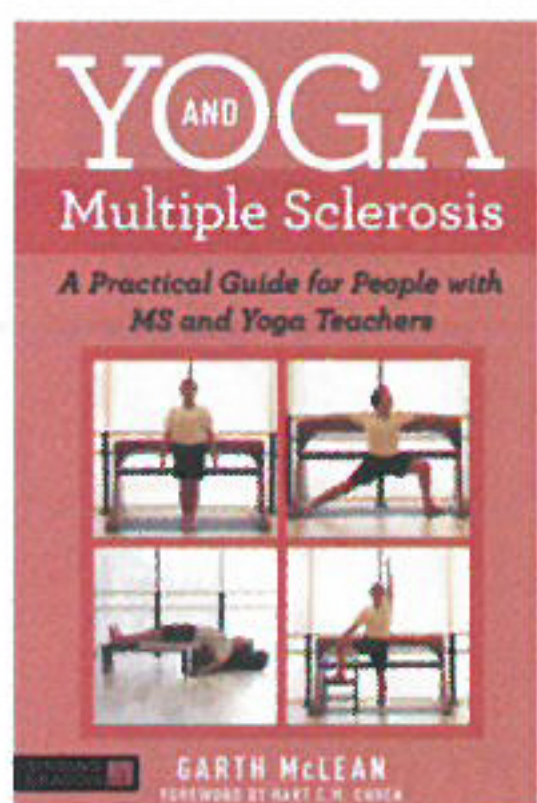


## MediaReviews



### Yoga and Multiple Sclerosis: A Practical Guide for People with MS and Yoga Teachers

By Garth McLean

Singing Dragon, 2021

Reviewed by Patrizia Casaccia

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an inflammatory demyelinating disorder of the central nervous system that usually begins affecting people in young adulthood. As the name implies, the immune system attacks myelin, the insulating coating of nerve cells, at multiple sites, producing an array of symptoms. Patients may experience effects ranging from visual problems to sensory symptoms, from fatigue to inability to walk and spasticity, from impaired coordination and balance to incontinence. In addition, some patients have days, weeks, or months characterized by clinical manifestations (relapses) followed by prolonged periods without any symptoms (remissions), whereas others have a disease course characterized by progressive clinical deterioration (progressive MS). This clinical picture clearly presents challenges for yoga therapists working with the MS patient, as there is a tremendous need to tailor interventions to the individual case.

This book's author, Garth McLean, C-IAYT, is both a patient with relapsing-remitting MS and an Iyengar yoga therapist—he can thoroughly appreciate the challenges from both sides of the client-therapist relationship. McLean's perspective renders this book a unique resource for both those with MS and yoga therapists.

The book includes eight chapters, a few of which are more directed to MS patients who may be new to yoga. These sections explain basic concepts of yogic philosophy, asana, and pranayama and provide guidance on how to start a home practice and integrate it with other aspects of lifestyle (e.g., diet, massage). Other chapters are more geared toward yoga professionals, as they elucidate basic concepts of MS pathogenesis, clinical manifestations, medications, and detailed approaches specifically for those with MS.

Chapter 3 presents a classical description of yoga poses with photos illustrating the use of props and modifications based on the challenges the MS patient may encounter on a given day. The benefits for each pose are detailed, and a specific time in each position is suggested. Three sequences are suggested for home practice, and overall this organization is comparable to that of other books on the topic. Chapter 4 presents basic concepts of pranayama and meditation, which may benefit from in-person work.

The real treasure is Chapter 5, which is organized by symptom. This extremely valuable and unique tool for both clients and yoga therapists integrates the content of the previous two chapters into suggested asana and breathing exercised to target each symptom: balance and vertigo, incontinence and bowel issues, depression, foot drop, fatigue, ataxia, sensory symptoms, and spasticity.

*Yoga and Multiple Sclerosis* presents a broad spectrum of information on MS. Although some references to MS pathogenesis, treatment, and lifestyle may need to be updated as new research findings arise, the basic concept of the use of yoga for symptom management will likely remain valid. In addition, the author shares a number of case studies, personal anecdotes, and even MRI results and personal emails, rendering the message very effective.

The result is a little masterpiece filled with personal experiences, valuable references and resources, and incredibly honest recollections of a journey toward self-acceptance and awareness for what is possible.

*Patrizia Casaccia, MD, PhD, RYT-200, is a New York-based, internationally recognized neuroscientist. She studies mechanisms of neuroprotection and myelin repair in multiple sclerosis and has authored more than 150 scientific articles. Dr. Casaccia has a keen interest in rendering yoga accessible to all.*