

Effectiveness of Yoga Therapy in Medical Healing

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ABSTRACT

Yoga has come a long way from being an assortment of Asanas, Breathing Exercises, and Meditation. It has developed into a medical tool that enhances the effectiveness of contemporary medical healing practices. We know that modern Physiotherapy has its roots in the Yoga asanas and many exercises in physiotherapy are based on the asanas of yoga. Yoga Therapy is now well established to help out in Physical, Mental and Behavioural Ailments. I am not making this statement only from what I gather from literature but have personally experienced by undertaking yoga therapy from a yoga guru for easing out my knee pain. Many of us do not know that Yoga Therapy helps patients suffering from Physical/ Mental and Behavioural ailments. This Paper explores what Yoga is, its history, difference between yoga and yoga therapy and explains how yoga therapy helps patients suffering from Physical, Mental and Behavioural Ailments. While it works on stand-alone basis but its optimum effectiveness surfaces when it is taken as a support to traditional medical treatment.

Keywords: *Yoga, Yoga Therapy, Use of Asanas/Breathing exercises and Meditation, Yoga for pain/anxiety/depression*

I am sold on the view that Yoga does have a therapeutic value. I joined Yoga classes two years back when I found that while lowering my right leg, there was acute pain in my knee and I started feeling pain during my morning walk in the municipal garden near my house. The yoga teacher listened to my discomfort and assured me that yoga could help me overcome my difficulties. He was right and it was a matter of a few weeks when my problem of knee pain while lowering my right leg totally disappeared and I could increase my rounds in the garden from 3 rounds to 5 rounds!!!

Yoga opened a new world to me. Apart from bringing relief to my knee problem, it also calmed my mind and changed my outlook towards life. The meditation experience really proved a game changer. My mind while retaining its alertness became slow and made me stretch each moment of my life so that I could seek maximum enjoyment in living that moment. I found hitherto not experienced mental calmness. I was always tense as if there was an invisible knot in my mind that kept me tense for no obvious reasons. Suddenly after meditation, this knot dissolved and my mind became pleasantly calm. The slowness of mind and the calmness changed my attitude and behaviour. Most often I used to react without thinking if someone tried to instigate me, this got replaced with my response based on my deep thinking and foresight. This was possible because the slowness of my reflexes allowed

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me to evaluate the contents of what was hurled at me and I could respond wisely. People around me noticed the change with great relief in their minds. Suddenly, the people and environment around me changed beautifully filling me with great peace and joy!!

I started exploring the vastness of Yoga and could author two research papers: "*Meditation-opening Inner Corridors*¹" and "*Creating Awareness about Controlled Breathing*²." The dramatic knee pain relief prompted me to explore the therapeutic expanse of Yoga, and I am with this paper before you.

We shall explore how yoga can be used to tackle physical/mental and behavioural health problems with or without the use of drugs/ pills.

In this paper, we shall understand yoga, its history, and how it helps us in various ways, including providing therapy for good health.

Yoga and its history

We can take pride in the fact that **Yoga** has its roots in India. From here, it branched out to the whole world, and today, people across the world benefit from its practice.

Yoga is a generic term for physical, mental and spiritual disciplines, originated from ancient India. It is a spiritual and ascetic discipline including breath control, simple meditation and adoption of specific body postures, practised for health and relaxation.

The Sanskrit term 'Yuj' means to unite/integrate a person's consciousness with the universal consciousness. It is a harmonious blend between the body, mind and spirit, wherein the body controls the actions, the mind controls intelligence and the spirit controls emotion.

According to modern scientists, everything in the universe is just a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in harmony with the universe and can be called a 'yogi'.

History of Yoga

Traced back over 5,000-10,000 years, the early writings on yoga were transcribed on fragile palm leaves that were easily damaged, destroyed or lost. Some texts state that Yoga has existed since the beginning of time and consider Lord Shiva as the 'ADIYOGI' i.e the first Yogi¹
https://www.physio-pedia.com/Principles_of_Yoga

The development of Yoga started from Pre-Vedic period, let us see the journey of the development of Yoga (Jess Doshi³)

1. Pre-Vedic Period

Dating back to 2700 BC, in the Indus-Saraswati valley civilization, seals and fossils of people doing yoga sadhana have been found. This hinted at the practice of Yoga starting at such early times, although it was an undocumented period.

2. Vedic Period

The word 'Yoga' was first mentioned in the ancient Sanskrit texts of Rig Veda which dates back to 1500 BC. Later, in the Atharva Veda (around 900 BC), the importance of controlling

breath was stressed upon. However, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact era as the Vedas were originally passed down through stories and by word-of-mouth.

3. Pre-Classical Period

The Upanishads predominate these 2,000 years in the history of Yoga. They explain the meanings of Vedic literature, reading between the lines and explaining how the body and mind work. Out of the 108 written documents, 20 of them were Yoga Upanishads. They focus on different yogic techniques that are still used, like pranayama (breathing exercises), pratyahara (withdrawing senses), breathing modulation, sound and meditation in complete peace. At this time, Yoga was divided into two forms - karma Yoga and jnana Yoga.

4. Classical Period

The Classical period of Yoga lasted from 500 BC TO 800 AD. The importance of a peaceful mind, as a consequence of Yoga, was put into the limelight during this period.

- The Bhagavad Gita, a 700-verse compilation of conversation between Lord Krishna and Prince Arjuna, explains the importance of dharma, jnana Yoga, karma Yoga and bhakti Yoga. In this renowned text, Lord Krishna says, “Samatvam Yoga uchyate”, i.e. Yoga is a balanced state. Yoga strives for oneness between man and nature. It takes us back to our joyous state.
- Maharshi Patanjali, the Father of Yoga, was the first yogi to truly understand and explain the meaning of Yoga and the true purpose behind it, in his Yoga Sutras. This was called Raja Yoga.
- The first commentary on the Yoga Sutras by Veda Vyasa was written in the classical period.
- The classical period focused on the importance of mindfulness in yoga. Yoga seemed to flourish in this period.

5. Post-Classical Period

The post-classical period ran up to 1700 AD. It brought forward names of numerous Yoga teachers who worked towards the development of this beautiful, cultural art form. Some of the yogis include Acharya Trayas-Adi Shankaracharya, Madhvacharya, Ramanujacharya, Meera Bai and Purandara Dasa.

Other yogis like Tulsidas and Purandara Dasa worked on the science of Yoga. The Yoga of physical postures and breathing techniques or Hatha Yoga was popularized and is still widely renowned today.

6. Modern Period

Swami Vivekananda was one of the primary yogis to spread Yoga in the modern period, that is from 1700 AD upto now. The period focused on Yoga as a manner of being physically strong.

Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, BKS Iyengar, K Pattabhi Jois, Paramhansa Yogananda, and Vivekananda held parts in the spread and popularity of Hatha Yoga, Vedanta Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

Yoga has undergone a wide number of changes over the centuries. Over this span of time, many people have been propounding numerous theories for the spread of its culture. The essence and soul of Yoga lie in the feeling of oneness with the spirit, mind, body and nature.

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Yoga has not only remained alive but has prospered and developed because people across the world are immensely benefitted by it and realizing its importance and usefulness they have been innovating and adding more dimensions to it. Recognizing its universal appeal the United Nations proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by resolution 69/131 on December 11, 2014. The draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states. Prime Minister Narendra Modi first introduced the proposal in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the General Assembly, in which he said: “Yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action ... a holistic approach [that] is valuable to our health and our well-being. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practising yoga.”

Not only was yoga recognized as an international day, but it was also inscribed on the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in 2016.

A Yoga app called “*WHO mYoga*” was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Government of India to help people stay active and healthy. The app contains a collection of videos and audio files to teach and accompany yoga practice and is an easy-to-use and free tool for both people, who are trying yoga for the first time, and for those who already practice yoga regularly.

Over the last few decades, there has been an upsurge in the prevalence of yoga. Medical professionals and celebrities are also adopting and recommending the regular practice of yoga due its various benefits.

Before we get into the benefits of Yoga, it is essential to understand what exactly Yoga really is. Yoga is not a religion, it's a way of living that aims towards a healthy mind in a healthy body. Man is a physical, mental and spiritual being; Yoga helps in developing the balance between all the three as stated in Ayurveda in India. Other forms of exercise, like aerobics, only assure physical well-being. These exercises have very little to do with the improvement of the spiritual or astral body.

Yoga is not just about bending or twisting the body and holding the breath. It is a technique to bring you into a state where you see and experience reality simply the way it is. If you enable your energies to become exuberant and ecstatic, your sensory body expands. This enables you to experience the whole universe as a part of yourself, making everything one, this is the union that yoga creates. (<https://www.dabur.com/blog/yoga/importance-and-benefits-yoga>)

Over millennia of years, thinkers and yogis in India have been trying to understand the human body and mind. The accumulated learnings have brought us the knowledge of each muscle, bone, ligaments and other parts of the body. Not only we have accumulated knowledge about how each part functions, we have learnt how ailments happen and how these could be relieved by movement/ stretching the relevant muscles and parts of the body. We have not only learnt about physical body but have also gained huge knowledge about the working of mind and now we can control our mind. Yoga is based on these knowledge treasures and yoga therapy has foundation on this knowledge treasure and has developed physical asanas for movement of muscles and body parts to penetrate the roots of physical ailments and relieve them through

strengthening of body muscles and body parts through the asanas. Meditation and mindful practices are developed to take care of mental ailments.

In the next few paragraphs, we shall explore how yoga therapy helps relieve physical/mental/behavioural ailments.

Yoga Therapy

Yoga is now being used worldwide by medical practitioners in support of the treatment of their patients. It has wide therapeutic use. Catherine Woodyard⁴ of the University of Mississippi throws light on the therapeutic use of Yoga in her article in the International Journal of Yoga:

A 3,000-year-old tradition, yoga, is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to health and is classified by the National Institutes of Health as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM).⁵

Before we explore yoga therapy we must understand that Yoga is a form of mind-body fitness that involves a combination of muscular activity and an internally directed mindful focus on awareness of the self, the breath, and energy. Four basic principles underlie the teachings and practices of yoga's healing system.

1st Principle: The human body is a holistic entity comprised of various interrelated dimensions inseparable from one another and the health or illness of any one dimension affects the other dimensions.

2nd Principle: Each individual and his needs are unique and therefore must be approached in a way that acknowledges this individuality and their practice must be tailored accordingly.

3rd Principle: Yoga is self-empowering; the student is his or her own healer. Yoga engages the student in the healing process; by playing an active role in their journey toward health, the healing comes from within, instead of from an outside source and a greater sense of autonomy is achieved.

4th Principle: The quality and state of an individual's mind is crucial to healing. When the individual has a positive mind-state healing happens more quickly, whereas if the mind-state is negative, healing may be prolonged.

Before we elaborate on yoga therapy further, let us first understand the difference between

Yoga and Yoga Therapy:

Mellisa Madeson⁶ comments that people often confuse yoga and yoga therapy and clarifies the difference between the two. Yoga therapy is different from traditional yoga because it is usually conducted on a one-on-one basis. The individual session is designed with individual goals and objectives in mind to address the specific needs of the client. It tends to address specific ailments of the individual by grouping asanas and breathing exercises which would have a positive impact towards healing the person.

While yoga focuses on personal improvement for a “normal” and healthy individual, yoga therapy is a holistic treatment to address somatic or psychological dysfunction.

Yoga therapy is the application of yogic tools and principles to address emotional, mental, and physical needs. This type of therapy involves yoga postures (asanas), breath work, meditation, guided imagery or visualization, and relaxation exercises.

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Like traditional therapy, yoga therapy includes a treatment plan and techniques based on the specific age, ability, goals, and diagnosis of the client. A yoga therapist explains the purpose of each yoga pose, technique, or skill implemented and how it can help reach client goals.

For example, an individual experiencing anxiety might be taught relaxation, deep breathing techniques, and asana practice that includes postures like a child's pose, tree pose, and legs up the wall, which relieve anxiety.

Yoga therapy is effective on a stand-alone basis but is more effective when it is done in support of medical treatment. It does not interfere with the medical treatment but provides a synergy in medical healing.

While modern medicine has the ability in many cases to heal physical diseases and alleviate psychological disorders, it is argued that a purely medical approach is far less effective in healing the emotional, intellectual, and personality layers of the human entity. The discipline of yoga offers individuals a timeless and holistic model of health and healing and although it may not result in the complete elimination of physical diseases and/ or adverse conditions from the body it offers a holistic path of healing.

The four principles discussed earlier bring clarity as to what Yoga Therapy can do. The yoga therapy has to be tailored for an individual and the yoga gurus are well equipped to understand the individual needs and can decide upon what aspects of yoga will be effective in an individual's case.

Yoga therapy can effectively handle many physical ailments because the asanas not only activate different body parts and muscles it tends to strengthen them and hence many physical ailments can be effectively handled through these asanas. Mental and Behavioural ailments all emanate from aberrations of mind. Meditation and Breathing exercises help soothe and calm the mind and can be beneficial for many mental and behavioural ailments. Treatment of all ailments can't be covered in the paper, we just consider some of them to bring home the awareness about yoga therapy's effectiveness.

Briefly stated Yoga therapy is found useful in the following ailments:

1. Mental health problems such as ***depression, anxiety and stress***. These are among the most common reasons for individuals to seek treatment with complementary therapies such as yoga.
2. Yogic practices inhibit the areas responsible for ***anger and aggressiveness*** and stimulate the rewarding pleasure centres in the median forebrain and other areas leading to a state of bliss and pleasure. Several studies demonstrate the potential beneficial effects of yoga interventions on ***depression, stress, and anxiety***.
3. With continued practice comes a gradual loosening of the muscles and connective tissues surrounding the bones and joints; this is thought to be one reason that yoga is associated with reduced ***aches and pains***. Yoga helps to build muscle mass and/ or maintain muscle strength, which protects from conditions such as ***arthritis and osteoporosis***. During a yoga session, the joints are taken through their full range of motion, squeezing and soaking areas of cartilage not often used and bringing fresh nutrients, oxygen and blood to the area, which helps to prevent conditions like arthritis and chronic pain.

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4. Yoga works on both mind and body and hence yoga therapy works on mental as well as physical ailments. The ailments on which Yoga Therapy can be divided into ***Mental, Physical and Behavioral*** ailments.

Mental ailments

- ***Stress and Anxiety***
- ***Depression***

Physical ailments

- ***Arthritis, Osteoporosis leading to Knee Pain***
- ***Epilepsy***

Behavioural Ailments

- ***Anger and Aggressiveness***
- ***Schizophrenia***

We shall now discuss yoga therapy on the above ailments in detail:

Mental Ailments

Stress and Anxiety

Breathing exercises and Meditation help calm the mind and reduce stress and anxiety. Yoga therapy can be an effective way to manage stress and anxiety because of the mental and physical relaxation it provides. Yoga can help improve your mood through better awareness of the present moment. Focusing on the present moment may push stress and anxiety backstage. Yoga can help you learn to recognise thoughts, feelings, and actions that lead to anxiety and may help soothe yourself.

To relieve stress and anxiety the following simple tips are helpful while doing yoga:
Focus on your breath: Focus on your breath and be aware of the present moment in each pose during the yoga session.

Notice sensations: Notice the sensations in your body as you move into each pose.

Allow emotions: Allow yourself to feel any emotions that arise.

Bring your mind back: If your thoughts start to scatter, gently bring your mind back to your practice.

The above tips of yoga will help If you have mild stress and anxiety.

Yoga Asanas that help in relieving severe stress and anxiety

(source: (<https://oncquestlabs.com/blog/how-does-yoga-reduce-stress-and-anxiety/>):

Yoga is widely recognised for its stress-relieving benefits. The combination of gentle physical postures, controlled breathing, and meditation helps reduce cortisol levels, promoting relaxation. Consistent practice can contribute to improved mental well-being and a sense of calm, making it an effective tool for stress management.

Yoga offers a diverse range of poses and techniques that can be particularly effective for reducing stress/anxiety and promoting relaxation. Here are some key yoga poses and practices to help alleviate stress and anxiety:

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Child's Pose (Balasana): This gentle resting pose helps release tension in the back, shoulders, and neck. It encourages deep, calming breaths and provides a sense of security



Corpse Pose (Savasana): The ultimate relaxation pose, Savasana involves lying flat on your back, focusing on breathing and letting go of tension. It's ideal for reducing stress and promoting mental tranquility.



Legs-Up-The-Wall Pose (Viparita Karani): This pose is known for its calming effect on the nervous system. It can help reduce anxiety, improve circulation, and alleviate tension in the legs.



Cat-Cow Pose (Marjaryasana-Bitilasana): This dynamic flow between arching and rounding the back is excellent for releasing spinal tension and promoting mindfulness through breath awareness.



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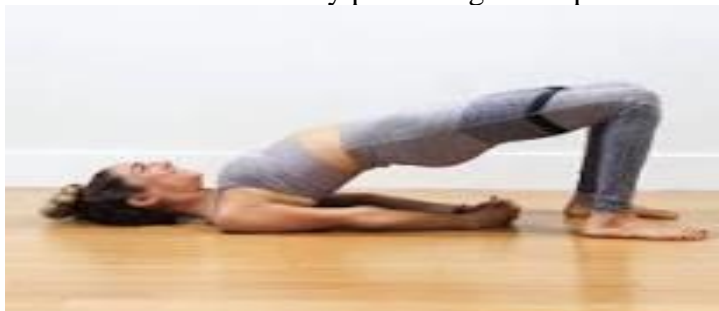
Standing Forward Bend (Uttanasana): This forward bend stretches the hamstrings and lower back, and it can calm the mind by promoting relaxation and relieving stress.



Triangle Pose (Trikonasana): Trikonasana stretches the entire body, improving focus and balance while reducing stress by encouraging deep, conscious breaths.



Bridge Pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana): This pose opens the chest and strengthens the back, which can alleviate stress by promoting better posture and reducing tension.



Sun Salutations (Surya Namaskar): A series of poses and movements that provide a full-body workout, improve circulation, and promote mindfulness through coordinated breath and movement.



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Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana Pranayama): A breathing technique that balances the left and right sides of the brain, promoting calmness, mental clarity, and emotional equilibrium.



Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing): Focusing on deep, diaphragmatic breaths can activate the body's relaxation response, reducing stress and anxiety.



Meditation and Mindfulness Practices: Incorporating meditation into your yoga practice enhances mindfulness, allowing you to stay present and reduce anxiety.



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Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep): A guided meditation that induces a state of deep relaxation, helping to release stress and tension.



The following explains how above yoga asanas act as a therapy to eliminate stress and anxiety: Yoga's effectiveness in reducing stress is not merely anecdotal; it has a solid scientific foundation supported by research in various fields. Yoga practice has been shown to decrease the secretion of cortisol, the primary stress hormone. Lower cortisol levels are associated with reduced stress and anxiety. It stimulates the production of endorphins, often referred to as "feel-good" hormones. These neurotransmitters act as natural painkillers and mood elevators, contributing to stress reduction.

- The controlled breathing (pranayama) in yoga activates the vagus nerve, which is associated with the body's relaxation response. This promotes a state of calm by reducing heart rate and blood pressure.
- Mindfulness practices in yoga have been linked to structural changes in the brain, particularly in regions associated with emotional regulation and stress response, such as the amygdala and prefrontal cortex.
- Chronic stress can lead to inflammation in the body, contributing to various health issues. Yoga has been shown to reduce markers of inflammation, which can, in turn, lower stress levels.
- Yoga teaches emotional regulation and self-awareness, enabling individuals to manage their responses to stressors more effectively.
- Certain yoga practices, especially relaxation techniques, can promote the release of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep patterns. Improved sleep quality helps reduce stress and anxiety.

These scientific explanations underscore how yoga not only provides relief from stress but also contributes to overall well-being. The integration of mind, body, and spirit in yoga offers a comprehensive approach to stress reduction, making it a valuable tool for individuals seeking to manage stress and anxiety effectively.

Yoga Therapy for Depression

Depression as an ailment emanates from the gap between expectation and achievement. The bigger the gap, the higher is the intensity of depression. Medical practitioners treat the patients but most often the antidepressants and other soothing drugs do not yield the desired results. Yoga therapy helps in those cases.

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According to Ayurveda, depression is a sign that the body-mind complex has low prana or life-force energy. Prana is responsible for enthusiasm, happiness, and peace. Regular practice of yoga and meditation help to increase the prana levels, thereby removing the symptoms of depression. In fact, several scientific studies have found yoga to have healing effects on people with depression.

The Art of living⁷ suggests following yoga asanas as Yoga Therapy for having relief from Depression:

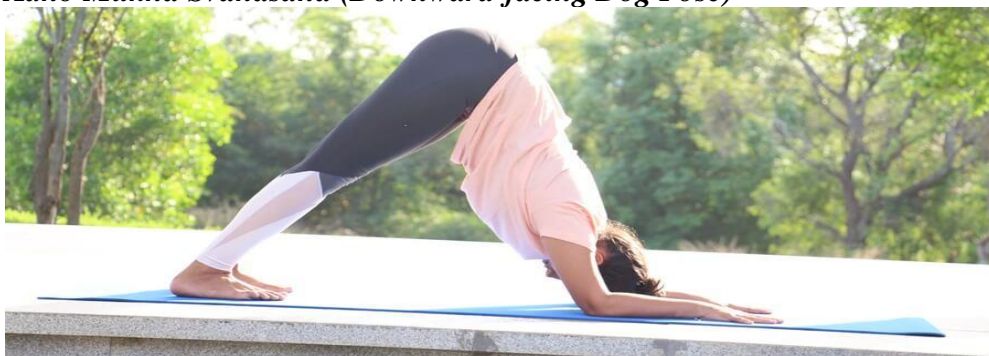
Hal Asana



This asana calms the nervous system and reduces stress and depression. This also stimulates the thyroid gland, helping to improve your mood and energy levels which are essential to overcoming depression.

This asana must not be done if you have injured your neck or suffer from high blood pressure. Ladies must avoid this asana during pregnancy and also during the first two days of their menstrual cycle

Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-facing Dog Pose)



This asana also helps in overcoming depression as it energizes and rejuvenates the body and increases blood circulation to the brain which helps boost your mood.

Some Asanas which helped overcome stress and anxiety as described in earlier paragraphs also help in overcoming depression viz.:

- *Shavasana (corpse Pose), Setu Bandhana Asana (bridge pose), Bal Asana (child pose)*
- Apart from the above asanas, Breathing exercises and Pranayama are particularly effective techniques to help overcome depression.
- Bhramari Pranayama (Humming Bee Breathing Exercise) helps calm the agitated mind and builds confidence. To do Bhramari you have to

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- Sit up in a quiet, well-ventilated corner with your eyes closed keeping gentle smile on your face
- Feel the quietness and calmness and place your index fingers on your forehead, middle fingers on your nose, ring fingers above your lips and small fingers on chin and close your ears by your thumbs
- Take a deep breath and while exhaling make a humming sound
- Breathe in again and continue the same pattern 5-6 times
- Bhramari is a wonderful exercise to calm the mind and overcome depression.
- Another exercise already described in the treatment of stress and anxiety viz Naadi Shudhhi helps overcome depression as it helps bring the mind to the present discarding unwanted thoughts of the past and future. It purified the nadis—the energy channels, thus, ensuring smooth flow of prana and helping in releasing accumulated stress and warding off depression.
- More than a dozen published studies have documented significant relief from depression in individuals who learned and practised the above asanas and breathing exercises. These studies have demonstrated a 67-73% success rate in relief from depression, regardless of the severity of the depression

Managing Physical Ailments through Yoga Therapy

Arthritis and Osteoporosis leading to Knee Pain

Arthritis or Osteoporosis attacks the knee and causes pain. If a person has chronic knee pain, yoga practice may help. The knee is the largest joint in the body. It is extremely complex and one of the keys to mobility. When arthritis/ osteoporosis becomes acute, it affects a person's mobility due to knee pain, and ultimately, the person is compelled to go for knee replacement. Yoga Therapy can help delay this acute situation. Yoga exercises help invigorate and strengthen leg muscles so that pressure on the knee is reduced and we get relief from knee pain. Yoga is a low-impact activity that puts minimal pressure on the knees. It can strengthen the muscles and promote flexibility. There are specific yoga exercises which help ease knee pain and prevent further deterioration.

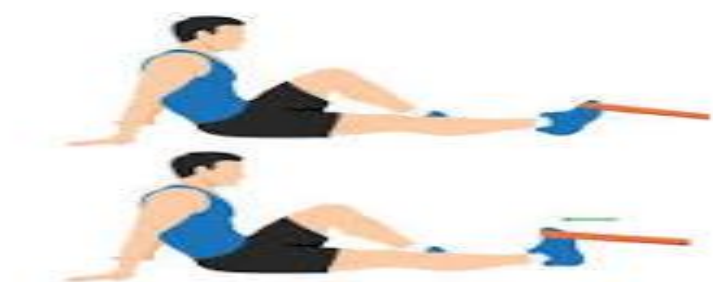
I started experiencing discomfort two years back when I lowered my lifted right leg down because I experienced excruciating knee pain. My niece suggested contacting some yoga school and I found that the yoga therapy provided by my yoga teacher not only eliminated this excruciating pain but also eased my discomfort while walking.

I give below sequentially the asanas that I have been doing to keep my knee pain away:

Stretching toes and ankles: Sit down and stretch both legs. Start extending toes up and down, making sure that even the little fingers on the toes move along with other fingers. Repeat the exercise at least ten times. Make sure that knees remain stretched during the exercise. Do the same exercise for the ankles—stretch ankles up and hold and then move down and hold. Repeat ten times



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Ankle rotation—keeping both feet stretched rotate the ankles clockwise without lifting the knees. Repeat ten times and then do it ten times anticlockwise

Ankle Rotation



Ankle close open—Stretch both legs and bring them close to each other and then without letting knees lifting open the ankles apart and then bring them close. During moving apart and closing the ankles, the knees must be firm pressing down. Repeat this ten times.

Leg Raises

Half Leg raise—Sit comfortably on the floor, and stretch one leg in front. Support the second leg with hands around the inner thighs, lift the lower portion of the leg (from knees downwards) up and then bring it down. Repeat ten times.



Leg Raise--- Lie down on the floor on your back, and stretch both legs. Slowly lift one leg up without bending, hold and then lower it down to the floor gradually. Do the same with the other leg. Repeating ten times from both the legs.



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Sideways leg raise- Lie on side and raise one leg as was done in above exercise. Repeat ten times with both the legs



Using a roller to do knee exercise: Sit on the floor with your legs stretched. Keep the roller below the knee portion, lift one leg up, and stretch one toe upwards. Hold, and then take the leg down very slowly. Repeat it 50 times, and then do it with the other leg.



Standing Asanas for knee pain

High Lunge

Ashwa Sanchalanasana (High lunge) improves balance and stability of the legs, back, arms, and core muscles and helps relieve knee pain. To practice this pose, follow the instructions- Move your left foot back into a deep lunge (stretch). As you do this, bend your right knee forward (about 90 degrees). Raise your arms to the sky and look ahead. Stay in this pose for at least 10 seconds, then switch to your left knee.



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Bridge pose for knee pain relief



This asana Strengthens the knee, quads and glutes and stretches the hip flexors.
After all these asanas we must do Shavasana to relax our all muscles and calm the mind
Shavasana



My experience with the above asanas for knee pain relief has been astounding. Although ageing and knee cartilage damage cannot be stopped, yoga certainly slows down the progress of ageing and damage. Two years after the start of my knee pain, when I got an X-ray done and examined by a doctor it prompted the doctor to exclaim how are you walking- you must immediately go for knee replacement if you want to enjoy quality life in your twilight years. But with yoga exercises, I am still able to walk without knee pain and my yoga teacher advised to postpone the knee replacement till I experience unbearable knee pain and he reassures me that with continued exercises that situation will not happen for a long time.

So, this is the miracle caused by Yoga Therapy where it strives to defy the medical claims!!!
Yoga Therapy for Epilepsy

(source: <https://www.arhantayoga.org/blog/yoga-poses-epilepsy/>)

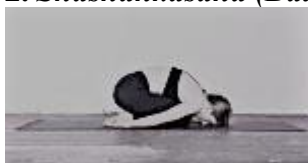
The following 8 exercises and yoga postures are beneficial to calm down the nervous system and are therefore helpful in dealing with the aftermath of a seizure. As mentioned above, with regular practice some epilepsy patients might even experience a reduction in seizures.

1. *Anulom Vilom / Alternate Nostril Breathing*



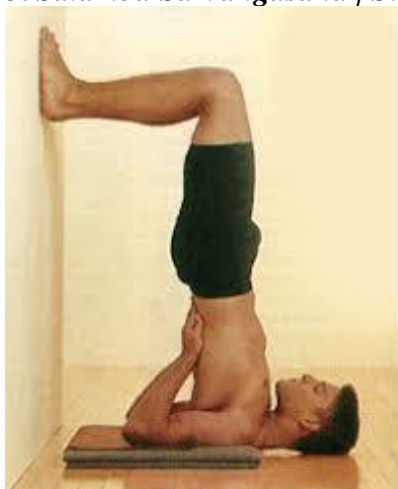
At first, we recommend practicing this breathing exercise without retention. So, breathing in 4 counts through the left nostril and exhaling immediately 8 counts through the right nostril. To complete one round, breathe in again through the right nostril for 4 counts and exhale through the left nostril for 8 counts. Once this feels comfortable, you can add an 8 count retention after the inhalation (and before the exhalation).

2. *Shashankasana (Balasana) | Child's Pose*



While resting the forehead on the mat and letting your breath become easy and comfortable, you enter the rest-and-regenerate state of your nervous system. The gentle pressure of the forehead against the ground is very calming and soothing. Make sure that your forehead is resting on the mat or a bolster and that also your buttocks are either supported on your heels or on a cushion.

3. *Salamba Sarvangasana / Supported Shoulderstand (against the wall)*



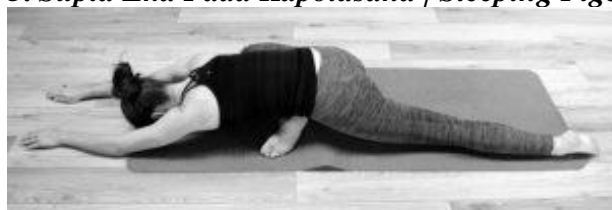
The slightly increased blood flow toward the head and the pressure in the throat region triggers a physical reflex referred to as the baroreflex. This is one of the many triggers we have in our body that cause us to enter the calm, relaxed state of the parasympathetic nervous system. Because of this effect, the Shoulderstand is actually a very relaxing pose. In order to make this pose more accessible and safer, we suggest teaching it with the feet up against the wall for students with epilepsy.

4. Passchimottanasana / Seated Forward Bend



The seated forward bend is an excellent pose to stretch the entire back body and release tension in your lower back and hips. Before entering the pose, make sure that you are sitting high up on your sitting bones. Enter the pose with a straight back and as you reach your maximum flexion, allow your upper back to round and your forehead to rest on your knees (or on support). If your hamstrings are tight, bend your knees and rest them on a folded blanket before assuming the pose described above. Once you are in the pose, try to relax completely while breathing into your lower belly and lower back.

5. Supta Eka Pada Kapotasana / Sleeping Pigeon Pose



The Sleeping Pigeon Pose lengthens and releases tension deep inside your buttocks (the glutes and piriformis) and the hip flexors (quadriceps femoris and psoas) whilst giving space to breathe into the body and check in with how you're feeling. The psoas is considered to be a storehouse for stress and anxiety and gently stretching it can help students with epilepsy release long-stored emotions and stress.

6. Seal Pose (Yin Yoga)



The Seal is an adapted version of the Extended Cobra Pose. Through using cushions under the belly, it becomes a Yin Yoga pose that can be held for 3 – 5 minutes. It is an excellent pose to massage the sacral-lumbar arch and it stimulates the whole spine and abdominal organs.

7. Garland Pose | Malasana



The Garland Pose, aka Yogic Squat, is a pose in which you have to find a balance between activation and relaxation. While you are pushing heels into the ground, pushing your elbows out, and reaching up with the top of the head, allow your Achilles heels to relax. This will enable your inner thighs and calves to lengthen. Make sure that your heels are resting, and if necessary, support them with a folded mat or block.

8. Vrksahasana / Tree Pose

The Tree Pose is an immensely grounding and calming pose, in which you can develop one-pointed focus and a clear mind. Look at a point slightly above eye level and approximately 2 meters away. Look at the point with a gentle gaze and if you are struggling to maintain your balance, direct your breath to the focal point. Hold the pose for at least 1 minute on each side.

Having explored the benefits for the physical ailments, let us now explore how yoga therapy helps behavioural aberrations:

Yoga Therapy for relieving Anger or Aggression

Fear, Anger or Aggression get triggered in the mind and lead to devastating results. Since the mind can be calmed by Yoga, Yoga therapy can help in controlling these triggers.

Tahyla Soutter⁹ suggests some Asanas to control Anger and Aggression

According to research published in *Frontiers In Psychology*, yoga can help you manage your anger and aggression and decrease the impulses that surround it.

Yoga has long been recognized for its ability to help us improve our cognitive function. Yoga research has shown that it can assist us in overcoming the fight-or-flight response and shifting from our amygdala (fight-or-flight response) to our prefrontal cortex (regulating emotions and problem-solving), allowing us to think more clearly. Regular yoga practice can train your brain to stop and calm itself, which can help you manage your anger and aggression.

When you think of exercise to manage and control anger/aggression, or an exercise you might do when you're angry in the heat of the moment, you might think of going for a run or hitting the gym to relieve pent-up frustration and take it out on your muscles. Although these are great strategies and have many benefits, yoga can also be a great way to manage anger, maybe even better than a gym session.

Swami Ramdev, a famous Indian yoga guru and businessman, swears by the practice of Pranayama for beating frustration and coping with anger. He stresses the importance of deep breathing and breath control, which in turn controls and helps to strengthen emotional regulation.

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When you get angry or stressed, your sympathetic nervous system is activated. Breathing becomes more sharp and shallow, your blood pressure and heart rate increase, and your sympathetic nervous system puts unnecessary pressure on your body. *Deep breathing, breath retention, and control utilizing a slow and steady breath ratio activate the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce anger and aggressiveness. Long, deep breaths can also help us relax by managing our stress reactions and lowering anxiety, fear, racing thoughts, a rapid heart rate, and shallow chest breathing.*

Pranayama is best suited to control anger and aggression.

Apart from Pranayama, Meditation soothes mind and controls anger and aggression.

According to recent research in the Journal - Consciousness and Cognition, one session of meditation alone may help your body's reaction to rage and anger.

Even in individuals who had never practiced meditation, just one session reduced the physical signs of rage, according to the new research. After only 20 minutes of meditation, individuals who had never practiced meditation previously showed a much calmer and more relaxed physical reaction when asked to re-experience anger.

Anger is a complicated emotion, and for many people, it's a source of embarrassment or guilt if they can't keep their tempers in check. We've all experienced anger of one sort or another, whether it's a simmering irritation that boils over, a long-held resentment finally released, or an injustice eating away at the core. Many successful and well-renowned men have discovered that meditation aids them in controlling their anger and have implemented regular practice into their lives, including Joe Rogan, Russel Brand, Timothy Ferris, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Bill Gates.

We have covered a lot of ground on Yoga therapy and shall be concluding the paper after discussing yoga therapy for ***Schizophrenia***

Yoga therapy for Schizophrenia

Ellen Anderson¹⁰ suggests following asanas which are associated with benefits for people with schizophrenia

1. Surya Namaskar/Sun Salutation (see image above)



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2. Vrikshasana/Tree



3. Marjaryasana/Cat



4. Apanasana/Knees to Chest



5. Shavasana/Corpse



Along with these asanas, Adham pranayama/Diaphragmatic breathing is also useful for patients of Schizophrenia



With this, we come to the end of the paper. Yoga has now become a very important part of our lives and its therapeutic benefits are recognized even by the medical fraternity. This is evidenced by the fact that many physiotherapy exercises have their roots in Yoga Asanas. Doctors are also advising yoga therapy to work along with their medical treatments. Maybe yoga therapy stand-alone may not be as useful as done alongside medical treatment. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be sidelined and in some cases, the yoga therapy even outsmarts the medical claims as was in my case.

Summarizing I can say that Yoga Therapy is an integrated approach working at the level of Body (Physical), Breathy (Physiological) and Mind (Psychological)- a very effective course of treatment for all ailments.

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