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Dr. Geeta Sharma
Assistant Professor in Surjeet
Memorial College of Education,
Ferozepur, Punjab, India

Yoga for stress management among youth

Dr. Geeta Sharma

Abstract

Stress has become one of the biggest challenges of the world. In spite of million of the dollars being spent for development of management program to deals with stress, we are no towards solving even the pinch of the problem. In early seventies stress used to be in the executive word only, today it has spread everywhere. Even small kids, small students, small children come and say oh maa I am so stressed up, I am so tensed up, I am so bored. In a multi ethnic society like India 30% of the youngsters, teenagers suffer from depression. We are very concerned. Why we have not been able to tackle the problem of stress? In this article we study how yoga can be very helpful tool in managing stress. It's practiced not only for stress management but also for good physical and mental health and to live in a more meaningful way.

Keywords: Yoga, stress management, physical

Introduction

Every individual has a distinctive style of behaving. This unique quality of individuals behavior constitutes shape to personality, which includes feelings, values, reactions, prejudices, attitudes, perceptions etc. psychologically personality development means the development of physical, mental, emotional temporal makeup. A considerable amount of research has shown that yoga has benefits on mental health includes a reduction in proneness to depression, and increase in emotional positivity and also increase in ability to deal with life inevitable stresses. Yoga is an activity for the body, mind and soul. In the modern period Vivekananda said- yoga is defined as a system of personality development, transformation, of consciousness and integration with in the human system leading to the complete well being.

The word yoga is derived from Sanskrit word 'Yuj' which means union-to join or to yoke, the union beings that of the personal self and the impersonal self. Patanjali defines Yoga as chitta, vritti, nirodh. He says it is restraint of mental modifications, means controlling of thought waves entering the mind. Chitta is the intellect including the ego and the senses. Patanjali believes that knowledge is objective and thoughts are waves which come from outside and are caught by the mind as an aerial would catch sound waves and turn them into words and music. Control of the thought waves means getting rid of false identification of the thought waves with the ego sense.

Yoga is an ancient, Indian art and science that seeks to promote individual health and well-being through physical and mental exercise and deep relaxation. *Bhakti yoga, Dhyana yoga, Karma yoga, Kriya yoga, Kundalini yoga, Hatha yoga* all form of yoga teach methods of concentration and contemplation to control the mind, subdue the primitive consciousness, and bring the physical body under control of the will. In the *Hatha yoga*, slow stretching of the muscles in exercise is taught, along with breathing in certain rhythmical patterns. The body positions or asana for exercises and meditation can be learned, with some practice, by most. in the defense against the stressor. These positions are thought to clear the mind and create energy and a state of relaxation for the individual.

Stress

All of us keep hearing this terminology stress most commonly. Somebody gets stress physically, somebody gets stress emotionally, somebody gets mentally and express that is highly stressful. It is very commonly occurring phenomenon in every one's life. Let us try to understand what exactly stress is all about.

Correspondence
Dr. Geeta Sharma
Assistant Professor in Surjeet
Memorial College of Education,
Ferozepur, Punjab, India

In simple terms stress can be defined as ‘Non specific basic response pattern which prepares an individual for a demanding situation’. This involves activities at physiological level, activities at the behavior level and emotional level. Stress arises when individuals perceive that they can adequately cope with demands being made on them or with threats made to their wellbeing. For instance, for a teacher, stress is “experience by teacher of unpleasant, negative emotion, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspects of their work as a teacher”. It is important to understand that while stress is necessary and positive. It can also be negative and harmful. Whether positive or negative, physical or mental, the body’s reaction to stress can be described by three stages:

Alarm Reaction Stage- The body identifies and first reacts to the stress. In this stage the body first releases hormones that help in the defense against the stressor.

Resistance Stage- The body continues to resist the stressor as they persist. If the stressors continue and there is a consistent state of resistance, there is potential to move into the third and final stage.

Exhaustion Stage- The body and mind are no longer able to make the necessary adjustments to resist the stressors and there is physical and/or mental exhaustion.

Why Stress In Youth?

We can experience stress from five basic sources following under such as:

Environmental stressors include weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe and substandard housing and crime.

Family related stressors include, family separations (due to work relocations or other reasons), relationship conflicts disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, illness or death of a family member, parenting or child care challenges, divorce, financial crisis and homelessness.

Workplace stressors are conflict among co-workers, unexpected/unwanted transfer of work location, lack of mobility/transport for high risk patients at the healthy facility, poor communication with co-workers, lack of support from supervisor, no forum to express work concern and issues and lack of resources to support the provision of care.

Physiological stressors are situations circumstances that affect our body. Examples of physiological stressors include rapid growth of adolescence, menopauses, illness, aging giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition and sleep disturbances.

Thoughts: our brain interprets and perceives situations as stressful, difficult, painful or pleasant. Some situations in life are stress provoking, but it is our thoughts that determine whether they are a problem for us or not.

The times of India (2007) [7] reported that stress overloads our mental and physical resources and interferes the effective use of skills thus badly affecting our performance. Akhtar (2006) [2] reported that stress changes brain anatomy, which adversely affects memory. He further claimed that stress brings the changes, which are directly linked to body-mind problems, such as suicidal tendencies, severe depression, obsessive

compulsive disorder, provocations, addictive behavior, and debilitating hypersensitivity that even affect immunity. Nan Little (2006) [6] found that chronic and acute stress causes difficulty with concentration and memory. Bremnes *et al.* (1998) [3] revealed that stress causes memory deficits and affects the capacity for learning.

The danger comes when stress is chronic or unmanageable because a person’s responses may be inadequate. Intense stress can lead to physical illness, emotional problems, or interpersonal difficulties. Yoga is an effective way to resolve stress because it works on both the mind and body, reducing the feeling of being overwhelmed and burned out by life’s circumstances. Yoga stimulates the natural healing resources of the mind and body so that the individual is better able to cope with stress.

How Yoga Helps For Stress Management

Everyone suffer from mild anxiety from time to time, but chronic anxiety takes a tremendous toll on the body, draining energy resources and keeping the body in a constant state of stress. The stress and tension are the universal phenomenon of social life. Emotional stress causes disturbance in hypothalamus which is the centre for sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. So when an individual gets excessive stress constantly, the sympathetic nervous system is stimulated which increases the functions of heart which results in blood pressure.

There is deep relationship between the pattern of our breathing and our internal emotions. When we become angry, we breathe faster and when we are happy our breath is slower. The specific breathing techniques open up the lock with in people, which is the source of all emotional and physical disturbances.

Today when everybody in this world is searching for peace, harmony and happiness to reduce their stress and tension, the yoga is very much authentic and useful.

The practice of yoga is well-demonstrated to reduce the physical effects of stress on the body, and has even been found to lower cortisol levels. People find that they feel more relaxed after practicing Yoga. The asana, or physical postures of yoga, are helpful for reducing muscular tension, which reduce stress. Since we often have a tendency to store stress not only in our nervous system, but distributed throughout the musculature and other tissues of the body, yoga can be a valuable and effective tool for releasing this pent-up or stored stress. Yoga helps you to access an inner strength that allows you to face the sometimes- overwhelming fear, frustrations, and challenges of everyday life.

Yoga also includes meditation and breathing practices as well as a set of ethical precepts and observances (yamas and niyamas). These other elements also have beneficial stress-reducing qualities, partially by improving our relationships with the various aspects of our inner nature.

The benefits of yoga posture (asana), breathing (pranayama), and meditation (dhyana) include increased body awareness, release of muscular tension and increased coordination between body and mind. It helps in better management of stress and ensures an overall feeling of wellbeing.

Suggestions for Stress Management through Yoga

1. Pressure or negative feelings are the sources of hypertension so when any negative feeling arises in the mind it should be replaced by cherishing appropriate positive thought. Yogic rules and exercises like pranayam are helpful and body because more active against negative feeling.

2. Attitude of contentment or santosha is also consider as another yogic technique for satisfaction for anything is a source of mental power and physical strength.
3. Some yogic exercises are
 - a) Lie down on earth, contact your body with the floor and make it sink into the floor.
 - b) Release the tension around mouth and smile.
 - c) Relax shoulders, let it sink into the floor and let the tension flow into floor.
 - d) Release the arms let it sink into the floor, move fingers and muscles relax.
 - e) Relax heart, embrace it tenderly and mindfully.
 - f) Relax legs; release the tension in knees, clavicles, ankle, feet and toes.
 - g) Relax body, feet it very light and floating free like cloud.
 - h) Come back to abdomens rising and falling, breathing in and out.
 - i) Slowly sit up, slowly stand up and smile again.
 - j) Self-discipline in body, word and mind for self-development.
 - k) Don't control the breath.
 - l) Enjoy waking with balance i.e. combine in breath and out breath, also be careful about breathing in and breathing out and abdomens rising and falling.
 - m) Take the hand of a small child to receive freshness, innocence and practice.

Conclusion

Stress has become a threat to human beings in today's world. Continued exposure to stress results in a decline in the body's overall functioning because of continues secretion of stress-related hormones. Stress affect our immune system due to which, our task performance suffers badly. Apart from physiological impact of stress, one suffers from psychological level too. Everybody life is full of ups and downs and we cannot get rid of stressful situations. But we can make ourselves strong enough to face these stressful situations with the help of yoga. The yogic exercises are both preventive and curative in their nature. Yoga should not be looked at as a religion or an exercise, it is more of a system of well integrated techniques and mind frames designed to alleviate stress and bring about universal harmony throughout one's body, thus infusing feel-good vibes in mind and body. In a world where most good things come with side-effect, Yoga brings a refreshingly different perspective.

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