

Them 4.Physical Fitness and Wellness in Post COVID World

Sr. No.	Name of the Author	Title of Paper	Page No.
90.	Sowmya.S	Importance of Physical Fitness and Wellness in Post Covid World	332
91.	Mr. Anand Mohan Yadav Dr. Sharad Shankarrao Aher	Study of Fundamental Skills Profiles and Anthropometric Measurements of Roll Ball players of Asian Continent	336
92.	Dr. Pratibha Verma and Arvind Kumar Verma	A Study on Physical Fitness and Wellbeing in Post-Covid Era for Sustainable Development through Complete IQ	340
93.	Satyam Tiwari	Role of Yoga For The Promotion of Mental Health During COVID-19 Pandemic- A Narrative Review	344
94.	Prof. Patil Bhimrao Shivajirao Dr. Ramesh Gaikwad	Yoga and Its Positive Effects on Human-Being	353
95.	Anupamkumar L Parmar, Baburao L Ghayal	Physical activity and Wellness	357
96.	Adv.Rajendra Appasaheb Koli Dr. Shikhare V.P.	A Study of Effectiveness of Yoga, Pranayam, sudarshan Kriya & Meditation on Teaching Process	360
97.	Prof. Smt Smita S. Survase	Study of Effect of Anulom Vilom And Bhastrika Pranayama on The Vital Capacity and Maximum Ventilatory Volume on M.P.Ed.Students	365
98.	Mallikarjun B. Patil* and Prof. Dr. Anil G. Kamble	Bridging the Gaps in Educational System During and Post COVID-19 Pandemic	369
99.	Assit. Prof. Nagtilak Ramhari Shivaji	Physical Fitness and Motor Fitness for Children	371
100.	Dr. Mohite Babu Chandrahar	Relevance of Yoga in post Covid 19 scenario – A brief review	374
101.	Dr.Gadhve Shashikant Devidas	A Study of Study of Well-Being Life After Covid	376
102.	गणेश जिभाऊ वाघ डॉ. नितीनकुमार दादासाहेब माळी	डॉ. विश्वास मंडलिक लिखित योग साहित्याचा अभ्यास	377
103.	अभिजीत पाटील रोहित डिसले	लघु क्रीडांगणावर राबवलेल्या शारीरिक शिक्षण कार्यक्रमाचा बार्शा येथील महात्मा फुले विद्यामंदिर शाळेतील इयत्ता चौथीच्या विद्यार्थ्यांच्या मूलभूत कारक कौशल्यावर होणारा परिणामांचा अभ्यास	380
104.	अरविन्द अहिरवार	योग शिक्षा व्यवस्था से व्यक्तित्व निर्माण की सम्भावनाएँ : एक अध्ययन	385
105.	डॉ.अनिल जी कांबळे	कोविड 19 महामारी काळात खळाडूंचे मानसशास्त्राची भूमिका	390



Yoga and Its Positive Effects on Human-Being

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Abstract:

As it happens, Western science is starting to provide some concrete clues as to how yoga works to improve health, heal aches and pains, and keep sickness at bay. Once you understand them, you'll have even more motivation to step onto your mat, and you probably won't feel so tongue-tied the next time someone wants Western proof.

Yoga History:

Yoga is more than mastering postures and increasing your flexibility and strength. "The traditional purpose of Yoga, however, has always been to bring about a profound transformation in the person through the transcendence of the ego,"

In Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism the word yoga means "spiritual discipline". People often associate yoga with the postures and stances that make up the physical activity of the exercise, but after closer inspection it becomes clear that there are many more aspects of yoga. It is an activity that has been practiced for thousands of years, and it is something that has evolved and changed overtime. Different factions of yoga have developed since its conception. The exact history and origins of yoga is uncertain; however, there are pieces that have been connected and allow us to make some conclusions. It is known that yoga originated from the East. The earliest signs of yoga appear in ancient Shamanism. Evidence of yoga postures were found on artifacts that date back to 3000 B.C. Evidence of yoga is found in the oldest-existing text, Rig-Veda. Rig-Veda is a composition of hymns. Topics of the Rig-Veda include prayer, divine harmony, and greater being.

"The primary goal of shamanism was to heal members of the community and act as religious mediators," ("History of Yoga").

Yoga originally focused on applying and understanding the world. Its focus later changed to the self. Self-enlightenment became the ultimate goal.

It was not until the sixth century B.C. that the poses and meditation became a critical element. They were implemented by Buddhist teachings.

Modern Yoga:-

Modern yoga is based on five basic principles that were created by Swami Sivananda.

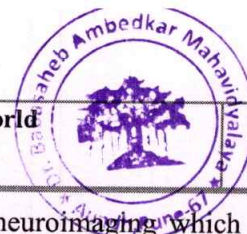
- Proper relaxation
- Proper exercise
- Proper breathing
- Proper diet
- Positive thinking and meditation

Introduction:

Yoga is a spiritual, mental, and physical practice that's been around for centuries. Today, there are several types of yoga that vary in difficulty and speed. While different yoga types feel different, yogis and scientists alike will tell you they are all extremely beneficial for your mental and physical health.

The link between body and mind:

Many practitioners believe there is a very strong link between body and mind and the prevalence of many diseases. This belief has only in recent times spread into the World where before they have long believed that the mind is not interconnected to the body. In our modern day, fast paced lifestyles it becomes quite easy to forget about the importance of slowing down and taking time out for ourselves. Every day we find so many places we need to be, people we need to see, jobs we need to do and children we need to take care of. Couple this with emotional, financial and physical stress, it's no wonder we have a hard time actually paying attention to what our body is trying to tell us. It goes even deeper, in that we are also seeing a link between the mind and the immune system and our emotions and their effect on our body. These incredible findings have been made



much easier to prove thanks to development in technology, in particular in neuroimaging which measures specific brain function and molecular biology which reads various biological interactions between cells. When you are stressed your body releases hormones that have a big impact on how your nervous system and internal organ's function. Cortisol is the main hormone that affects your body's function when placed under stress. It has been found to impair memory and function, increase weight and bring about multiple cardiovascular diseases. Your digestive system can also be directly affected by stress and it has been shown that nutrients are not as effectively absorbed when stressed. Irritable bowel syndrome and food allergies are also closely linked to stress. The brain communicates to your stomach via the vagus nerve. When placed under continual stress your immune system begins to suffer which leaves you wide open to many illnesses. The body is unable to fight effectively against harmful bacteria and infections, resulting in inflammation which can occur at many levels. For this reason it is believed that many autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and osteoarthritis form in the body as a result of stress.

Positive Effect Of Yoga On Human-Being :

While the world took a considerable amount of time to discover yoga to the ancient world, its positive effects are beginning to show throughout the modern day healthcare system. In a recent study carried out by Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH)'s Institute for Technology Assessment and the Benson-Henry Institute (BHI), it was found that yoga has helped to reduce healthcare costs by as much as 43%. In the study, patients participated in a relaxation training program which significantly lowered stress-levels and anxiety while lowering blood pressure, heart rate and decreasing muscle tension. The patients were found to use much fewer health care services in the year following their participation in the relaxation program.

Better Flexibility

Have you ever watched an experienced yogi twist herself into pretzel-like poses? Seriously, who knew the human body could even bend like that?! The truth is, if you don't keep your body conditioned to do such movements, then it won't be able to. Overtime your muscles will atrophy and your joints will settle into a limited range of motion. So when you take your first yoga class, you may not be able to touch your toes let alone tuck your feet behind your head. Stick with it, though, and you will gradually notice your body loosening up.

Better Posture

Has anyone ever told you to stop slouching or to sit up straight? Poor posture doesn't only look bad; it also has a negative impact on the body. Bad posture has been linked to backaches, neck pain, joint problems, and muscle fatigue. Luckily, there are a few things you can do right now to improve your posture, with yoga topping the list. Yoga is one of the best ways to fix poor posture since each pose aims to get your body back into proper alignment without forcing you into unnatural positions.

Better Balance

From easy beginner movements to more advanced stretches, you will need to concentrate and focus in order to hold yoga poses. Overtime, though, you will notice that you don't have to concentrate quite as hard. That's because your balance has naturally improved. Every yoga pose helps improve your balance, even the ones that don't appear to require any balance. When you are sitting or leaning you are still required to centre your body.

More Strength

Unlike other types of workouts where you pump iron or pull on resistance bands, with yoga, you only use your own bodyweight as resistance. Since yoga requires you to enter into and hold various positions, you will naturally strengthen your muscles. Don't worry about your muscles getting bored with the same old poses, though. As soon as one pose becomes easy for you there is always another, harder, pose for you to begin working on.

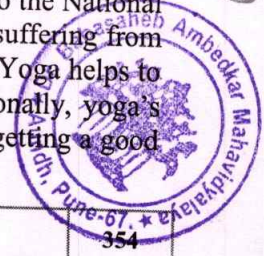
Tones the Body

One really great aspect of yoga is that it works to tone your body without using weights or exercise equipment. Like a push-up or a pull-up, yoga only uses your own body weight as resistance.

Better Sleep

While sleep experts recommend getting between 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night, according to the National Sleep Foundation, millions of Americans are getting nowhere near that. Rather, many people are suffering from sleep problems. If you are someone who has trouble sleeping, scientists recommend trying yoga. Yoga helps to relax the nervous system, which is the part of your body responsible for a restful sleep. Additionally, yoga's meditative aspect comes into play to quiet the mind. So if a racing mind is what keeps you from getting a good night's sleep then performing yoga at any point during the day may offer you some relief.

33





Lower Blood Pressure

It's important to monitor and lower high blood pressure since it can lead to heart attack, stroke, and other unhealthy cardiovascular events. Aside from taking medications, there are natural ways to lower high blood pressure. According to a study published in the British medical journal The Lancet, yoga is a great workout for your heart and over time will improve your cardiovascular function. The key is sticking with it long enough to get these benefits. In one study, researchers looked at people with hypertension and compared the effects of Savasana (Corpse Pose) with simply lying on a couch. After three months, the group that practiced Savasana noticed a 26-point drop in systolic blood pressure and a 15-point drop in diastolic blood pressure.

Better Circulation

With all of the twisting motions and upside down poses, yoga can really get your heart pumping and blood circulating. This means fresh blood and oxygen are delivered to your cells and organs, enhancing their function. According to studies: "Twisting poses wring out venous blood from internal organs and allow oxygenated blood to flow in when the twist is released. Inverted poses encourage venous blood flow from the legs and pelvis back to the heart and then pumped through the lungs where it becomes freshly oxygenated."

Lower Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a lipid that's found in the bloodstream. While the body needs some cholesterol, too much LDL cholesterol can lead to a buildup of plaque in the arteries, blood clots, heart attack, and stroke. Impressively enough, numerous studies have shown yoga to lower LDL "bad" cholesterol and boost HDL "good" cholesterol. According to the American Heart Association, HDL cholesterol actually helps to remove LDL cholesterol from the arteries and carries it back to the liver, where it's broken down and passed from the body.

Weight Loss

Yoga can help boost your metabolism and build stronger muscles, two things are essential for weight loss. Tip: If you start to eat more whole, organic foods while performing a daily yoga routine you'll be more likely to see the pounds come off quicker.

Better Immunity

Do you feel like every time you turn around you are battling another cold or illness? If so, your immune system is probably weak. A weakened immune system can stem from a variety of things such as lack of sleep, chronic stress, and poor digestion. Since yoga has been found to improve all of those things, it may not come as a surprise that yoga can also strengthen your immune system.

Better Respiration

During your first yoga class, you will quickly realize that one of the main focuses is your breathing. You're consistently asked to pay attention to your breath. Taking deeper breaths, expanding your lung capacity, and being more conscious of your breathing are all part of the process. For that reason, it may not surprise you that yoga is great for people who are suffering from any sort of respiratory ailment or condition. It can help open up a person's airways and gets their lungs to function more effectively.

Less Stress and Anxiety

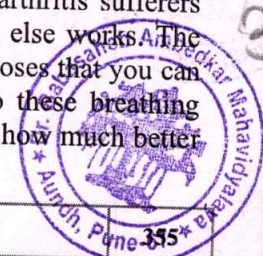
Between bills, bosses, family, and the hustle and bustle of everyday life, people are stressed to the max. As if the feeling of stress isn't bad enough, chronic stress wreaks havoc on health in a number of ways. It can lead to poor digestion, weight fluctuations, weakened immune system, cardiovascular conditions, and much more. One way to naturally beat stress is to exercise. According to researchers, when you perform yoga, feel-good brain chemicals like serotonin are released, putting you in a better mood.

Improves Digestion

You may not realize it, but when you exercise you're not only working your leg and arm muscles. Inside your intestines, there is also a layer of muscle that is constantly contracting to help food waste pass. If you aren't getting enough physical activity, though, your intestinal muscles may become too relaxed. In yoga, you perform a combination of deep breathing exercises and twisting poses that really massage the organs, works your intestinal muscles, and helps release any trapped toxic stool.

Alleviates Symptoms from Many Conditions

From helping cancer patients recovering from chemotherapy treatments to helping arthritis sufferers regain mobility in their joints, yoga can provide symptom relief when it seems like nothing else works. The great part about yoga is no matter what condition you're currently in, there are at least a few poses that you can perform. Some yoga exercises are just breathing. So even if you're bedridden you can do these breathing exercises to help focus your mind and improve your respiratory function. You'd be amazed at how much better you feel just by breathing more effectively.





Improves Your Outlook On Life

Getting a better outlook on life can help you in nearly every aspect of your life. You may feel like not even trying some days, or you may get stuck in a cycle of unhealthy thoughts. Thankfully, yoga boosts serotonin levels and can help you break free from your slump. Who knows, with a new zest for life you may take on new work projects. You'll never know unless you get started and the good news is even the most basic yoga poses can get you there.

Provides An Inner Calmness (Eventually)

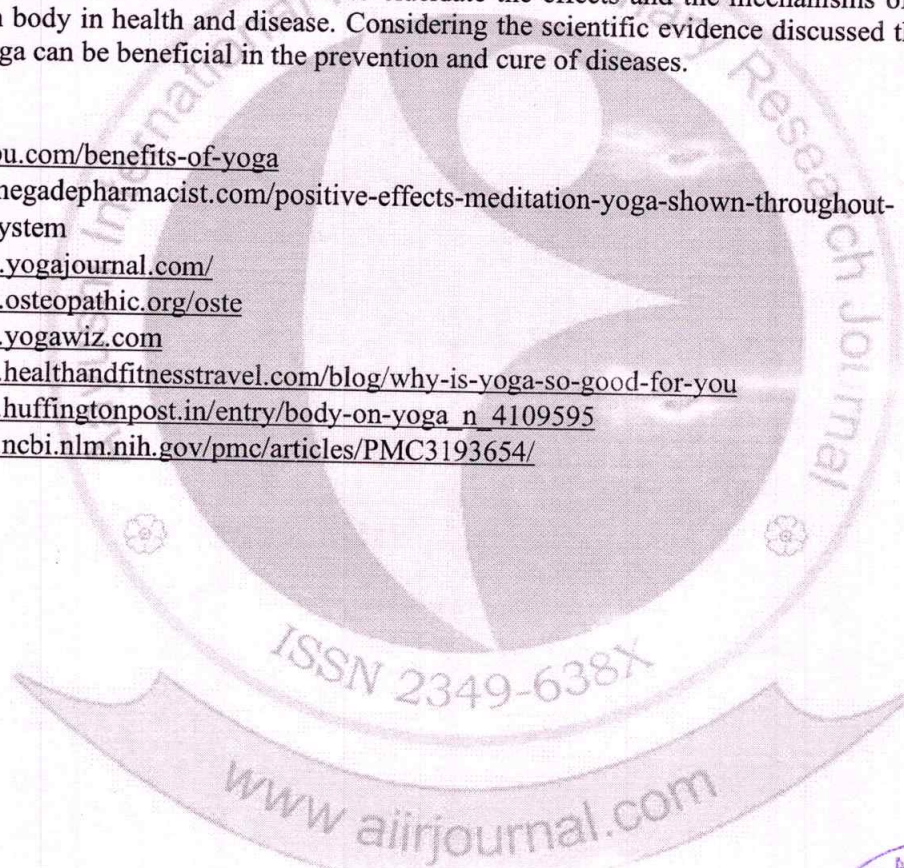
When first starting out with yoga, you may find the poses hard to get into and even harder to hold. Your state of inner being might be all chaos and confusion mixed with frustration and exhaustion. Trust me, if you have faith and stick with it, you'll get better. Once the poses get easier to you, you'll be able to turn your mind inward, which produces the calmness you typically hear attributed to yoga.

Conclusion:

In summary, this review postulates that mind-body exercise such as yoga couples sustained muscular activity with internally directed focus, producing a temporary self-contemplative mental state. It also triggers neurohormonal mechanisms that bring about health benefits, evidenced by the suppression of sympathetic activity. Thus, it reduces stress and anxiety, improves autonomic and higher neural centre functioning and even, as shown in some studies, improves physical health of cancer patients. However, there is a definite need for more directed scientific work to be carried out to elucidate the effects and the mechanisms of such effects of yoga on the human body in health and disease. Considering the scientific evidence discussed thus far, it is fair to conclude that yoga can be beneficial in the prevention and cure of diseases.

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315