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Yoga helps elderly stroke victims

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Elderly victims of stroke exposed to yoga produce "exciting" results, including greater confidence and balance, new research says.

Researchers from Indiana University explored whether this popular mind-body practice can help stroke victims cope with their increased risk for painful and even deadly falls. The pilot study involved a group of men and one woman, average age of 66. For eight weeks, they participated in a twice weekly hour-long group yoga class taught by a yoga therapist who dramatically modified the poses to meet the needs of the elderly.

The participants improved their balance by 17 per cent and 34 per cent, on different measures, respectively by the end of the programme, according to an Indiana statement. Lead researcher Arlene A. Schmid, a rehabilitation research scientist at the university, found a measurable gain in confidence of study participants in their balance. "It also was interesting to see how much the men liked it," said Schmid, assistant professor of occupational therapy.