, as well as long-time practitioners negotiating the finer nuances and subtleties of the practice.

Felicia Marie Tomasko, RN, E-RYT-500 is a member of the board of directors of the National Ayurvedic Medical Association and the editor in chief of *LA YOGA Ayurveda and Health* magazine.