

Impact of Yoga and Meditation on Health

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Abstract: *The terms yoga and meditation are related with promotion of harmony of body and mind for physical, mental and spiritual wellness of human beings. Similarities or dissimilarities between these terms have been matter of debate many times. This study aims to search integral correlations between yoga and meditation, effect on body and mind disorders, and directions for upcoming researches to enhance healthcare facilities. In an age where the younger generation is increasingly turning obese and facing health issues at an abnormal rate, fitness plays a very vital role. One can achieve complete control of mind over body by being both physically and mentally fit...Yoga and meditation have been practiced in India since ancient times and provides a healthy mind and a sound body, something which the stress filled youngsters of our generation need. Yoga is considered a comprehensive practice that integrates mental, physical, and spiritual elements of the human body. The purpose of this study was to examine the benefits of yoga and meditation on the physical and mental health. This study provides support for Deep relaxation and meditation practices cultivate awareness and ultimately more profound states of consciousness. Beneficial effects might involve a reduction of distress, blood pressure, and improvements in resilience, mood, and metabolic regulation. Studies attest the fact that meditation enhances performance physiologically and psychologically. It can improve the mental well-being of the prisoners and reduce the impulsiveness among prisoners. Prisoners everywhere survive under tough and frustrating situations that incessantly build up their stress levels.*

Keywords: Spiritual, Meditation, Yoga, Psychologically

I. INTRODUCTION

Yoga is a set of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines which started off in ancient India. There is a large variety of yoga schools, practices, and objectives in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Advantage of yoga includes all round body fitness, weight loss, stress relief, improved immunity, better posture, and raised energy. In yoga, body positions are called as asanas to improve different elements in life such as Kundalini, Ashtanga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Swara Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Manta Yoga. According to the Rigveda, the beginning of yoga have been considered to date back to Prevedic Indian civilization but most likely developed between 6th and 5th centuries before common era (BCE) . In today's society that is fast approaching a more sedentary lifestyle, there is a greater need than ever to increase the daily activity levels in order to maintain both cardiovascular fitness and body weight. Fitness does not refer to being physically fit alone, but mentally state as well. Any individual can function optimally only if the individual is both mentally and physically fit. Such individuals tend to be less prone to medical conditions as well. While most people tend to focus on physical fitness alone, they forget that a sound mind exists only in a sound body. Rapidly emerging in the Western world as a disciplined way of life, for integrating the mind and body into union and harmony, yoga improves physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual health. It also offers an effective method of managing and reducing stress, anxiety and depression and there have been numerous studies that demonstrate the efficacy of yoga on mind related disorders. The physical exercises (asanas) in yoga tends to increase the patient's physical flexibility, coordination, and strength, while the breathing practices and meditation helps calm and focus the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety , and thereby resulting in higher quality of life. One simply cannot separate the aspect of health from their emotional well-being. Comprehensively Ideal Fitness Program includes aerobic, anaerobic, and resistance training, in addition to flexibility and core-building exercises likes yoga and meditation.

II. IMPACT OF YOGA

A) Physiological Impacts

Through Yoga, the body triggers a line of beneficial chemical processes within the body, slows the heart rate, reduces the level of blood lactate, lessens the muscular tension, leads to more efficient gas exchange in the lungs, lower levels of cortisol and adrenal levels. This not only boosts the immune system, but also results in higher energy levels, and increased strength.

B) Normalizing Blood Pressure

Blood circulation can be improved in the body through Yoga and Pranayama and has proved to treat both High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) and Low Blood Pressure (Hypotension). Practicing Yoga stretches keeps the arteries ductile and reduces the stiffness of the arteries which again lowers the blood pressure.

It results in the creation of positive energy leading to a better and improved lifestyle. Certain Asanas have the power to slow the heart rate by soothing the nerves and minimizes the chances of a heart attack.

C) Mental Benefits

It has been found through studies that the benefits of Yoga include increased focus, concentration levels and mental clarity. It also helps to bring down the stress levels, reduce depression and anxiety. Since the stress is reduced, the sleep cycle is improved. Yoga as a way of life boosts feelings of self image and well being.

D) Immune System Boost

When regularly practiced and being in the relaxed state on a regular basis, the brain produces more of the positive neurotransmitter 'serotonin' and stimulates less of the negative 'cortisol' which impairs cognitive skills, trigger high Blood pressure and blood sugar imbalances, affecting the immune system badly.

E) The Less Demonstrable

One of the most unique benefits of Yoga is that it leads to a better understanding of one's self, a certain tranquility and awareness level. While some enjoy the spiritual aspects of the practice, the fact is that it has the power to change a person as a whole by developing their personality.

III. IMPACT OF MEDITATION

Meditation, or as Westerners like to term it "Mindfulness", has the ability to enhance skills like attention, memory, and emotional intelligence.

A) Building Resilience

Studies show that meditation has proved to decrease anxiety levels, thereby increasing resilience and performance under stress.

B) Enhances Emotional Intelligence

Brain imaging studies suggests that meditation can help enhance your ability to control and regulate your emotions. To be more precise, it helps the mind to take control over the body and not the other way round.

C) Boosts Creativity

It has been proved scientifically through various studies that the human mind is most creative and come up with the brightest insights and breakthroughs when the mind is in a relaxed state of mind.

During meditation the mind is in a relaxed state and thereby encourages divergent thinking at its best and comes up with the maximum number of plausible solutions to a given problem, which is one of the most important aspects of creativity.

D) Improves Relationships

Under stress, individuals tend to narrow down their perspectives and this reduces the sense of empathy, thereby affecting the performance and relationship. Meditation has a direct connection to improving the mood of the individual, which improves both the performance and relationship in a team.

E) Enhanced Focus

Meditation helps curb our tendency to be distracted thereby increasing our abilities to think better and stay focused. It also helps improve the cognitive and decision making skills in an individual.

F) Improves Sleep And Energy Levels

Practicing meditation results in decreased sleep disturbance and helps to improve their quality of sleep. Better sleep means lower levels of stress and fatigue. A consistent sleep cycle helps regulate your circadian rhythms, which makes sure your energy levels stay throughout the day.

G) Improves Feelings Of Wellbeing

Emotional stability is very vital for better sense of well being. The ability to master one's emotions plays an important role to become more resourceful and productive. Developing a meditation practice will empower to become more aware of your emotions. Meditation is a remedy for the stress of modern day lifestyle. It brings the nervous system into balance.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, this review postulates that mind-body exercise such as yoga couples sustained muscular activity with internally directed focus, producing a temporary self-contemplative mental state. It also triggers neurohormonal mechanisms that bring about health benefits, evidenced by the suppression of sympathetic activity. Thus, it reduces stress and anxiety, improves autonomic and higher neural center functioning and even, as shown in some studies, improves physical health of cancer patients. However, there is a definite need for more directed scientific work to be carried out to elucidate the effects and the mechanisms of such effects of yoga on the human body in health and disease. Considering the scientific evidence discussed thus far, it is fair to conclude that yoga can be beneficial in the prevention and cure of diseases. The benefits of increased feelings of relaxation, improved self confidence and body image, improved efficiency, better interpersonal relationships, increase in attentiveness through Yoga and meditation as a way of life encourages an optimistic outlook on life.

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