

STAR WELL-KIT: INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE RESOURCE GUIDE

A Resource for Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families

Many individuals have found that learning more about integrative medicine (IM) practices and making them a part of your everyday life has benefits such as relaxation and increased energy. If you are interested in learning more, the following steps can help you get started:

1. Think about what types of practices you most want to try. Ask yourself:

- Do you want a movement-based, active practice, or one that can be done while sitting or lying down?
- Do you want a practice you can do anytime, on the go, or something to do in private?
- Do you prefer to learn on your own (using audio or video materials), or would you rather do an activity with a group?

2. Once you have narrowed down what might work best for you, the next step is get resources that can help you get started.

3. Different Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) locations, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), and Vet Centers offer different practices and services. Call your local VA or speak to your primary care provider (PCP) or Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) about what is available near you. See if your local VA has a Planetree or Patient Centered Care unit. Many community centers also offer various integrative medicine classes including Yoga, meditation, Qigong and more. Call to find out what is offered near you.

4. Some Integrative Medicine techniques, including Yoga, meditation, and Qigong (see the full list on the right), can be learned at home using CDs or DVDs. Browse in stores or online to find instructional DVDs/CDs about your preferred techniques.

5. Consult with your primary care provider to discuss which practices may be safe for you to try.

If you are ready to try out a technique using any of the options above, here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Check and confirm the qualification or certification status of the provider, teacher, or trainer who will be teaching you about any integrative medicine practices or services.
- Once you learn them, you do not need a class to practice them.
 - Some techniques are short and can be used “on the go” whenever you are feeling stressed, or feeling pain, or for other specific purposes.
 - Some techniques take a little more time but can be done on your own schedule at home. Some people feel benefits for hours or days after doing them.
- Choose a time of day or a certain event for your practice, so that you can do it regularly (for example: when you wake up in the morning, before bed, or before lunch).
- Speak with your health care providers about what you’re practicing. They may have helpful suggestions.

Names of some of the IM services or practices that have been offered at VAs- please check with your PCP or your local VA’s Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) or in the community for the availability. Independent practices which can be done on your own after you learn them:

- Guided Imagery
- Meditation
- Stress Management, Relaxation Therapy
- Yoga
- Movement Practices
- Tai Chi
- Qigong

Other Resources

The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center's (WRIISC's) Complementary and Integrative Medicine Fact Sheet

Veterans seeking new or alternative ways to manage and improve overall health and well-being may be interested in learning about Complementary and Integrative Medicine and its many benefits.

<http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/education/factsheets/complementary-and-integrative-medicine.pdf>

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is the Federal Government's lead agency for scientific research on the diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine.

<http://nccam.nih.gov>

SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions

The SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions (CIHS) promotes the development of integrated primary and behavioral health services to better address the needs of individuals with mental health and substance use conditions, whether seen in specialty behavioral health or primary care provider settings.

<http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/health-wellness/wellness-strategies>