



Yoga on Mental and Physical Health

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About

This paper traces the history of yoga and briefly describes the various forms of yoga which feature prominently in ancient Indian texts. Yoga is a discipline and meditation which needs to be practiced physically, mentally and spiritually. It was originated in the ancient India however being practiced all over the world in many centuries. It also delves into the mental and physical benefits one gains from the practice to make the claim that yoga is indeed the elixir of life. For than a decade, asana, pranayama and meditation – has become an activity practiced across the world, irrespective of region, religion, caste culture, sex, and age. With the advent of technology, and due to hectic schedules, many people nowadays practice yoga in front of their TV sets or laptops instead of attending in outdoors yoga camp. And while the higher aspect of yoga is a search for enlightenment and bliss, today's e-tech generation does it to maintain physical and mental well-being.

You must control your breath while practicing yoga

The reality of the situation is that the popularity of yoga is increasing at a rapid pace day after day because of its positive results. For many, this includes enhancing one's inherent power in a balanced manner, or achieving self-realization, or finding harmony between mind and body. Yoga may also help in physiotherapy of the treatment of muscle injuries. Recognizing the varied benefits it brings, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 21 June as International Yoga Day. Considering its importance and relevance in our times, it's is advisable to know the history of this discipline.

The word 'yoga' is taken from the Sanskrit word 'yug', which means to yoke or unite. This could mean uniting the individual spirit with the universe. According to Maharishi Patanjali, yoga involves a feeling of the mind and spirit. Yoga guru B.K.S. Iyengar stated, 'Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured, and endure what cannot be cured.' The definition of yoga thus varies, but in an ordinary sense we can define yoga as an ancient Indian ascetic discipline which involves specific postures, breathing and meditation techniques to facilitate one's physical, mental and spiritual development.

It is difficult to provide the precise history of yoga due to the oral transmission of its sacred texts and its early teachings transcribed on palm leaves that were easily damaged, destroyed or lost. That being said, researchers have traced the beginnings of yoga to over 5000 years ago, the Patanjali age, the Hatha age and the present age.

Introduction of Yoga

The word 'yoga' first appeared in the Rigveda, which was a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns considered to be one of four Vedas or sacred texts of Hinduism. It later appeared in the Upanishads, ancient literature which has come to represent core spiritual values of Hinduism. Around 500 BCE the Bhagavad Gita spoke of how 'yoga is the journey of the self, through the



self, to self.' This age preached karma u yoga or a form of living in a selfless way. In the second century the yoga, towards obtaining enlightenment.

These sutras still influence most modern styles of yoga. The Hatha Age, arriving a few centuries after Pantjali, saw the creation of a new system of practices, Such as Tantra Yoga and Hatha yoga, which aimed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life by exploring physical –spiritual connections. Finally, the present age began when yoga teachers travelled across the country and to the West. At the 1893 Parliament of Religious in Chicago, Swami Vivekananda lectured on world religions and yoga. In 1924, the yoga teacher. Krishnamacharya opened the first Hatha Yoga School in Mysore. In 1936, the spiritual leader Swami Sivananda founded the Divine Life Society on the banks of the Ganges. He also founded yoga centers across the world.

Yoga and mental health

The study result are so far not sufficient in quantity and quality to determine whether studies with a focus on the asana are more effective as compared to studies with meditations and focused styles. Thus there is a strong need to conducts more conclusive studies with high mythological quality and larger patient samples. There has been an attempt to explore mechanism of action and to understand looking at a electrophysiological markers of attention, and neurotransmitters which were found to change with yoga.

The following types of yoga feature prominently in ancient texts.

1. Japa yoga: which involves the repeated recitation of a mantra or divine name?
2. Karma yoga: which preaches selflessness and to perform all actions without any vested interest. In this discipline, a yogi considers his duty as divine action and performs it with whole-hearted dedication.
3. Gyana yoga: which seeks to differentiate between the self non-self and practices acquiring knowledge of one's spiritual entity through the study of scriptures, the compny of Saints and meditation?
4. Bhakti yoga: which is a system of devotion with an emphasis on a complete and intense surrender to divine will.
5. Raja yoga, popularly known as Ashtanga yoga, which is widely practiced to build internal heat and to aid mental and physical development. The eight aspects of Ashtanga yoga are Yama(morality),Niyama(discipline),Asana(exercise),Pranayama (breathing) Pratyahara(detachment),Dharana(concentration),Dhyana (mediation)and Samadhi(self-realisation).
6. Hatha yoga ,which involves physical postures as a form of higher meditation to balance , stretch and strengthen the body.
7. Swara yoga, which focuses on awareness, observation and the control or manipulation of breathing.
8. Kundalini yoga or sahaja yoga, which is a part of the Tantric tradition. According to yogis, the seat of Kundalini is a small gland located at the base of the spinal cord. The movements and mediations practiced by the discipline aim to release the primal energy within this gland.
9. Nadi yoga, as described by yogic texts, involves nadis or a flow of energy which can be visualized at the psychic level. The entire network of nadis is so vast that yogic texts differ in their calculations of the exact number. Some place their number at 72000



emerging from the navel. Of all the nadis, Ida, Pingalal and Susumma are said to be the most important; they conduct energy to chakras situated along the spinal column.

Yoga and physical

One may expect that retaining physical fitness and improving physical functioning can have a positive effect on functional abilities and self autonomy in older adult. Further studies should address whether or not individual self esteem and self confidence will increase during the course and whether or not regular classes may be also improve social competence and involment.

Conclusion

These reviews suggest a number of areas where yoga may be beneficial but more research is required for virtually all of them to more definitely establish benefits. However, this is not surprising given that research studies on yoga as therapeutics intervention have been conducted only over the past four decades and are relativity little a number. The names of the various forms of yoga may differ, but they are interrelated and share the same goal of helping one acquire enlightenment. And while the central theme of yoga is spiritual, it provides innumerable physiological, psychological and biochemical benefits to its practitioners. Physiological benefits range form better sleep to increased energy and strength. Psychological benefits include, among others, managing anxiety and streets. Biochemical benefits include decreasing cholesterol levels and balancing endocrine and nervous systems. So wide – ranging are its benefits that yoga, originally a means by which one could seek spiritual enlightenment, has now become a popular global practice, thus proving itself to be the true elixir of life.

Reference

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