



news injuries

Yoga can lead to hip

injuries

It's not necessarily newcomers to yoga who get injured

Yoga is a good form of exercise, but experts warn it can lead to serious hip injuries in some women.

Dr. Raza Awan, a sports injury specialist in Toronto who uses yoga for rehabilitation, started tracking yoga injuries after noticing there wasn't much published data.

If someone is too flexible and gets into the end range of a pose without good support and muscle stability, it can cause wear and tear on joints, Awan said.

While injuries to the lower back, knees and wrists are more common, hip injuries can be more significant and need surgery, he told CBC's Kim Brunhuber.

"There's a rim of cartilage inside the socket portion that can become torn," he demonstrated with a model of a hip, the body's largest ball-and-socket joint. "That can lead to surgery because the cartilage doesn't heal well typically. If you continue to have cartilage loss, you'll get arthritis, and this may lead to hip replacement or an artificial hip."

Riki Richter has been teaching yoga for 14 years and has taught anatomy and injury prevention to aspiring yoga instructors.

Richter said women complain of hip pain after yoga classes, often those who are "hypermobility" with ligaments that are much looser than average. It's not necessarily newcomers to yoga she sees injured, but sometimes yoga teachers.

"It's that their body can go into a very extreme range of motion and it doesn't feel like anything. So, for something like a hip issue, they can deeply fold without actually fine-tuning any of the rotations and really cause some problems."

It's hard to back people out of going deeper all the time, Richter said. Pain signals injury with the knee but people need to be cognizant of hurting their hip joint when twisting it excessively without even knowing.

Richter's prevention tips include:

- Take classes with an experienced teacher who looks for injury.
- Monitor your own body to make sure you're not feeling discomfort.
- Watch for any kind of "catching" in the hip or feeling a little tentative to weight bearing after a class.

Cristina Gonzalez has been practising yoga for 18 years and attends Richter's small classes. Gonzalez said she tends to be hypermobile and despite injuries to her shoulder and hip, Gonzalez continues to enjoy the self-reflection that yoga offers.

"Yoga helped me to understand my body better, or at least I thought so at the time," Gonzalez said. "I've injured myself quite a bit thinking something felt good or feeling like I was going deeper."