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## Effects of yoga on health

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**Abstract**  
Stress, stress-related illnesses, unrest, and family disintegration are all on the rise in today's globe. Germ theories, antibiotics, and procedures cannot solve the majority of common health and societal problems. Many people who practice yoga do so to improve their physical fitness, ease stress, and improve their quality of life. As a result, yoga is becoming increasingly popular around the world. Yoga has been around since the beginning of time. It provides comfort to the restless mind. It is a blessing for the sick. It is the fashion of the day to maintain the average man fit and lovely. Yoga and meditation, two mindfulness-related techniques, have been extensively proven in medical study for decades as a means of activating the body's natural stress-management mechanisms. Despite the opposition of hard core matter-based pharmaceutical and surgery-oriented researchers, several research publications on the importance of positive thinking, prayer, spiritual healing, mind-body medicine, yoga, acupuncture, and energy medicine are being poured into medical journals. In this paper, we describe the eight limbs of yoga which guide us how to live a purposeful life. This paper also describes how yoga improves our mental and physical health and other beyond the mat benefits.

**Keywords:** Health, yoga, effectiveness, mental health, physical health

### Introduction

Yoga literally means "unity." Yoga connects the mind and body. Yoga has both physical and emotional advantages. Yoga is a philosophic exercise and meditation system. There are many different types of yoga, each with its own set of practices but all with the same goal of controlling the mind and body<sup>[1]</sup>. There are six major branches of yoga. Hatha yoga is a physical and mental discipline of yoga that focuses on priming the body and mind. This style of yoga incorporates meditation and rigorous devotion to the eight limbs of yoga, which are a set of disciplinary actions. Karma yoga is a path of service aimed at creating a world free of negativity and selfishness. Bhakti yoga is a devotional practice that tries to build a constructive manner to channel emotions and cultivate compassion and tolerance. Jnana yoga is a branch of yoga that focuses on wisdom, the scholar's path, and intellectual development via study. Tantra yoga is the path of ritual, ceremony, and relationship fulfillment. Yoga's overall premise is to bring the mind, body, and spirit together. The general goal of yoga practice is to facilitate the growth and integration of the body, mind, and breath in order to generate structural, physiological, and psychological consequences<sup>[2]</sup>. Hatha yoga is the most popular type of yoga in Western cultures. It combines asana to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and mind-body-breath coordination, as well as pranayama and meditation exercises to calm the mind and enhance self-awareness<sup>[3]</sup>.

**Eight limbs of yoga:** In Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, the eightfold path is called *ashtanga*, which literally means "eight limbs" (*ashta*=eight, *anga*=limb). These are eight steps, commonly known as the 8 limbs of yoga, basically act as guidelines on how to live a meaningful and purposeful life.

**Yama:** It is the first limb of yoga that aiming to direct our behavior and how we deal with ourselves. Yamas are the basic principles that teach us to behave in a gentle manner with others. There are five yamas which include:

- a) **Ahimsa (non-harming):** This principle deals with the contribution of growth and nourishment of the people around us.

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- This states that treating and caring for others as an extension of us.
- b) **Satya (Truthfulness):** we act differently with different people because we wear masks of different personality. This principle teaches us that we wear off the masks and act as a true self. We must act as a unbiased when we deal with different people. When we act as a true self then we live in reality rather than illusion. Sometimes speaking truth might be difficult but it is the noble way to do so.
  - c) **AsteYA (Non-stealing):** This principle teaches us to respect other people's time, energy and resources.
  - d) **Brahmacharya (Abstinence):** This is about to performing our primal life force as scared.
  - e) **Aparigraha (Non-hoarding):** Greed is the cause of all root evils. This principle states that we must not be highly attached with the materialistic things like wealth, people. Greed and hoarding increases the resource disparity and poverty. We must able to build a system on the basis of mutual aid and sustainability.

**Niyama:** The prefix 'ni' is a Sanskrit verb which means 'inward' or 'within'. Niyama principle deals with the duties that one must perform towards us. This is about to practice self-discipline. The five niyamas are:

- a) **Saucha (Cleanliness):** This principle not only belongs to clean the body but clean the mind as well. We must have bath daily, eat clean food, and make the living space clean along with having a pure and positive thoughts about yourselves and others.
- b) **Santosha (Contentment):** This principle states that we must content with what we already have. We practice to feel complete in the present.
- c) **Tapas (Heat):** There is a beautiful saying that practice makes a man perfect. When we do something frequently then we can achieve mastery on this. Sometime it may be difficult but tapas principles say that we should use this pain to fuel our practice.
- d) **svadhyaya (Self-knowledge):** The Bhagavad Gita says, "Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self." Yoga is meant to be a process of direct inquiry into our internal world. The more we dive inward, the more we can learn about the infinite nature of our consciousness.
- e) **Ishvarapranidhana (Full surrender to the divine):** Yoga allows us to seek a supreme divine being, and allow ourselves to connect with them through practice.

### Asana

We must practice yoga movements with full enjoy and ease. While doing asana it is essential to take time in each pose, and move from one pose to another by fully concentrated on breathe. Through the practice of asanas, we develop the habit of discipline and the ability to concentrate, both of which are necessary for meditation. To do asana daily increases wellness in body and mind.

### Pranayama

This practice is about to "breathe control". The word *Prana* refers to 'energy' or 'life source'. This can be used to define the very important essence of life that makes us alive. It is also related to energy in the universe around us. Pranayama can be understood as either 'prana-yama' which would mean 'breath – control' or 'breath restraint', or it could be understood as 'prana-ayama' which would translate as 'freedom of breath', 'breath expansion' or 'breath liberation'<sup>[10]</sup>. When we practice different breathing techniques our mind is able to alert in a myriad of way. Every breathing practice can change our state of being.

### Pratyahara

Pratyahara is the fifth step. Pullout or sensitive preponderancy is the fifth of yoga's eight branches, Pratyahara. We make the conscious effort to withdraw our consciousness from the external environment and outside stimulants during this stage. We direct our attention internally, wary of our sensations yet creating a separation from them. Pratyahara practice allows us to take a step back and examine ourselves. This approach lets us to objectively observe our jones habits, which may be harmful to our health and obstruct our personal development.

### Dharana

Dharana The practice of pratyahara establishes the context for dharana, or focus, since each stage prepares us for the next. We can now deal with the diversions of the mind after we've removed external distractions. It won't be easy! We learn how to slow down the cognitive process by focusing on a single internal object, such as a specific energetic centre in the body, an image of a deity, or the silent reiteration of a sound, in the practice of attention, which comes before contemplation. Of course, in the previous three steps of posture, breath control, and sensory pullout, we started to improve our attention powers.

### Dhyana

The seventh stage of ashtanga is meditation or contemplation, which is the continuous influx of attention. Although attentiveness (dharana) and contemplation (dhyana) appear to be interchangeable, there is a narrow line between the two stages. Dhyana is a condition of intense apprehension without focus, whereas dharana is a state of one-pointed attention. The mind has calmed down at this point, and it creates a large number of studies or none at all. The emotional fortitude and stamina required to achieve this condition of stillness are considerable. Don't give up, though. While this may appear to be a difficult, if not impossible, undertaking, keep in mind that yoga is a process. Even if we don't achieve the "perfect" disguise or the optimal state of knowledge, we benefit at every stage of our development.

### Samadhi

The eighth and final stage of ashtanga, samadhi, is described by Patanjali as a state of elation. The meditator merges with his or her point of focus at this point and transcends the Tone entirely. The meditator realises a deep connection to the divine and connectivity with all living things. With this completion comes the "calm that surpasses all comprehension," the feeling of happiness and oneness with the Universe.

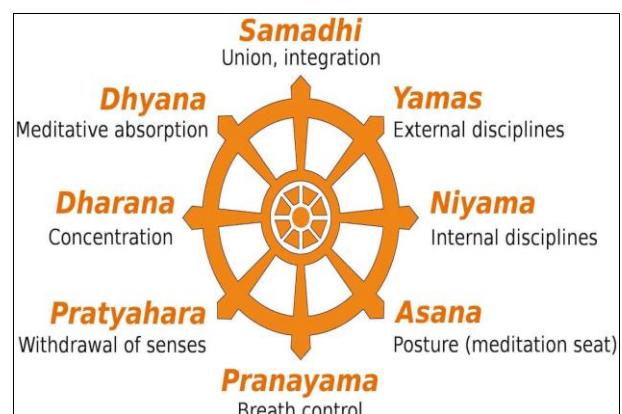


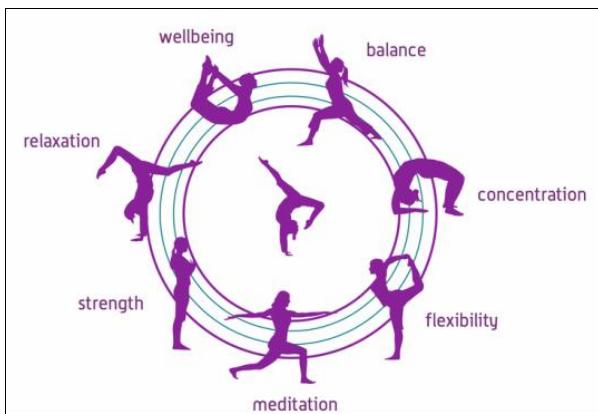
Fig 1: Type of meditation

### Benefits of yoga

Yoga increases flexibility, which is an important aspect of

physical fitness. Yoga comes in a variety of styles, ranging in intensity from intense to moderate to light. Even the most low-intensity techniques have been shown to improve flexibility.

Yoga enhances mental health by enhancing creativity and willpower, two components of the mind. Yogic techniques have been shown to increase man's creative ability [4]. Yoga is commonly used to help people relax and relieve stress. Yoga relieves stress in the following ways: According to the American Psychological Association, 84 percent of American people are affected by long-term stress [5]. As a result, it's not surprising that the second most popular reason for doing yoga is to relieve tension.



**Fig 2:** Type of yoga

### Benefits of Yoga

Anxiety disorders may be the most frequent mental health illnesses in the United States, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America [6]. Yoga may help with anxiety. Several studies suggest that yoga asana may be useful as an alternative treatment for anxiety disorders, while several researchers have asked for more repeated studies before concluding [7, 8].

Yoga may help you live a better life: The World Health Organization defines quality of life (QOL) as "an individual's view of their place in life in relation to their goals, aspirations, standards, and concerns in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live." Yoga can help your brain work better: According to studies, yoga is a true mind-body exercise. The above-mentioned review discovered

Yoga aids in the development of intuition: Yoga and meditation can help you develop your intuitive abilities so that you can recognize what has to be done, when, and how to achieve positive results on your own. Yoga should be practiced on a regular basis because it is a continual process. The more you practice yoga, the more profound the advantages become.

A boost to weight loss and maintenance: Yoga practitioners and mindful eaters are more attuned to their body. They could be more responsive to hunger and fullness cues. People who practiced yoga for at least 30 minutes once a week for at least four years gained less weight in middle adulthood, according to researchers. Overweight individuals actually dropped weight.

Cardiovascular benefits: Yoga was proven to have a positive effect on cardiovascular risk factors in several minor studies: it helped persons with hypertension lower their blood pressure. Yoga most likely restores "bar receptor sensitivity." This aids the body in sensing blood pressure irregularities and maintaining balance.

### Conclusion

To summarize, yoga is an excellent way to improve your flexibility and strength. Yoga is good to our total health in addition to physical mobility. Yoga and meditation can help you develop your intuitive abilities so that you can recognize what has to be done, when, and how to achieve positive results on your own. Yoga should be practiced on a regular basis because it is a continual process. The more you practice yoga, the more profound the advantages become. Yoga is beneficial to the body and mind, but it is not a substitute for medical treatment. It is critical to learn and practice yoga under the guidance of a certified Yoga instructor. Practice yoga if you have a medical ailment. Yogic and meditative techniques have been shown to be extremely beneficial to an individual's overall health. As a result, it becomes our responsibility to carry this forward with us and make full use of it, rather than letting it go. Many educational institutions are now aware of the benefits of yoga and have begun to incorporate it into their curricula. These are excellent initiatives that should be supported and expanded upon.

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