

Role of Integrating Yoga and its Ability to Increase Quality of Life

Gudiya¹, Shashank Nautiyal²

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Abstract

Modern life patterns affect our health in different aspects physically, psychologically, and socially. There is a need for increasing people awareness about the effect of modern life to control the effects of the patterns of life. Promoting healthy lifestyle includes proper eating, physical activity, and better way of communicating and socializing in the community. All these have positive impacts which we can easily get in practising yoga. Thousands of years ago yoga originated in India, Yoga will reduce the risk of getting so many diseases which resulted from our day-to-day lifestyles. Yoga is reported to reduce stress and anxiety, improves autonomic functions by triggering neurohormonal mechanisms by the suppression of sympathetic activity, it involves eight limbs of yoga (Asthanayoga), which include yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi. Health is a primary goal of any individual and hence without spending lots of money by practicing Yoga one can achieve proper health. This article therefore, deals with significance of Yoga in modern life to encourage the reader to practice Yoga to sustain physical, social, and spiritual health.

Keywords: Yoga; Stress; Anxiety; Yama; Niyama; Asana; Pranayama; Pratyahara; Dharana; Dhyana; and Samadhi.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to talking about how important yoga is to modern life. The issues related to contemporary life must be discussed. It is certain that contemporary habits make life easier for Today's man. However, it also has a detrimental impact on a person's bodily, social, psychological, and spiritual well being. There are too many

to list all the causes of these issues. Lack of exercise, utilising technology enabled devices to make life easier and spending a lot of time on them, travelling by means of transportation, and spending a lot of time sitting in front of computers and in offices are a few of them. The chance of being overweight or obese is increased by modern lifestyle, Generating diabetes, heart conditions, and cancer as a result. Many people suffer from numerous respiratory ailments caused by pollution brought on by contemporary technology. People are psychologically more prone to increasing stress and depression. If you spend a lot of time online, you could become socially isolated. Yoga is a practise that has been around for ages and was created to help people with their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It has been a long-standing custom in India and is currently gaining popularity in Western culture. "yoga" refers to the unification of our consciousness with

Author Affiliation: ¹PG Scholar, Department of PG Kaya Chikitsa, ²Assistant Professor, Department of Kriyasharir, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Gurukul Campus, Haridwar 249408, Uttarakhand, India.

Corresponding Author: Shashank Nautiyal, Assistant Professor, Department of Kriyasharir, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Gurukul Campus, Haridwar 249408, Uttarakhand, India.

E-mail: shashank46nautiyal@gmail.com

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the Universal Divine Consciousness.¹ The Rigveda, the oldest book ever written by human, references the yogic meditation of the wise, and the Yajurveda urges us to practise yoga in order to improve our mental health, physical stamina, and prosperity. Yogic ideas abound throughout the Upanishads.² In addition, the Bhagavat-Gita frequently uses terminology connected to yoga, such as pranayama and samadhi. Raja-yoga, a technique of focus to free the soul or atma from the bonds of maya and into the Paramatma, was understood by the ancient Indian rishis to always require a healthy body. "Hatha yoga," which consists of asana, mudra, pranayama, etc., was created. According to the Gharanda Samhita, there are 84 lakh asanas, of which 16000 are the best, and only approximately 300 are widely practised. Sidhasana, Padmasana, Sinhasana, and Bhadrasana are the four main classes that "Hathayoga-pradipika" divides all asanas into. Additionally, asana can be divided into two categories: shasthasana (to achieve a healthy physique) and dhyanasana (to keep the spinal cord free).

History of yoga

Yoga is a term used to refer to any 'practises' that aid in a union between the self and the Divine. The Sanskrit root Yuj, which means to yoke, join, or attach, is the source of the word. Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Hatha Yoga are the four types of yoga.³ "Yoga is founded on a concept that is useful and practical for our everyday life. Yoga induces favourable physiological changes and has solid scientific underpinnings."⁴

Astang Yoga

"yoga" refers to the unification of our consciousness with the Universal Divine Consciousness. The techniques outlined in the yoga sutras may have been practised as early as 3000 BCE, according to archaeological findings and other sources. According to oral tradition, the date might even be earlier. In the past, knowledgeable teachers would impart the yoga sutras orally to their students. Patanjali is thought to have organised and compiled these sutras between the years 400 BCE), according to scholars.⁵ The eight steps or limbs that make up yoga, according to Patanjali, are each equally significant and work together as a whole. These eight limbs are meant to lead to self-realization or discriminative enlightenment.⁶ Following are the eight limbs of yoga: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.⁷

Yama:

The yamas are seen as rules of restraint, abstinence, self-regulation, and concern our interactions with other people and the outside world.

Niyama:

The niyamas are self-training rituals or practises that focus on our inner selves. These are ways to train your body, senses, and intellect on your own.

Asana:

Postures should be practised to prepare the body for extended meditation sessions. Any position that is stable, still, and pleasant can be employed for meditation. The head, neck, and chest must all be aligned while maintaining the spine's natural curve. It is accomplished by letting go of attempt to sit in a specific position and letting attention merge with the limitless.

Pranayama:

Controlling your breathing and using awareness-based breathing techniques to breathe slowly and subtly. Exhalation takes a while. There is no gap between inhaling and exhaling. Dharana (mind control) and concentration are aided by it. There are many varieties of pranayama.

Pratyahara:

Removal of the cognitive and action senses from both the outside world and the thoughts or images in the mind. Pratyahara is the process by which the mental organs of the senses and acts (in drieras) integrate or return to the mind field from which they originally emerged when they stop engaging with the associated objects in their mental realm.

Dharana:

It involves keeping or focusing the mind's attention on a single object.

Dhyana:

It is sustained concentration.

Samadhi:

Trance or blissful state, becoming totally absorbed in a thing or the Divine.

Yoga and Pranayama: Beneficial Health Impacts

Today, a lot of people live in "sympathetic overdrive." This happens when the body experiences a constant stressor, and the daylong short-term sympathetic stress response results. Regrettably, our bodies were not actually built to

endure these on going stresses. When under stress, cortisol helps the body's ability to break down fat, protein, and carbohydrates by gluconeogenesis, which turns them into glucose. As a result of this longer lasting stress reaction, blood sugar levels rise, the immune system is suppressed, and the kidneys retain sodium and water, increasing blood volume and blood pressure. Cortisol will exert negative feedback to the hypothalamus and pituitary gland with lower release of both CRH and ACTH at a given blood concentration. Homeostasis now returns to the body and to the system. However, if the body continues to experience stress, whether it be actual or perceived, this cycle will persist, resulting in continued continuous activation of the Hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis.⁸ Numerous studies have demonstrated that doing yoga immediately reduces both HPA axis reactions to stress. It is commonly known that yoga can help with stress management.⁹ Additionally, it was discovered that a short yoga based relaxation programme normalises the autonomic nervous system's operation by shifting both the sympathetic and parasympathetic indices towards the more "normal" middle range of the reference values.¹⁰

According to studies, yoga lowers levels of plasma rennin, nor-epinephrine, and epinephrine as well as blood glucose, nor-epinephrine, and salivary cortisol.¹³ Yoga dramatically lowers systolic and diastolic blood pressure as well as heart rate.¹⁴ Numerous evaluations of the literature have been done to look at how yoga affects various illnesses, such as anxiety, cancer, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and cardiovascular disease.¹⁵

One of the first and most noticeable advantages of yoga is increased flexibility.¹⁶ Yoga is thought to relate to reduced aches and pains in part because of the gradual relaxation of the muscles and connective tissues surrounding the bones and joints that occurs with repeated practise. Yoga promotes muscle growth and/or strength maintenance, preventing diseases including arthritis, osteoporosis, and back discomfort.¹⁷ The joints are moved through their full range of motion during a yoga session, which helps to avoid problems like arthritis and chronic pain by compressing and soaking sections of cartilage that are not frequently used and delivering fresh nutrients, oxygen, and blood to the area. Neglected cartilage will eventually wear down and reveal the underlying bone if not properly maintained. Numerous studies have demonstrated how asana, meditation, or a combination of the two can help persons with chronic pain issues like back pain, Carpel Tunnel Syndrome, arthritis, and other

chronic conditions feel less pain. Additionally, proprioception and balance are improved by yoga.

Yoga also 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. Yoga also thins the blood, lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke since these conditions are frequently brought on by blood clots. Twisting positions squeeze venous blood from internal organs and, when the twist is relaxed, enable oxygenated blood to flow in. Inverted postures promote the return of venous blood from the legs and pelvis to the heart, where it is pumped via the lungs and given a new supply of oxygen. Numerous studies have shown that practising yoga can lower resting heart rate, improve maximum oxygen intake and utilisation during exercise, and increase endurance. Lowering the risk of a heart attack requires regular aerobic exercise. While not all yoga is aerobic, even yoga asanas that do not raise heart rate enough to be considered aerobic can nevertheless help the heart and circulatory system.

Yoga enhances physical, mental, and spiritual wellness and fosters a certain tranquility that many cancer patients seek, even though it neither prevents nor treats cancer.¹⁸ For cancer patients, yoga, breathing techniques, and meditation can lower stress, accelerate recovery, and improve quality of life. Stress exacerbates the growth of tumours and other cancer markers; thus, it is especially crucial for persons with cancer to effectively manage and reduce stress. There are several presumptions that support the use of yoga based therapies with cancer patients. Cancer patients may at first benefit from the poses themselves, which are made to work every muscle, neuron, and gland in the body. The poses specifically target any joint or organ where there is tension, holding, or energy obstruction. As this tension is released, energy moves more easily throughout the body, giving patients a feeling of heightened power and well-being as well as a harmony between their mind, body, and soul.

Meditation

It seems that regular meditation practise can alter both the structure and the function of the brain. It has been discovered that those who practise meditation more frequently have stronger brain architecture in specific regions. Numerous studies have demonstrated that yogic techniques like mindful meditation can increase grey matter and brain thickness, notably in regions mediating executive function and emotional regulation. The insula, ventromedial pre-frontal cortex, and

anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) stand out among these areas.²⁰ Proprioception, self-awareness, and emotional control are all regulated by the insula. The brain's executive centre, which includes planning, problem solving, and emotional regulation, is the ventromedial pre-frontal cortex. The anterior cingulate cortex is the centre for the self-regulatory process, which enables one to keep track of attention conflicts and promotes more cognitive flexibility.²¹ The left hippocampus, which is crucial for the development of long-term memory, emotional control, and cognition, as well as being a crucial area of the brain that plays a crucial role in the resilience to chronic stress and depressive states, has been shown to thicken during meditation. This effect may be caused by the expression of hippocampal neurotrophic protein (also known as brain derived neurotrophic factor, The hippocampus is where post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and resilience to stress are stored. Several studies have demonstrated that higher hippocampal activation correlates favourably with resilience and adversely with PTSD and depression symptoms. Patients with PTSD have significant hippocampal volume loss, decreased ventromedial PFC activity, and insufficient amygdala inhibition, all of which contribute to increased fear, enduring negative emotions, impulsivity, anxiety, and depressive rumination. According to a recent study, hatha yoga asanas by themselves can reduce stress and foster a more relaxed attitude.

Risks of Yoga Practice

Although there are numerous safe ways to practise yoga, some are physically demanding and might not be suitable for everyone. Prior to using yoga as a form of therapy, elderly individuals or those with mobility issues may want to consult a doctor. In the reviewed medical literature, there is only one event that has been mentioned in relation to the dangers of practising yoga. The most catastrophic instance that has been documented involves a female practitioner who suffered a stroke after developing vertebro basilar artery thrombosis from an intimal rupture. This was ascribed to assuming an odd neck posture when practising yoga.²² Yoga can be regarded as a safe type of exercise if it is performed under the direction and supervision of a certified trainer, despite not being completely risk free. However, yoga may be a very alluring method for many patients with depression, anxiety, or stress to better manage symptoms. Yoga's scientific study has shown that mental and physical health are not only closely related, but also almost identical. Yoga practise is a relatively low risk, high yield method

of enhancing general health, according to growing body of research.

CONCLUSION

The modern way of living is complicated and tense. People in metropolitan regions are therefore busy with their job schedules in order to fulfil their needs for survival. Due to technological advancement, the modern man lives in a hostile environment. The job style, eating habits, and family life structure of today's lives, particularly in urban industrial culture, have drastically changed. In modern society, the extended family structure is unimaginable, and the nuclear family structure itself is chaotic due to the enormous demands it places on its administration. The stress brought on by this way of living contributed to a variety of ailments in the people. Yoga practise is therefore important in managing health issues brought on by the circumstances of modern living. Holistic practises like yoga improve the body, mind, soul, and society.

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