

# **‘Benefits of Yoga’**

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Yoga is a traditional method of meditation developed by the saints of ancient India. They practiced yoga as an effective method of controlling their mind and bodily activities. An ancient form of exercise which evolved thousands of years back in the Indian Society and is being practiced continuously since then. It includes various forms of exercises to keep a person in good shape and to get rid of various forms of diseases and inabilities. It is also considered as a strong method for meditation which helps in relaxation of mind and body.

People generally think that yoga is a form of exercise that includes stretching and folding of body part but yoga is much more than just exercise. Yoga is a way of life or Art of living through mental, spiritual and physical path. It allows to achieve stillness and to top in to the consciousness of inner self. It also helps in learning how to rise above the pull of mind, emotions and lower bodily needs and face challenges of day to day life. Yoga works on the level of one’s body, mind and energy. Regular practice of yoga brings positive changes in the practitioner – strong muscles, flexibility, patience and good health.

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word, ‘yuj’. It means to join, connect or unite. It is the union of individual consciousness with universal consciousness. Yoga is 5000 years old Indian philosophy. It was first mentioned in the oldest sacred text – The Rig veda. Yoga is being practiced in the Indian Society Since thousands of years. A person doing yoga will move from one posture to the other called Asana. Yoga benefits people who practice it regularly. The form of exercises performed in yoga is called as ‘Asana’ which are capable of bringing about stability of body and mind. Yoga Asana are the simplest and easiest way to reduce our excess weight

and keep fit. Yoga originated in ancient India thousands of years ago, long before the first religion or belief system was born. It is believed that Shiva is the first yogi or Adiyogi and first guru. According to the studies, yoga was being practiced under direct guidance of a Guru and its spiritual value was given a lot of importance. Sun was given the highest importance during Vedic period and that's how Suryanamaskar was invented later on. However, Maharishi Patanjali is known as the father of modern yoga. He did not invent yoga as it was already there in various forms. He assimilated it into the system. He saw that it was getting quite complex for anyone to understand it in any meaningful way. So he assimilated and included all aspects in to a certain format yoga sutras. The role of breath is very important in the practice of Asana or yoga positions. Breath is a vital force and our body requirement of oxygen changes depending on our actions. If we exercise than we require more oxygen hence the breathing becomes faster and if we are relaxing then our breathing becomes relaxed and deep. In yoga the focus is integrated onbreath which indulging in slow movements as well as while doing complete Asana. Yoga promotes smooth and relaxed inhalation and exhalation during the practice. Traditional classification of yoga include four main paths including karma yoga, Jnana yoga, Bhakti yoga and kriya yoga.

**Karma yoga :**It is also known as 'Discipline of Action' in the western culture. This form is one the four essential pathways of yoga. This teaches to perform one's duty withoutgetting attached to the fruit or reward by doing selfless activities and duties. This is the main lesson which is being thought to karma yogic. It is for those who seek union with God. It can be also practiced in our routine life by conducting one's duty in a sincere manner without expecting the reward. This is the path of spiritual development. A life of individual is governed by his karma cycle where in if a person has good thought good actions and good words he or she will lead a happy life where as if a person has had thoughts, bad actions and bad words, he will lead an unhappy and difficult to lead such a selfless life as human beings are prone to fruits of labor they do. These are reason way we are facing problems like high stress, mental illness and depression.Karma yoga teaches to get rid of all the materialistic path and lead a happy and content life.

**Jnanayoga :**It is also known as the 'wisdom yoga' . It is a very difficult and complex path among all. This teaches a person to merge with the inner self by practicing various mental techniques by meditating in to deep conscience mind and conducting self questioning sessions. It tells an individual to differentiate between permanent conscious and temporary materialistic world. This path teaches to steady the mind and emotions by focusing on 6 fundamental virtues – calmness, control, sacrifice, tolerance, faith and focus. It is often advised to practice Jnana yoga under the guidance of a competent guru to achive the goal and to perform it in the best way.

**Bhakti yoga :** Also known as 'spiritual or devotional yoga'. It is associated with divine love as it is the greatest pathway to spiritual enlightenment through love and devotion. In this path an individual sees God as the supreme expression and embodiment of love. Its main features are to chant the lords name, singing his praise or bhajans and engaging in worship and ritual. It is the easiest and the most popular one. Bhakti yoga leads to the purification of mind and heart and can be achieved by numerous mental and physical yoga practices. If also gives courage in adverse situations. It is basically developing compassionate feeling and focusing on purifying inner self with pure divine love.

**Kriyayoga :**It is the physical practice where in several body postures are performed though meditation techniques of energy and breath control or pranayama. In this, the development of body, mind soul takes place.By practicing the kriya yoga the entire human system is energized in a short time.All the internal organs such as the liver, pancreas etc are activated. Necessary hormones and enzymes are secreted to keep body healthy. The blood absorbs high amount of oxygen and becomes decarbonized quickly which helps in general well being and number of psychosomatic diseases are avoided. Though more circulation in the head, the brain cells are energized, the working capacity of brain is enhanced and the memory becomes sharp and a person does not get tired easily.

Yoga is a practice that works on eight level of development in the areas of mental, physical, spiritual and social health. When the physical health is intact, the mind is clear and focused and there is no more. Yoga is an art which connects our body, mind and soul together and makes us strong and peaceful. Yoga is necessary because it keeps us fit, helps burst

stress and maintains out overall health. A healthy mind can concentrate well and do everything. Yoga is important because by practicing yoga you are being benefited on the following points.

**Inner peace :** yoga helps achieve inner peace and fight against stress and other problems. Yoga increase the peace level in an individual and makes him become more joyful resulting in more confidence.

**Healthy :** A healthy person can achieve and do more work than an unhealthy person. Life now a days is very stressful and there is lot of pollution us. This is a cause of numbers health issues. Just 10-20 minutes of yoga each day can help regain your health. Better health means better life.

**Activeness :** people now a days feel lazy, tired or sleepy. Due to which they miss out most of the fun in life and are not able to complete their work correctly. Being active keeps you aware of the things happening around you and also helps you complete your work more efficiently and quickly. And one way to achieve this is by practicing yoga regularly.

**Flexibility :** people now a days suffer from joint pains face difficulties while bending or touching their toes. Regular practice of yoga help in relieving these pains. The effect can be seen in few days of practicing.

**Increase Blood Flow :** yoga helps make your heart healthy and makes it work more efficiently by increasing blood flow in your body and veins. It helps in keeping your body oxygenated.

**Power to Concentrate :** Yoga helps your body calm down and relax which means there is less stress and one can concentrate and focus quickly on his work. That is why children and teenagers are encouraged to do yoga because it helps them concentrate better on their studies.

Yoga in this modern time provided as the best solution for the sufferings of the modern man due to his or her dependency nature on modern technology and sedentary behaviors. Though the development of science and technology simplify life it also has an adverse effect on our life. In this modern times, physical labor is highly reduced which makes the modern man change his lifestyles. The change in lifestyle creates competition for survival which leads to suffering from stress both psychological and physical. Yoga provides a solution to such problem with the systematic exercises that it provides to those who are practicing.

Yoga helps to live in harmony with our environment, it helps us to give recognition for ourselves, the natural environment. We are living and help us to peaceful interact with the society to which we belong. Yoga is significance in modern life in “improving postures, increases the intake of oxygen enhances the functioning of the different system of our body such as the respiratory, digestive, endocrine and reproductive and excretory system”.<sup>1</sup> Yoga is highly suggested for people in “competitive, stressful working atmospheres, which is characteristic of modern life. Yoga is a tool to get rid of the deceptive curtain that positions in the middle of us and vibrant energy of life”.<sup>2</sup>

Yoga aids in controlling a person’s body, mind and soul. It brings the physical and mental discipline together to soothe the body and mind. It also aids in managing stress and anxiety and keeps you relaxed. Yoga asana are known to develop vigor, flexibility and confidence. A yoga session mainly comprises of breathing exercises, meditation and yoga asana that stretch and strengthen various muscle groups. It is a good substitute for avoiding medicines that are harmful for our mental and physical health. One of the main benefits of practicing yoga is that it helps manages stress. Stress is common these days and is known to have devastating effects on one’s body and mind. Due to stress people develop serious problem like sleeping disorder, neck pain, back pain, headaches, rapid heart rate, sweaty palms, dissatisfaction, anger, insomnia and inability to concentrate. Yoga is known to be really effective in curing these kinds of problems over a period of time. It helps a person in managing stress by meditation and breathing exercise and improves a person’s mental well being. Regular practice creates mental clarity and calmness thereby relaming the mind.

Yoga is only partially understood as being limited to Asana. But people fail to realize the immense benefits yoga offers in uniting the body, mind and breath. Yoga can be opted and practiced by any age group and any body size. It is possible for any one to start. The size and the fitness level do not matter as there are modifications for every yoga asana according to different people.

The modern life style is complex and filled with tension. As a result, people in urban areas are busy with work schedules to full fill what life demands survival. The modern man is living in a competitive environment

due to technological progress. In the current lifestyles especially in urban industrial society the work style, eating habit and family life structure is completely changed. The extended family structure in this society is unthinkable and administering the nuclear family structure itself is hectic due to the huge demands it requires. This lifestyle brought stress to the individual which leads to different types of diseases. Therefore, practicing yoga is significant in controlling health problems resulted from modern life situation. Yoga is holistic which provide physical, psychological, social and spiritual benefits.\*

### **References :**

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