

A STUDY ON YOGA FOR WELLNESS, SELF AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract: Yoga is an integral part of our lifestyle. Yoga is a means for supporting overall health and well-being. It removes the impurities from the level of mind and unites everything with the spirit. Body, mind and spirit are like a tripod – even if one aspect isn't functioning properly, our life will not be balanced and that will lead to ill health. Yoga, a component of Ayurveda, is that link which creates a harmony by aligning all the three components -body, mind and spirit, into one. This harmony, in turn exists to support life. Since time immemorial, yoga has represented a universal desire to evolve and transcend the worldly limitations. It has been perceived as a way of connecting with the inner life force within us. Yoga offers integrated up building for a healthy body, creative mind and evolving spirit for overall well-being of our personality. **Yoga lowers our stress and improves our mood,boosts our confidence, lowers the risk of injury ,helps us lose weight, increasing** our stamina and endurance, slows down our heart rate which in turn lowers blood pressure and have also been linked with improving the immune system and lowering cholesterol. By constant practice of yoga, we enjoy good health, we are emotionally balanced, we build up good rapport with others in our relationship and as a result we build up the happy and harmonious living. The beauty of yoga is that it can be practiced pretty much anywhere, on our own or with other yoga enthusiasts.

Keywords: Yoga, Wellness, Health, Emotion, Self, Social, Transformation.

Introduction: Yoga is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines which originated in ancient India. *Yoga* can take on meanings such as "connection", "contact", "union", "method", "application", "addition" and "performance". According to Dasgupta, the term yoga can be derived from either of two roots, *yujir yoga* (to yoke) or *yujsamādhau* (to concentrate). One who practices yoga with a high level of commitment is called a yogi. In my article, I am going to deal how yoga could be the means for well-being of oneself with good health of body, mind and spirit. Regular practices of yoga regulate the functioning of our body, moderates the emotions and keeps us connected with divine being.

The Purpose of Yoga: The original context of yoga was spiritual development practices to train the body and mind to self-observe and become aware of their own nature. It was to cultivate discernment, awareness, self-regulation and higher consciousness in the individual. Some people practice yoga to attain a perfect body, in terms of lasting beauty and health. However, such a goal is impossible to achieve. Real happiness comes when a person achieves the actual goal of yoga, which is optimum physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Yoga offers both the goal and the means to reach it. Yoga has a diverse range of things that it can offer. It could be said that a primary goal of yoga is to gain balance and control in one's life. The practice of yoga aims at overcoming the limitations of the body. Man is a physical, mental and spiritual being; yoga helps promote a balanced development of all the three. Other forms of physical exercises, like aerobics, assure only physical well-being. They have little to do with the development of the spiritual or astral body.

Wellness of A Person: *“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. Sri Ravi Shankar”.* One who is stable and established in the self is healthy. That is to say that identifying a healthy person doesn't only entail physical fitness, but what's even more crucial is one's mental fitness. One cannot say that 'I'm healthy, but not interested in life'. The enthusiasm in life shows how healthy you are. Causes of sickness or ill health are generally noted as impurities on the level of mind, body and speech. Our own speech can create distress in us as well as other people around us. Even distress or discomfort should be treated as an illness.

Physical Well Being The Physical Benefits Of Yoga Include: Workout fads come and go, but virtually no other exercise program is as enduring as yoga. It's been around for more than 5,000 years. Yoga does more than burn calories and tone muscles. It's a total mind-body workout that combines strengthening and stretching poses with deep breathing and meditation or relaxation.

Pain Relief: Yoga can ease pain. Studies have demonstrated that practicing yoga asanas (postures), meditation or a combination of the two reduces pain for people with conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, auto-immune diseases and hypertension as well as arthritis, back and neck pain and other chronic conditions. Some practitioners report that even emotional pain can be eased through the practice of yoga.

Better Breathing: Yoga teaches people to take slower, deeper breaths. This helps to improve lung functioning, trigger the body's relaxation response and increase the amount of oxygen available to the body.

Flexibility: Yoga helps to improve flexibility and mobility, increasing range of movement and reducing aches and pains. Many people can't touch their toes during their first yoga class. Gradually they begin to use the correct muscles. Over time, the ligaments, tendons and muscles lengthen, increasing elasticity, making more poses possible. Yoga also helps to improve body alignment resulting in better posture and helping to relieve back, neck, joint and muscle problems.

Increased Strength: Yoga asanas (postures) use every muscle in the body, helping to increase strength literally from head to toe. And, while these postures strengthen the body, they also provide an additional benefit of helping relieve muscular tension.

Weight Management: Yoga (even less vigorous styles) can aid weight control efforts by reducing the cortisol levels as well as by burning excess calories and reducing stress. Yoga also encourages healthy eating habits and provides a heightened sense of well-being and self-esteem.

Improved Circulation: Yoga helps to improve circulation and as a result of various poses. More efficiently moves oxygenated blood to the body's cells.

Cardiovascular Conditioning: Even gentle yoga practice can provide cardiovascular benefits by lowering resting heart rate, increasing endurance and improving oxygen uptake during exercise.

A regular yoga practice can contribute to a flatter, stronger stomach, as most of the poses require us to use the muscles for stabilization. If we have a layer of fat covering our muscles, however, we'll have to lose it first to see any stomach-flattening results of our practice. Yoga can increase one's mindfulness and the way one relates to their body.

Besides these we can enjoy better and more restful sleep, Energized, toned endocrine, nervous, and digestive systems, Freer, Greater bodily strength and balance, Improved circulation, Improved flexibility, Increased awareness and concentration, Reduced anxiety, Strengthened immune system, Energy and vitality, maintaining a balanced metabolism, improved athletic performance, protection from injury and more joy.

Yoga is a great activity for us if we have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or heart disease. It gives us strength, flexibility, and mind-body awareness. We'll also need to do something aerobic (like walking, biking, or swimming) if we are not doing a fast-moving type of yoga.

If we have high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart problems, we may need to avoid certain postures, like those in which we're upside down or that demand more balance than we have right now. A very gentle program of yoga, coupled with a light aerobic activity like walking or swimming, may be the best way to start.

If we have arthritis, yoga can help us stay flexible and strong without putting added stress on our joints. We get the added benefit of a mind-body approach that can help us relax and energize.

If a woman is pregnant, yoga can help keep her relaxed, strong, and in shape. If she is new to yoga or has any health or pregnancy related problems, she needs to consult her doctor before she gives it a try. She needs to make some adjustments as her baby and belly grow and her center of gravity shifts.

Mental Well Being: "Yoga is a psychology -- the whole practice helps us work with the nature of the mind, the nature of being a human, how emotions live in our bodies, how they affect our behavior and our minds," says Turner, who reveals that yoga helped her recognize and cope with her own low self-esteem.

Yoga's Mental Health Benefits: The many Mental Health Benefits of Yoga. Yoga is a mind-body exercise effective for reducing stress, anxiety and depression and improving brain function and mental health. All kinds of physical exercise reduce stress, but yoga may be one of the best.

Stress Relief: Yoga reduces the physical effects of stress on the body. By encouraging relaxation, yoga helps to lower the levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Related benefits include lowering blood pressure and heart rate, improving digestion and boost in the immune system as well as easing symptoms of conditions such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, asthma and insomnia.

Yoga moves us from the sympathetic nervous system to the parasympathetic nervous system or from flight-or-flight to rest-and-digest. We typically have less anxiety and enter a more relaxed state. As soon as we start breathing deeply, we slow down out of fight or flight and calm our nervous system.

Focus on the Present: Yoga helps us to focus on the present, to become more aware and to help create mind/body health. It opens the way to improved concentration, coordination, reaction time and memory.

Besides these, Yoga Sharpens attention and concentration, focus, and mental clarity, Calms and centers the nervous system, Mood stabilization, Improves sleep and reduces sleep disturbance, Increases body awareness, Increases feelings of well-being and self-image, Helps serious psychiatric disorders and Protects our brain against aging. Yoga's positive benefits on mental health have made it an important practice tool of psychotherapy.

Psycho-Social Well Being:

1. **Yoga helps us build our sense of self.** Through yoga, we get to know ourselves and cultivate a more nonjudgmental relationship with ourselves. We are building self-trust. We exercise more and eat healthier. At the end of the day, everything comes down to our relationship with ourselves. When we get more confident and become more rooted in our sense of self and our center, we develop a healthy, balanced ego, where we have nothing to prove and nothing to hide. We become courageous, with high willpower. We are not afraid of difficult conversations. We know we are still going to be OK at the end of the day.
2. **It improves our romantic relationship.** When we are more centered and more peaceful with ourselves, we will be the same way with our partner. We will view them through the same lens of compassionate, unconditional love. We are less reactive. For example, we may know that snapping at our partner is not a wise choice.

3. **It helps us become aware of our "shadow" qualities.** The yoking of solar and lunar (light and dark) in yoga makes us recognize qualities in ourselves that we were not aware of, helping us be more mindful. That's typically where we are holding our psychological or emotional energy. We work from the outside in, so asana is so important. A backbend will open our heart and release the stiffness between the shoulder blades, at some point, we will have some sort of emotional release, which we may or may not be conscious of. It's about doing the inner work to shift or change and be open to doing our best with our weaknesses and faults. When we excel in it, we transform in our attitudes and relate with others peacefully and pleasantly.
4. **It helps us deal with family of origin issues.** We can't give back our family, we're born into it and that's what we get. It's about owning what I call sacred wounds (rather than blaming) and taking them on more mindfully. We are the only one that can change, the only thing we can do is control our actions and our behavior. Other people will inevitably be forced to show up in a different way we are showing up in a different way. Think of the Warrior poses, yoga helps us rise up and do our best. Thus there will social transformation.

Spiritual Well Being: The word yoga means to join or unite, and yogis view this unison in different ways – the unison of body, mind and spirit, uniting all the aspects of ourselves with a higher power or spiritual force. We can believe in God or nothing at all. The average spiritual purification that happens across the various bodies of our existence after undertaking yogic *asanas* and *pranayam*.

Although yoga is not a religion, this ancient practice can have an effect on a person in a spiritual sense because of the seven spiritual laws: **Law of Pure Potentiality, Law of Giving and Receiving, Law of Karma (Cause and Effect), Law of Least Effort, Law of Intention and Desire, Law of Detachment and Law of Dharma.** By expressing our unique talents and using them to serve others, we will experience unlimited love, abundance, and true fulfillment in our life. These laws act as guides to help people find the path to inner peace through love and compassion for themselves and others. For example, one of the laws is about karma. It refers to the idea that the way that we treat other animals and humans comes back to us. So in other words, if we act with kindness, we will receive kindness in return.

Inner Peace - The meditative aspects of yoga help many to reach a deeper, more spiritual and more satisfying place in their lives. Many who begin to practice for other reasons have reported this to be a key reason that yoga has become an essential part of their daily lives.

Conclusion: Yoga is a holistic package for happy living. It provides techniques to unite the body, mind and breath, and connect to the inner core of our being – the spiritual aspect of our lives. Yoga **cleanses our body and feels revitalized at** Absolute Sanctuary. Yoga definitely counts as exercise. It's been shown to increase strength, flexibility, and VO₂ consumption. Yoga is amazing, even if we only practice for one hour a week, we will experience the benefits of the practice. I suggest starting with two or three times a week, for an hour or an hour and a half each time. By doing yoga regularly, we attain physical health, mental health, emotional balance and Psycho-social wellness. Once we have calmed ourselves, accepting our limitations and weaknesses, we are able to face any kind of situations, any kind of persons and any kind of problems. We become an integrated person. I learn to relate with myself peacefully and relate with others harmoniously. Life becomes interesting, urging us to do new things and to innovate new facts with new force and vigour. Yoga helps us to attain that serenity and peace in order to enjoy our life. In turn we start believing in God and our inner sanctuary longs to give the apt place for God. On 11 December 2014, The 193-member United Nations General Assembly approved by consensus, a resolution establishing 21 June as "International Day of Yoga". Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted and declared it, during his address to UN General Assembly on 27 September 2014. So yoga is essential for wellness, self and social transformation. Let us also adopt yoga as the means to become an integrated person and for happy living.

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