



# reCAPS

**Counseling & Psychological Services**  
**University of California, Santa Cruz**

## Yoga for Healing

Yoga, a collection of physical, mental, and spiritual practices that originated in ancient India, was introduced in the United States in the 1890s but didn't become widely known and practiced here until the 1960s. The 1980s saw the beginning of a yoga boom in the U.S., as yoga gained popularity as a way to become healthier and more balanced.

Fast forward to 2018: Today, yoga is widespread in the United States, and many people are embracing

the cognitive, mindful aspects of yoga along with the physical (e.g., the asanas, or physical postures, of yoga, along with various forms of breathing). Just look online for yoga classes at UCSC and studios in Santa Cruz to get an idea of how popular yoga has become!

There are different types of yoga, some being more calming and relaxed and others being more active and energizing. One of the most popular types of yoga in the West is hatha, a

branch of yoga that emphasizes physical exercises to master the body along with mind. The benefits of practicing yoga are many: It can increase flexibility, balance, focus, and general health and counteract some of the problems associated with being sedentary and/or stressed. It can also help quiet your mind.

This quarter, there are two new ways for students to explore yoga to improve their well-being. One is a drop-in yoga group offered

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## All About CAPS

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) offers confidential mental health services to registered UCSC students all year:

- Helpful workshops, trainings, and self-help tools
- A variety of therapy and support groups
- Let's Talk drop-in consultations
- Brief individual and couples counseling
- Referrals to on- and off-campus resources
- Crisis services in person Mon–Fri 8 am–5 pm and by phone 24/7 at (831) 459-2628

To make an appointment, call (831) 459-2628 or stop by (Student Health Center, East Wing, 2nd floor) weekdays between 8 am and 5 pm. To learn more, visit our [website](#), check out the [CAPS blog](#), and like us on [Facebook](#)!



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by CAPS called “Yoga for Mental Health,” which will be held on six Thursdays, from February 8<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>, in the Mural Room of the Student Health Center from 4 to 5:30 pm. No sign-up is required, and it’s free to any UCSC student—just show up for any or all classes! This group is appropriate for anyone looking to incorporate mind-body practices in their mental health recovery and self-care. Students with any level of yoga

experience are welcome. Call CAPS for more information during business hours (Mon–Fri, 8 am–5 pm) at (831) 459-2628.

The second new yoga resource, being launched by the Campus Advocacy Resources and Education (CARE) Office this quarter, is a yoga group for female-identified survivors of sexual assault. This group teaches “trauma-informed yoga,” which is a style of yoga that was created for

assault survivors to help them reconnect with their body and feel safe and supported. It also includes some teaching and discussion. Sign-up is required to join this group, which is being held weekly. Contact the CARE Office at (831) 502-2273 during business hours or [care.ucsc.edu](http://care.ucsc.edu) to see if there are still spots available this quarter or to inquire about signing up for the group in spring quarter.

## Dear CAPS,

*I want help with some issues, but I'm not sure if "talk therapy" is what I need. What else can I try?*

—All Talked Out

There are many forms of healing. Some involve “talk therapy,” and others are “experiential.” Traditional psychotherapy (individual or group therapy to address emotional and mental health issues), is “talk therapy,” where clients talk about their issues, feelings, and thoughts with a mental health professional. Talk therapy can provide you with support and feedback, build insight, teach coping and communication skills, and help you take action and make decisions.

Experiential types of healing focus on the *experience* of activities, feelings, and sensations. They are helpful in building awareness, reducing stress, expressing things nonverbally, and increasing the mind-body connection. Experiential healing modalities include some forms of psychotherapy (such as somatic, or body-oriented, therapy;

art therapy; and dance therapy). These can be good ways to learn relaxation and coping techniques and express things that are difficult to put into words. Experiential approaches also include practices outside of the mental health field, such as meditation, prayer, massage, acu-



puncture, and yoga therapy. These modalities can increase focus and calm, relieve stress and tension, reduce symptoms of physical and mental health problems, and pro-

vide meaning and connection with the self, others, and community.

Exercise is an experiential approach to healing and wellness. Studies show its therapeutic benefits on mood, stress, and well-being. Some forms of exercise (e.g., yoga, dance, martial arts) that combine movement with breathing and focus provide benefits that are physical, mental, and emotional. Exercising with others can also help you get more social and connected.

Although CAPS uses a talk therapy approach in most of our groups and individual counseling, we also offer some experiential services, such as our new yoga group (see story on page 1) and a three-workshop mindfulness series (“Mindful Living”). We can also help connect you with other talk therapy or experiential healing services on and off campus. Call CAPS at (831) 459-2628 or stop by our office (Health Center, East Wing, 2nd floor) during business hours to set up a first appointment to talk to a counselor about your concerns and get advice about what might help.

## Wellness Tip: Dealing with Exam Stress

It's not possible to avoid stress, but you can do things to make your life less stressful and to cope with stress more effectively. One thing that stresses out a lot of students is exams. When it comes to examinations, what are the things you have control over? Here are a few examples: You can do your best to keep up with your work, go to tutoring or study groups, meet with your professor or TA for help, and give yourself enough time to study before exam day comes. Something else you can try and do is get better at managing your time. Use a planner or other system to keep track of classes, assignments, and other important things you need to attend to. Get better at recognizing barriers to getting started or being productive and see if there are some small changes you can make to eliminate those barriers. For example, if you always get distracted by incoming

text messages, put your phone away while you study.

Other things over which you have some control that impact how you perform on exams: You can try and get enough sleep the night before the test and eat a healthy breakfast beforehand. You can also avoid talking to people who are super stressed out before the exam—listen to some calming music or sit under a tree and breathe deeply for a few minutes instead of venting with others about how anxious you feel about the test.

But, there may be aspects of exam time over which you have less control. For example, maybe you have two exams on the same day or you just don't understand the material for a test despite trying to get help and study. In these situations, you may need to focus your energy on building up your coping skills—do

the things that help you calm down, relax, and let go of those worries running through your mind. Some tried and true ways to cope with stress are exercise, getting support from people in your life, and relaxation exercises such as meditation or deep breathing. Avoid the use of alcohol or other drugs to cope, as any relaxing effects they may have will be temporary and can cause other problems. Similarly, exclusively using things like TV and video games to cope may not be the best—sure, they help you unwind and take your mind off of things, but they may not provide as many positive effects as other coping tools such as exercise or talking to friends. The trick is to have a few different strategies, not just one.

See the graphic below for a few more ideas!

## 5 WAYS TO DE-STRESS YOURSELF



### GRIN AND BEAR IT

Laughing or forcing your facial muscles to smile sends a message to the brain signaling safety, generating positivity, lowering heart rate and decreasing stress levels.



### CRAFTING

Repetitive motions like the fine motor skills used to knit, crochet or make jewelry can soothe stress and anxiety. The repetition of a sound or movement helps fulfill mindfulness practice.



### MUSIC

Listen or sing to songs with steady rhythms and catchy tunes. Singing releases hormones found to alleviate anxiety and stress. Music helps to soothe your mind and soul.



### WALK IT OFF

Go out for some fresh air and take a stroll around the neighborhood. Your body will release endorphins, reducing stress levels and lowering blood pressure. It helps clear your mind, too.



### ENJOY LIFE

Simple things like a warm bath or hanging out with friends can give you a much needed break from the stressors in your life. Relax, slow down and breathe. Don't let stress ruin your life.



## Upcoming Events

See our [website calendar](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more upcoming events.

**WHAT'S YOUR EMOJI?:** Come to this CAPS-sponsored event to get a free, brief depression/mood screening and information about services on and off campus. Student Health Center, Wednesday, February 7th, 11 am to 1 pm.

**LET'S TALK:** Let's Talk is a drop-in space where you can have a brief, confidential, chat with a professional CAPS counselor. It's free, and you don't need an appointment—just walk in! Let's Talk is held four afternoons a week at different, convenient locations around campus when classes are in session (not held during finals week or summer). All registered undergraduate and graduate UCSC students are welcome to any location of Let's Talk. Read more and see the current schedule on our [website](#).

**WELLNESS WORKSHOPS:** CAPS offers a different wellness workshop every Wednesday, 3 to 4 pm when classes are in session (not during finals week or summer), at the Student Health Center Mural Room. These hour-long workshops provide info and tools for being mentally healthier. Topics include sleep, moods, self-compassion, mindfulness, and improving academic focus. Read more on our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

**ANXIETY TOOLBOX:** This is a three-part workshop series that provides research-proven tools to help you better understand and cope with anxiety. Each of the three hour-long workshops provides info and experiential skills. Offered different days and times throughout the quarter. Sign-up and attendance of all three sessions required. Read more on our [website](#), and call us to get more information and sign up at (831) 459-2628.

**MINDFUL LIVING:** This is a three-part workshop series that uses mindfulness-based tools to increase insight and self-awareness and build coping. The skills learned apply to a range of issues, including managing stress and difficult emotions. Each of the three hour-long workshops provides info and experiential skills. Offered different days and times throughout the quarter. A preliminary scheduled appointment at CAPS is required before sign-up if you have not been seen at CAPS this academic year. Read more on our [website](#), or call us to get more info at (831) 459-2628.

**CAPS GROUPS:** CAPS offers a variety of therapy and support groups. Most of our weekly groups are full for winter quarter, but call to inquire about openings for spring quarter. We also have some drop-in groups—drop in any week or every week. No sign-up or appointment required. Check out our [Groups web page](#) or call us at (831) 459-2628 for more info.



If you are a UCSC student looking for some new ways to cope with stress, anxiety, or mood ups and downs, check out the WellTrack self-help program. Learning new coping skills can help prevent mild to moderate problems from getting to a crisis point. WellTrack is a secure and anonymous way for users to assess their personal well-being and quickly gain access to resources tailored to help them make progress in changing thoughts and behaviors that are not working for them. Some of the specific tools WellTrack offers are videos, relaxation exercises, mood tracking tools, and written exercises to help raise awareness and work on addressing unhelpful thought patterns. Visit the [WellTrack website](#) and sign up for free using your UCSC email address or the CAPS access code: UCSCCAPS. There is also an app that allows you to track your moods!