

Yoga – The Holistic Therapy for Lifestyle Disorders

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Abstract

In this article an introduction of Yoga and its scientific analysis from Maharshi Patanjali is provided. How mind-body harmony could be achieved through practice of yoga is illustrated by the scientific approach of Yoga. According to MaharshiPatanjali, the main goal of Yoga is to free your mind from all suffering in order to finally achieve universal consciousness. To reach this state, Patanjali advocates the practice of astanga yoga meaning the eight-fold path. In this article, one of the eight fold path, “asana”, which refers to the practice of postures for achieving stability and firmness of the body both physically and psychologically, is emphasized. In this article there is no attempt to illustrate all the different steps of performing Yoga-Asanas. However, the benefits of practicing the major asanas can provide a path to a curative and preventive measure for all physical and/or psychological issues. Thus the practice of Yoga-Asanas with proper breathing taught by an expert can provide mind-body balance. Yoga considers that when the whole body has lowered life force, the result is a lowered vitality level, poor health and susceptibility to various diseases. No disease would occur if the body's life force were high enough to fight against it. Yoga is the union of mind and body with spirit.

Keywords

Yoga, Astanga, Health, Disease, Union



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INTRODUCTION

The word 'Yoga' is derived from the verbal root word "Yuj" in Sanskrit it means joining act of union, uniting etc. Usually the human soul attaining complete union with the ultimate divine power or the supreme spirit is considered as the Yoga. The Yoga sutras in ancient India were reassigned orally by erudite sages to their disciples and the tradition continued for the ages so on. Patanjali, further organized these sutras which are available now days¹. Yoga considers that when the whole body has lowered life force, the result is a lowered vitality level, poor health and susceptibility to various diseases. No disease would occur if the body's life force were high enough to fight against it. Yoga is the union of mind and body with spirit. During practice of Yoga, one can deeply connect to its innermost self through mindful exercise, involving Asanas, controlled breathing i.e. Pranayama and meditation. These postures strengthen the body, the meditation sharpens one's focus, and the breath calms the mind and heals the body. When the three are in harmony, the result is improved fitness, flexibility, stress management, relaxation

skills, mental clarity, and overall well-being. There are many techniques of yoga.

Types of The Yoga-Yoga mainly classified as Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga. According to Yoga Sutra there are Ashtanga Yogas.

Ashtanga Yoga-Yoga Sutra of Patanjali Maharshi is the earliest book, which is available on Yoga. The eight limbs of Yoga are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi². The first four are considered as Bahiranga (external) Yoga, whereas the later are consider as the Antaranga (internal) Yoga.

1. Yama: - The principles and ethical rules followed in personal and social behaviors are Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, and Aparigraha.
2. Niyama: - These are the personal ethical rules for everyone. By the Niyama one can get control of the thoughts and purification of the body.
3. Asana: - The Asana gives firmness and flexibility to the body. The static posture is usually used for the meditation in which body remain still.

4. Pranayama: - It is the method through which the vital energy is enhanced. The control of the Prana can be achieved by the practice of Pranayama. It does the purification of the Nadis and provides the lightness to body.

5. Pratyahara- It stands for the withdrawal of the senses, cognition and action from both the external world and the images or impressions in the mind i.e. bringing inward

6. Dharana: - Pratyahara is nothing but withdrawing the senses from the external worldly things where is Dharana is the initial state of Dhyana.

7. Dhyana: - Dhyana is the meditation. Here the awareness of the inner self is developed.

8. Samadhi: - It is the very highest state of the awareness or trance state. The rejecting the perception of the external part and meditating on the internal part or the state of absolute contemplation is Samadhi.

First two part mentions about avoiding mental transgression.

Benefits of Yoga and Asana

In the past few years, Yoga has remained a centre of attraction for research & therapeutic purpose for modern epidemic

diseases as nonpharmaceutical measure. Life style disorders like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, mental stress, coronary heart disease, and COPD are the prime areas where yoga is being indicated now a day as complement to drug therapy. Studies report beneficial effect of yoga in these conditions.

General benefits

Yoga helps to attain the steadiness of the body. Regularity of the Asanas can help one to have a strong, body with increased capacity to withstand the any sort of the illness. It helps to improve the inner consciousness. It also helps to boost up self-confidence improves concentration, creativity, and coordination.

Systemic Benefits

Effects on endocrine: The regular practice increases the blood circulation towards the endocrine glands and there by normalizes their secretions. Some stress related hormones, which may do the hyper activity of the sympathetic nervous system and there by causes the hyperglycemia. Asana gives the maximum relaxation to body and mind. And also balances the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous activity. It also decreased the cholesterol, Serum LDL, VLDL, and triglycerides level³⁻⁵. Yoga also

found to be helpful in control of type II diabetes mellitus and can act as an add-on conventional medical therapy⁶. Study also shows that Yoga helps to lower fasting as well as postprandial blood glucose levels and acetylated hemoglobin⁷ and also tend to reduce the dose of anti-diabetic drugs³.

Musculoskeletal system: Asana improves muscular tone. It improves the strength of the muscle and gives proper relaxation. The rhythmic contraction and relaxation of the muscles enhances the glucose up take by the muscle and also it helps to reduce the amount of fat in the body. It helps in removing of the metabolic waste products.

Cardiovascular system: Studies have suggested that Yoga slow down progression of atherosclerosis in subjects with severe coronary artery disease⁸. It improves the blood circulation to the involved part⁹.

Respiratory system: Yoga significantly improves lung functions and strength of respiratory muscles¹⁰⁻¹¹. Studies also indicated that reduction in the dose of medicines in patients suffering from COPD can also be achieved by regular Yoga, and Pranayama practice¹²⁻¹³.

Obesity and hypertension: Meditation practices may modify the decontrolled

processes associated with Bunder Eating disorder in several ways. As a relaxation technique, meditation may decrease both emotional and physiological reactivity in obesity as essential hypertension. As a way of improving self-acceptance, it may decrease the relative appeal of binge eating as an escape mechanism and facilitate general therapeutic change. Studies have shown that regular Yoga exercise resulted in decrease in body mass index (BMI), waist hip ratio and eventually body weight of individuals⁷. Yoga has been found to have influential antihypertensive effect when tried along with meditation¹⁴⁻¹⁵.

Systematic practice of yoga helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. It unites physical and mental authorities and also helps to control stress and anxiety. Flexibility, muscle strength and body tone is improved by Yoga. Outcomes confirmed that yoga exhibits positive effects for treatment of various systemic ailments and lifestyle disorders. Practice of yoga is beneficial for all the dimensions of health. Physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of the person can be improved and well maintained with the regular Yoga and at the same time it also promotes harmony with nature. The ultimate aim of Yoga is to

transform the individual and achieve
ultimate deliverance.

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