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## Role of yoga in personality development

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### Abstract

This paper discusses yoga as a potential tool for children to deal with stress and regulate themselves. Yoga provides training of mind and body to bring emotional balance. We argue that children and young people need such tools to listen inward to their bodies, feelings and ideas. Yoga may assist them in developing in sound ways, to strengthen themselves, and be contributing social beings. First, we address how children and young people in today's world face numerous expectations and constant stimulation through the Internet and other media and communication technologies. One reason why children experience stress and mental health challenges is that globalization exposes the youth all over the world to various new demands, standards, and options. There is also increased pressure to succeed in school, partly due to increased competition but also a diverse range of options available for young people in contemporary times than in the past. A main concept in our article is that yoga may help children and young people cope with stress and thus, contribute positively to balance in life, well-being, and mental health. We present research literature suggesting that yoga improves children's physical and mental well-being. Similarly, yoga in schools helps students improve resilience, mood, and self-regulation skills pertaining to emotions and stress.

**Keywords:** Personality, youth, mental and physical health, yoga

### Introduction

Children and young people all over the world to various new standards and options. Now children not only have new resources in their lives, but are also expected to perform well. Different institutions in children and adolescents lives, such as family, school, and the media, constantly provide stimulation as well as expectations. This exposure to new expectations and demands has the potential to create stress in young people's lives, especially related to evaluation of their performances. Recent research shows that the most stressed-out generation is the current young adults. The survey has found that millennial (18–33 years of Age) are more stressed than any other current living generation. Respondents in the millennial generation were also less likely to give their healthcare an A grade. It is common knowledge that stress can have serious health consequences. If unaddressed consistently, a high stress level could become a chronic condition, which could result in a range of health problems, including anxiety, insomnia, muscle pain, high blood pressure, and a weakened immune system.

### Development through Yoga

Research indicates that stress can even contribute to the development of major illnesses such as heart disease, depression, and obesity or exacerbate existing health issues. We have observed that children are quite good at hiding their distress and emotional stress from their parents, since they do not want their parents to worry on their account. They desire to please their parents by their "appropriate" and "socially right" behaviors. Children dislike upsetting their parents and being the reason for adding to existing parental stress. According to a constructivist approach, children actively participate in their own development process. Moreover, children and young people interact with everyday life situations with world views that could be different from those of adults. In line with this theory, we believe that children function as an agency for their own well-being and have the evolving capacity to be partners of wellness with their families, friends, and society. However, children depend on the environment set by society to facilitate their potential for development.

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This article discusses yoga as a potential tool for the youth to deal with stress and to regulate themselves. Yoga provides training of mind and body to bring emotional balance. It is claimed that yoga leads to alignment and harmony. A recent thesis suggests that yoga is a tool to listen to your heart. We argue that children and young people need such aid to listen inward, to their bodies, feelings, and ideas. Thus, yoga may contribute to healthy development and good mental health; health promotion for children needs to include improvement of their attention, self-esteem, empowerment, and self-regulation. We believe that children and adolescents need to develop based on their unique personalities, and to interpret and achieve the balance between their own strengths and societal expectations. Yoga may assist them in developing in sound ways, to strengthen themselves, and be contributing social beings.

### Yoga and Children/Young

The ancient practice of yoga may help children and young people cope with stress and thus contribute positively to mental health. In a recent book on yoga education in India, the author claims that “in a nutshell, yoga is a powerful medium for developing the personality of Children and making them capable of facing the present-day challenges and problems”. In her review article, “Effect of Yoga on Mental Health in Children,” one of the world’s most prominent yoga researchers, Shirley Tells, concludes that yoga improves children’s physical and mental well-being. Thus, yoga is an important life skill tool for children and young people to cope with stress and self-regulation in a life-long perspective. As researchers and responsible citizens concerned with children and young people’s healthy development, what can we do to provide a happy environment and opportunities for them to develop their maximum potentials? With this profound question confronting us, we would like to provide the arguments for choosing yoga. Thus, we must seek other solutions comprising empowerment to give children and young people the tools to develop self-reflection, self-protection, self-regulation, and holistic self-development.

The increased global interest in yoga in recent decades is primarily due to the expectancy that yoga can calm the mind and increase overall health and well-being. Children’s mental health and well-being include developing healthy relationships with peers and teachers, and being able to self-regulate emotionally, mentally, and behaviorally. Yoga is an ancient Indian practice, which has been spread all over the world, and is even being revitalized in India itself. Yoga consists of certain postures, regulated breathing techniques, hand poses, and meditation. There is experiential knowledge on which poses are appropriate for different bodily functions. Yoga’s positive impact on the physical and mental health of individuals and their well-being has been an established truth in the ancient as well as contemporary yoga literature. The recent scientific research on yoga provides empirical evidence for some of these claims, and specifies that certain yoga practices are beneficial for the mental and physical health of children and young people.

### Benefits of Yoga

Yoga can be an appropriate scientific intervention in childhood and youth as a stress alleviator, especially in the school setting. The mentioned study conducted by Khalsa on high school students does provide evidence of yoga’s positive influence on them for emotional balance and stress alleviation. Yoga is also expected to help younger children

and youth increase self-regulation and thus, facilitate their well-being, positive social interactions, and school performance. Other academic research suggests that yoga has significant health potentials and is especially beneficial for coping with stress.

The evidence of yoga practice among children indicates improved benefits in concentration, stress alleviation, self-awareness, consciousness, self-regulation, behavioral and emotional maturity, and self-confidence in everyday life. There are also some proofs where yoga has worked as an adjunct to medical treatment of mental illness with positive effects.

### Conclusions

- The results of the present indicate that regular practice of the various techniques had a beneficial effect on the personality development of students at the physical, mental, emotional and intellectual levels.
- In spite of the limitations of the study, we may conclude that all the changes developed as a result of the accumulation of the effects of the yoga techniques and the contribution of the positive self-image produced thereby.
- It seems likely that by producing a repeated, feel good experience of the regular practice of yoga techniques produces a progressive relaxation of the psychological process within oneself.
- Thus the personality development takes the direction of increased openness towards the environment and increased spontaneity.
- The process leads to new awareness of self, exhibited by increased self-reliance, self-confidence, openness to interpersonal relationships and independence in the adolescent student.
- The process of education for the development of personality is a continuous function. The greater the development of personality greater will be his educational implications and greater will be the enfoldment of perfection in him. In the future education, we need not bind ourselves either by the ancient or the modern system but selects only the most perfect and rapid means of mastering knowledge.
- The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit. Each must have its due and natural place in a national system of education.

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