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A PEER-REVIEWED INTER-DISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL



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Benefits of Yoga: Builds Strength and Awareness and Brings Together the Mind and Body

Shri Sangappa Chalageri

Introduction:

Yoga is a spiritual, mental and physical practice that has been around since ages. With time, people have discovered a number of health benefits associated with yoga. Yoga does more than burning calories and strengthening muscles, it is a workout which involves both body and mind. Human beings are made up of three components - body, mind and soul. Corresponding to these are three needs that must be satisfied for contented life: the physical need is health; the psychological need knowledge; and the spiritual need is inner peace. When all three present, there is harmony.

As Sri Sri Ravi Shankar puts it, "Health is not a mere absence of disease. It is a dynamic expression of life – in terms of how joyful, loving and enthusiastic you are." (Dash, B.N, 92). This is where yoga helps: postures, pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation are a holistic fitness package. "The term "yoga" in the

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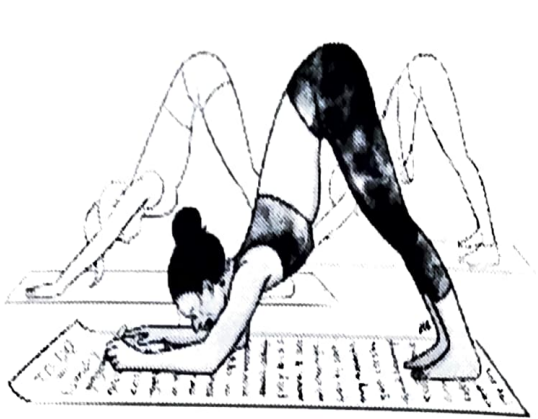
Western world often denotes a modern form of Hatha yoga and a posture-based physical fitness, stress-relief and relaxation technique, consisting largely of the asanas; this differs from traditional yoga, which focuses on meditation and release from worldly attachments.” (Burley, Mikel 2000)

We have seen that Yoga is not something of an ordinary physical exercise or a way of worship. It is means through which not only does one enjoy the blessing of this life possessing good health but also mitigates the pains and sufferings of death. It is erroneous to think that yoga was meant for the people of antiquity only. Rather modern man needs yogic practices more than the ancient man did simply because the modern world which is getting madder everyday in the pursuit of materialistic philosophy and sensual pleasures is a conglomeration of psychic tensions and physical tribulations. “Yoga is first mentioned in the Rigveda, and is referred to in a number of the Upanishads. The first known appearance of the word ‘yoga’ with the same meaning as the modern term is in the Katha Upanishad.” (Stuart Ray 2005)

Yoga originated in India and spread too many parts of the West- especially Europe and America where people are readily embracing it is a means of acquiring mental equilibrium and peace. There are, now days, more yogic centers in America than we find in India. A lot of research is being conducted on the on the effect of yogic exercise on the body and mind but there are higher stages in Yoga where scientific experimentation especially that in the laboratory, cannot intrude upon. These stages are a matter of purely personal experience and practice. Even psychological introspection may lead to nothing substantial from the point of view of research. In Tibet, every Lama takes it to be his duty to practice yogic exercises every day. They think that Tibet is ahead of India now in this respect.



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Benefits of Yoga:

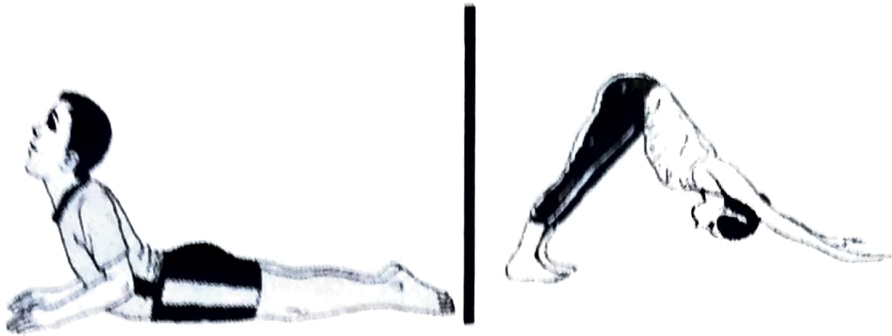
- Yogic asana are a cure and a prevention of many diseases especially those of stomach or digestion.
- It is a means by which the delicate balance of the bodily humours of Kaff, Pita is maintained.
- Yoga is the simplest form of relaxation. Thus the horror of psycho somatic disease does not loom large on those who practices Yoga daily.
- Yoga has a hygienic effect. Exercise like Net, Dhoti, Neoli etc. are meant for cleaning various internal vital organs of body.
- For mental poise and peace yoga is panacea
- In order to accomplish spiritual tasks, it is necessary to stimulate higher processes of the brain for which yoga helps us to a great extent.
- There has cropped up great controversy about the effect and efficacy of breathing exercises in Yoga but it should be understood that Yoga helps in regularizing the breathing mechanism and increasing vital capacity.
- It is a means to the achievement of salvation after death. Science cannot corroborate this assumption.
- It is the most economically activity

Benefits of Yoga in Daily Life:

- **All-round Fitness:** You are truly healthy when you are not just physically fit but also mentally and emotionally balanced. This is where yoga helps: postures, pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation are a holistic fitness package.
- **Weight Loss:** What many want! Yoga benefits here too. Sun Salutations and Kapal Bhati pranayama are some ways to help lose weight with yoga. Moreover, with regular practice of yoga, we tend to become more sensitive to the kind of food our body asks for and when. This can also help keep a check on weight.
- **Stress Relief:** A few minutes of yoga during the day can be a great way to get rid of stress that accumulates daily - in both the body and mind. Yoga postures, pranayama and meditation are effective techniques to release stress. You can also experience how yoga helps de-tox the body and de-stress the mind at the Art of Living Yoga Level 2 Course.
- **Inner Peace:** We all love to visit peaceful, serene spots, rich in natural beauty. Little do we realize that peace can be found right within us and we can take a mini-vacation to experience this any time of the day! Benefit from a small holiday every day with yoga and meditation. Yoga is also one of the best ways to calm a disturbed mind.
- **Improved Immunity:** Our system is a seamless blend of the body, mind and spirit. An irregularity in the body affects the mind and similarly unpleasantness or restlessness in the mind can manifest as an ailment in the body. Yoga poses massage organs and strengthen muscles; breathing techniques and meditation release stress and improve immunity.
- **Living with Greater Awareness:** The mind is constantly involved in activity – swinging from the past to the future – but never staying in the present. By simply being aware of this tendency of the mind, we can actually save ourselves from getting stressed or worked up and relax the mind. Yoga and

pranayama help create that awareness and bring the mind back to the present moment, where it can stay happy and focused.

- **Better Relationships:** Yoga can even help improve your relationship with your spouse, parents, friends or loved ones! A mind that is relaxed, happy and contented is better able to deal with sensitive relationship matters. Yoga and meditation work on keeping the mind happy and peaceful; benefit from the strengthened special bond you share with people close to you.
- **Increased Energy:** Do you feel completely drained out by the end of the day? Shuttling between multiple tasks through the day can sometimes be quite exhausting. A few minutes of yoga everyday provides the secret to feeling fresh and energetic even after a long day. A 10-minute online guided meditation benefits you immensely, leaving you refreshed and recharged in the middle of a hectic day.
- **Better Flexibility & Posture:** You only need to include yoga in your daily routine to benefit from a body that is strong, supple and flexible. Regular yoga practice stretches and tones the body muscles and also makes them strong. It also helps improve your body posture when you stand, sit, sleep or walk. This would, in turn, help relieve you of body pain due to incorrect posture.
- **Better Intuition:** Yoga and meditation have the power to improve your intuitive ability so that you effortlessly realize what needs to be done, when and how, to yield positive results. It works. You only need to experience it yourself. Remember, yoga is a continuous process. So keep practicing! The deeper you move into your yoga practice, the more profound are its benefits.



In India, lot of money is being spent on the research on Yoga. It is again becoming popular every day. Centre are being opened everywhere to attract people to the practice of Yoga. Big Yoga Centers at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras etc. make people conscious that salvation of humanity lies in yoga. Living in harmony with oneself and one's inner nature, and with others, are high goals as well as the secret wishes of most people. Yoga provides a system of practices that help approach that goal. Yoga can help develop the inherent goodness in people which can then be expressed externally. If we achieve that, we will undoubtedly contribute to a better world and live happier lives. Love and laughter, compassion and a sense of humour are important ingredients in the delicious meal of a happy life. This is the greatest of all Yogas.

Conclusion:

Yoga offers physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages. And, if you're going through an illness, recovering from surgery or living with a chronic condition, yoga can become an integral part of your treatment and potentially hasten healing. Yoga is as good as basic stretching for easing pain and improving mobility in people with lower back pain. Regular yoga practice may reduce levels of stress and body-wide inflammation, contributing to healthier hearts. Several of the factors contributing to heart disease, including high blood pressure and excess weight, can also be addressed through yoga.

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