

## Yoga May Be The Best Exercise For Sleep Problems

Last month we reported on the problems many Chiari patients have with sleep and the negative impact that can have on their overall health and quality of life. Now, an analysis of published research suggests that high intensity yoga, twice a week for 30 minutes or less, may be the best exercise choice to improve sleep quality. There is a growing body of research into different exercise interventions for sleep disorders (not specific to Chiari), but most studies only compare one type of exercise to a control group that doesn't participate, or two different exercise types to each other. However, this study used a statistical technique called a network meta-analysis to compare many different exercise interventions and also come up with what might be the optimal frequency, duration, and intensity.

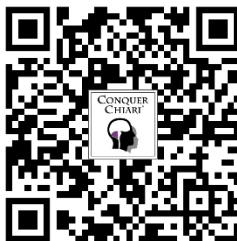
Specifically, the researchers methodically searched the published literature for randomized controlled trials which assessed the effectiveness of aerobics, traditional Chinese exercises, resistance training, walking, yoga, dance, or combined therapies in improving sleep quality in people with sleep disorders. The studies had to use the Pittsburgh Quality Sleep Index (PQSI) to measure the changes in the participants' sleep quality. The PQSI is widely used and is Conquer Chiari's preferred assessment tool when evaluating sleep in Chiari patients.

The researchers identified 30 studies that met their criteria, which overall involved over 2500 patients with sleep disorders. Using statistical techniques to combine and compare the studies they concluded that yoga was the best exercise to improve sleep, followed by walking, resistance training, combined therapies, dance, traditional Chinese exercises, and finally aerobic exercise. The data also suggested that the optimal frequency was twice a week, the optimal duration was 30 minutes or less, and the optimal intensity was high.

It is important to keep in mind that this analysis was not specific to Chiari and that the only outcome they looked at was sleep quality. Studies specific to Chiari patients may produce different results and more frequent or different types of exercise may have a larger benefit for overall health or pain reduction. It is also a good idea to discuss any new exercise program with a qualified health professional before starting.

**Source:** Li L, An J, Wang D, Li H. Which exercise prescription is most effective for patients with sleep disorders?: a network meta-analysis of 30 randomized controlled trials. *Sleep Biol Rhythms*. 2025;23(4):355-372. Published 2025 Jul 11. doi:10.1007/s41105-025-00596-7

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