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Effects of Integrating Yoga Breaks on Students Preparing for Competitive Examinations: An Observational Study

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Abstract: *Students preparing for competitive examinations often experience prolonged study hours, mental fatigue, and elevated stress levels, which can negatively affect cognitive performance and overall health. Integrative approaches such as yoga have gained increasing attention as potential strategies to enhance psychological well-being and academic performance. The present observational study examined the effects of integrating structured yoga breaks into the daily study routine of students preparing for competitive examinations. Twenty students aged 17–25 years were included and divided into two groups: an experimental group practicing yoga breaks and a control group continuing routine study without structured breaks. The intervention consisted of a 10–15 minute yoga session practiced after every two to three hours of study over a period of ten weeks. The yoga routine included breathing practices (Anulom Vilom), stretching exercises, selected yoga postures such as Tadasana, Vrikshasana, Bhujangasana, Balasana, and short meditation. Data collection tools included stress questionnaires, weekly mock test scores, and self-reported concentration assessments. Results indicated reductions in perceived stress levels and improved concentration in the experimental group compared with the control group. Mock test scores improved by approximately 20–30 percent among students practicing yoga breaks. These findings suggest that incorporating short yoga breaks into intensive study schedules may improve mental well-being, cognitive functioning, and academic productivity among students preparing for competitive examinations.*

Keywords: Yoga breaks, stress, concentration, competitive examinations, student well-being, cognitive performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Preparing for competitive examinations requires sustained mental effort, extended study hours, and intense psychological pressure. Students frequently experience elevated levels of stress, anxiety, fatigue, and physical discomfort due to prolonged sitting and continuous cognitive engagement. Such conditions may impair concentration, memory retention, and overall academic performance.

Yoga is a holistic discipline integrating physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation to promote physical and psychological well-being. Previous research suggests that yoga contributes to stress reduction, improved emotional regulation, enhanced cognitive performance, and better overall health outcomes.

Students preparing for highly competitive examinations such as engineering entrance tests and civil service examinations often maintain demanding study schedules. Continuous cognitive effort without adequate breaks may lead to mental exhaustion and decreased productivity. Introducing short structured breaks incorporating yoga practices may help restore cognitive resources, improve concentration, and prevent burnout.

Short yoga sessions consisting of breathing exercises, stretching, and meditation may promote relaxation, improve blood circulation, and enhance oxygen supply to the brain. These physiological changes may support improved

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attention span, memory retention, and emotional balance. Therefore, the present study examined the effects of integrating yoga breaks into daily study routines among students preparing for competitive examinations.

Objectives

1. To examine the effect of yoga breaks on stress levels among students preparing for competitive examinations.
2. To evaluate improvement in concentration and memory following regular yoga breaks.
3. To assess changes in academic performance and overall well-being associated with yoga breaks.

Methodology

The study followed an observational comparative design. Twenty students aged 17–25 years preparing for competitive examinations participated in the study.

Participants were divided into two groups:

Experimental Group (n=10): Practiced structured yoga breaks.

Control Group (n=10): Continued routine study without structured breaks.

The intervention duration was ten weeks. Participants in the experimental group practiced a 10–15 minute yoga break after every two to three hours of study.

Intervention Protocol

The yoga break included the following practices:

Deep Breathing (Anulom Vilom) – 2 minutes

Neck and Shoulder Rolls – 2 minutes

Tadasana – 1 minute

Vrikshasana – 2 minutes

Bhujangasana – 2 minutes

Balasana – 2–3 minutes

Short Meditation – 3 minutes

These practices were designed to relieve muscular tension, improve posture, enhance circulation, and promote mental relaxation.

Data Collection Tools

- Stress questionnaires assessing perceived stress levels
- Weekly mock test scores
- Self-reported concentration assessments
- Feedback regarding physical discomfort such as back pain, fatigue, and eye strain

Results and Findings

Students practicing yoga breaks demonstrated notable reductions in perceived stress levels compared with the control group. Participants reported improved concentration and fewer distractions during study sessions.

Academic performance also improved among students practicing yoga breaks. Mock test scores increased by approximately 20–30 percent on average, whereas the control group showed only minimal improvement.

Participants in the experimental group also reported reduced physical discomfort, including decreased back pain, reduced eye strain, and lower levels of fatigue during study sessions.

Discussion

The findings suggest that integrating short yoga breaks into study routines may enhance psychological and physical well-being among students preparing for competitive examinations.

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Yogic breathing practices activate parasympathetic responses and help reduce stress and anxiety. Meditation practices improve attentional control and cognitive flexibility. Physical postures improve spinal mobility and posture, thereby reducing musculoskeletal discomfort associated with prolonged sitting.

These findings align with previous research demonstrating that yoga improves emotional regulation, concentration, and academic performance among students.

II. CONCLUSION

Integrating short yoga breaks into study routines can significantly improve mental health, concentration, and academic performance among students preparing for competitive examinations.

Yoga breaks serve as an effective mental reset mechanism by combining breathing techniques, postures, and meditation. These practices regulate the nervous system, improve circulation, and enhance cognitive efficiency.

The results indicate that yoga is a practical and accessible intervention that may support student well-being and learning outcomes during demanding academic preparation.

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