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Influence of yogic breathing on Asthma: The respiratory disorder

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Abstract

Breathing is something most people take for granted — except for those with severe asthma. Asthma is a chronic (long-term) disease of the respiratory system, which affects the lungs and the airways that carry air to and from the lungs. A person suffering from asthma has difficulty breathing due to the constriction of these airways. Inflammation and mucous in the airways (bronchi) can make the patient wheeze. The most common symptoms that can be seen in an asthma patients are coughing (especially after a long laugh or exercise), difficulty in breathing, tightness of the chest, shortness of breath, wheezing or whistling sound when breathing. Asthma narrows the airways in your lungs to the point where it can be hard to catch your breath. Medicines like inhaled corticosteroids and beta-agonists open up your airways to help you breathe easier. Until recently, doctors didn't recommend breathing exercises for asthma — simply because there wasn't enough evidence to show that they work. Yet more recent studies suggest these exercises might help improve your breathing and quality of life. Based on current evidence, breathing exercises may have value as an add-on therapy to medication and other standard asthma treatments. Yet for some people with severe asthma, these medicines might not be enough to control symptoms. Yogic Exercise is something to supplement drug treatment to timely cure.

Keywords: yogic exercise, asthma, breathing, respiratory system

Introduction

Asthma is a chorionic inflammatory lung disease that can cause repeated episodes of cough, wheezing and breathing difficulty. During an acute asthma episode, the airway lining in the lungs becomes inflamed and swollen. In addition, mucus production occurs in the airway and mucus production occurs in the airway and muscles surrounding the airway spasm. Severe asthma can make it hard to talk or be active. Some people refer to asthma as “bronchial asthma” Asthma is a serious-even dangerous disease. Though with proper treatment, you can live well.

Asthma: Breathing Disorder

Breathing is something most people take for granted — except for those with severe asthma. Asthma is a chronic (long-term) disease of the respiratory system, which affects the lungs and the airways that carry air to and from the lungs. A person suffering from asthma has difficulty breathing due to the constriction of these airways. Inflammation and mucous in the airways (bronchi) can make the patient wheeze. The most common symptoms that can be seen in an asthma patients are coughing (especially after a long laugh or exercise), difficulty in breathing, tightness of the chest, shortness of breath, wheezing or whistling sound when breathing. Asthma narrows the airways in your lungs to the point where it can be hard to catch your breath. Medicines like inhaled corticosteroids and beta-agonists open up your airways to help you breathe easier. Until recently, doctors didn't recommend breathing exercises for asthma — simply because there wasn't enough evidence to show that they work. Yet more recent studies suggest these exercises might help improve your breathing and quality of life. Based on current evidence, breathing exercises may have value as an add-on therapy to medication and other standard asthma treatments.

The incidence of bronchial asthma world over is on increase. The disease is characterized by cough, wheezing, and breathlessness (expiratory difficulty). It is exacerbated by various

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factors like environmental factors, infections, occupational factors, cold exposure, exercises, etc. Presently, disease management strategy includes pharmacological therapy (inhaled/oral medicine). Initially this therapy is helpful in management of the disease, but later on there is increase in financial burden, morbidity (more and more patients requiring oxygen therapy/respiratory support therapy), and mortality.

Causes of Asthma

Some of the causes of asthma include pollen, mites, food related allergies and environmental irritants like dust and smoke. In some cases, stress can be a trigger too. Not everybody gets asthma due to the same reasons and the triggers may be different for different people.

The fact that India contributes 10% to the total number of asthma patients globally is a cause of concern. It can affect people of any age group.

Some of the factors that may make you susceptible to asthma are:

- Genetic: If several of family members suffer from Asthma then one might be genetically pre-disposed to develop Asthma.
- Overweight
- Exposed to seasonal allergens like pollen.
- Smoker or exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Allergic to certain foods or synthetic food additives like colours and preservative

There is no cure for asthma and the treatments revolve around reducing symptoms and the chances for a fresh asthma attack.

Foods for Asthma Patients

An asthma patient should try and switch from animal protein to plant protein and eat ginger and turmeric regularly. The patient should also avoid fried food, smoking, alcohol, cheese, food additives, processed foods and focus on an organic food diet. But that doesn't mean you can't live a normal life, you just need to be a little more cautious than the others. Have an optimistic approach and live your life to the fullest. Here are some breathing techniques are described for Asthma patient.

1. Diaphragmatic breathing

The diaphragm is the dome-shaped muscle below your lungs that helps you breathe. In diaphragmatic breathing, you learn how to breathe from the region around your diaphragm, rather than from your chest. This technique helps to strengthen your diaphragm, slow your breathing, and decrease your body's oxygen needs.

To practice diaphragmatic breathing, lie on your back with your knees bent and a pillow under your knees, or sit up straight in a chair. Place one hand flat on your upper chest and the other hand on your stomach. Breathe in slowly through your nose. The hand on your stomach should move, while the one on your chest remains still. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips. Keep practicing this technique until you're able to breathe in and out without your chest moving.

2. Nasal breathing

Mouth breathing has been linked in studies to more severe asthma symptoms. The advantage to breathing through your nose is that it adds warmth and humidity to the air, which can help reduce asthma symptoms.

3. The Papworth method

The Papworth method has been around since the 1960s. It combines several different types of breathing with relaxation

training techniques. It teaches you how to breathe slowly and steadily from your diaphragm and through your nose. You also learn how to control stress so it doesn't affect your breathing. Research finds Trusted Source that this technique helps to erase breathing symptoms and improve quality of life in people with asthma.

4. Buteyko breathing

Buteyko breathing is named after its creator, Konstantin Buteyko, a Ukrainian doctor who developed the technique during the 1950s. The idea behind it is that people tend to hyperventilate — to breathe faster and more deeply than necessary. Rapid breathing can increase symptoms like shortness of breath in people with asthma. Buteyko breathing uses a series of exercises to teach you how to breathe slower and deeper. Studies evaluating its effectiveness have shown mixed results. Buteyko may improve asthma symptoms and reduce the need for medication, though it doesn't seem to improve lung function.

5. Pursed lip breathing

Pursed lip breathing is a technique used to relieve shortness of breath. To practice it, you first breathe in slowly through your nose with your mouth closed. Then, you purse your lips as if you were about to whistle. Finally, you breathe out through your pursed lips to a count of four.

6. Yogic breathing

Yoga is an exercise program that combines movement with deep breathing. A few small studies have found that using the same type of controlled deep breathing as in yoga may help improve asthma symptoms and lung function.

Yogic Breathing Exercises for Asthma

Here are some yoga exercises suggested by her that will help asthma patients get relief from their asthmatic problems:

1. Bharastika

This yoga breathing pranayam is known as breath of fire. In this asana, both Inhalation and exhalation are forced. Bharastika comprises of exhaling and inhaling in order to provide complete oxygen to our body. This asana gives strength to lungs, helps in allergies, asthma, respiratory diseases, improves immune system and helps in common cold.

2. Anulom Vilom Pranayama

It is a breathing exercise which very easy to do and is very effective too. It helps in cases of stress and depression. It even improves the functioning of lungs. It is an efficient practice for asthma patients.

3. Nadi Shodhan Pranayama

This is also known as Alternate Nostril Breathing. This is the next level of Anulom Vilom pranayama. Nadis are the subtle energy channels in our body which tend to get blocked because of unhealthy lifestyle, stress and physical trauma. Shodhan means cleaning and unblocking the nadis. This asana helps you release tensions, stress and contributes in keeping the mind calmer.

4. Kapalbhatai Pranayama

This asana is a breathing technique which helps in the improvement of respiratory system functioning.

Yogic Asanas

1. Sukhasana (Easy Pose)

Sukhasana or the Easy Pose is a simple seated pose that is also one of the easiest poses to sit down in meditation. In many Asian countries, Sukhasana is a natural way of sitting down and also assumed while having meals. For best results, practice Sukhasana in the morning, not necessarily on an empty stomach. The Easy Pose is a beginner level Vinyasa yoga asana. Hold the pose as long as you are comfortable sitting in it.

Sukhasana for Treating Asthma

Sukhasana focuses on your breath and controls stress. It broadens your chest, relaxes your brain, and makes you strong and steady. The pose gives you a sense of calm and peace and helps you avoid circumstances that trigger asthma attacks due to tension and stress.

2. Upavistha Konasana (Seated Wide Angle Pose)

Upavistha Konasana or the Seated Wide Angle Pose involves sitting down on your buttocks and spreading your legs apart as wide as possible. Practice the pose in the morning on an empty stomach or in the evening after a gap of 4 to 6 hours from the last meal. Upavistha Konasana is an intermediate level Hatha yoga asana. Hold it for 30 to 60 seconds.

Upavistha Konasana for Treating Asthma

In this pose, the upper body is stretched out. This opens up the lungs and betters the breathing. It also calms the brain and de-stresses your mind. The pose improves the body's flexibility and, as a whole, is ideal to prevent an asthma attack.

3. Ardha Matsyendrasana (Sitting Half Spinal Twist)

Ardha Matsyendrasana or the Sitting Half Spinal Twist is an asana where you sit down and twist your spine sideways. Practice the Ardha Matsyendrasana in the morning on an empty stomach and clean bowels. The pose is a beginner level Hatha yoga asana. Hold it for 30 to 60 seconds.

Ardha Matsyendrasana for Treating Asthma

Ardha Matsyendrasana stretches your chest and opens it up, thereby paving the way for more oxygen to enter your lungs and improving their oxygen capacity. This function of the pose reduces the possibility of an asthma attack.

4. Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)

Setu Bandhasana or the Bridge Pose looks like a bridge when assumed. It works best when practiced in the morning on an empty stomach. The pose is a beginner level Vinyasa yoga asana. Hold it for 30 to 60 seconds.

Setu Bandhasana for Treating Asthma

Setu Bandhasana is very effective for asthma patients. It keeps your body balanced by opening up your chest and lungs, keeping a check on your thyroid gland, and improving digestion.

5. Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Bhujangasana or the Cobra Pose is an energizing backbend that resembles the raised hood of a cobra. Practice Bhujangasana in the morning on an empty stomach and clean bowels. The pose is a beginner level Ashtanga yoga asana. Hold it for 15 to 30 seconds.

Bhujangasana for Treating Asthma

Bhujangasana eases the symptoms of asthma. It improves

oxygen and blood circulation throughout the body. It also opens up your chest and clears the passages to the lungs. The pose increases your flexibility, elevates your mood, and stretches the muscles of your chest.

6. Purvottanasana (Upward Plank Pose)

Purvottanasana, which means eastward facing, signifies the onset of new and bright beginnings, just like how the sun rises in the East in all its glory. Practice this Upward Plank Pose early in the morning on an empty stomach and clean bowels for best results. The pose is a beginner level Vinyasa yoga asana. Hold it for 30 to 60 seconds.

Purvottanasana for Treating Asthma

Purvottanasana opens up your mind to new possibilities and positivity. It improves the working of your respiratory system and keeps a check on your hormones. It helps you stay calm and composed as well as strong by strengthening your wrists, arms, and back, hence keeping asthma attacks at bay.

7. Shavasana (Corpse Pose)

The ending pose for every yoga session, the Shavasana or the Corpse Pose gets its name as the pose requires you to stay immobile like a dead body. Shavasana can be practiced anytime during the day and not necessarily on an empty stomach if not preceded or succeeded by other asanas. Shavasana is a beginner level Ashtanga yoga asana. Stay in the pose for a couple of minutes till you feel completely relaxed.

Shavasana to Treat Asthma

Shavasana relaxes your entire body and mind and takes away any built-up anxiety or pressure. It brings you into a meditative state and completely refreshes you. The pose helps you to be calm and composed, which is essential to tackle asthma.

Conclusion

Learning these breathing exercises and practicing them regularly may help to gain more control over asthma symptoms. They might also allow you to cut down on your use of asthma medication. Yet even the most effective breathing exercises can't replace asthma treatment entirely. Yoga helps to breathe better. Although breathing is a natural process, with yoga, it is possible to change your breathing pattern and habits for a more holistic breathing experience that will help you tackle your asthma problem effectively. Along with it, yoga has other physical and mental benefits, all working together in tandem to help you combat the asthma menace.

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