Yoga Therapy (YT) for Movement Disorders - Principles & Practices

Musculoskeletal Level Rx Goals - Working with...
1. Increased flexibility, balance, coordination & strength – All movements of spine!
2. Posture is also a major issue as some students don’t have the muscle tone to keep their bodies upright e.g. Scoliosis with CP
3. Spasticity/spasms/stiff joints cause flexibility issues – Long Stretches preferred - Dynamic movement is contraindicated for spasms/spasticity
4. Stretching for ROM & to prevent permanent muscle shortening from Spasticity
5. Smoothing out walking (“freezing”) & difficulty initiating movement - PD
6. Initiating Smooth Movement & Decreasing Tremors - PD
7. Slow, Stiff & Shaky Movements/ Breath in PD
8. Making movements smoother/supported through using touch, guiding movements with hands close to core always
9. Standing balance poses – Use chair/wall
10. Stooped posture – Chest Openers
11. Bilateral movement is key - Strong side will support the weak side when moving one side at a time or when using a belt to lift spastic arms/legs
12. Brain Balancing with Bilateral Movement and Breathing
13. Quiet/Weak Voice – Chanting/Singing/Brahmari
14. Flat Affect in PD via Expressiveness – Laughter Yoga; Light Atmosphere; Joy!

Psycho Physiological Level Rx Goals - Working with...
1. Communication Deficits (Speech) - Chanting & Humming for speech/ language/memory problems
2. Vocalization/breathing & chanting/ singing work may help with speech impediments & “learned helplessness” from lack of communication
3. Concentration/Meditation for memory/ vision problems
4. Sensory deficits (Vision & Hearing)
5. Cognitive deficits (Memory & Attention)
6. Chronic pain & insomnia as well as greater attention, concentration & memory
7. Vision Problems: Driṣṭi – Focus on Hand Movement with Eyes & Long EX - PNS
8. Heat Reduction for MS ONLY (Vāta Pitta) – Others Movement Disorders are Vāta, so warmth is good for Vāta
9. Breathing should also deepen & become less laboured due to improved posture
10. Fatigue/sleep problems – Restorative poses with breath work
11. Lots of “Rests” b/t poses especially with MS to cool down and deal with fatigue
12. Encourage relaxation response (PNS) from doing calming practices
13. From a neuroplasticity point of view, YT helps students build new neural pathways as mind & body are brought into greater integration – bilateral movement is key - strong side will support the weak side
14. Encourage safety, grounding, empowerment/self-determination and connection to the Self/Life Force
15. Promote better mood, more confidence & social contact in group Yoga Therapy!
Example Practices

1. Grounding Breathing
   - Hes, Marhneri & Ujjeyi Pranayama
   - Calming Ventral Nervus nerve in throat
   - Squeeze bolster on EX
   - Add marching of feet & press down on feet as you EX
   - Curling toes on EX & release on IN

   Neck & Shoulder, Upper Back/Lower Back Warm Ups

2. Sun Breathing with Om on Exhale

3. Chair Tadasana
   - Hold belt with hands or belt b/t thumb & fingers
   - Belts below elbows
   - Helps strong side lift weak side

   Bow & Arrow side to side
5. Chair Cakravakasana


   IN: Flex fingers/palms up to sky
   - Feel Median Nerve
   
   EX: Make lobster claws, curled down

7. Chair Parsvakonasana

   Side to side
   Use more props on side chairs as needed
   OR hold back of chair on each side
8. Warrior Lunges

9. Uttanāsana
Pārśva Version: Move front chair to one side & then the other

10. Cat-Cow for Neck, Shoulders & Upper Back

11. Updog - Downdog
12. Ardha Matsyendrasana Variations

Look at Middle Finger

Try Twists w/ EX Shhhh in Liver Cleaning

Twist on EX
Untwist Head on IN

13. Chair Uttanasana

Hold side of bolster
Blocks ~ To support bolster
Stay 6 BRs
Standing Poses if Possible for MS & PD

14. Wall Tadasana

15. Virabhadrasana 3 Balances

16. Bhagirathāsana/Vṛksāsana - Tree Pose

17. Virabhadrasana Leg Stretches
18. Ardha Utkatasana

Innra leg line / Mula (Root Line)

= Stability ~ legs, hips & lower back

Legs, Hips, Core & Lower Back Strength
Reduces Lordosis ~ Sway Back

19. Uttanasana Variations

Spinale Stretch

OR

Ardh (½) Uttanasona

20. Dvipadapitham

Note: Vinyasa Version may be contraindicated because of spasticity/lack of mobility/strength in legs
21. Bhujangāsana

22. Apanāsana

23. Jathara Parivrtti (Pārśva) "Banana Pose"
24. Jathara Parivrtti (Parivrtti) - Windsheild Wiper Variation

L ankle over R to left side OR Reverse

Add blankets/blocks under head/shoulders as needed

Bolster for tight hamstring/LBPain ~ Lordosis
or for disabilities e.g. spasticity in legs

25. Supta Padangusthasana Variations

Chair or belt

OR

Belt on ball of foot

26. Viparita Karani with a Chair, Bolster and Belts

Savasana

Belly Breathing / Breath Awareness