

## STRESS MANAGEMENT DURING YOGA

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### ABSTRACT

It may seem that there's nothing you can do about stress. The bills won't stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day and your career and family responsibilities will always be demanding. But you have more control than you might think. Most of experiments and researches have shown that depressing mental thoughts is hazardous and go towards sickness. They may be either directly or indirectly in the form of psychological problems such as stress, depression etc., that often results in various cardiac problems. So it's our duty to tell the way to deal with stress. Yoga is best therapy to avoid stress. From Yoga, we teach how to survive normal life, healthy life and natural life.

**Keywords:** Asana, Therapy, Depression and Health.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's hyper competitive and busy world, we all lead incredibly stressful lifestyles. We experience stress due to a multitude of reasons. Some of these factors include financial problems, difficult boss, unsatisfying job, relationship problems or even hardships faced while one is in graduate school. Stress can cause a wide variety of problems, but it can also cause disaster on our overall health. Impact of stress on nutrition is one of the major reasons why stress can be so damaging. During stressful times, we tend to ignore our health. A major part of managing stress is yoga that reduces stress levels and helps us deal with life challenges. As yoga becomes increasingly diffuse and diverse, a single, common definition that can be agreed upon by everyone is all but impossible. Complicating matters further, the term yoga has been in use for several thousand years and has shifted in meaning many times. Since my primary concern is the modern interpretation of the physical practices of yoga, it is there that we will look for our definition. The word yoga comes from Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language. It is a derivation of the word yuj, which means yoking, as in a team of oxen. In contemporary practice, this is often interpreted as meaning union. Yoga is said to be for the purpose of uniting the mind, body, and spirit. Meditation is one way, but sometimes it is necessary to prepare the body for meditation by stretching and building strength. This is the physical practice of yoga, also known as asana. Asana as one of the eight "limbs" of yoga, the majority of which are more concerned with mental and spiritual well-being than physical activity.

Man is a physical, mental and spiritual being; yoga helps promote a balanced development of all the three. Other forms of physical exercises, like aerobics, assure only physical well-being. They have little to do with the development of the spiritual or astral body. Yogic exercises recharge the body with cosmic energy this facilitates.

- Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony.
- Promotes self- healing.
- Removes negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body.
- Enhances Personal power.
- Increases self-awareness.

- Helps in attention focus and concentration, especially important for children.
- Reduces stress and tension in the physical body by activating the parasympathetic nervous system.

### **Stress**

Stress is a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way. When you sense danger—whether it's real or imagined—the body's defences kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the "fight-or-flight-or-freeze" reaction, or the stress response. The stress response is the body's way of protecting you. When working properly, it helps you stay focused, energetic, and alert. In emergency situations, stress can save your life—giving you extra strength to defend yourself, for example, or spurring you to slam on the brakes to avoid an accident. The stress response also helps you rise to meet challenges. Stress is what keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work, sharpens your concentration when you're attempting the game-winning free throw, or drives you to study for an exam when you'd rather be watching TV. But beyond a certain point, stress stops being helpful and starts causing major damage to your health, your mood, your productivity, your relationships, and your quality of life.

### **Causes of Stress**

The situations and pressures that cause stress are known as stressors. We usually think of stressors as being negative, such as an exhausting work schedule or a rocky relationship. However, anything that puts high demands on you or forces you to adjust can be stressful. This includes positive events such as getting married, buying a house, going to college, or receiving a promotion. Of course, not all stress is caused by external factors. Stress can also be self-generated, for example, when you worry excessively about something that may or may not happen, or have irrational, pessimistic thoughts about life. What causes stress depends, at least in part, on your perception of it. Something that's stressful to you may not faze someone else; they may even enjoy it. For example, your morning commute may make you anxious and tense because you worry that traffic will make you late. Others, however, may find the trip relaxing because they allow more than enough time and enjoy listening to music while they drive.

### **Common External Causes of Stress**

- Major life changes
- Financial problems
- Work or school
- Being too busy
- Relationship difficulties
- Children and family

### **Common Internal Causes of Stress**

- Chronic worry
- Unrealistic expectations/Perfectionism
- Pessimism
- Rigid thinking, lack of flexibility
- Negative self-talk
- All-or-nothing attitude

## **Stree Warning Signs and Symptoms**

### **Cognitive Symptoms**

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

### **Emotional Symptoms**

- Moodiness
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

### **Physical Symptoms**

- Aches and pains
- Constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

### **Behavioral Symptoms**

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes and drugs
- Nervous habits (nail biting, pacing)

Keep in mind that the signs and symptoms of stress can also be caused by other psychological or medical problems. If you're experiencing any of the warning signs of stress, it's important to see a doctor for a full evaluation. Your doctor can help you determine whether or not your symptoms are stress-related.

### **Managing Stress through Yoga**

- Yoga Nindra
- Yogasana
- Pranayama
- Meditation

### **Yoga Nindra**

Yoga Nindra (Sanskrit for Yogic Sleep) is a powerful technique. It is both a name of a state and of a practice which creates an altered state of consciousness allowing the practitioner to relax and heal their being, expand their faculty of imagination, enter the realm of subconscious & super conscious, effectively manifest seemingly magical changes in their life, certain karmic debris in their life clear and assist in reaching a state called by some enlightenment. Here is a step-by-step guide to do yoga nindra.

It is a good idea to cover yourself with a blanket to keep yourself warm. The body becomes warm while doing postures and a sudden drop in temperature is not suitable.

Lie down straight on your back in Corpse Pose (Shavasana). Close your eyes and relax. Take a few deep breaths in and out. Remember to take slow and relaxed breaths, and not ujjayi breaths.

If you feel any discomfort or pain in lower back, adjust your posture or use a pillow to elevate the legs a little, for more comfort.

Start by gently taking your attention to your right foot. Keep your attention there for a few seconds, while relaxing your foot. Then gently move your attention up to the right knee, right thigh and hip (again for a couple of seconds). Become aware of your whole right leg. Repeat this process for the left leg. Similarly, take your attention to all parts of the body: genital area, stomach, navel region, chest, right shoulder and right arm, followed by the left shoulder and left arm, throat, face and the top of the head. Take a deep breath in, observe the sensations in your body, and relax in this still state for a few minutes. Now, slowly becoming aware of your body and surroundings, turn to your right side and keep lying down for a few more minutes. Taking your own time, you may then slowly sit up, and whenever you feel comfortable, slowly and gradually open your eyes. Yoga nindra is thus a joyous, effortless way to end your yoga practice.

### **Yogasana**

Asanas are one of the most important systems of physical culture ever created. The purpose of asanas is to create a free flow of "Prana", life energy in and out of the system, in order to perfect its functioning. Wrong posture, on the other hand, can create a lot of stress and cause contractions, inhibiting circulation of energy and nutrients in the body. This encourages toxins and waste materials to accumulate inside body. As the mind and body are connected, physical blocks combined with mental blockage can result in pain and disorder in both spheres. The Corpse pose (Shavasana), the Crocodile pose (Makarasana), and Child pose (Balasana) are simple relaxation postures. These are particularly helpful in relieving stress, anxiety and nervous irritability.

#### **Shavasana**

This asana is known as Shavasana or Corpse Pose as it looks like a dead body. This asana is one of the easiest asanas to get into but the most difficult to practice. It is one of the best relaxation poses and if practiced correctly and with full efforts, can relax every body part, relaxing not only the body but also the mind.

**Taking the asana position:** 1- Spread the legs one to two feet apart, the toes are turned outwards, the heels facing each other, a comfortable distance apart. 2- Bring the arms a little away from the body, palms turned upward. 3- Relax the neck and allow it to turn to the side if it is more comfortable. 4- Close the eyes and focus the attention on the body, breathing normally. 5- Begin focusing each body part and relaxing it, then moving on. Keep the mind focused on relaxation, the breath should be normal. Relax the whole body.

#### **Makarasana**

Makarasana or crocodile pose is a yoga asana used for relaxation. In sanskrit, 'Makar' means crocodile. This is a yogic pose useful for people with back and shoulder problems.

Taking the asana position :- 1) Lie down on the floor on your stomach with your hands folded under the head. 2) Place the palms on your shoulders in a relaxed way and close your eyes. 3) Stretch the legs as far as possible. The toes should point outwards. 4) Relax the whole body. Breathe normally and slowly. Feel the whole body touching the ground and the deep relaxation in all your muscles. 5) Relax in this posture for 2 – 5 minutes. 6) Slowly bring the feet together. 7) Unfold the arms and come to the Prone Position.

### **Balāsana**

Child's pose or balāsana is a bend, which stretches and releases the spine and lower back. You can use this pose as a warm-up pose, a resting pose or a counter pose for a back bend. You should experience your spine lengthening when you drop the weight of your hips to your heels and relax your head to the floor. Breathe evenly throughout the pose and imagine your body relaxing with each breath.

**Taking the asana position:** 1- Maintaining the position of the hands, exhale while you sit back on your heels and rest your upper body on the thighs. 2- Keep your forehead on the floor. 3- Place your arms next to you with hands adjacent to feet and palms facing up. 4- Exhale when you release the hips to the heels and feel your spine lengthening. 5- Remain in this pose for up to 2 minutes. 6- Release the pose by inhaling when pressing the hands into the floor to lift yourself to seated position. Child's pose stretches and releases the spine and lower back. Benefits to body parts - Stretches and relaxes spine and lower back.

### **Pranayama**

The word Pranayama is derived from 2 Sanskrit words "Prana" meaning life force/vital energy/the breath and "Ayama" meaning control. The term "pranayama" means "life-force control." Pranayama is a controlled breathing technique that helps in maintaining energy flow and balance in the body. Breathing is a very important element of life and controlled breathing is necessary for all kinds of successful exercises.

Proper respiration/ breathing provide energy to different body systems/parts as well as removes toxic waste products from our body. This promotes relaxation. Pranayama helps in maintaining oxygen and carbon dioxide balance in our body and thereby connects our body, mind and spirit. An individual under stress or stressful conditions usually does not pay much attention to proper breathing, and this can lead to fast and shallow breathing. The result can be oxygen deprivation, which increases negative energy and stress in the body. The term "pranayama" means "life-force control." It is a powerful tool for purifying mind and body and raising your energy level. Basic pranayama is easy to do.

### **Basic Pranayama**

Sit up straight in a chair with a straight back to help support your spine. Use your thumb and middle finger for the exercise.

Place your middle finger on one nostril. Inhale to the count of 12 through the other nostril. Pinch the nostril shut with the thumb. Hold the breath for 20 counts. Lift your middle finger from the other nostril and exhale through it to the count of 12. Next, inhale from the nostril through which you exhaled. Pinch it shut with the same finger, hold the breath for 20 counts. Then lift the thumb from the other nostril and exhale to the count of 12. Do this 10 times, alternating between the nostrils.

Next, using the same fingers and timing counts, inhale through one nostril and exhale through the other 10 times. Repeat with the other nostril 10 times. Next, inhale and exhale through the same nostril 10 times using the same timing counts. Repeat with the other nostril. Note: Avoid doing pranayama under a fan at high speed. The best times for this exercise are early in the morning and at sunset. Watch which nostril is easier to breathe through. If it's the right, it means your left logical brain is active; if it's the left nostril, your creative right brain is ready for some creativity.

### **Meditation**

Meditations have tremendous benefits for stress management and overall health. While there are many different meditations that are effective, each brings something unique, and some meditations may feel more

comfortable for you than others. The following are several meditations to choose from; see what type of meditation works best for you, and let it transform your life. There is nothing mystical about meditation. On the contrary, it is something that you can do quite easily by following these steps: Sit quietly, comfortably and close your eyes. Start by relaxing the muscles of your feet and work up your body relaxing muscles. Focus your attention on your breathing and Breathe in deeply and then let your breath out. Count your breaths, and say the number of the breath as you let it out. Focusing on breathing and counting breaths is just one way you can occupy your mind during meditation. Other approaches are: Focusing on an object: Here, you completely focus attention on examination of an object. Look at it in immense detail for the entire meditation. Examine the shape, colour differences, texture, temperature and movement of the object. Objects often used are flowers, candle flames or flowing designs, but you can use other objects equally effectively (for example alarm clocks, desk lamps or even coffee mugs!)

#### **Focus on a sound**

Some people like to focus on sounds they make. The classic example is the Sanskrit word “Om”, meaning “perfection”. Whether or not this is practical depends on your lifestyle.

#### **Using Imagery**

This can be a very refreshing and pleasant way of meditating. Here, you create a mental image of a pleasant and relaxing place in your mind. For more information. However you do it, it is important to keep your attention focused. If external thoughts or distractions wander into your mind, let them drift out.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Stress is manageable through yoga but it requirements attempt. Stress manages on self in terms of opinion & act. Change your behavioral pattern. Lead a healthy balanced life for happiness.

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