

Pain, Presence & Practice

Yoga Therapy Meets Modern Pain Science

Symposium on Yoga Therapy and Research

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Thank you for joining us! There is so much information to share!

Part 1: Understanding Migraines - Olena Bakai

Migraine is not just a headache — it's a nervous system overload involving neural hyperexcitability, vascular reactivity, sensory sensitivity, and autonomic imbalance. It unfolds in four phases: prodrome, aura, pain, and postdrome.

Neuroplasticity & Breath

The brain forms pain loops: same triggers → same pain.

Goal: retrain the system with breath + movement + awareness.

♦ **Breath as Regulation**

CO₂ shapes vascular tone.

Aura (vasoconstriction): gentle breath with pauses ↑CO₂

Pain (vasodilation): light rhythmic breath ↓CO₂ (e.g. bhastrika)

 Oxygen therapy is also helpful during pain phase.  [PubMed Study](#)

Book: Agapkin, Sergey. *Don't Let Your Head Split!* Eksmo, 2019

♦ **Yoga Therapy Tools**

Interval Savasana (5–7 rounds):

– 4–5 min movement + 4–5 min rest with long exhale

✓ Balances ANS, reduces attacks

 Releases: trapezius, jaw, suboccipitals

- **Deep Insight - Ask yourself:**

- What do I feel in pain?
- How do I relate to powerlessness?
- Can pain be seen as insight?

👉 **Migraine is not only physical — it's also subconscious and emotional.**

True healing = body + mind + inner awareness.

Yoga therapy = science + spirit working together.

Part 2: Persistent Pain, Somatic Tracking & Yoga Therapy

- Amber Kyliuk

The [**link**](#) below will link you to information shared in the 2nd part of the discussion regarding **persistent pain, the new view of pain vs. the old view of pain, somatic tracking** used, and more.

Links to references including the Resolve Back Pain Handbook, links to studies on back pain and Pain Reprocessing Therapy, as well as examples of how I teach somatic tracking to clients living with persistent pain.

This page will be updated after the conference to include more links for anything brought up for discussion over the weekend.

Access will be open until the end of August 2025.

[**https://www.criticalmovementyyc.ca/SYTAR25**](https://www.criticalmovementyyc.ca/SYTAR25)

This link also includes links to Melissa and Olena's webpages and information.

Part 3: Subtle Approaches to Pain via Yoga and Ayurvedic Frameworks

- Melissa Shah

Panchavayus (5 Directions of Prana)

Vyana vayu and Apana vayu are the two primary directions of prana to support when addressing pain.

- Vyana's primary function is to facilitate movement.
- Apana vayu's primary function is to facilitate downward movement and support letting go.

Consider the energetic effects of practices you offer - subtle practices like pranayama and mantra can cause healing or harm. With pain, it's helpful to ensure your practices have a langhana (lightening, calming, reducing) effect.

- Langhana pranayama practices that facilitate apana vayu and bring in a calming effect for pain
 - Extended exhale + Pause after exhale
 - Moving only on exhale
 - Finger nyasa with exhale
 - Modified ujjayi breath - whisper HAA
 - SSHHH on exhale
- Langhana chanting practices - vibrations and frequency
 - AAA, UUU, MMM
 - OM APAANAAYA NAMAH
 - OM, OM SHANTIHI, OM SHANTI SHANTIHI, OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTIHI
 - Building on a word each time to extend the exhale