

The adjacent segment degeneration (ASD) is likely caused by extra wear and tear resulting from the spinal fusion. In spinal fusion, surgeons use supplementary bone tissue to immobilize the area and ameliorate the pain, but after the procedure, it is not possible for patients to move the fused vertebrae. Precisely at the place where the procedure was done, it becomes next to impossible to bend forward, arch back, twist or tilt the spine. This inevitably forces the joints around the surgery site to work extra hard to compensate for the lack of movement in the spine. Those joints have to work each time you sit, stand, walk, reach, lift and more. It is this extra wear and tear that causes ASD in almost one out of three people undergoing spinal fusion.

The study highlights the importance of emphasizing alternatives to surgery, such as yoga, as therapy for chronic back pain. Yoga helps release the chronic muscle tightness that lies at the root of much back pain and counteracts faulty muscular holding patterns. A mounting body of studies has shown yoga to be effective for back pain. Most recently a review of studies on the [effects of yoga for back pain](#) found consistent improvements across the ten high-quality studies reviewed.

As always, however, prevention is better than cure. Studies on yoga for back pain cannot gauge the considerable preventive effects from a regular yoga practice. By keeping the muscles strong and flexible, facilitating proper posture, and creating greater awareness of the body's inherent signals of discomfort and overuse, yoga's preventive effects for back pain are likely to far exceed the effects picked up by studies on chronic back pain sufferers.

*Source: Xia, Xiao-Peng MD; Chen, Hong-Lin MM; Cheng, Hong-Bin MM. (2013). Prevalence of Adjacent Segment Degeneration After Spine Surgery: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. Spine: 01 April 2013 - Volume 38 - Issue 7 - p 597–608.*