



# Importance of Yoga During Covid-19 Pandemic

SAPNA SAHU

Research scholar,

Khwaja Monuddin Chishti Language University

Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-India

## Abstract:

*As we all of us know that how first and second waves of COVID-19 were badly. The pandemic has led to a substantial loss of human lives and has created unprecedented challenges for the public health system, not just in India, but across the world. The fear of this ever-mutating virus has kept many of us indoors. This forced confinement has increased the stress on our bodies and minds. It is an effective tool to reduce stress and improve motor functions, which, in turn, helps keep various health problems at bay. It is an effective tool to reduce stress and improve motor functions, which, in turn, helps keep various health problems at bay. Yoga practitioners reported good physical ability and endurance. Yoga group also showed less anxiety, stress, fear, and having better coping strategies than the non-Yoga group. The Yoga group displayed striking and superior ability to cope with stress and anxiety associated with lockdown and COVID-19.*

*On this Yoga Day, let us grab our mats and lift our spirits with yoga. We need the peace and calm that yoga brings into our lives.*

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**Keyword:** COVID-19, Pandemic, Yoga

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## 1. Introduction

Yoga, which originated in India and has been part of the Indian civilization for millennia, has been a practice that aligns our mind, body and spirit, and enhances mental clarity. It is an effective tool to reduce stress and improve motor functions, which, in turn, helps keep various health problems at bay. The pandemic has led to a substantial loss of human lives and has created unprecedented challenges for the public health system, not just in India, but across the world. The fear of this ever-mutating virus has kept many of us indoors. This forced confinement has increased the stress on our bodies and minds. This public health crisis has brought to the fore the importance of strengthening our immune systems. For this, we need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Studies suggest that yoga contributes to improving the immune system since it is a combination of physical exercise, controlled breathing and mental concentration all of which are known to have health benefits. Among the many yoga Asanas, Shavasana and Sasakasana reduce stress which, many practitioners believe, increases the efficiency of the immune system. Breathing techniques like Pranayam improve the functioning of the respiratory function. Trikonasana improve blood circulation which benefits all our organs.

## 2. Why Yoga?

Yoga practitioners reported good physical ability and endurance. Yoga group also showed less anxiety, stress, fear, and having better coping strategies than the non-Yoga group. The Yoga group displayed striking and superior ability to cope with stress and anxiety associated with lockdown and COVID-19. Continuous anxiety or stress can manifest many health conditions such as high blood pressure, muscle tension, breathing issues, etc. Stress is the element that triggers our sympathetic nervous system causing all these health issues and in such situations, yoga can help us to stay calm. The posture and Asanas of yoga help us to reduce muscle tension, joint issues and relax our sympathetic system,

resulting in a relaxed mind. There are a lot of yoga poses which help us to manage our blood pressure level and anxiety. Yoga also teaches us to regulate our breath, which can make a person feel relaxed and at peace.

We need the peace and calm that yoga brings into our lives. The relevance of yoga amid the Covid-19 pandemic, which has upended the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world has increased substantially. Several medical practitioners and experts have suggested that those suffering from mild symptoms of Covid-19 and who have been advised to isolate at home, could benefit from practicing yoga Asanas and breathing exercises, albeit with caution.

As the virus directly affects the lungs, it is imperative to strengthen the respiratory system. Practicing yoga is also advised to those who have recovered from the virus. Yogic breathing, beginner-level yoga Asanas and meditation bring mental peace, a vital factor in the recovery process for those who have had the traumatic experience of contracting Covid-19. Apart from these, modified breathing techniques and yoga poses recommended by experts can help reduce fatigue and slowly restore energy levels among Covid-19 patients who are on the mend.

### **3. Yoga during the pandemic**

To live through this lockdown & pandemic period, yoga is the best thing to adopt as a lifestyle habit. It helps us build a strong physical, mental and spiritual health system. When combined with breathing and meditation, it acts as the best element to take care of our mind, body and soul. There are different forms of yoga that can help us to stay physically strong and mentally balanced. It could also be something you can motivate others in your family & social circle to do, as it could help them get through these times easily & healthily. Just like a normal walk in the park or 30 minutes of hard-core gym exercising, Yoga brings its own flavour and benefits to the table, which can be performed by people of all ages, and provides you with a holistic sense of health, which is especially required during these times.

Children can also benefit from yoga. As many are facing mental stress due to isolation and anxiety in an unpredictable school year, yoga can be a useful coping method. Hence, I appeal to all the parents and teachers to motivate young children to practice yoga in their daily lives. Being a country with the largest population of young people, we must make significant efforts to help them navigate through the adverse effects of the pandemic-induced disruption. Parents and teachers can and should motivate children to practice yoga. This will help improve physical flexibility and enhance concentration in these challenging times.

Our way of life has changed, most likely, forever. Across the world, yoga has come to be recognized as an effective tool in improving health, which, in turn, helps maintain an all-important work-life balance. Today, yoga has gained an enormous following globally and could well be considered one of the pillars of India's soft power.

In the absence of Covid-19, we could have been out in parks and public places celebrating this ancient practice. But we will have to maintain safety protocols and stay indoors. The virus has been debilitating for so many of us. But on this Yoga Day, let us grab our mats and lift our spirits with yoga. We need the peace and calm that yoga brings into our lives. And let us hope that by next Yoga Day, the virus will be well and truly behind us.

### **4. Health Benefits of Yoga & Meditation during Covid-19**

Since the outbreak of the corona virus, we have seen many people fighting stress, depression and anxiety. Global lockdown, stressful working conditions, change in climate, loss of loved ones and restricted outings can take a toll on people's minds and overall health. These issues often manifest into

physical diseases. While the Government and hospitals are doing their bit to supply vaccines and medicines, one should also follow mindfulness through **yoga and meditation** to keep themselves fit and healthy.

The negative news on TV channels, working from home all the time, feelings of detachment and loneliness can affect your health severely. In fact, as per a study conducted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anxiety, depression, increased substance use, and suicidal thoughts have been noticed among the younger generation mostly people belonging to the age of 18-29.

### **5. How is yoga and meditation beneficial during Covid-19?**

It has also been observed that people affected by hypertension, depression and cardiovascular diseases are at higher risk to be affected by Covid-19. Moreover, insomnia, negative thoughts, anxiety and stress can weaken the immune system and deplete your body's strength to fight the virus.

In this case, the age-old practices of **yoga and meditation** can help reduce stress, strengthen the immune system, improve blood flow, and release muscle tension. The abundant **health benefits of yoga** and meditation have proved to reduce stress and anxiety among individuals.

Regular practice of **yoga and meditation** also helps to resolve breathing issues with the help of the **benefits of pranayama**, which prevents cardiovascular diseases. As you learn to regulate your breath and take longer and deeper breaths, all diseases and emotions trapped in the mind and body are released, leading to peace and good health.

#### **Top 3 Ways to Practice Yoga during Covid-19**

1. Go for a 30-minute walk in nature.
2. Register for online classes for availing yourself of **yoga and meditation benefits**.
3. Practice basic breathing and stretching exercises in the morning.

### **6. Conclusion**

Yoga is a word that became popular across the world in the last few years. Yoga is not only beneficial for the body but also for the mind. It helps to improve blood flow and helps in building mind clarity. For ages, yoga was known to be beneficial for our physical & mental health. It not only help us to stay calm but also help us to lose weight.

During this ongoing corona virus pandemic, when we are all bound to live a restricted life under the constant fear of infection risks, it is natural for anyone to develop anxiety. The continuous flow of negative news, the inadequacy of daily resources, everything is adding to this growing anxiety and depression. Being confined at home for such long periods of time can be mentally challenging for us. When our mind is flooded with the uncertainty of the future, we often experience sleepless nights causing fatigue. Many of us are unable to relax our mind during this time thereby increasing the stress on our minds.

During this time, it is important to understand that mental health is very important for survival. To help with this growing level of anxiety and depression, we must lead a healthy lifestyle stay connected to our loved ones, and practice.

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