

Effects of Yoga as Exercise on Anxiety of Woman

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Abstract—Yoga is a multifaceted spiritual tool with enhanced health and well-being as one of its positive effects. The components of yoga which are very commonly applied for health benefits are asanas (physical postures), pranayama (regulated breathing) and meditation. In the context of asanas, yoga resembles more of a physical exercise, which may lead to the perception that yoga is another kind of physical exercise. A narrative review is undertaken based on traditional and contemporary literature for yoga, along with scientific articles available on yoga and exercise including head-to-head comparative trials with healthy volunteers and patients with various disease conditions. Physical exercises and the physical components of yoga practices have several similarities, but also important differences. Evidence suggests that yoga interventions appear to be equal and/or superior to exercise in most outcome measures. Emphasis on breath regulation, mindfulness during practice, and importance given to maintenance of postures are some of the elements which differentiate yoga practices from physical exercises.

Keywords: Depression, exercise, disorder, stress, health etc.

INTRODUCTION

Om Saha Navavatu

Saha Nau Bhunaktu

Saha Virya Karvav-Hai

Te-Jasvi Nava dhitam-Astu

Ma Vidvi Şav-Hai

Om SantiH santiH santiH

OM Paramatma, protect and bless us.

Give us strength to come to the end of the path,

To eternal knowledge,

**Help us so that we do not turn against one another,
and eternally united continue on the path together.**

OM Peace Peace Peace

-Swami Maheshwarananda

Yoga is a traditional method of meditation developed by the saints of ancient India. They practiced yoga as an effective method of controlling their mind and bodily activities. 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. 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. 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. 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. Yoga increases the flexibility of the spine, improves body’s physical condition and heightened awareness to the importance of relaxation. It has been emphasized that each exercise be practiced slowly, coordinating movement with the breath, pausing motionless in each position and always with full concentration. Yoga teaches you to focus on breathing while you hold the poses. This attention to breath is calming it dissolves stress and anxiety. Yoga can help cure insomnia, as regular yoga practice leads to better and deeper sleep. Yoga can help fight fatigue and maintain your energy throughout the day. Yoga is an effective treatment for a variety of autoimmune diseases because it can reduce the symptoms these diseases often cause, such as stiffness, malaise, fatigue, and weakness. Even children can benefit

from yoga. Those with attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity can learn to relax and get control by using yoga breathing and yoga asanas. Yoga has been used to help heal victims of torture or other trauma. Because yoga is a form of meditation, it results in a sense of inner peace and purpose, which has far-reaching health benefits

Derived from the Sanskrit word yuj, Yoga means union of the individual consciousness or soul with the Universal Consciousness or Spirit. Yoga is a 5000-year-old Indian body of knowledge. Though many think of yoga only as a physical exercise where people twist, turn, stretch, and breathe in the most complex ways, these are actually only the most superficial aspect of this profound science of unfolding the infinite potentials of the human mind and soul. The science of Yoga imbibes the complete essence of the Way of Life.

Yoga is an ancient Indian, science which helps to improve physical, mental, social and spiritual health. Yoga has found its special existence in Japan by its peculiarities like asana and pranayama. But many consider yoga as an alternate to exercise. Few research works have been conducted in Japan on yoga. There is a need to show that yoga is not merely an exercise system but it has many more health benefits. It can be wisely applied in the old age care to improve the quality of life. Research is needed to understand the mechanism of action of yoga.

History of Yoga

Yoga is more than 10,000 years old. The earliest mention of the contemplative tradition is found in the oldest surviving literature Rig Veda, in Nasadiya Sukta. It dates back to the Indus-Saraswati civilization. The Pashupati seal from the selfsame civilization shows a figure sitting in a yogic posture, further corroborating its prevalence in those ancient times. However, the earliest mention of the practices that later became part of yoga are found in the oldest Upanishad, Brihadaranyaka. The practice of Pranayama finds a mention in one of its hymn and Pratyahara in Chandogya Upanishad. The first appearance of the word “yoga” with the same meaning as we know today, perhaps happens for the first time in Kato Upanishad, a mukhya or important Upanishad, embedded in the last eight sections of the Katha school of Yajurveda. Yoga here is seen as a process of inner journey or ascent of consciousness.

Vratya, a group of ascetics mentioned in the Atharvaveda, emphasized on bodily postures, which may have evolved into Yogasanas. Even Samhitas mention munis, kesins and vratyas, various ancient seers and sages who practiced rigorous physical deportments to meditate or do tapasya. Yoga as a concept slowly emerged and has an elaborate mention in Bhagavad Gita and in Shanti Parva of Mahabharata.

There are more than 20 Upanishads and Yoga Vasishtha, which predate Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita, where Yoga is stated to be the union of mind with the Supreme Consciousness.

Yoga as Exercise

Yoga as exercise is a modern phenomenon which has been influenced by the ancient Indian practice of hatha yoga. It involves holding stretches as a kind of low-impact physical exercise, and is often used for therapeutic purposes. Yoga in this sense often occurs in a class and may involve meditation, imagery, breath work and music.

Both the meditative and the exercise components of hatha yoga have been researched for both specific and non-specific fitness and health benefits. Hatha yoga has been studied as an intervention for many conditions, including back pain, stress, and depression.

Yoga has roots in India. The foundational text for yoga is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Yoga came to the attention of an educated western public in the mid 19th century along with other topics of Hindu philosophy. The first Hindu teacher to actively advocate and disseminate aspects of yoga to a western audience was Swami Vivekananda, who toured Europe and the United States in the 1890 (however, Vivekananda put little emphasis on the physical practices of Hatha Yoga in his teachings).

Nearly all types of hatha yoga practices include asana, pranayam and savasana. The physical asanas of hatha yoga have a tradition that goes back to at least the 15th century, but they were not widely practiced in India prior to the early 20th century. Hatha yoga was advocated by a number of late 19th to early 20th century gurus in India, including Tirumalai Krishnamacharya in south India, Swami Sivananda in the north, Sri Yogendra in Bombay, and Swami Kuvalayananda in Lonavala, near Bombay.

A hatha "yoga boom" followed in the 1980s, as Dean Ornish, MD, a medical researcher and follower of Swami Satchidananda, connected hatha yoga to heart health, legitimizing hatha yoga as a purely physical system of health exercises outside counter culture or esotericism circles, and unconnected to a religious denomination.. Since then, hatha yoga has been used as supplementary therapy for diverse conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and asthma.

The more classical approaches of hatha yoga, such as Iyengar Yoga, move at a more deliberate pace, emphasize proper alignment and execution and hold asanas for a longer time. They aim to gradually improve flexibility, balance, and strength. Other approaches, such as Ashtanga or Power Yoga, shift between asanas quickly and energetically.

Importance of Yoga

Yoga is not a religion; it is a way of living that aims towards 'a healthy mind in a healthy 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.

Yogic exercises recharge the body with cosmic energy and facilitates:

Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony

- Promotes self-healing.
- Removes negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body
- Enhances personal power
- Increases self-awareness
- Helps in attention, focus and concentration, especially important for children.
- Reduce stress and tension in the physical body by activating the parasympathetic nervous system

The aspirant feels rejuvenated and energized. Thus, yoga bestows upon every aspirant the powers to control body and mind.

Benefits of Yoga

The art of practicing yoga helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keeps you relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. It improves respiration, energy and vitality. Practicing yoga might seem like just stretching, but it can do much more for your body from the way you feel, look and move.

Yoga asanas build strength, flexibility and confidence. Regular practice of yoga can help lose weight, relieve stress, improve immunity and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

"Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. This tradition is 5000 years old. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with you, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help in well being. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day." — Narendra Modi, UN General Assembly, September 2014.

How yoga exercises can help get over anxiety?

Regular yoga practice can help you stay calm and relaxed in daily life and can also give you the strength to face events as they come without getting restless. Yoga practice ideally includes the complete package of asanas (body postures), pranayamas (breathing techniques), meditation, and the ancient yoga philosophy, all of which has helped several anxiety patients recover and face life with new positivity and strength.

The following yoga techniques can help calm an unsettled mind and aid in anxiety treatment naturally.

1: Do Yoga Asanas and relieve your stress of mind.

These yoga postures can help achieve a happy and healthy mind and body. Asanas help release tension and negativity from the system.

- Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)
- Matsyasana (Fish Pose)
- Janu Shirsasana (One-Legged Forward Bend)
- Setubandhasana (Bridge Pose)
- Marjariasana (Cat Stretch)
- Paschimottanasana (Two-Legged Forward Bend)
- Hastapadasana (Standing Forward Bend)
- Adhomukha Shwanasana (Downward Facing Dog)
- Shirshasana (Headstand)
- Shavasana (Corpse Pose)

Note: At the end of the yoga posture session, lie down in Yoga Nidra to give your mind and body a few minutes of through relaxation. The technique is helpful in flushing out body toxins, a primary cause of stress, from the system.

2: Breathe right with pranayamas to relieve anxiety

Taking your attention to the breath can help free the mind of the unnecessary clutter of thoughts that breed anxiety. Try the following breathing practices:

- Kapal Bhati Pranayama (Skull-Shining Breathing Technique)
- Bhastrika Pranayama
- Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing) – effective in releasing stress from the system (where the exhalation is longer than the inhalation)
- Bhramari Pranayama (Bee Breath)

3: Meditate to enjoy the gift of a relaxed mind

Meditation can be an excellent technique to relax a distracted mind, give you a sense of calm and peace, and also observe with daily practice how your mind works to keep you involved in small, petty things around. It can also help you not worry too much or get anxious of the unknown future.

4: Apply yoga philosophy in your life; stay happy and enjoy every moment

Knowing and applying the ancient yoga knowledge in daily life, which talks about some simple yet profound principles (yamas and niyamas) of yoga, can be the secret to happy and healthy living. For instance, the Santosha principle (niyama) teaches the value of contentment. The Aprigraha principle can help us overcome greediness or the desire to

keep possessing more, which can be a reason for stress and anxiety. Also, the Shaucha principle talks about cleanliness of the mind and body. This rule can particularly help if you tend to get too anxious about catching infectious diseases.

The yamas and niyamas of yoga will also help us eat nutritious food and live a healthy lifestyle which greatly helps to overcome anxiety and stress. To understand the yoga philosophy, you may consider reading Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Commentary on Patanjali Yoga Sutras.

5: Pray, keep faith and smile!

Prayer is the best form of reassurance and support to keep you anxiety-free. Developing habits of daily prayer, chanting or singing bhajans (devotional songs) fill you with positive energy and also help still the mind. They also instill a sense of deep faith that all happens for the best and that there is a higher divine power that takes care. Moreover, make a conscious effort to smile more and more. It will instill confidence, calmness and positivity instantaneously. Try it out right now!

6: Think about what you can do for others

When we constantly remain stuck in 'me and mine', it makes room for stress and anxiety. We keep worrying about what will happen to us. Rather, shift your attention to how you can be of some use to others around you. Energizing yourself with some service activity can give you deep satisfaction and immense joy.

7: Know the impermanence of the world

When this realization sets in that everything around us is temporary and would change, we become relaxed and settled from within. A feeling of 'this too shall pass and not remain forever' arises in us and frees us from anxiety. Meditation can help us see this founding principle of life.

8: Remember a similar past situation when you could overcome anxiety

This fills you with immense courage that you can pass even this situation. Keep reminding this to yourself often.

9: Keep positive company around you

When you spend more time with positive-minded people, you are influenced by similar thoughts, which reflect in your overall attitude to life. Only a positive mind can breed joy, peace and relaxation.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude the fundamental principle of "Yoga as exercise" is religious freedom. Yoga is not a religion - it is the source of spirituality and wisdom, the root of all religions. Yoga transcends religious boundaries and reveals the way to unity. "Yoga exercise in Daily Life" offers the spiritual aspirant guidance on life's path through the practices of Mantra Yoga

and Kriya Yoga. As the most highly developed beings upon earth, humans are capable of realizing their real nature and inner Self, God. The spiritual goal of Yoga is God-Realization, the union of the individual soul with God. The realization that we are all one in our common root and connection to God is the first step. Decisions regarding your health and Wellbeing and a free, happy life, are in your hands. Practice regularly with firm determination and success will be certain. I wish all Yoga practitioners and those still to become practitioners much happiness, success, health, harmony; joy in life and God's blessing.

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