

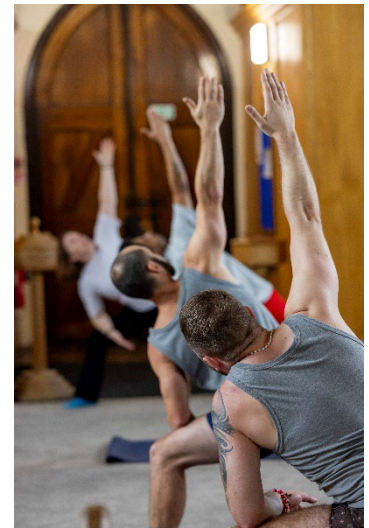
Summary of recent evidence

Yoga, mindfulness & meditation in prison

There is a significant body of evidence that yoga and meditation ease the mental health symptoms associated with trauma, improve positive emotional states, and reduce negative states that lead to re-offending.

Most recent are Dr Nora Kerekes' research findings¹ (Kerekes 2024, 2021, 2019, 2017) that yoga in prison:

- increased sense of responsibility, self-acceptance, and self-control
- improves impulse control and sustained attention
- decreases antisocial behaviour and negative affect states
- reduces psychological distress, paranoid and obsessive thoughts



Oxford University

The Kerekes research builds on that of Amy Bilderbeck at Oxford University, whose 2013 study published in the Journal of Psychiatric Research² found that over 10 weeks of yoga classes, prisoners increased their ability to override impulse - recognised by prison services as a skill critical in reducing recidivism. Prisoners continued to do better after the course than peers in a control group. They also reduced stress, improved decision-making, concentration and mood.

Practice Plus Group social prescribing pilots 2021-23

209 patients in HMPs Stafford, Swinfen Hall and Drake Hall took part all with at least 6 months on their sentence. Activities offered included yoga.

- 95% of participants felt their health and wellbeing improved
- 96% felt more connected to other people and their community

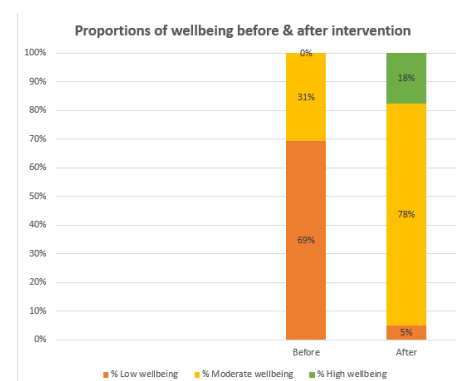
Prisons reported:

- Reductions in self-harm, violent incidents, use of force, self-isolation
- Increases in uptake of employment, education, domestic visits, positive interactions with staff, community engagement

The PPT Mindful Yoga courses in women's prisons 2023-24

40 women participated in Yoga and Mindfulness courses at HMPs Downview and East Sutton Park.

- **84%** experienced meaningful improvement in mental wellbeing;
- Participants with low mental wellbeing fell from **69% to 5%**
- Moderate mental wellbeing rose from **31% to 78%**
- High mental wellbeing rose from **0% to 18%**



¹ N Kerekes: <https://www.yogatocare.com/publications/>

² Bilderbeck AC, et al., Participation in a 10-week course of yoga improves behavioural control and decreases psychological distress in a prison population, Journal of Psychiatric Research (2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2013.06.014>