

YOGA THERAPY-THE NATURAL IMMUNITY BOOSTER**Dr. Surabhi S. Pathak*¹ and Dr. Arti R. Firke²**

¹M.D. (Ayu.) Scholar, Swasthavritta and Yoga Department College of Ayurved and Research Centre, Nigdi, Pune.

²(ASSO. Prof. & Guide), Swasthavritta and Yoga Department College of Ayurved and Research Centre, Nigdi, Pune.

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Corresponding Author*Dr. Surabhi S. Pathak**

M.D. (Ayu.) Scholar,
Swasthavritta and Yoga
Department College of
Ayurved and Research
Centre, Nigdi, Pune.

ABSTRACT

Yoga is defined as to control the inner behavior of mind and body. It is difficult for our body to keep pathogens away when the immunity is down. We cannot stop being in contact with the affected people but we can certainly work out a way to strengthen our defense mechanism not only by taking medicines but by practicing yoga as it is a natural immunity booster. Yoga is an ancient art that strengthens our body and also relaxes the mind. Hence, yoga is one of the most effective and time tested natural immunity enhancing therapies that we can adopt for a healthier life. A healthy life can be easily achieved if we learn to go for healthier lifestyle, healthier food habits and choices and regular practice of yoga and meditation. This paper presents the importance of

yoga and some asanas which will help to boost the immunity for a healthy life with regular practice. Yoga is not an alternative medicine but a precaution to keep disease away. So, this is the time to beat all health issues and improve the immunity with ease i.e. with regular yoga practice.

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Immunity, Asana, Meditation.

INTRODUCTION

In Patanjali Yog Darshan, yoga is defined as to control the inner behavior of mind and body. (Pa.Yo.D.1/2). Yoga is a traditional method of meditation developed by the saints of ancient India. They practiced yoga as an effective method of controlling their mind and bodily activities. Yoga in Daily Life is a system of practice consisting of eight levels known as Ashtang yoga of development in the areas of physical, mental, social and spiritual health.

When the body is physically healthy, then the mind is clear, focused and stress is under control.

The word yoga is very vast. Nowadays in 21st century It is difficult to follow whole Ashtang yog but we can definitely adopt some of them like Yam, Niyam, Asanas, Pranayam for better lifestyle. Focusing on the Asana and Pranayam which can be practiced in daily routine for the improvement of immunity.

About Yogasana and Pranayam

In Gherand samhita it is written that there are eighty four thousands of asanas described by shiva among them eighty four are the best and thirty two have been found useful for mankind in this world. Asanas are beneficial for the muscles, joints, cardiovascular system, nervous system and lymphatic system, as well as the mind, psyche and Chakras (energy centres). They are psychosomatic exercises, which strengthen and balance the entire nervous system and harmonies and stabilize the practitioner's state of mind. The effects of these exercises are a sense of contentment, clarity of mind, relaxation and a feeling of inner freedom and peace. Asana practice helps to develop the body and mind bringing a lot of health benefits yet is not a substitute for medicine. It is important to learn and practice yoga postures under the supervision of a trained person.

'Prana' is the vital energy needed by our physical and subtle layers, without which the body would perish. It is the prana or life force in us that nourishes the mind and keeps the body alive. 'Prana' refers to the universal life force and 'Ayama' means to regulate or lengthen. Pranayama means working in the dimension of prana.

The healthy body we should possess a good resistance power that comes from our inner immunity. A fragile body, low resistance, and a weak defense mechanism keep down and far away from an active lifestyle. Being stuck and away from work is agitating. The immune system plays a vital role in keeping body healthy by preventing infection. We cannot hide our self from not being infected but we can definitely work our way to strengthen our defense mechanism not only by taking medicine but by practicing yoga as natural immunity booster. Yoga is most effective and time tested immunity enhancer that we can adopt for the healthier life.

Here onwards elaborating some specific asanas i.e. yoga poses and pranayam i.e. yogic breathing that strengthen and support immune system and regularly practicing them will keep diseases away.

Sr. No	Yogasana
1.	Suryanamaskar
2.	Tadasana (Mountain Pose)
3.	Vrikshasana (Tree Pose)
4.	Trikonasana (Triangle Pose)
5.	Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand)
6.	Matsyasana (Fish Pose)
7.	Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)
8.	Padmasana (Lotus pose)
8.	Vajrasana (Adamantine pose)
10.	Simhasana (Lion pose)
11.	Makarasana (Crocodile pose)
12.	Shavasana (Corpse pose)

1. Surya Namaskar: It is a set of 12 powerful yoga asanas that have profound physiological benefits that have been written about for thousands of years. This asana requires to keep eyes open while in the pose.

Benefits: Sun Salutations provide a good cardiovascular workout, stretch every part of the body and when used with breath coordinate the body with the mind. Even more impressively, this sequence takes the spine through almost every possible range of motion. These postures can be used as a warm-up routine or as an exercise in themselves. The poses can be practiced slowly for deeper stretching and quickly for more of a cardiovascular workout.

2. Tadasana: It also called the Mountain Pose, is a base pose from which all the others asanas emerge. Therefore, it is rightly called the ‘mother’ of all yoga poses. This basic level Hatha Yoga pose can be done at any time in the day and needs to be held for at least 10-20 seconds.

Benefits: Tadasana helps restore balance and regulates the digestive system. It steadies breathing, increases awareness, relieves tension, and improves blood circulation. It increases energy and harmonizes body and mind.

3. Vrikshasana: It is also called the Tree Pose because it represents the stable and balanced stance of a tree. This asana requires to keep eyes open while in the pose. It is best to do this as beginner in the morning on an empty stomach and a fresh mind. Balance for a minute each on both the legs.

Benefits: Vrikshasana strengthens spine and aids nerve-muscle coordination. It improves mental capabilities and keeps stable. It invigorates entire body by stretching it, increases stamina, and keeps focused. It boosts self-confidence and relaxes the nervous system.

4. Trikonasana: It also called the Triangle Pose, is named so because it resembles a triangle. This asana requires to keep eyes open while doing it to maintain balance. This yoga pose requires to hold it for 30 seconds. It is best to do the asana in the morning as are energized and the food is digested completely.

Benefits: Trikonasana improves the blood flow in body. It cures indigestion, reduces blood pressure, and increases concentration and balance. It calms mind and takes the stress away. Trikonasana burns fat and reduces obesity.

5. Sarvangasana: It is called shoulder stand to be held for 15-30 sec. It is best to do in the morning.

Benefits: Stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands and normalizes their functions. Strengthens the arms and shoulders and keeps the spine flexible Nourishing brain with more blood. Stretches the heart muscles by returning more venous blood to the heart. Brings relief from constipation, indigestion and varicose veins.

6. Matsyasana: It also called the Fish Pose, This Yoga pose needs to be held for at least 30-60 seconds. It is best to do Matsyasana in the morning when are refreshed from a good sleep and energized with digested food.

Benefits: Matsyasana makes body absorb nutrients better. It relieves tension in the shoulders and neck. It helps to breathe right and tones parathyroid gland. Matsyasana gives digestive organs a good massage and keeps anxiety, constipation, and fatigue at bay.

7. Bhujangasana: It also called as the Cobra Pose. This yoga pose needs to be done for at least 15-30 seconds, early in the morning on an empty stomach.

Benefits: Bhujangasana stimulates digestive system and regulates metabolism, thus helping lose weight. It is a stress relieving exercise that opens up heart and lungs. It increases flexibility, elevates mood, aids kidney function, and keeps fatigue away.

8. Padmasana: Lotus position is a cross-legged yoga posture which helps deepen meditation by calming the mind and alleviating various physical ailments. A regular practice of this posture aids in overall blossoming of the practitioner, just like a lotus; and hence the name Padmasana.

Benefits: Padmasana Improves digestion, Reduces muscular tension and brings blood pressure under control, Relaxes the mind, Helps pregnant ladies during childbirth, Reduces menstrual discomfort and helps in improvement of immunity.

9. Vajrasana: This yoga posture has been named after the shape it takes – that of a diamond or thunderbolt. One can sit in Vajrasana (Adamantine Pose) at the time of doing pranayamas.

Benefits: Enhances blood circulation in the lower abdomen improving digestion. If one sits in Vajrasana after food, food gets digested well, Relieves excessive gas trouble or pain, Nerves of legs, thighs are strengthened, Makes knee and ankle joints flexible and prevents certain rheumatic diseases. In Vajrasana spine is erect without much effort. It is also beneficial for practice of pranayam and as a preparatory for meditation.

10. Simhasana: In Sanskrit Simh is known as Lion. This asana is thus known as Simhasana since the facial expressions and the entire force in the body is modified as such that it appears to be as a lion.

Benefits: This asana is very useful for individuals with bad breathe. keeps the platysma firm as we go on aging. Destroys various diseases. Relieves sore throat and various respiratory ailments. Brings about the exercise of lungs thus increasing their oxygen intake capacity.

11. Makarasana: Makarasana or the Crocodile pose is a yoga asana used for relaxation. Makarasana is a yogic pose useful for people with back and shoulder problems.

Benefits: This asana can be done as a relaxation pose between other asanas or it can be relaxation method when are tired. can be in this asana for a prolonged period of time if are tired after a workout. It gives deep relaxation to the shoulders and the spine.

12. Shavasana: It the corpse pose is a yogic relaxation pose. The name comes from the sanskrit words Shava meaning “corpse”. Shavasana is the simplest and the main relaxation pose used in yoga. It is usually performed at the beginning and at the end of yoga practice.

Pranayam: Yogic breathe

1. Deep Breathing: Deep Breathing should be a part of our everyday life. It not only can lengthen the years that we get to live, but can make us happier, more productive and energetic living them too. Breathing deeply is a well-known stress reliever and has a multitude of health benefits as well. However, in our high stress busy lives, we often breathe very shallowly most of the time. But with a little effort, deep breathing can become an easy and unconscious part of our daily life. By making a conscious decision to focus on our breath for a part of each day, we can make it so that we regularly breathe deeper without having to think about it at all.

Benefits: Deep Breathing makes calmer. It helps to detoxify the body. Deep Breathing relieves pain. It makes us happier. It helps to improve posture. Breathing stimulates the lymphatic system and increases our cardiovascular capacity. Deep Breathing gives energy and improves digestion. Deep Breathing strengthens the major organs of the body and mainly helps to regulate weight.

2. Anulom-Vilom Pranayam/ Nadi shodhan Pranayam

Nadis are subtle energy channels in the human body that can get blocked due to various reasons. The Nadi Shodhan pranayama is a breathing technique that helps clear these blocked energy channels, thus calming the mind. This technique is also known as Anulom Vilom pranayama. Nadi Shodhan pranayama helps relax the mind and prepares it to enter a meditative state. Practicing it for just a few minutes every day helps keep the mind calm, happy and peaceful. It helps in releasing accumulated tension and fatigue.

Benefits: It is Excellent breathing technique to calm and center the mind. Works therapeutically for most circulatory and respiratory problems. Releases accumulated stress in the mind and body effectively and helps relax. Helps harmonize the left and right hemispheres of the brain, which correlate to the logical and emotional sides of our personality. Helps purify and balance the nadis - the subtle energy channels, thereby ensuring smooth flow of prana (life force) through the body. Maintains body temperature. Helps in improvement of immunity.

3. Omkar/ Om chanting: Om clears the obstacles from mind. It is a sound that can remind of that state of feeling. When say Om remember the totality of the being that is the very core

of this existence, which is free from misery and which is all love, unconditional love. The sound Om reminds of the Lord of the Creation.

“Then the understanding of soul, the Self happens, and there will be an absence of obstacles, that is, obstacles in path will vanish.”(Patanjali Yoga Sutra 29).

When this feeling of elevation, totality of consciousness comes to then witness consciousness dawns in and mind gets totally transformed. Clarity begins in thinking. Clarity begins in feeling. The whole body undergoes a transformation; so alive, so full of prana, and all the obstacles in path are removed. Just the memory of Lordship, of the Divine can remove obstacles from mind. This is the beauty of omkar.

CONCLUSION

Yoga is a holistic practice which strengthens our body physically as well as mentally. As a result, the body's defense mechanism also improves in such a condition. Above mentioned all asana that works on all body systems like Cardio-vascular system, Respiratory system, Nervous system, Thyroid system etc. If all these systems work properly and remain healthy there will be no rise of any disease and it will boost immunity always. Even pranayam does the same work it increases lung capacity and open up all tissues and cells of body, increases breathing time and eventually helps to increase the immunity and gives longevity to life.

A healthy life can be easily achieved if we learn to adopt a healthy lifestyle, healthy food choices and regular practice of yoga and meditation. Ayurveda, yoga and meditation are the ideal factors to live a healthy life. Yoga is not an alternative to medicines but rather a precautionary measure to keep diseases away. So, let's not wait this time for the health issues to come knocking at our door but rather beat it with ease. In this way we can peruse the Yoga i.e. asanas and pranayam in our daily routine for healthy lifestyle and to boost our immunity.

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