

A review on yoga and its impact on human health

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Abstract

In this fast moving world, one where hardly get time to take care of himself. Yoga is a holistic exercise that both physically and mentally strengthens our bodies. If we learn to adopt a healthy lifestyle, make appropriate food selections, and regularly practise yoga and meditation, a healthy life can be readily attained. Yoga can aid with relaxation and overall health. Ancient times saw the practise of yoga as it was described by Patanjali. The presence of yoga in indus valley culture is indicated by the number of seals, fossils with yogic motivations, and figures doing yoga sadhana. Yoga poses come in a variety of varieties, each with unique health advantages. Numerous research have been conducted to demonstrate that yoga is effective in the prevention of illnesses and boosting immunity. Asanas, meditation and the combination of two reduced the pain in people suffering from Tunnel syndrome, back pain and other chronic conditions. Yoga also increases proprioception and improves balance. Yoga boosts blood flow, haemoglobin levels, and red blood cell production, which improves the function of the body's cells by allowing more oxygen to reach them. The present paper focus on the impact of yoga on human health

Key words: Yoga, Asanas, Immunity, Illness, Patanjali

Introduction:

The word “yoga” comes from a Sanskrit root “yuj” which means union, or yoke, to join, and to direct and concentrate one's attention.[1] 3,000 year old tradition, yoga, is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to health and is classified by the National Institutes of Health as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) [2]

Regular practice of yoga promotes strength, endurance, flexibility and facilitates characteristics of friendliness, compassion, and greater self-control, while cultivating a sense of calmness and well-being. (Yoga: intuition, preventive medicine, and treatment.[3]

Yoga philosophy and practice were first described by Patanjali in the classic text, Yoga Sutras, which is widely acknowledged as the authoritative text on yoga. Today, many people identify yoga only with asana, the physical practice of yoga, but asana is just one of the many tools used for healing the individual; only three of the 196 sutras mention asana and the remainder of the text discusses the other components of yoga including conscious breathing, meditation, lifestyle Asana is the physical practise of yoga that most people associate with yoga today, although there are many more methods of healing that can be employed in addition to

asana and diet changes, visualization and the use of sound, among many others.[4] In Yoga Sutras, Patanjali outlines an eightfold path to awareness and enlightenment called ashtanga, which literally means “eight limbs”. [5]

History and Development of Yoga

The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In the yogic lore, Shiva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi, and the first Guru or Adi Guru. Several Thousand years ago, on the banks of the lake Kantisarovar in the Himalayas, Adiyogi poured his profound knowledge into the legendary Saptarishis or "seven sages". The sages carried this powerful yogic science to different parts of the world, including Asia, the Middle East, Northern Africa and South America. Interestingly, modern scholars have noted and marvelled at the close parallels found between ancient cultures across the globe. However, it was in India that the yogic system found its fullest expression. Agastya, the Saptarishi who travelled across the Indian subcontinent, crafted this culture around a core yogic way of life.

The Number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswati valley civilization with Yogic motives and figures performing Yoga Sadhana suggest the presence of Yoga in ancient India. The phallic symbols, seals of idols of mother Goddess are suggestive of Tantra Yoga. Presence of Yoga is available in folk traditions, Indus valley civilization, Vedic and Upanishadic heritage, Buddhist and Jain traditions, Darshanas, epics of Mahabharat and Ramayana, theistic traditions of Shaivas, Vaishnavas, and Tantric traditions.

Historical evidences of the existence of Yoga were seen in the pre-Vedic period (2700 B.C.), and thereafter till Patanjali's period. The main sources, from which we get the information about Yoga practices and the related literature during this period, are available in Vedas (4),

Upanishads(108), Smritis, teachings of Buddhism, Jainism, Panini, Epics (2), Puranas (18) etc. Tentatively, the period between 500 BC - 800 A.D. is considered as the Classical period which is also considered as the most fertile and prominent period in the history and development of Yoga.

The period between 1700 - 1900 A.D. is considered as Modern period in which the great Yogacharyas- Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Paramhansa Yogananda, Vivekananda etc. have contributed for the development of Raja Yoga.[6]

The Four Branches of Yoga

The needs of different persons in society to bring about the transformation of the individual. They are broadly classified into four streams.

1. The Karma Yoga: This involves doing action with an attitude of detachment to the fruits of action. This makes man release himself from the strong attachments and thereby brings in him a steadiness of mind which verily is Yoga “Samatvam yoga uchyate”. Instruments of action and understanding (karmendriyas and jnanendriyas) get cleansed.

2. The Bhakti Yoga: This control of emotions is the key in the path of worship. In this modern world, man is tossed up and down due to emotional onslaughts. The path of Bhakti is a boon to gain control over emotional instabilities by properly harnessing the energy involved in it.

3. The Jnana Yoga: The age of science has made man a rational being. Intellectual sharpness is imminent. Analysis forms the tool. The path of philosophy is apt for the keen intellectuals and is centered on the analysis of ‘happiness’, the vital contribution of Upanishads. Also many other fundamental questions regarding the mind, the outside and inside world and the reality are taken up. Basic questions are raised even involving the intellect itself to reach the very basis of intellect.

4. The Raja Yoga: Culturing of mind is the key for success in almost all endeavors

in our lives. The yoga of mind culture or psychic control gives a practical and easy approach to reach higher states of consciousness. It is based on the Austang Yoga of Patanjali's Yoga system. [7]

Benefits of different types of asanas:

Asanas essentially work to lubricate the muscles, joints, ligaments and other parts of the body. This helps to increase circulation and flexibility. They also help better the internal body health as different asanas work on different internal parts of the body. Practising daily asanas can boost up energy and also improve health. [8]

EFFECTS OF YOGA ON HEALTH:

Numerous studies have shown that asana, meditation or a combination of the two reduced pain in people with arthritis, Carpel Tunnel syndrome, back pain and other chronic conditions. Yoga also increases proprioception and improves balance. Yoga increases blood flow and levels of hemoglobin and red blood cells which allows for more oxygen to reach the body cells, enhancing their function.[9]

Yoga also thins the blood which can decrease the risk of heart attack and stroke, as they are often caused by blood clots. Twisting poses wring out venous blood from internal organs and allow oxygenated blood to flow in when the twist is released. Inverted poses encourage venous blood flow from the legs and pelvis back to the heart and then pumped through the lungs where it becomes freshly oxygenated. Many studies show yoga lowers the resting heart rate, increases endurance, and can improve the maximum uptake and utilization of oxygen during exercise.[10]

Effects of yoga on stress

stress has a negative impact on the immune system and prolonged exposure increases susceptibility to disease and leads to physical and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.[11] Practicing yoga and meditation as a means to manage and relieve both acute and chronic stress helps individuals overcome other co-morbidities

associated with diseases and leads to increased quality of life.[14,31] As a non-pharmacological form of treatment, yoga based interventions are an alternative option for the treatment of mood disorders.[12]

Yoga For Relieving Stress

1. Shishuasana (Child pose)

Shishuasana is an excellent pose to decongest the chest and build a better immunity defense system.

2. setu bandhasana (Bridge pose)

The Setu Bandhasana opens the heart and improves blood circulation. It increases energy in the body to help put a better resistance against pathogens.

3. Halasana pose (plow pose)

halasana is a backward bend that releases white cells in the body and strengthens the immune system.

4. Bhujangasana pose(cobra pose)

It is a chest opening pose which helps release white cells that improve the body's immunity.

5. Dhanurasana pose

Dhanurasana is yet other pose that improves the flow of white cells by putting pressure on the digestive system.

6. Matsyasana pose

Matsyasana expands the chest and stimulates the thymus. This helps improve the body's immunity level. [13]

YOGA IS HELPFUL IN MANAGING COMMON DISORDERS:

Diabetes, Hypertension, Obesity and joints related problems are very common

now days. there is a significant effect of Yogic intervention on serum glucose level on Diabetics. Find that people with rheumatoid arthritis who participated in a yoga program over a three-month period had greater handgrip strength compared with those who did not practice yoga. observed in their study that there is a significant effect of Yogic Intervention on R A Factor in Gout Patients. It was observed that yoga practice has also significantly improved BP among people with hypertension. In another study it has been observed that there is a significant effect of Yogic intervention on Blood uric acid Level in Gout Patients.[14]

Role of yoga in boosting immunity:

Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)-This Yoga Asana helps to open the heart and lungs & to improve circulation by stretching the chest, lungs, shoulder, and abdomen. It is also helpful in bronchial asthma by improving breathing.[15]

Matsyasana (fish pose)-It is an immunity strengthening pose which detoxifies the body and helps to boost energy level. It can also open up nasal passages and relieve congestion.[16]

Adho-Mukha Svanasana (downward-facing dog)- This pose transfers energy throughout the body & offers excellent protection by increasing blood circulation.[17]

Uttanasana (forward bend)-This Yoga exercise is a great way to relieve congestion and protect the sinuses and mucus membranes, which are the first form of defence.

Dhanurasana (bow pose)-This Yoga pose helps to improve the flow of WBCs by putting pressure on the abdomen & increasing blood circulation to the abdominal organs. It makes the digestive

system more competent and healthier. As the digestive system is composed of many lymphocytes, the small WBC fight invaders and boost your overall immunity and health. The specific pose of Dhanurasana also tones up the legs and arms. In a nutshell, it can be stated as various Asanas nourishes the specific organs, especially lungs, by increasing the elastic recoil of the lungs & increasing the oxygen level in the blood. It also strengthens the various organs with their muscles & tissues by making more relaxed breathing easily without increasing the respiratory rate. [18]

Conclusion:

It is concluded that yoga is good for health. Regular yoga practise encourages endurance and flexibility as well as kindness, compassion, and improved self-control. Only three of the 196 sutras mention asana; the rest of the text covers other aspects of yoga such as conscious breathing, meditation and way of life. Nowadays, many people only associate yoga with asana, the physical practise of yoga but asana is only one of the many tools used for healing the individual. The physical practise of yoga known as asana is what most people now connect with yoga however there are many additional healing techniques that can be used in addition to asana, such as diet adjustments, sound therapy, and visualisation. It's thought that yoga has been practised from the very beginning of civilization. In essence, asanas help to lubricate the body's muscles, joints, ligaments, and other structures. This promotes more flexibility and blood flow.

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