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Rajvir Singh Ojha

Department of Zoology,
Raja Balwant Singh College,
Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

The health benefits of yoga asana and exercise

Rajvir Singh Ojha

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Abstract

Yoga is a Sanskrit word meaning to meet or to be united. Yoga originates from Indian culture. People have been practicing yoga for 5000 years ago. Yoga does not only keep physical fitness but also help people to control their mind and body through mental focus and breathing. Regular practice of yoga asana can help in controlling our emotions and promote well-being. It helps to develop self-discipline and self-awareness if practiced regularly. It helps to strengthen our flexibility, enhance muscle tone and improve posture. Regular practice can reduce chronic pain conditions such as back pain and arthritis by improving joint and movability and decrease inflammation. It reduces stress, anxiety and promote relaxation. The benefit if yoga asana and exercise are vast and intense by merging into their daily live of an individual.

Keywords: Yoga, mental peace, posture, mental focus, relaxation and self-awareness

Introduction

Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj' which means union of the soul with God. Yoga comprises meditation, relaxation, control of breathing and various physical postures (asanas). Consistent practice of yoga establishes natural harmony and functional balance between numerous organs systems, leading to better health and a feeling of well-being. Yoga asanas support with evolving correct breathing patterns, bowel habits and regular sleeping patterns. It enlightens the art of relaxation, relieving muscular and nervous tension and leads to increased energy. Numerous literature reviews have been managed that analysed the impact of yoga on specific health conditions to measuring the effects of yoga in rheumatoid arthritis (Haslock *et al.*; 1994) [4]. The health benefits of yoga and exercise: a review of comparison studies (Ross and Thomas, 2010). Effects of yoga on stress management in health adults (Chong *et al.* 2011) [3]. Yoga has been used for centuries to promote physical and mental and spiritual health (Sengupta, 2012; Taneja, 2014) [9, 10]. The mind and body and promote relaxation concentration and inner peace (Broughton, 2016; Kumar and Singh, 2016; Akshaya *et al.*, 2019; Matko *et al.*, 2021; Schmid *et al.* 2021; Yadav *et al.* 2022) [2, 5, 1, 6, 8, 11].

Asana means 'posture' in Sanskrit. Yoga asanas involving standing, sitting, lying, balancing, upside down positions, stretching, twisting and constriction and relaxation of muscles, producing a steady posture at a given time. A regular routine is as essential as the intensity of asanas. It is useful to perform asanas in a quiet, well-ventilated area with the least distraction and free of dust and cold breeze.

This article describes few asanas that most commonly aid health maintenance and disease control. The asanas described are selection of several yoga texts. The names of asanas in Sanskrit words and usually correlate with to the posture showing the meaning of the word (e.g. Tadasana (palm pose), Padmasana (lotus pose), Bhujangasana (cobra pose), Shavasana (corpse pose)).

Results and Discussion

1. Tadasana

Tadasana is derived from the Sanskrit word 'tada' meaning 'palm' or 'mountain' and 'asana' meaning 'posture' or 'mudra'. The tadasana signifies standing strong like a tree or mountain. It is also called as 'mountain pose' or 'palm tree'.

Corresponding Author:

Rajvir Singh Ojha

Department of Zoology,
Raja Balwant Singh College,
Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Stand upright, keeping a distance of 2 inches between your feet. Inhale and lift your arms in front, levelling up to your shoulders. Look the fingers of both the hands together and then slowly rotate your wrist outwards. Now inhale and lift your hands above the head.

Tadasana centers your body and mind, which helps create a calm sense of inner peace. Maintaining alignment and body awareness is a constant process. Standing strong, steady and centered in mountain pose assists to improve posture, alignment and balance. This can benefit other yoga poses as well as your daily movements.



Fig 1: Tadasana

2. Padmasana

Padmasana is also known as 'lotus pose' because its shape is like that of flower of lotus. It is an ancient Indian practice, where a person sits in a cross-legged posture placing his/her feet in Hindu, Jain and Buddhist for meditation.

Bend your right leg at the knee. Place your right foot on your left thigh with the support of your hands. Now fold the left leg too at the knee. Once again, carry your left foot with your hands and bring it to rest on your right thigh.

Padmasana offers several health benefits, such as improving digestion, relieving constipation, improving flexibility and reducing anxiety. It can also help reducing menstrual discomfort and lowering high blood pressure. It may support in maintaining body weight.



Fig 2: Padmasana

3. Bhujangasana

In Sanskrit, the word bhujangasana comes a combination of two words- 'bhujanga' which translates to 'cobra' and 'asana' meaning 'posture'. Even visually it reflects the posture of a cobra that has its hood raised and hence, it is called as 'cobra pose', is a popular yoga asana. This pose is backbone that stretches the spine, chest and abdomen while build up the muscles of the back and arms. It is often practiced as part of the sum salutation pattern and is known for its many health benefits.

Lie on your stomach. Bring your chin to the mat and place your palms under your shoulders inhale.

Bhujangasana supports stimulate the digestive organs, counting the liver and kidneys while also strengthening the abdominal muscles. It uplift a healthy flow of blood digestive tract, improving digestion. Bhujangasana procedure calms the pain in the back, shoulders and arms. Further it reduces the stress in the body and improves blood circulation. It strengthens the muscles and joints of middle-aged person. For women, it regularizes menstrual blood flow and frequency.



Fig 3: Bhujangasana

4. Shavasana

It is also known as 'corpse pose' is an asana in hath yoga and modern yoga as exercise, often used for relaxation. It is the most relaxing pose, usually performed at the end of yoga session. It acts as a cooldown posture. It is basically meditation in the supine position, which allows us to be aware of our inner self while our body is physically at rest.

Lie down flat on your back. Stretch your arms and legs out and away from your body. Keep your eyes gently closed. Breathe evenly and attempt to relax. Ensure that your body is completely relaxed and focus on your mind. Practice regularly till you learn to focus and can still your thoughts.

Shavasana acts as a cool-down posture. It is basically meditation in the supine position, which allows us to be aware of our inner self while our body is physically at rest. It may also aid in managing diabetes, depression, insomnia, lowering blood pressure and decreasing headache. It signifies the end of our physical yoga practice, allowing your heart rate and breathe to return to normal and our body temperature to cool before we return to our day off the yoga mat.



Fig 4: Shavasana

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