

Impact of Yoga Asanas on Human Body

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Abstract:

Health is the basic requirement to enjoy life and have peace. Peace and satisfaction in life can be fulfilled by practicing Yoga. Yoga is not only curative, but precautionary also. It refreshes and relaxes our body. Yoga aims at complete self –development and total self realization. Health play very important role in modern life. The impact of asanas in human body systems can be used as complementary therapy in association with medicinal therapy. Asanas are postures that are quite useful in treatment of many diseases and these postures cure the root cause of disease irrespective of their symptoms. Progress in this realm of asanas requires immense faith and determination. Today a man is called healthy only when he is to fit. Fitness includes the realms of mental, moral, social, emotional fitness as well. Health and fitness both aspects can be attained by proper exercise. Practicing yoga and Physical exercise in the fresh air and sunshine, sleep well-chosen food and proper care of the body, all these helps us to maintain our health fitness This paper explain the role of Yoga and physical exercise in making everyone healthy which will be useful for self development.

Key Words: Yoga, Skeletal System, Circulatory System, Digestive System, Nervous System, Endocrine System

INTRODUCTION

Man has made tremendous progress in almost every walk of the life. Modern researchers and scientists have absolutely changed the life-style. However, pollution of air, water, body and mind is also the result of science. Longing for material wealth has hardened the hearts of human beings. Human values are declining. Stress and strain are the causes of physical as well as mental distraction. Yoga has the surest remedies for men's physical as well as psychological ailments. It makes the organs of the body active in their functioning and has good effect on internal functioning of the human body.

Yoga is not the religion. It is a method by which one obtains control of one's latent powers. It is the means to reach complete self-realization. Yoga is a re-education of one's mental processes, along with the physical.

The literally meaning of word yoga is yoke. The word yoga has been derived from the Sanskrit word 'Yug' which means to join individual's soul of divine. It is a comprehensive system linking body, mind, intelligence, wisdom and spirit. Yoga creates symmetry

throughout our body. In the Indian culture or thought human beings or everyone on this earth is guided by the supreme universal spirit i.e. Pramatama or God of which the individual human spirit i.e. Jivatma is a part.

IMPACT OF YOGA ASANAS

Yoga Asanas have a profound impact on the systems of the human body. The muscles, bones, nervous system, respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems of the human body are greatly benefited from regular practice of yoga asanas. The body becomes more flexible, and more able to adjust to environmental changes after practising asanas. The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are brought into a state of balance with the help of asanas.

a) YOGA AND THE SKELETAL SYSTEM

Our skeletal system is a series of long and short bones connected to each other by joints. Our body depends on this skeletal framework for shape and movement, without it we would be like a jelly fish – soft and shapeless. The 206 bones which make up the human skeleton also have many other functions. They protect the softer parts of the body like the heart, brain and lungs. Blood cells are produced in the bone marrow and the bones store many minerals like calcium and phosphorous. Although our bones are very hard on the outside, on the inside they are much softer, porous and sponge-like. Bones, like the rest of our body are living tissue which are growing and reshaping themselves over and over again according to the way we are using our bodies. Yoga poses bring a steady supply of blood, nutrients and energy to this mass of living, breathing, changing tissue. Because many forms of exercise like jogging, aerobics and many of the competitive sports are high-impact, they can have a negative effect on our joints which, as we age, can contribute to bone fractures and joint wear. Recent studies show that yoga poses improve our joint health by stimulating the release of lubricating fluids and reducing the effects of the wear and tear that is responsible for osteoarthritis.

In a well rounded yoga session there are a variety of poses which systematically apply bone strengthening weight to each of the body parts. Therefore the bones in the hands, wrists, arms, upper body, neck and head, pelvis, spine and feet and legs all become stronger. As a form of exercise to build strong bones, yoga is a complete workout and because all the poses can be adapted and modified there is no limitation to who can perform any of the poses and still get the required results while working at their own pace.

One of the most debilitating problems that affects us at any age is the compression and misalignment of the spine. The stretching, twisting and strengthening of yoga poses and the emphasis that is placed on building and maintaining correct posture can so dramatically affect the spine that problems such as slipped discs, spondylosis, kyphosis and scoliosis can all be reduced if not cured.

Unfortunately as we age we are more prone to falling over and fracturing our bones but a consistent yoga practice can address this by improving our balance and co-ordination.

At any age we can succumb to the effects of unmanageable stress. Yoga is well known as ‘first-aid’ for stress! Who would think that stress affects our bones, but one of the effects of stress is the release of adrenaline which depletes the calcium in our bones, encouraging them to become more brittle and prone to osteoporosis. The slow, complete yoga breath, the restorative poses such as Legs up the Wall and Supported Fish are deeply relaxing and work to retain the calcium where it should be – in the bones.

Yoga is a well rounded health practice which encourages the health of the skeletal system along with every other system of the body.

b) YOGA AND THE CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

Yoga is such a wonderful form of exercise. Not only does it feel good but it can also produce amazing health benefits for all of the bodily systems. The circulatory system is comprised of the heart (the pumping station) and blood vessels (the conduits). As the heart contracts it sends blood to the lungs where oxygen is picked up. This oxygen enriched blood then travels back to the heart which pumps it around to every cell in the body. After nourishing the cells of the body the oxygen depleted blood returns to the heart which pumps it back to the lungs to receive more oxygen and the cycle begins again.

Yoga exercise benefits your entire circulatory system, beginning with the production of blood, which takes place in the marrow of the long bones in the thighs. By improving circulation to the legs with daily yoga stretching exercises we help to rejuvenate the blood. Yoga exercises stretch the body’s major blood vessels, keeping them free-flowing and elastic. Complete yoga breathing oxygenates the blood and assists fresh nutrients to reach all peripheral vessels and capillaries. Improved circulation means that your brain will receive more oxygen, improving alertness, memory, and mood. Vital organs receive a steady supply of the nutrients they need for optimal functioning.

Stress is a known major contributor to high blood pressure and heart disease. Yoga is a natural relaxant which calms the mind and soothes the nervous system reducing our stress response and its harmful effects.

Although not considered a serious health problem many people suffer from low blood pressure and there are yoga poses which can help this condition.

c) YOGA AND THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

A sedentary lifestyle, imbalanced diet, and frequent stress are the main enemies of our digestive system. As a result, we may end up suffering one or more from a large set of ailments: indigestion, gastritis, constipation, flatulence, diarrhea, and colitis. According to research published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology (2004), 63 million people in North America suffer from constipation (under Rome II diagnosis criteria). Let us see how Yoga can become our good helper in combatting such problems.

The direct positive effect of Yoga on the digestive system is that it's like an internal massage of the digestive tract, including the stomach area, intestines, liver, and pancreas. This massage ensures the flow of blood and oxygen, and also strengthens the muscles of the internal organs. Metabolic processes are activated in organs and tissues, saving them from stagnation. A large amount of enzymes are generated in order to support the absorption of nutrients, while intestinal peristalsis is improved, excretory processes function better, etc. Some asanas' even name their digestive benefits; for example, Apanasana is translated from Sanskrit as 'Wind-Relieving Pose'.

The asanas that act directly on the gastrointestinal tract are: twisting (Parivrtta Trikonasana, Marichyasana) stretching (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Utkatasana) compressing (Paschimottanasana, Balasana, Uttanasana, Apanasana). Another very important effect is reduced stress and a normalized nervous system. The central nervous system is the main regulator of human activity, that's why nerve problems often affect the organs of the digestive system. As always during imbalance, the weakest point is stuck, and many consequences of these attacks are quite difficult to treat. Both scholars and practitioners have already recognized Yoga as an excellent tool to calm nerves and to restore positivity in your soul. You can feel it after each session. When it comes to digestive health, you can also get help from Balasana, Uttanasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Utthita Trikonasana and, of course, the favorite Savasana.

d) YOGA AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

There are many factors in a person's life that combine to equate to good health. Exercise, proper eating habits, and positive mental health all benefit one's body and mind. Another form of health in a person's life is manifested through happiness. Health and happiness may be magnified by practicing the ancient art of yoga. No other practice has sustained the elements the ways in which yoga has, nor has any other natural practice been proven as effective in positively changing a person's entire being.

Yoga has the ability to alter many parts of the body, but some underestimate the power that yoga practices have on they body's systems, particularly those that are somewhat abstract to us because they are not visible like the arms or the legs. The nervous system, a key example of this, is a vital structure that affects parts of the body from the organs to the muscles. A well-rounded nervous system is what enables one to remain level headed in stressful situations. Neurons are the cells that make up the system, with fibrous hairs attached to the cell membrane which enables each cell to transmit impulses to nerves.

The asanas in yoga are what cleanses these cells, which in turn allow the nervous system to react carefully to stress. The muscles are also able to relax during a time of tension and other negative symptoms produced by our adrenaline that pours into the system during "fight or flight" mode are repressed. All of these effects are due to activity within the sympathetic nervous system.

e) YOGA AND THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

Yoga not only plays an important role in maintaining our health but, also has a very good effect on our endocrine system. In the present times due to the hectic lifestyle that one leads, one sees lot of hormonal problems. Some of the health issues faced by both men and women are hormonal changes, underactive or overactive thyroid and hormonal imbalance. Increase cortisol level, insulin deficiency or insulin resistance, early puberty and early menopause are few hormonal disorders that women face.

Role of Yoga in Controlling the Hormonal System:

Pranayam : has a very good effect on endocrine system. Pranayam means stretching , modifying and lengthening the breath. Pranayam has dual benefits. In Pranayam when you control your breath it controls both your mind and your body. During Pranayam we supply more oxygen to the lungs which is transported to each and every cells of the body. The blood supply and the oxygen supply also increases to the brain and hypothalamus thereby improving the functioning of the brain and hypothalamus. One can control the stress and emotions in a better way because stress can disturb the functioning of hypothalamus. Pranayama improves the relationship between hypothalamus –pituitary and the other glands and thus the entire endocrine system is balanced.

Yog Nidra or Yogic sleep: Is great way to control stress and emotion. It is not about going to shavasana and just sleeping but stay awake and control your thoughts, control your senses, replace negative thoughts with positive ones and relax and energize your mind and body. Yognidra will improve the functioning of brain, hypothalamus and the relationship between hypothalamus and pituitary and other endocrine gland.

Yogic Poses: like Sirsasana, standing forward bend increases blood flow to brain an improves the functioning of brain and hypothalamus along with improving the functioning of pituitary and pineal gland. Halasana and shoulder stand improve the functioning of thyroid and parathyroid gland. Ardh matsendra sana and balasana will stimulate pancreas for the release of insulin and glucagon from pancreas .setubandhasana and bhujangasana will stimulate testes and ovaries .

CONCLUSION

Once the mind and body are rejuvenated by the practice of asanas, it is time to move further on the path of spiritual journey and move towards concentration, meditation and sadhana. The impact of asanas in human body systems can be used as complementary therapy in association with medicinal therapy. Asanas are postures that are quite useful in treatment

of many diseases and these postures cure the root cause of disease irrespective of their symptoms. Progress in this realm of asanas requires immense faith and determination.

Yoga affects every cell of the body. It brings about better neuro-effector communication, improves strength of the body, increases the optimum functioning of all organ-systems, increases resistance against stress and diseases and brings tranquility, balance, positive attitude and equanimity in the practitioner which makes him lead a purposeful and healthier life.

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