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Awesomeness of Yoga Practices to maintain and energizing the body for Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

We manage to do many activities with full attention, but sometimes there is no mental relaxation. And there are other moments when our awareness seems to have expanded, but the mind is not sharp. Is it then possible to be totally aware, relaxed and happy, as well as have sharpness of intelligence at the same time? Yes, Yoga can help us to achieve this balanced state of awareness that gives clarity and sharpness of mind, as well as calmness and joy. Yoga is a mind and body practice with historical origins in ancient Indian philosophy. Various styles of yoga combine physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation. Yoga in Daily Life is a system of practice consisting of eight levels of development in the areas of physical, mental, social and spiritual health. When the body is physically healthy, the mind is clear, focused and stress is under control. This gives the space to connect with loved ones and maintain socially healthy relationships. When you are healthy you are in touch with your inner Self, with others and your surroundings on a much deeper level, which adds to your spiritual health. The word "Yoga" originates from Sanskrit and means "to join, to unite". Yoga exercises have a holistic effect and bring body, mind, consciousness and soul into balance. Yogic techniques are known to improve one's overall performance. Pranayama is an important, yet little known part of Yoga. Until recently, this art and science of yogic breathing was almost completely unknown to the common man like many other ancient Indian arts. Pranayama techniques act to purify the nadis including these three main energy channels. In 5,000 years of yoga history, the term "yoga" has gone through a renaissance in current culture, exchanging the loincloth for a leotard and leggings. Yoga has become popular as a form of physical exercise based upon asanas (physical poses) to promote improved control of mind and body and to enhance well-being. The main goals of "Yoga in Daily Life" are physical health, mental health, social health, spiritual health, self-realization or realization of the Divine within us. These goals are attained by Love and help for all living beings, respect for life, protection of nature and the environment, A peaceful state of mind, full vegetarian diet, Pure thoughts and positive lifestyle, Physical, mental and spiritual practices, Tolerance for all nations, cultures and religions. In this review paper, types of yoga and their health benefits are delineated precisely.
Keywords: Anxiety, Sleeplessness, Health benefits, Meditation, Relaxation, Yoga types, Awareness, Physical postures

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INTRODUCTION

Yoga attends to all aspects of our being – body, mind, breath, emotions and the inner Self. Awareness of breath establishes us in the present moment. Yoga asanas contribute towards physical well-being. Yoga postures done with full awareness provides a gentle massage to all the internal organs, and leads you to a relaxed state of mind. In a relaxed and steady posture, you can feel a joyful expansion. Yoga helps us become aware of our body, including the pains or discomfort in any part of the body. It is possible to release the pain, by just taking our attention to it. The secret of awareness is to just watch everything that

is going on in the body and mind - as a witness. Do not resist, but watch with a smile! Make our life a celebration - with Yoga!

Yoga is a 5000 year old tradition. In India monks went into seclusion for years with the goal of creating a dis-ease free strong body. The original intention was to be able to sit in meditation for hours but with a achy body that is impossible to do. The postures of yoga were each created for a specific health purpose. To Detoxify, realign musculature, strengthen muscle, and create flexibility. Along with correcting the fallacies of the body, these yogis went about trying to find how to correct fallacies of the mind. An entire philosophy was created, based solely around leading a human being finding his or her bliss. The teachings were so dead-on that they are still practiced 5000 years later. Yoga has become more popular than ever, with celebrities, politicians, business people, and almost every walk of life currently practicing. The important thing to understand about this way of thinking is yoga is not a religion. You can be from any background and reap its benefits.

Regular practice of Yoga establishes us in the Self; we feel a sense of belongingness with everyone and everything in Creation. We are then at peace with ourselves and everything around us. Enhance our good health and energy - by eating with awareness. When we are pre-occupied or feel upset, we tend to eat mindlessly. However when the mind is aware, we are conscious of what we eat and how much we take in. The mind swings back and forth, from the past to the future, drowning us in a whirlpool of thoughts, worries, fears... An effective way to break this chain of thoughts is to become aware of the thoughts. Breath is a powerful tool to deal with the mind. We don't have to run away to a forest or a cave, to calm down the mind. Yoga with asanas, pranayamas, meditation... can gently guide us on this inner journey. With Yoga, we can attain a pleasant and composed state of mind. When our mind is aware, we are sensitive to other's feelings and to our surrounding. A clear mind is powerful like a beam, helping us to take effective decisions. When the mind is calm, creativity dawns; productivity increases.

Living with awareness cultures our speech and actions. You acquire a skill in dealing with people and situations. You do not react to situations or what people say, but respond with calmness. When the mind is aware, you can be proactive instead of provocative - in our speech and actions. Often words just shoot out of the mouth. As you grow in the path of Yoga, our words become more powerful. Meditation is an essential limb of Yoga. In meditation we get a glimpse of our Self, the inner core of our being that is calm, settled and serene. Regular practice of Yoga establishes us in the Self; we feel a sense of belongingness with everyone and everything in Creation. We are then at peace with ourself and everything around us. The secret of awareness is to just watch everything that is going on in the body and mind - as a witness. Do not resist, but watch with a smile! Make our life a celebration - with Yoga!

TYPES AND STYLES OF YOGA

The word "yoga" is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj meaning "to yoke or join together." Some people take this to mean a union of mind and body. There are many styles of yoga. A person's fitness level and desired practice outcome determines the type of yoga class to which they are best suited. Yoga is defined as having eight branches or limbs: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi. Practicing yoga has many potential health benefits including relieving low back pain, assisting with stress management and increasing balance and flexibility. There is some evidence to suggest that pregnant women taking yoga classes are less likely to experience problems in later pregnancy and labor. Modern forms of yoga have evolved into exercise focusing on strength, flexibility, and breathing to boost physical and mental well-being.

There are many styles of yoga, and no style is more authentic or superior to another; the key is to choose a class appropriate for our fitness. Increasing lubrication of the joints, ligaments and tendons – likewise, the well-researched yoga positions exercise the different tendons and ligaments of the body. Surprisingly it has been found that the body which may have been quite rigid starts experiencing a remarkable flexibility in even those parts which have not been consciously worked upon. Why? It is here that the remarkable research behind yoga positions proves its mettle. Seemingly unrelated “non strenuous” yoga positions act upon certain parts of the body in an interrelated manner. When done together, they work in harmony to create a situation where flexibility is attained relatively easily. Increasing Flexibility – yoga has positions that act upon the various joints of the body including those joints that are never really on the ‘radar screen’ let alone exercised. Complete Detoxification – By gently stretching muscles and joints as well as massaging the various organs, yoga ensures the optimum blood supply to various parts of the body. This helps in the flushing out of toxins from every nook and cranny as well as providing nourishment up to the last point. This leads to benefits such as delayed ageing, energy and a remarkable zest for life. Excellent toning of the muscles – Muscles that have become flaccid or weak are stimulated repeatedly to shed excess flab and flaccidity.

- **Ashtanga yoga:** based on ancient yoga teachings but popularized in the 1970s, each of the six established sequences of postures rapidly link every movement to breath.
- **Bikram yoga:** held in artificially heated rooms at temperatures of nearly 105 degrees and 40% humidity, Bikram is a series of 26 poses and sequence of two breathing exercises.
- **Hatha yoga:** a generic term for any type of yoga that teaches physical postures. When a class is labeled as "hatha," it is usually a gentle introduction to the basic yoga postures.
- **Iyengar yoga:** focused on finding the proper alignment in each pose and using props such as blocks, blankets, straps, chairs and bolsters to do so.
- **Jivamukti yoga:** meaning, "liberation while living," jivamukti yoga emerged in 1984, incorporating spiritual teachings and vinyasa style practice. Each class has a theme, which is explored through yoga scripture, chanting, meditation, asana, pranayama, and music, and can be physically intense.
- **Kripalu yoga:** teaches practitioners to get to know, accept and learn from the body. In a Kripalu class, each student learns to find their own level of practice on a given day by looking inward. The classes usually begin with breathing exercises and gentle stretches, followed by a series of individual poses and final relaxation.
- **Kundalini yoga:** the Sanskrit word kundalini means coiled, like a snake. Kundalini yoga is a system of meditation directed toward the release of kundalini energy. A class typically begins with chanting and ends with singing, and in between features asana, pranayama, and meditation designed to create a specific outcome.
- **Power yoga:** an active and athletic style of yoga adapted from the traditional ashtanga system in the late 1980s.
- **Sivananda:** a system based on a five-point philosophy that holds that proper breathing, relaxation, diet, exercise, and positive thinking work together to form a healthy yogic lifestyle. Typically uses the same 12 basic asanas, bookended by sun salutations and savasana poses.
- **Viniyoga:** intended to be adaptable to any person, regardless of physical ability, viniyoga teachers are required to be highly trained and tend to be experts on anatomy and yoga therapy.
- **Yin:** a quiet, meditative yoga practice, also called taoist yoga. Yin yoga enables the release of tension in key joints: ankles, knees, hips, the whole back, neck, and shoulders. Yin poses are passive, meaning the muscles should be relaxed while gravity does the work.
- **Prenatal yoga:** yoga postures carefully adapted for people who are pregnant. Prenatal yoga is tailored to help people in all stages of pregnancy and can support people in getting back into shape after pregnancy.
- **Restorative yoga:** a relaxing method of yoga, spending a class in four or five simple poses using props like blankets and bolsters to sink into deep relaxation without exerting any effort in holding the pose.
- **Health benefits of yoga**

Scientific trials of varying quality have been published on the health benefits and medical uses of yoga. Studies suggest that yoga is a safe and effective way to increase physical activity and enhance strength, flexibility and balance. Yoga practice has also shown benefit in specific medical conditions. Scientists and medical doctors pursuing yoga-related research focus on its potential benefits as a technique for relieving stress and coping with chronic conditions or disabilities, as well as investigating its potential to help prevent, heal, or alleviate specific conditions, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, carpal tunnel syndrome, asthma, diabetes, and symptoms of menopause.

Mind-body medical interventions are commonly used to cope with depression, and yoga is one of the most commonly used mind-body interventions. Systematic studies and meta-analyses have been carried out in order to assess the effectiveness of yoga for depression. Falls amongst older people are a global health concern. Whilst falling is not a typical feature of aging, older people are more likely to fall and falls are a leading cause of death and disability. Yoga and tai chi have shown potential to improve balance and prevent falls in older adults. They also have the potential to improve pain and quality of life. Fatigue is one of the most frequently reported, distressing side effects reported by survivors of cancer and often has significant long-term consequences. Research indicates that yoga can produce invigorating effects on physical and mental energy, and thereby may improve levels of fatigue. A systematic review of yoga interventions on fatigue in patients with cancer and survivors of cancer suggests that yoga interventions may be beneficial for reducing cancer-related fatigue in women with breast cancer; however, conclusions should be interpreted with caution as studies demonstrated varying levels of bias and inconsistent methodology.

A sedentary lifestyle and stress are major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Since yoga involves exercise and is thought to help in stress reduction, it may be an effective strategy in the primary

prevention of cardiovascular disease. There is some evidence that yoga has favorable effects on diastolic blood pressure, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and triglycerides, while the effects on low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol were uncertain. Currently, several studies have assessed the effect of yoga training on the management of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Effective stress management is a key part of managing blood pressure, and a number of systematic reviews have assessed the available evidence for yoga as a therapeutic tool for managing prehypertension and hypertension (elevated blood pressure). Several studies suggest yoga may be effective for chronic low back pain and have shown that yoga intervention in populations with chronic low back pain may be more effective than usual care for reducing both pain and medication use.

Hypertension, especially in the elderly, is a strong risk factor for cardiovascular mortality and morbidity. Oxidative stress has been implicated as one of the underlying causes of hypertension. A study found yoga to be an effective means to reduce oxidative stress and to improve antioxidant defense in elderly hypertensive individuals. Yoga is used for a variety of immunological, neuromuscular, psychological, and pain conditions. Recent studies indicate that it may be effective in improving pregnancy, labor, and birth outcomes. The breathing and meditation techniques can help enhance health and relaxation for those who are pregnant, and support mental focus to aid childbirth. Some postures are chosen specifically to help encourage an optimal fetal position. Several studies have looked at yoga as a model for stress management.

Yoga is perhaps the only form of activity which massages all the internal glands and organs of the body in a thorough manner, including those – such as the prostate - that hardly get externally stimulated during our entire lifetime. Yoga acts in a wholesome manner on the various body parts. This stimulation and massage of the organs in turn benefits us by keeping away disease and providing a forewarning at the first possible instance of a likely onset of disease or disorder.

CONCLUSION

The word yoga is Sanskrit for Yoke, or union. In the practice of yoga we seek to create union between the mind and body. Yoga is the perfect example of holistic health because of this combination of mind and body. After all the body cannot exist without the mind and vice versa. By repairing the body, we are more able to repair the mind. If you feel tense in the neck, shoulders, or hips, you'll find it more difficult to relax and be happy. In order to do this Yoga is comprised of the asana (physical postures) and a philosophy that offers tools to finding true, lasting happiness. The exquisiteness of Yoga is that it can be practiced by anyone. It doesn't matter how old you are or what shape you are in. If you desire a more limber body, Yoga is one of the quickest ways to attain it. Yoga also increases an individual's physical coordination and promotes better posture. And it does all this without potentially hazardous negative effects that are often incurred in high-impact forms of exercise.

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