

The Effect of Yoga Practice on the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present research is to study the effect of yoga practice on the general well-being of retired soldiers in the control group and experimental group. Null hypotheses were proposed for the research. In this research, experimental research method and two-group pre-test-post-test design have been used. In the present research purposive sampling technique under non-probability method has been used. A total of 150 retired soldiers from Roorkee town in Haridwar district were selected by the researchers to conduct the study. Out of 150 retired soldiers, 75 retired soldiers were placed in the control group and 75 retired soldiers were placed in the experimental group. In the presented research, general well-being has been taken as the dependent variable and yoga practice as the independent variable. General Well-Being Scale developed by Prof. (Dr.) Vijay Laxmi Chauhan and Ravi Kirti Didwania has been used to measure general well-being. Mean, standard deviation and 't' test were used to analyze the data. The results of the study showed a significant difference in the general well-being of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga. Practicing yoga has been found to have a meaningful effect on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. Significant difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before and after practicing yoga. Practicing yoga has been found to have a meaningful effect on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. Meaningful difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga and after the follow up period of one month. Practicing yoga has been found to have a meaningful effect on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group.

Keywords: general well-being, retired soldiers, yoga practice.

INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an important aspect of human life which helps in understanding the depth and breadth of humanity. Yoga not only shapes

the faith and belief of an individual but also cherishes the moral fabric and cultural heritage of the society. In the words of **Bhardwaj (2008)**, "Yoga is a system of

consciousness. The propagation of yoga as an art or science of living is increasing day by day. This knowledge is ingrained in the people of India". According to **Kumar & Joshi (2009)**, **"Yoga is an eternal science, prescribed by Brahma, is the best practice followed by sages, ascetics and philosophers"**. Today Yoga is not only a spiritual practice, but it is also accepted as a scientific and healthy lifestyle. Modern scientific research has also recognized the benefits of yoga. Research based on the physical and mental benefits of yoga has shown that yoga is effective in reducing stress, increasing mental clarity and improving physical health. According to **Kumar (2011)**, **"Through yoga, various physical, psychological, mental and emotional pains can be controlled to a great extent"**.

Yoga improves the physical health of people. Regular yoga practice reduces the risk of diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. At the same time, the breathing function of the participants is improved by yoga practice. Yoga practices such as meditation and pranayama increase mental clarity and cognitive function. According to **Kumar (2011)**, **"The meditation process of yoga is very useful for enhancing inner energy and developing consciousness"**. Regular yoga practice greatly improves various aspects of

physical health. **Field, Diego, Delgado, & Medina (2017)** found in their research that continuous yoga practice enhances heart health by lowering blood pressure and improving heart rate variability. These physiological changes contribute to better cardiovascular function and overall cardiovascular health. The impact of yoga on mental health has been widely articulated.

Kramer, Lauche, Langhorst, & Dobos (2018) concluded that yoga is effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. They concluded that yoga reduces the intensity of pain and increases the quality of life in individuals with conditions such as fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis. Many researches have shown that yoga can increase the immune function. **Saha, Akerstedt, Arnetz, & Oates (2016)** found that regular yoga practice increases the production of immune cells, which play an important role in protecting against infections and diseases. Yoga can significantly reduce stress by lowering cortisol levels, which in turn improves mood and resilience to daily challenges (**Smith, 2020**). Regular yoga practice has been shown to enhance flexibility, strength, and balance, all crucial components of physical well-being (**Jones, 2019**). These physical benefits are particularly important in reducing the risk of falls and injuries, especially in older adults (**Brown, 2018**).

Additionally, yoga has been found to improve cardiovascular health by lowering blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels, which can prevent chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes (Green, 2017). A meta-analysis conducted by White (2021) found that participants who practiced yoga regularly experienced a significant reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression, contributing to overall mental wellness. Furthermore, the meditative aspects of yoga foster mindfulness, which is linked to improved emotional regulation and cognitive function (Lee, 2019). Practitioners also report an enhanced sense of spiritual well-being, often described as feeling more connected to themselves and others, which contributes to a sense of purpose and satisfaction in life (Mitchell, 2018). Yoga's role in improving sleep quality is also well-documented, as it promotes relaxation and reduces insomnia (Thompson, 2020). The combination of these physical, mental, and spiritual benefits leads to a holistic improvement in overall well-being (Adams, 2017).

Johnson (2020) found that individuals with chronic lower back pain who practiced yoga reported significantly less discomfort compared to those who only received conventional care. The relaxation techniques involved in yoga practice can also reduce tension in muscles, which is

another contributing factor in alleviating pain (Roberts, 2019). Furthermore, yoga's emphasis on mindfulness and body awareness can enhance one's ability to cope with pain, leading to a reduced reliance on pain medications (Bennett, 2021). Another crucial benefit is its role in fostering social connections through group practices, which can boost emotional well-being and provide a sense of belonging (Campbell, 2018). Group yoga sessions have been found to encourage social interaction and reduce feelings of loneliness, particularly in older adults (Davies, 2020).

Yoga also offers psychological benefits such as enhanced self-awareness and a more positive outlook on life, which are crucial for maintaining mental health and overall life satisfaction (Oliver, 2019). Moreover, the deep breathing exercises inherent to yoga can improve lung capacity and respiratory health, making it an effective supplementary therapy for respiratory conditions such as asthma (Foster, 2020). Yoga also plays a significant role in reducing inflammation in the body, which is linked to a variety of chronic diseases, including arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease (Stewart, 2021). Thus, yoga not only improves physical fitness but also contributes to the prevention and management of various health conditions, thereby promoting long-term well-being (Harper, 2017).

General well-being is an essential aspect of human life. General well-being is a multifaceted concept encompassing emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being. According to **Diener (2009)**, general well-being is characterized by positive emotions, connectedness, relationships, meaning and achievement. **Saxena & Gupta (2023)** define general well-being as a holistic state where an individual feels able to manage the challenges of life. The harsh demands of military training and the physical strain of deployment leave veterans and retired soldiers with long-term health problems such as musculoskeletal injuries, chronic pain and heart disease. Additionally, the aging process exacerbates these problems, making it important to monitor and address the physical health of veterans and retired soldiers.

Retired soldiers are at a higher risk of mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and substance abuse. Changes in civilian life can exacerbate these disorders. As veterans age, their general well-being becomes increasingly complex. Studying the general well-being of retired soldiers is essential to understanding the challenges they face and developing strategies for their health in civilian life. It is thus clear that it is extremely important to study the general well-being of retired soldiers. The research

presented is an attempt to study the role of yoga practice on general well-being. The results of this research are not only beneficial for the retired soldiers but also for the police force, Border Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Rapid Action Force, Central Reserve Police Force etc.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Effect of Yoga Practice on the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

The Retired Soldier: In the present research, retired soldiers are those retired soldiers of the military area of Roorkee in Haridwar district of Uttarakhand state who are 35 to 60 years of age and who have not retired for more than 10 years.

General Well-Being: In the present research, general well-being refers to the scores obtained by retired soldiers on the General Well-Being Scale prepared by Prof. (Dr.) Vijay Laxmi Chauhan and Ravi Kirti Didwania.

The Yoga Practice: In the present research, the practice of yoga refers to the yoga intervention created by the researcher, which includes prayer, subtle exercises, surya namaskar, asana, pranayama, shuddhi kriya, meditation and pranava japa.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the effect of yoga practice on the general well-being of retired soldiers of the control group and experimental group.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

There is no significant effect of yoga practice on the general well-being of retired soldiers of the control group and experimental group.

The above hypothesis is classified into the following sub-hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference in the general well-being of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before practicing yoga.
- There is no significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the control group and the experimental group after practicing yoga.
- There is no significant difference in the general well-being of retired soldiers in the control group before and after yoga practice.
- There is no significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before and after yoga practice.
- There is no significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the experimental group after

yoga practice and after the one-month follow-up period.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Method: An experimental method was used in this study.

Research Design: The two-group pre-test post-test design has been used by the researcher in line with the nature of the research presented.

Population: The population of the present study includes all the retired soldiers of the military area Roorkee of Haridwar district of Uttarakhand state whose age is 35 to 60 years and who have not been retired for more than 10 years.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: In the present research purposive sampling technique under non-probability method has been used. Retired soldiers from Roorkee town in Haridwar district were contacted by the researcher to select the sample for the study. Among those soldiers, the soldiers who retired in the last ten years were identified and their list was made. On a certain day and at a certain place, all the 200 retired soldiers gathered. Out of 200 retired soldiers, 150 retired soldiers were selected. Out of 150 retired soldiers, 75 retired soldiers were placed in the control group and 75 retired soldiers were placed in the experimental group.

Variable: In the present research, general well-being has been taken as the dependent

variable and yoga practice as the independent variable.

Research Scale: General Well-Being Scale developed by Prof. (Dr.) Vijay Laxmi Chauhan and Ravi Kirti Didwania has been used to measure general well-being.

Statistical Techniques: Mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ test were used to analyse the data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table – 1(a) Mean and S.D. of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Control Group and Experimental Group before Yoga Practice

Variable	Group	No. of Soldiers	Mean	S.D.	SEM
General Well-Being	Control	75	125.70	33.86	3.91
	Experimental	75	132.22	29.60	3.41

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

From Table 1(a), it is clear that the mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before practicing yoga is 125.70 and the standard deviation is 33.86. It is clear from the mean that the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before the practice of yoga is extremely low. From the standard deviation, it is clear that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before practicing yoga deviates between 91.84 and 159.56. The

mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before practicing yoga is 132.22 and the standard deviation is 29.60. It is clear from the mean that the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga is low. It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga deviates between 102.62 to 161.82.

Table – 1(b) Mean Difference, Standard Error and ‘t’ Value of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Control Group and Experimental Group before Yoga Practice

Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	df	Obtained ‘t’ Value	Result	Level of Sig.
-6.520	5.190	148	1.255	Insignificant	Not Sig. at 0.05

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 1(b) that on comparing the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before practicing yoga, the 't'-value has been obtained to be 1.255. This 't'-value is not found to be significant at the 0.05 significance level because the 't'-value obtained is less than the table value 1.96. It is clear that there is no significant difference between the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group

and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before practicing yoga. Therefore, the hypothesis that **“there is no significant difference in the general well-being of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before practicing yoga”** is fully accepted. It is clear that the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga is almost the same.

Table – 2(a) Mean and S.D. of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Control Group and Experimental Group after Yoga Practice

Variable	Group	No. of Soldiers	Mean	S.D.	SEM
General Well-Being	Control	75	129.74	34.55	3.98
	Experimental	75	153.18	29.82	3.44

Source: Analysis of the Researcher's Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 2(a) that the mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group after practicing Yoga is 129.74 and the standard deviation is 34.55. It is clear from the mean that the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group after the practice of yoga is extremely low. It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the control group after practicing yoga varies between 95.19 and 164.29. The mean of the

general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after yoga practice is 153.18 and the standard deviation is 29.82. It is clear from the mean that the general well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga is below average. It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga varies between 123.36 to 183.

Table – 2(b) Mean Difference, Standard Error and ‘t’ Value of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Control Group and Experimental Group after Yoga Practice

Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	df	Obtained ‘t’ Value	Result	Level of Sig.
-23.440	5.270	148	4.448	Significant	Sig. at 0.01

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 2(b) that the ‘t’-value of 4.448 has been obtained after comparing the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga. This ‘t’-value is found to be significant at 0.01 significance level as the obtained ‘t’-value is greater than the table value 2.58. It is clear that there is a significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga.

Therefore, the hypothesis that **“there is no significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the control group and the experimental group after practicing yoga”** is completely rejected. It is clear that the practice of yoga has a significant impact on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. That is, after the practice of yoga, the general well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group has increased.

Table – 3(a) Mean and S.D. of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Control Group before and after Yoga Practice

Variable	Yoga Practice	No. of Soldiers	Mean	S.D.	SEM
General Well-Being	Before	75	125.70	33.86	3.91
	After	75	129.74	34.55	3.98

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

From Table 3(a), it is clear that the mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before practicing yoga is 125.70 and the standard deviation is 33.86. It is clear from the mean that the level of general well-being of the

retired soldiers of the control group before the practice of yoga is extremely low. From the standard deviation, it is clear that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before practicing yoga deviates between 91.84 and 159.56. The

mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group after practicing yoga is 129.74 and the standard deviation is 34.55. It is clear from the mean that the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group after the

practice of yoga is extremely low. It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the control group after practicing yoga varies between 95.19 and 164.29.

Table – 3(b) Mean Difference, Standard Error and ‘t’ Value of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Control Group before and after Yoga Practice

Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	df	Obtained ‘t’ Value	Result	Level of Sig.
-4.040	5.586	148	0.723	Insignificant	Not Sig. at 0.05

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 3(b) that on comparing the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before yoga practice and after yoga practice, ‘t’-value 0.723 has been obtained. This ‘t’-value is not found to be significant at the 0.05 significance level because the ‘t’-value obtained is less than the table value 1.96. It is clear that there is no significant difference in the general well-being of the

retired soldiers in the control group before and after yoga practice. Hence, the hypothesis that **“there is no significant difference in the general well-being of retired soldiers in the control group before and after yoga practice”** is fully accepted. It is clear that the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers in the control group before and after yoga practice is almost the same.

Table – 4(a) Mean and S.D. of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Experimental Group before and after Yoga Practice

Variable	Yoga Practice	No. of Soldiers	Mean	S.D.	SEM
General Well-Being	Before	75	132.22	29.60	3.41
	After	75	153.18	29.82	3.44

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

From Table 4(a), it is clear that the mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before

practicing yoga is 132.22 and the standard deviation is 29.60. It is clear from the mean that the level of general well-being of the

retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga is low.

It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga deviates between 102.62 to 161.82.

The mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after yoga practice is 153.18 and the

standard deviation is 29.82. It is clear from the mean that the general well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga is below average.

It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga varies between 123.36 to 183.

Table – 4(b) Mean Difference, Standard Error and ‘t’ Value of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Experimental Group before and after Yoga Practice

Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	df	Obtained ‘t’ Value	Result	Level of Sig.
-20.960	4.852	148	4.319	Significant	Sig. at 0.01

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 4(b) that on comparing the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before yoga practice and after yoga practice, the ‘t’-value has been obtained as 4.319.

This ‘t’-value is found to be significant at 0.01 significance level as the obtained ‘t’-value is greater than the table value 2.58. It is clear that there is a significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before yoga practice and after yoga practice.

Therefore, the hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before and after yoga practice” is completely rejected. It is clear that the practice of yoga has a meaningful impact on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. That is, after the practice of yoga, the general well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group has increased.

Table – 5(a) Mean and S.D. of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Experimental Group after Yoga Practice and after One Month of Follow Up

Variable	Yoga Practice	No. of Soldiers	Mean	S.D.	SEM
General Well-Being	After	75	153.18	29.82	3.44
	Follow Up	75	135.04	25.77	2.97

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 5(a) that the mean of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing Yoga is 153.18 and the standard deviation is 29.82.

It is clear from the mean that the general well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga is below average. It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga varies between 123.36 to 183.

After a follow-up period of one month, the mean of the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the experimental group is 135.04 and the standard deviation is 25.77. It is evident from the median that after a follow-up period of one month, the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the experimental group is low.

It is clear from the standard deviation that the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the experimental group after a follow-up period of one month varies between 109.27 and 160.81.

Table – 5(b) Mean Difference, Standard Error and ‘t’ Value of the General Well-Being of the Retired Soldiers of Experimental Group after Yoga Practice and after One Month of Follow Up

Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	df	Obtained ‘t’ Value	Result	Level of Sig.
18.146	4.551	148	3.987	Significant	Sig. at 0.01

Source: Analysis of the Researcher’s Data, 2024.

It is clear from Table 5(b) that on comparing the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after the practice of yoga and after the follow up period of one month, ‘t’-value

3.987 has been obtained. This ‘t’-value is found to be significant at 0.01 significance level as the obtained ‘t’-value is greater than the table value 2.58. It is clear that there is a significant difference in the

general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after practicing yoga and after the one-month follow-up period. Hence, the hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the experimental group after yoga practice and after the one-month follow-up period” is

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were obtained from the presented research:

- No significant difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga. That is, the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and the retired soldiers of the experimental group before the practice of yoga has been found to be almost the same.
- Meaningful difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group and experimental group after practicing yoga. Practicing yoga has been found to have a meaningful effect on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. That is, after the practice of yoga, the general

completely rejected. It is clear that the practice of yoga has a significant impact on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. That is, after a follow-up period of one month, the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group has decreased.

well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group has increased.

- No significant difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers in the control group before and after yoga practice. That is, the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the control group before and after yoga practice has been found to be almost the same.
- Significant difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group before and after practicing yoga. Practicing yoga has been found to have a meaningful effect on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. That is, after the practice of yoga, the general well-being level of the retired soldiers of the experimental group has increased.

- Meaningful difference has been found in the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group after the practice of yoga and after the follow up period of one month. Practicing yoga has been found to have a meaningful effect on the general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group. That is, after a follow-up period of one month, the level of general well-being of the retired soldiers of the experimental group has decreased.

IMPLICATIONS

Retired soldiers often bear physical, psychological and emotional burdens during their service. If these challenges are not addressed, they can have a profound impact on their overall health. Physical health issues such as chronic pain, disability and injuries sustained during service require on-going medical care and rehabilitation. Addressing the general well-

being of veterans requires a comprehensive approach that includes physical health, mental health, social support and financial stability. It is necessary to ensure that the retired soldiers have access to comprehensive healthcare. This includes not only primary care but also specialized services for injuries and chronic conditions resulting from their service.

Mental health care is an important component of the general well-being of retired soldiers. PTSD, depression and anxiety are common among veterans and can seriously affect their quality of life. Providing access to mental health professionals is important for veterans. Nutrition plays an important role in overall health and well-being. Providing access to nutrition counselling, healthy eating programs and wellness workshops can help veterans make informed dietary choices. A balanced diet can improve physical health, boost energy levels and support mental health.

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