

# Study of Importance of Poses in Yoga & Meditation

## Abstract

Yoga can strengthen our body and provide immense mental power and stability. It can virtually awaken a new consciousness in a person and mould his entire personality. Yoga has no barriers of age, caste, religion or sex. However one must always ensure that all the yogic postures and the breathing exercises must be done correctly. By doing this, one will realize a striking and positive transformation in one's mindset and life style. Meditation, when practiced along with yoga, enhances our concentration and relaxes the mind. Yoga meditation practices enable people to lift themselves to higher levels of consciousness. One of the most effective aids to spiritual progress is to hold one's attention calmly at the point between the eyebrows. Modern neuroscience has revealed that when one's energy and attention are strongly focused in the fore brain, it is impossible to be carried away by negative emotions. By controlling and relaxing the breath, we can influence the mind to become calm. In this research paper I have focused on the poses or postures during Yoga and Meditation. If our poses are not right then result is also not the good. Actually Poses not only strengthen and tone the muscles, tissues, ligaments, joints and nerves but also maintains the smooth functioning and health of all the body's systems. If a person does regular Yoga and Meditation with right pose he could change his entire personality and live a stress free life.

**Keywords:** Poses, Yoga, Meditation, Concentration.

## Introduction

The term 'Yoga' has been derived from the Sanskrit word, 'Yuj' which means union. It can be explained as the union of the mind and the body to achieve perfect harmony at the most profound level. It helps us to reach a higher level of consciousness, thought a transformation of the psychic organs. Yoga has no specific religious connotations. Its appeal is universal and is practiced by many. The Upanishads, the Mahabharata, including the Bhagavadgita, Jainism and Buddhism accept yogic practices. Yoga is a methodical effort to attain perfection through the control of the different elements of human nature, physical and psychical. Yoga has two firm bases. They are the physical and the spiritual. The spiritual aspect is basically the control of the mind and self-development, but also with direct control of the inner energy, i.e., pranayam. Pranayam is one of the most important features of yoga. This is mainly the regulation of 'breath' when one inhales air from one part of the nose and exhales it from the other. Some Yoga guru claims that a regular practice of pranayam can prevent and cure fatal disease like cancer, heart ailments, diabetes, blood pressure, liver disorders and series gynecological problems. Meditation can be practiced anywhere. While meditating, one must sit straight or in a yogic posture. One should always keep his eyes closed, so that along with the body and mind, the eyes also get some rest. All great philosophers like, Buddha, Mahavir, Ramakrishna Paramhansa emphasized on the practice of meditation for the purification of the mind and the soul.

The yoga realizes that our body has a dignity of its own, as much as the mind. Asana or posture, is a physical help from concentration. We must settle ourselves down in a convenient posture before we begin to meditate. The postures relax the body and mind allowing both to recover from fatigue and weakness, a product of the stresses of daily life. It also helps to re-energize your energy levels and helps in your everyday levels of enthusiasm.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To study the different types of Yoga,
2. To study the power of meditation in our stress free life.
3. How these asanas and meditations could be done with right posture.

**Dheeraj Kumar**

Head,  
Deptt. of Physical Education,  
KMGGPG College,  
Badalpur, G.B.Nagar

**Methodology**

In this research paper I have used both primary and secondary data. For primary data I have taken the effects of Yogasans and meditation of group of class and secondary data is taken from internet, journals, research papers and various books relating yoga and meditation.

**Review of Literature**

There are various researches running on yoga. A team of scientists at the University of California, Los Angeles said that meditation may slow the worsening of AIDS in just a few weeks, perhaps by affecting the immune system. They tested a stress-lowering programme called mindfulness meditation, defined as practicing an open and receptive awareness of the present moment, avoiding thinking of the past or worrying about the future. P.S. Maju Lakshmi & P. Mahendran (2002) revealed the effectiveness of the Yoga basic methods of breathing, asanas and an effortless living technique, has been seen on the subjective well-being of the general population. Gyandeeep Mishra (2007) concluded in his study that it has been acknowledged that religious and complementary therapies are commonly used in community settings in India. The human magnet through its vital energy can be affected and get affected by others. Ranjana Sharma & G.P. Prakash (2002) examined the effect of Yoga on the moods and blood pressures of the Grassland Scientists of Jhansi. The moods and blood pressure were studied in three consecutive sessions, i.e. with medicine, without medicine and with Yoga. M.R. Panwar, Vimla Asnani & W. Selvamurthy (2002) in their study examines the practice of yogic exercises prior to altitude induction as well as during stay at high altitude (HA) will be useful in improving the health and operational efficiency of troops posted at HA..

**Different Type of Poses in Asans****Bridge – Bandha Sarvangasana**

*The Bridge yoga pose* is a great front hip joints opener, it also strengthens your spine, opens the chest, and improves your spinal flexibility in addition to stimulating your thyroid. This pose brings many benefits to your body, such as the relief from stress, anxiety, insomnia and it can help with depression.

**Downward Dog – Adho Mukha Svanasana**

*The Downward Dog yoga pose* lengthens and decompresses the spine, stretches the hamstrings, strengthens your arms, flushes your brain with fresh oxygen and calms your mind.

**Child Pose – Balasana**

*The Child Pose* is a resting pose useful to relieve neck, back and hip strain. While in the posture you should have slow regulated breath; extended arms; resting hips and your forehead should be touching the mat. You can always return to this pose as it is one of the most restorative and calming pose

**Easy Pose – Sukhasana**

*The Easy Pose* may seem as an easy pose but it has many benefits for the body. For example, it is a hip opener, it is calming, and it eases the menstrual pain for women in addition to lowering the

level of anxiety. (while doing the posture make sure your spine is straightened)

**Warrior 1 – Virabhadrasana I**

*The Warrior I* is a great pose for those of you who have had a hectic day at work and just need to relax your body and mind. While in this pose you are strengthening your legs, you are opening your chest and shoulders, movements which we usually don't do throughout our day, but they are necessary for a good posture and peaceful mind. The effects out of this posture are tremendous: it strengthens the muscles of your knees and feet, it stretches your shoulders and spine, and it improves your focus.

**Warrior 2 – Virabhadrasana II**

*The Warrior II yoga pose* also strengthens your legs and arms, opens your chest and shoulders, and it contracts your abdominal organs. Your breath needs to be regulated, your focus should be on the expansion of your arms which will help you to improve your patience. Keep your self elevated rather than collapsing with your hips – don't allow gravitation to pull you down. Stay strong.

**Triangle – Trikonasana**

*The Triangle* is one of those postures that brings to your body many benefits. For example, it improves the flexibility of your spine; it helps with the alignment of your shoulders; it relieves back pain and stiffness in the neck area, but don't forget you need to practice each posture on the left and right side – balancing your postures is very important. With the practice of this posture you will notice many improvements, but especially for your posture.

**Four Limbed Staff – Chaturanga**

*The Four Limbed Staff yoga pose* strengthens your arms, wrists and abdomen. It is also a good preparation pose for more challenging arm balancing poses

**Chair – Utkatasana**

*The Chair yoga position* tones your leg muscles, strengthens your hip flexors, ankles, calves and back. It stretches the chest and shoulders. It reduces symptoms of flat feet and it stimulates your heart, diaphragm, and abdominal organs.

**Tree – Vrksasana**

*The Tree yoga pose* may seem as another easy posture but it is not a resting asana. Your back should be aligned properly (extended), your hips should be at one level, and since your stability depends on the distribution of your weight on your standing leg ensure you do while maintaining and improving your balance.

**Boat – Naukasana**

*The Boat yoga* requires for one to be stable (as a boat) which means, straight back, chin looking forward, while knees and arms are locked. This is not an easy posture. Through it you build strong abdominal and core straight.

**Crow – Bakasana**

*The Crow yoga pose* strengthens the wrists, forearms and abdomen while also stretching the hamstring. Balance is crucial for this pose.

## Remarking An Analisation

### Arm Balance – Pincha Mayurasana

The Arm Balancing yoga poses are an advanced poses. This particular one helps you with the blood flow throughout your body; it calms your mind and it strengthens your arms. If you yet cannot do it as shown, you can always use the wall for support and the benefits are the same.

### Corpse – Savasana

The Corpse yoga pose is one of the most important postures. It is meant to rejuvenate your mind and body after practice while also allowing you to shift your attention to your inner-self. The benefits: lowering your blood pressure, calming you and giving your body the opportunity to absorb all of the benefits you worked out for.

### King Dancer – Natarajasana

The King Dancer yoga pose strengthens your legs, improves balance and core strength while also stretches your shoulders and improves your focus. It is one of the most graceful asana.

### Sitting Posture in Meditation and Pranayam

With all suitable sitting positions for Meditation and Pranayama, it is necessary to make sure that:

1. the upper body is straight and erect
2. head, neck and back are in alignment
3. shoulder and abdominal muscles are relaxed
4. the hands rest on the knees
5. the eyes are closed
6. the body remains motionless during the practice

### Sukhasana - Comfortable Pose

This sitting posture is recommended for those who have difficulty sitting for a long period of time in Siddhasana, Vajrasana or Padmasana.

#### Practice

Sit with the legs straight. Bend both legs and place the right foot under the left thigh and the left foot under, or in front of, the right calf on the floor. If it is more comfortable cross the legs in the opposite way. If it is difficult to keep the body upright then sit on a cushion at an appropriate height to make the posture comfortable.

If it is not possible to sit comfortably and painlessly in Sukhasana, practice the breathing and meditation exercises sitting on a chair. The most important point for everyone is that the upper body is straight, the body is relaxed and can remain motionless during the whole exercise.

### Siddhasana - Pose of the Adept

Siddhasana quietens the mind, has a balancing effect on the Nadis (nerves) and activates the spiritual energy of the Chakras. Therefore, this sitting posture is well suited to the practice of Pranayama and Meditation.

#### Practice

Sit with the legs straight. Bend the right leg and place the foot very close to the body on the floor. Now bend the left leg and place the left foot on top of the right calf. The sole of the foot touches the right thigh. Pull the toes of the right foot up between the thigh and the calf of the left leg and the toes of the left foot down between the thigh and the calf of the right

leg. If it is difficult to keep the body upright or the knees do not rest on the floor, then sit on a cushion, at the appropriate height.

*It is possible to practice this position bending the left leg first and bringing the right foot along the left calf.*

### Vajrasana - Sitting on the Heels

Vajrasana calms and harmonises body and mind. This position also stimulates digestion therefore it is recommended to sit in Vajrasana for about 5-10 minutes after a meal.

#### Practice

Come up onto the knees (knee stand). The legs are together. The big toes touch each other, the heels point slightly outwards. Tilt the upper body forward and then sit back between the heels. The trunk is upright. Place the hands on the thighs.

### Ardha Padmasana - Half Lotus

This posture is recommended for those unable to sit comfortably in Padmasana.

#### Practice

Sit with the legs straight. Bend the right leg and place the foot very close to the body on the floor. Now bend the left leg and bring the foot very close to the body on top of the right thigh. The upper body is straight. Both knees should rest on the floor. If unable to keep the body upright, or bring the knees to the floor, sit on a cushion of an appropriate height.

*This posture may also be practiced by bending the left leg first and bringing the right foot up on top of the left thigh.*

### Padmasana - Lotus

Padmasana, together with Shirshasana (Headstand), is referred to as the supreme or "royal" Asana. The Lotus posture activates and balances the Chakras and quietens the thoughts. It is an ideal sitting posture for Pranayama and Meditation.

#### Practice

Sit with legs straight on the floor. Bend the right leg and place the foot very close to the body on top of the left thigh. Now bend the left leg and bring the foot very close to the body on top of the right thigh. The upper body should be completely straight and knees should touch the floor. To keep the trunk upright more easily and help the knees to rest on the floor, sit on a cushion of an appropriate height.

*This position can also be practiced by bending the left leg first and then the right leg.*

### Position of The Hands

Particular Mudras are used with the breathing and concentration exercises and also for meditation. A Mudra is a position or gesture that is practised for a specific purpose or expression.

### Chin Mudra

Position of the Fingers in Meditation

#### Practice

In the meditation posture, place the hands on the knees with palms facing up. Thumb and index finger touch each other and the other three fingers remain straight but relaxed.

Chin Mudra represents the union of the cosmic with the individual consciousness. The index finger represents individual consciousness and the thumb, cosmic consciousness. The three remaining fingers symbolise the three Gunas, the three

E: ISSN NO.: 2455-0817

fundamental qualities of the world. It is the goal of the Yogi to move beyond the three Gunas and to unite with the cosmic Self.

### Pranayama Mudra

Position of the Hands in the Breath Exercises

#### Practice

Place the index finger and middle finger of the right hand at the eyebrow centre in the middle of the forehead. The thumb is used to close the right nostril and the ring finger to close the left nostril.

If the right arm becomes tired it is also possible to practice with the left arm.

#### About the Breath

In order to live and keep the body healthy, we require not only food and water, but also air to breathe. The air we breathe is even more important than eating and drinking. Without food we can survive several weeks. Without water we can survive for a few days. However, without breathing we can survive for just a few minutes. Our life begins and ends with a breath.

Within one breath, three phases can be distinguished

1. Inhalation
2. Exhalation
3. Pause in breathing

One phase flows into the other. The exhalation should last approximately twice as long as the inhalation. The pause in breathing arises naturally at the end of the exhalation phase and lasts until the impulse to inhale occurs of its own accord. The inhalation forms the active part of the breath. With it comes contraction of the respiratory muscles. The exhalation is the passive part of the breath, the phase of relaxation.

Quiet, regular and deep breathing is decisive for our health. It has a harmonising and calming effect upon body and mind. On the other hand, breathing that is too rapid and shallow has a negative influence upon us, as it can intensify nervousness, stress, tension and pain. A frequent mistake in breathing is drawing the abdomen in as the chest expands, rather than relaxing the abdomen forwards. Drawing in the abdomen considerably impairs deep breathing. Often fashion and restrictive clothing inhibits this natural movement. Therefore, all exercises in Yoga, including the breath exercises, should be practiced slowly and without unnecessary tension - without ambition or competition. The breath should be silent and through the nose (Because the air is filtered, moistened and warmed within the nose.). Over a period of time and with practice, one tries to gradually slow and lengthen the breath. Only through correct breathing can the full effects of the Yoga exercises totally unfold.

#### Conclusion

There are a large number of asanas in yoga. All of them require utmost dedication and discipline on the part of the practitioner. The advice of a yoga

## Remarking An Analisation

teacher or a guru should always be taken to practice the different asanas. In today's busy life many people are suffering with the stress and anxiety of day to day living and are finding themselves unable to cope with life's little emergencies. Prescription drugs are on the rise due to the increasing need for people to deal with their stress and anxiety. Yoga poses also boost the metabolism, lymphatic, circulation and hormonal secretions. It also helps bring about a chemical balance within the body which is crucial for everyday living. Every asana like Padmasana, Trilokasana, Shalabhasana, Bhujangasana, Dhanurasana, Halasana, Sarvangasana, Chakrasana, Vajrasana, Shavasana etc. Many people have a misconception about the word "yoga" and think of some sort of stretching and breathing, but yoga is much more complex than this. Yoga is actually "characterized by body alignment." In other words it consists of many different "poses" that stretch and relax the entire body. Yoga is not just about someone sitting on the floor twisting their body. So for best result every person should focused on right posture and do asanas. When practiced along with correct posture that will give the full effect to our body. Some people do the Yoga but they told that there is no effect on their body, this is only because they did not follow the right posture. Without right posture Asanas are useless. So we should always follow the right posture for every asana.

#### References

1. Chopra D. In: *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga*. Hoboken NJ, editor. United States: John Wiley and Sons; 2014.
2. Melton GJ. "Yoga" in *New Age Encyclopedia*. Detroit: Gale Research Inc; 2015. pp. 500–9.
3. Iyengar BKS. *Light on Yoga*. 2nd ed. New York: Schocken Books; 2005.
4. Raghuraj P, Ramakrishnan AG, Nagendra HR, Shirley T. Effect of two selected yogic breathing techniques on heart rate variability. *Indian J Physiol Pharmacol*. 1998;42:467–2.
5. Raj VA. *The Hindu Connection: Roots of New Age*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; 2014. pp. 62–86.
6. Scott B. Exercise or Religious Practice? *The Watchman Expositor*. 2001;18:5–13.
7. Vivekananda S. *Raja Yoga (34<sup>th</sup> Impression)* Advaita Asrama. 2007
8. Gokal R, Shillito L. Positive impact of yoga and pranayam on obesity, hypertension, blood sugar, and cholesterol: A pilot assessment. *J Altern Complement Med*. 2007;13:1056–7.
9. Swami Vivekanand, *The complete book of Yoga*, Teenage publisher, 2017
10. *India Today*
11. *Hindustan Times*
12. *Times of India*