

# Yoga in Managing Psychiatric Disorders

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**Abstract:** *Yoga, an ancient mind-body practice originating from India, has gained recognition as a complementary intervention for managing psychiatric disorders. Derived from the Sanskrit term “Yuj,” meaning “to unite,” yoga integrates physical postures (asanas), breath regulation (pranayama), and meditation (dhyana) to promote harmony between body, mind, and spirit. Unlike conventional exercise, yoga emphasizes mindfulness, self-awareness, and emotional regulation, offering therapeutic benefits beyond physical fitness. Recent research has highlighted yoga’s potential in addressing a wide spectrum of psychiatric conditions, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), schizophrenia, substance use disorders, bipolar disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Neurobiological studies indicate that yoga modulates the hypothalamic–pituitary– adrenal (HPA) axis, normalizes cortisol levels, enhances gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) activity, and promotes neuroplasticity through increased brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), collectively supporting stress regulation, mood stabilization, and cognitive functioning. Psychologically, yoga cultivates mindfulness, emotional regulation, self-compassion, and adaptive coping skills, while socially it fosters connectedness, discipline, and community support. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate that yoga significantly reduces depressive and anxiety symptoms, mitigates hyperarousal in PTSD, and alleviates negative symptoms in schizophrenia when used adjunctively with standard pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy. Comparative studies suggest yoga may offer unique advantages over other mind-body interventions, such as Tai Chi or mindfulness meditation, due to its integrated focus on posture, breath, and attention. Despite promising outcomes, current evidence is limited by small sample sizes, heterogeneous interventions, variable session duration, and methodological biases. Standardized protocols, biomarker assessments, and long-term follow-up studies are needed to optimize clinical application. Integrating yoga into both inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care, including trauma-sensitive and digitally delivered programs, presents a feasible approach to enhance treatment adherence, resilience, and quality of life. In conclusion, yoga represents a holistic, accessible, and culturally adaptable adjunctive therapy that addresses biological, psychological, and social dimensions of mental health, holding significant promise in the management and recovery of psychiatric disorders.*

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