

## Benefits of Yoga and Meditation

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### Abstract

Yoga is an internal expedition that creates an awareness and understanding of yourself and leads you to self transformation. It is a primordial science of self-development that filters your mind and body and sustains perfect balance and harmony between them. In other words, it is an art of controlling your mind, body and breath and unlocking the hidden potential energies. Yoga can be in meditation form and it could also be a form of physical exercise. Many human beings are so busy with their personal lives that they have even forgotten the correct way to breath. Yoga is a way of life for good living and for the benefit of the body. Yoga is the only technique through which the body of any human being can be healthy without any trainer, equipment and medicine. Thus, my purpose of this paper makes an attempt to analyze the role and importance of Yoga on physical health.

**Key Words:** Yoga, health, athlete, benefits

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### 1. Introduction:

The word 'yoga' means 'union' or 'yoke' or 'joining'. Originally, yoga was a method for joining a regular imperfect human being with the divine principle, or God. Yoga is a traditional method of meditation developed by the saints of ancient India. It is aimed to unite the mind, the body and the spirit. Through the practice of yoga, the mind can be trained to relax through deep breathing and become focused while holding the breath. This practice will lead to control the mind. Doing yoga, not just the physical portion, but also immersing oneself on to the mental aspect of it, can help improve mental health. Yogis (those who do yoga) believe that yoga can reduce, and eventually prevent, the build-up of repressed emotions in the mind. The process is gradual but the effects, of yoga continues to be practiced, are lasting. Yoga is a very effective stress reduction and relaxation tool. Performance of various postures requires the tensing and stretching and then relaxing of muscle groups and joints, which effectively produces relaxation in the same way that a massage does. Yoga practice also draws attention towards breathing, which produces a meditative and soothing state of mind.

Yoga is an effective method of controlling their mind and bodily activities. Yoga in daily life is a system of practice consisting of eight levels of development in the areas of physical, mental, social and spiritual health. When the body is physically healthy, the mind is clear, focused and stress is under control. This gives the space to connect with loved ones and maintain socially healthy relationships. When you are healthy you are in touch with your inner self, with others and your surroundings on a much deeper level, which adds to your spiritual health. Yoga increases the flexibility of the spine, improves body's physical condition and heightened awareness to the importance of relaxation. It has been emphasized that each exercise be practiced slowly, coordinating movement with the breath, pausing motionless in each position and always with full concentration. Yoga teaches you to focus on breathing while you hold the poses. This attention to breath is calming it dissolves stress and anxiety. Yoga can help cure insomnia, as regular yoga practice leads to better and deeper sleep. Yoga can help fight fatigue and maintain your energy throughout the day. Yoga is an effective treatment for a variety of auto immune diseases because it can reduce the symptoms these diseases often cause, such as stiffness, malaise, fatigue, and weakness. Even children can benefit from yoga. Those with attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity can learn to relax and get control by using yoga breathing and yoga asanas. Yoga has been used to help heal victims of torture or other trauma. Because yoga is a form of meditation, it results in a sense of inner peace and purpose, which has far-reaching health benefits.

## 2. Why every person should do Yoga:

Yoga is for everyone, athletes included. Yoga works on strength, flexibility, balance, agility, endurance, core, and overall strength, among other things. Any athlete could benefit hugely by adding yoga to her or his training regimen. Here's more details on a few of the perks:

**Strength:** No amount of weight-lifting with free weights will give you the strength that consistently holding up your own body weight will.

**Flexibility:** Practicing yoga increases flexibility and ease of movement, therefore increasing range of motion. In particular, athletes in sports that require swinging action (tennis, golf, etc.) can benefit greatly. Flexibility in general also helps to prevent injury.

**Balance:** Balancing poses in yoga improve overall balance in everything you do, preventing falls and injury. When you learn how to be soft and go with the flow, you can more easily bend and are less likely to break or fall over.

**Endurance:** The endurance that the ease of yoga gives you lends to endurance sports like running, triathlons, and Iron Mans. When you learn to tune into your body and mind, everything can be a meditation—sports included. Yoga also helps you learn how to pace yourself: slow and steady, in it for the long haul.

**Core:** Almost everything you do in yoga works on your core strength. Strong core equals a healthy back and a healthy body.

**Stability:** Yoga helps strengthen all of the little stabilizing muscles that people tend to miss in other physical workouts and are vital in protecting your joints and spine (among other things).

**Recovery:** Yoga also helps put athletes back together after injuries. Again: You're tuning into your body and giving it the care it wants and needs. Yoga also elongates all of the muscles that athletes spend so long contracting, so it is a great counter-action.

Most importantly, yoga changes the way you think and approach everything in life: When you learn to move with ease and stop forcing things, you will prevent injuries and your body will open with your mind, increasing your flexibility all around.

## 3. Yoga and Health in Sports:

Yoga has both preventive and therapeutic benefits. It has been shown to offer both physical and mental benefits to the body and the mind. The many physical benefits of hatha yoga are: it improves flexibility and muscle joint mobility; strengthens, tones, and builds muscles; corrects posture; strengthens the spine; eases back pain; improves muscular-skeletal conditions such as bad knees, tight shoulders and neck, swayback and scoliosis; increases stamina; creates balance and grace; stimulates the glands of the endocrine system; improves digestion and elimination; increases circulation; improves heart conditions; improves breathing disorders; boosts immune response; decreases cholesterol and blood sugar levels; and encourages weight loss. The mental benefits include: it increases body awareness; relieves chronic stress patterns in the body; refreshes the body by relieving muscle strain; relaxes the mind and body; centers attention; sharpens concentration; and frees the spirit. Western doctors and scientists are discovering additional health benefits of hatha yoga. Studies have shown that it can relieve the symptoms of several common and potentially life-threatening illnesses; such as arthritis, arteriosclerosis, chronic fatigue, diabetes, AIDS, asthma and obesity. Many believe it even fends off the ravages of old age. Here are five best ways yoga can benefit for sports person.

### 3.1 Increased power:

Flexibility keeps muscles and joints safe. Chances are, if you've just been using the same muscles for repetitive movements, they're going to be pretty tight. Top-flight bodybuilders and dedicated weekend warriors alike love a good massage for this reason. Maybe you've even noticed a one rep max plateau, or a speed block. If a muscle is so tight that injury is imminent, your body will start to recruit other muscles to help out with certain moves. And if those muscles are undertrained, you're looking at a torn muscle and -gasp- down time. Elastic muscles and supple joints move more efficiently, recover more quickly and continue doing their jobs. Increasing

your flexibility will also increase range of motion, which means an increased power output due to greater muscle recruitment, and more efficient movements.

### **3.2 Better muscle function:**

Yoga is a lot of things but it is basically all about breath and movement, movement and breath. To fully be present and to fully articulate each posture in yoga, a strong, focused breath is essential. Doesn't hurt that it tames busy brain or helps take the edge off your pre-workout drink. Getting in touch with your breath can help establish better breathing patterns and access parts of your respiratory system that you didn't even know you could control. Get ready for more efficient oxygen intake, more complete exhalation, and better muscle function. Hello, gains. Goodbye muscle fatigue, symptoms of asthma, ragged breathing, and side stitches. Just like you wouldn't restrict precious nutrients and protein from your muscles, you should also be feeding your muscles with more delicious blood flow and oxygen. This is also certain to develop positive respiratory habits that you can carry into the rest of your training endeavors.

### **3.3 Mental toughness:**

One of the biggest benefits of yoga is its emphasis on the connection between body and mind. Whether through meditation, or through the holding a headstand for an extended period of time, your mental toughness and focus are likely to improve. This might be the hardest benefit to achieve but once you begin to get your head in the game the benefits are almost unlimited.

### **3.4 Control:**

"Pull your belly button to your spine," "feel your lungs expanding," "roll down your spine, one vertebrae at a time," are all common phrases in yoga classes. It's this constant cueing to pay attention to the smallest of sensations that helps build the neurological connections between our brains and our muscles. Yoga builds body awareness, and this can help you analyze your form during your workout to both optimize your lifting techniques, and help prevent compensation based injury. Again, this carries over into your normal cadre of sets-and-reps: the better you are able to "connect" mind and muscle, the more focused (read: efficient) each rep will be. Tough to think about the burn when you're laser-focused on the effort.

### **3.5 Active recovery and muscle repair:**

Active recovery typically means a light workout on an off day. These low-key days are a perfect way to slide yoga seamlessly into your schedule. Using specifically yoga as a form of active recovery can actually repair muscle fibers more quickly than other common forms, as the combination of stretching and relaxing muscles encourages blood flow to broken down muscle tissues. Do yoga, lift again sooner.

If you think yoga is just for slim, prissy girls with hot yoga pants on, think again. Through yoga, you learn to control your body and your mind. And when it comes to building a stronger, leaner, more functional physique, that control can truly provide next-level results.

## **4. Objectives of Yoga in Sports:**

Health, physical fitness and emotional stability are the objectives which bring yoga and physical education on a common platform for the benefit of the human individual. Health is a more general and comprehensive term conveying the 'feeling of well-being', while physical fitness is a more specific term. Physical fitness is the capacity of an individual to perform a given task at a particular time. Health and physical fitness are not static. They are always changing they follow the law can be maintained only by carefully selected physical activities which are called 'exercise'. The utility of the particular exercise program can be evaluated only in the forms of the effects that one obtained in promoting a particular factor of physical fitness. Through constant practice of yoga, one can overcome all difficulties and eradicate all weakness pain can be transmitted in to 24bliss, sorrow in to joys, and failure into success and sickness in to perfect health. Determination, patience and persistence lead one to goal.

## 5. Conclusion:

It is obvious that yoga is a boon for the 'modern' man of twenty first century, which has become a victim of everyday stress. Modern research has recognized the scientific roots of yogic practices and yoga has now achieved international recognition and acclaim. As we all know, 21st June has declared as Yoga Day in all over the world and it has celebrated in all over the world. Today, yoga is a painstakingly worldwide phenomenon, it has taken the world by tempest and is gaining reputation day by day. It is enviable that yoga must be made an integral part of our educational as well as health care systems. If our masses practice yoga, they will be physically, mentally and spiritually healthy. The rush and burden of our hospitals will be greatly reduced. Hence, there is an urgent need to popularize yoga among the human beings. Yoga is reliable with our ethnicity and harmonizing to science, so, it is our primary duty to endorse it further.

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