

Benefits of Yoga on psychological well being

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Abstract:

Mental health conditions remain among the leading causes of disease burden worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, one in eight people worldwide live with a mental disorder. People with mental health conditions die 10–20 years sooner than the general population, often due to connected physical illness. Suicide is also a significant risk associated with mental illness. Unfortunately, many barriers limit access to care for people with mental health conditions. In addition, there are limitations to current treatments for mental health disorders. Yoga plays a significant role in promoting and maintaining positive mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, while also improving emotional regulation, mindfulness, and overall well-being. It achieves this through various mechanisms, including physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditative practices

Keywords: Physical Postures, Health, Psychological, Exercise, Yoga.

1. Introduction

The conceptual background of yoga has its origins in ancient Indian philosophy. There are numerous modern schools or types of yoga (i.e., Iyengar, Viniyoga, Sivananda, etc.), each having its own distinct emphasis regarding the relative content of physical postures and exercises (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), deep relaxation, and meditation practices that cultivate awareness and ultimately more profound states of consciousness. The application of yoga as a therapeutic intervention, which began early in the twentieth century, takes advantage of the various psychophysiological benefits of the component practices. The physical exercises (asanas) may increase patient's physical flexibility, coordination, and strength, while the breathing practices and meditation may calm and focus the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety, and thus result in higher quality of life. Other beneficial effects might involve a reduction of distress, blood pressure, and improvements in resilience, mood, and metabolic regulation.

2. Factors influencing psychological health:

There are several factors that influence our mind and give us many mental health issues. Broadly, these factors are categorised into three: biological, psychological, and socio-environmental; these factors are briefly touched up below.

3. Biological factors:

Biological factors define a problem, including genetic issues. They play an important role in determining the state of mental health in a person. Physical health problems such as mal-nutrient or mental development (neurodevelopment) or sometimes even serious genetic deformities and chromosomal abnormalities all can be clarified by this. Biological factors can affect brain developments across generations leading to mental health issues.

4. Psychological factors:

Psychological factors refer to an individual's thought process, self-esteem, personality traits, care-givers burden belief system, faulty learning and modelling, parenting style, identity crisis, cognitive labelling, and coping skills with environmental challenges, etc. All this leads to serious mental illnesses or problems in an individual when handled inefficiently. These problems are faced by people of all ages, from children to older people.

5. Socio-environmental factors:

Socio-environmental factors include an individual's cultural influence, dissatisfaction with a job or relationship, family relationship, poor parenting, social support, poverty, etc. An individual's behavior always depends upon the surroundings that the person lives in. This may be family, social environment, or financial status. Healthy family relationships, economic factors, and adequate social support are always seen as contributing positively to good mental health. Lack of any one factor may lead to serious mental health problems.

6. Psychological Benefits of Yoga

Yoga can improve balance, flexibility, range-of-motion, and strength. It can also enhance mental health, although these benefits are harder to measure. According to many studies, yoga can:

7. Release helpful brain chemicals:

Most exercises trigger the release of "feel-good" chemicals in the brain. These mood boosting chemicals include brain messengers such as dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine. Although yoga movements are slow and controlled, they still elevate your heart rate, make the muscles work hard, and stimulate the release of brain chemicals. As a result, yoga can make you happier.

8. Relieve depression:

Studies shows that yoga can ease depression. Researchers have found that yoga is comparable to other treatments, such as meditation and psychotherapy. Yoga is usually inexpensive and doesn't cause the same side effects as many medicines. It can even benefit those with major depressive disorder.

9. Reduce stress:

The tightening and relaxing of muscles can reduce tension. You may also benefit from the peaceful atmospheres, calming music, and positive attitude that you will find in most yoga classes.

10. Ease anxiety:

Yoga can improve anxiety. The breath training included in yoga may be especially effective, as there is a relationship between anxiousness and breathing problems. If you have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, yoga may not help. Still, some psychologists are using yoga to supplement other forms of therapy.

11. Improve sleep:

Research suggests that yoga can improve sleep. This may be especially true for older adults. In one study of yoga participants over the age of 60, participants reported an increase in both the quality and quantity of their sleep. They also increased their sleep efficiency, which measures the percentage of time in bed actually spent sleeping.

12. Enhance social life:

If you attend an in-person yoga class, you may benefit from interacting with others in your group. Social ties can positively affect both mental and physical health. Also, acting in unison with others, sometimes called synchrony, carries unique social benefits. Moving and breathing

at the same time as others can give you a sense of belonging and promote bonding with the group.

13. Promote other healthy habits:

If you practice yoga, you may be more likely to choose more wholesome foods. Yoga may also be a gateway to other types of physical activity. Exposure to other health-minded people can inspire you to make other positive lifestyle changes.

Besides these benefits, yoga may be beneficial for those trying to lose weight, stop smoking, and manage chronic disease. Of course, your results may vary. Your outcome can depend upon your attitude, the quality of your instruction, and the type of yoga being practiced.

14. Yoga Practices for Mental Health:

Yoga practices, including asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breath control), and meditation, are beneficial for mental health. These practices help manage stress, anxiety, and depression, and promote overall well-being by calming the nervous system, improving mood, and enhancing focus.

14. Asanas (Physical Postures):

Standing Poses:

1. Mountain Pose (Tadasana), Warrior poses (Virabhadrasana I, II, III), Triangle Pose (Trikonasana) help with grounding, balance, and stability, promoting a sense of strength and confidence.
2. Seated Poses:
3. Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottanasana), Butterfly Pose (Baddha Konasana), and Half Spinal Twist (Ardha Matsyendrasana) can calm the mind, relieve stress, and improve flexibility.
4. Inversions:
5. Shoulder Stand (Sarvangasana), Headstand (Sirsasana), and Legs-up-the-Wall Pose (Viparita Karani) can help improve circulation and calm the nervous system.
6. Restorative Poses:

Corpse Pose (Savasana) and Child's Pose (Balasana) promote deep relaxation and stress reduction.

15. Pranayama (Breath Control):

Deep Breathing:

Inhaling deeply through the nose and exhaling through the mouth can calm the nervous system and reduce anxiety.

Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana):

This technique is known to balance the mind, improve focus, and reduce stress.

Kapalabhati (Skull Shining Breath):

This powerful breath work technique can energize the body and mind, and improve mental clarity.

16. Meditation and Mindfulness:

Mindful Meditation:

Focusing on the present moment and observing thoughts and feelings without judgment can help reduce anxiety and improve emotional regulation.

Guided Meditation:

Listening to guided meditations can help individuals relax, reduce stress, and improve sleep quality.

17. Incorporating Yoga into Your Routine:

Start Slowly: Begin with gentle poses and gradually progress to more challenging ones.

Find a Qualified Instructor: Seek guidance from a certified yoga instructor to learn proper techniques and modifications.

Practice Regularly: Consistency is key to experiencing the benefits of yoga for mental health.

Listen to Your Body: Pay attention to your body's signals and avoid pushing yourself too hard.

Combine with Other Practices: Yoga can be combined with other healthy habits like exercise, healthy eating, and mindfulness practices for optimal well-being.

18. Conclusion

Yoga can bring harmony in mind-body functioning. Yoga has been conceived as plural in its composition, meanings and practices (i.e., Hathayoga- Physical Yoga, Gyan Yoga - Knowledge Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Emotional Yoga, Raj Yoga-Mental Yoga, Laya yoga- MeditationYoga) with singularity in its' objective to promote mind-body fitness. In contemporary times, Hatha Yoga (Physical Yoga) is getting further diversified into different styles. Deeper understanding of these forms of yoga reveals that certain components including ethical and moral principles, posture (Asana), breathe regulation (Pranayama), chanting particular sounds (Mantra), introspection (Pratyahar), contemplation (Dharana) and meditation (Dhyan) are common among these. Yoga can empower individuals' positively to take charge of their own psychological wellness and save a large expenditure for treatment and prevention of mental health problems. Yoga can take the form of a new therapy for curative, preventive, protective and promotive objectives at schools, hospitals, health care centres and in family. Yoga is a way of life and this helps to an individual to live a life in right way, aim is to bring mind-body in harmony and leads to path on peace and happiness.

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