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Can Yoga and Acupuncture Help You Get Pregnant?

SALLY FARHAT KASSAB ON FEB 9, 2011 AT 12:21PM

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Anyone who's [struggled to get pregnant](#) has heard (and inwardly steamed over) the advice to "just relax." But as [a recent New York Times article](#) pointed out, there may be a grain of truth to that old adage -- and many women around the country are looking to alternative approaches like "yoga for fertility" classes, meditation and acupuncture to add to (and aid in) their assisted reproductive plans.

Stress-relief programs have cropped up all over the country, "and we think it's been a patient movement," says Tami Quinn, co-founder of Pulling Down the Moon: Integrative Care for Fertility in Chicago and Washington, D.C. and the co-author of *Fully Fertile: A 12-Week Holistic Plan for Optimal Fertility*. "Patients are going to the doctor and saying, 'I am stressed -- what can you offer me?'" So in turn, doctors are turning to yoga and mind/body programs or whatever can help."

While the *Times* story notes that "no study has proved that yoga has increased pregnancy rates in infertility patients," the stress relief it provides can have its benefits. [Moms in our iVillage community](#)

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agree that exercise and meditation help: "I have a really stressful job, on top of the stress of trying to conceive after a miscarriage and having a 3-year-old," writes newlamom. "After my loss last summer, I started doing a combination class three times per week -- 30 minutes of spinning and 30 minutes of yoga. I think it really helps my stress level. I also started acupuncture in November, and I feel like that is helping with my stress levels, too. But ... it can be really difficult, if not impossible, to turn off that internal chatter."

If you're struggling with infertility, you already know it's stressful. So how do you relax when you're stressing about stressing? We asked Quinn, who struggled with infertility before having twins 13 years ago, for her expert advice on how to keep calm through it all (besides doing yoga, of course!).

Try acupuncture. Some studies have suggested that it can help improve IVF outcomes.

Try meditation. Some women find it can make you happier. Women who have a positive outlook and less depression may have better outcomes for pregnancy, Quinn says.

Treat yourself. Give yourself permission to relax. Get a massage, take a walk in nature or practice deep breathing.

See a nutritionist. Make sure you're at your ideal weight (being overweight or underweight can contribute to infertility) and to learn about [fertility-friendly foods](#).

* **Get some in-person support.** Find groups through your [local RESOLVE chapter](#) or your doctor's office.

* **Get inspired.** Read biographies about people who overcame challenges, or listen to a non-fertility related speaker who inspires you.

* **Give yourself a break.** "You are going through a harrowing experience. Realize it's not an easy challenge" and accept it, Quinn says.

* **Sleep.** Drop the cup-of-joe-habit -- too much caffeine and a lack of shut-eye aren't good for fertility.

How do you deal with the stress of getting pregnant? Chime in below!

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