

Study finds benefits of men's yoga

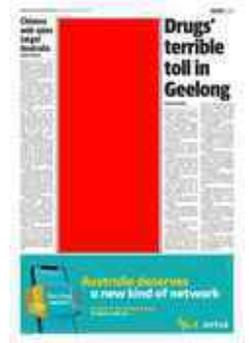
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Tim Oddie leads the men's-only yoga class at Geelong City Yoga on Malop St. In the first study of its kind, researchers looked at the mental health benefits for men who practise yoga and found it could make a positive difference. Picture: Alan Barber

Study finds benefits of men's yoga

MEN are being encouraged to roll out a mat and practise yoga to boost mental and physical wellbeing.

A new study by Deakin University found that men who regularly practised yoga saw a significant improvement in both their mental and physical health.

Associate Professor Melissa O'Shea, from Deakin's School of Psychology, said participants felt "calmer in all situations".

"Participants reported

initial physical health benefits that often extended to mental health benefits, including stress reduction," she said.

The study took place at Geelong City Yoga on Malop St, which runs a men's-only yoga class every Thursday evening.

Professor O'Shea said joining the class was a "turning point" for many men. She said men were sometimes intimidated by female-dominated studios.

"(They) discovered a

space where they felt motivated by each other's presence ... it felt like a safe space for men," she said.

Professor O'Shea said the low-impact nature of yoga - combining physical postures and meditation - could be an effective means for men to manage their mental health.

"Increasing the availability of men's-only yoga classes may be a great way to support men to step on to the mat for the first time," she said.