

Contribution of Yoga on Sports

Paper Submission: 15/10/2020, Date of Acceptance: 26/10/2020, Date of Publication: 27/10/2020



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Abstract

Yoga is an ancient system of training the body, mind, and soul. Nowadays yoga is being applied in sports as it is considered to be more effective for the sportsperson to perform better. This is the new trend but many are trying to include in practice. Yoga has become very popular because of its possible applications for healthy being, prevention of sports injuries, enhancing sports performance, body relaxation and for overall development of physical fitness. It is the key prerequisite factor for various performances in sports.

Modern techniques of sports are focus more on muscles and body development but less emphasis on concentration and confidence of the individual which can be achieved by the implication of yoga. Sportsperson who are engaged in heavy muscular activities need to know the techniques of relaxation which are defined in yoga. In order to gain significant stamina in sports performance, yoga is being included in daily practice of sports like stretching and relaxation. The contribution of yoga in sports also promotes the importance of various aspects of yoga asanas, thereby utilizing in the best way. The yoga effects both the sports as well as the individual to manifest in itself

Keywords: Yoga, Sports, Injury, Performance, Asanas.

Introduction

Yoga is an ancient system of training the body, mind, and soul. In the Indian philosophy, the importance of yoga is recognised and highly valued for the attainment of spirituality throughout the ages. Sri Aurobindo describes yoga as a systematic method for the unfoldment of our inner potential divinity, by moving towards self-perfection and self-searching. Yoga techniques were summarised for the first time by Patanjali so as to bring a practical form of yoga to the people. The word Yoga etymologically means union or integration. In the application of yoga to sports it can be considered as the unification of physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual aspects of human being for the best performance.

In order to help the development of such an integration various technique are employed and these techniques or practices are enjoined in Yogic literature. It is experienced and researched that yoga and sports are inseparable and indispensable aspects of sportsperson's life. The yoga asanas can help in overcoming the physical challenges posed by modern life with less physical work culture, adaptations of yoga techniques become inevitable.

Exercise deal with the vital organs of the body on which health depends. The precursor of physical fitness has in the efficient working of the vital organs of the body and yoga aims at it. The various techniques of asanas give different movements to the spine, controls respiration, relaxation method and become more attentive as a whole. The regular practice results in the good health taking care the vital organs of the body.

Yoga is broadly classified into

1. Yogasanas
2. Pranayama
3. Mudras & Bandhas
4. Kriya
5. Meditation

Yogasanas

Yogasanas is the stretching technique in a specific pattern of posture that helps in stabilizing the body and the mind. The main aim of yogasanas is aim of asanas to establish proper rhythm in the neuromuscular impulses by improving the general muscle tone. Yogasanas practices help in regulating the breathing mechanism and increases vital capacity.

Pranayama

Pranayama, focuses on the attention of breath and helps in the better uses of lungs, which benefits the entire body. The practice helps in clearing the nasal passages and even calms the central nervous system, which has both physical and mental benefits. The main purpose of Pranayama is to gain control over the autonomic nervous system through which it impacts the mental function.

Mudras & Bandhas

Mudras & Bandhas is a practice where one tries to control certain semi-voluntary muscles consciously in the body. The muscles are the combination of control and autonomic nerve supply. The asana helps to tone up the organs, relieve the congestion and stimulates for healthy function.

Kriyas

Kriyas is the process of cleansing or purification. It is classified into six processes known as sat kriyas which purify the system and they are Kapalabhati, Neti, Dhouti, Nauli, Trataka and Basti. They not only purify internal organs but also increase reflex mechanisms.

Meditation

Meditation is the process of achieving mastery over withdrawal of senses which thereby results in absolute control on mental faculties. The withdrawal is attained once attention becomes completely still on one object or thought, which results in a high level of bodily as well as internal awareness. Unlike the above four practices, meditation is more psycho-physiological in nature, which emphasize both on direct control of thoughts and the mind, and on physical or physiological sensations and their control.

Contribution of yoga to sports

The yoga contributes to the promotion of sports and the following points may be studied for its uses in sports:

1. Yoga for the prevention of sports injuries
2. Yoga for the cure of sports injuries
3. Yoga for the promotion of sports.
4. Yoga for the maintenance of physical fitness during the Participation period as well as in off season.

Yoga for the prevention of sports injuries

Every sport involves vigorous movement and all vigorous activities shorten muscles and make them more susceptible to pulls and strains. It is necessary to remember that the more a person involves himself in intensive and vigorous exercise, the more he needs to stretch. Herbert A. de Vries has shown the utility of stretching procedures in the prevention of athletic injuries. When an athlete exercises vigorously their muscles are injured slightly and with healing the affected muscles become shorter and tighter. Such a muscle is more frequently injured. In sports like running, the muscles are commonly injured by pulls and strain particularly the hamstrings and the calf muscles.

It is observed through practice that stretching is the most injury preventive in sports. Therefore, it is always required that one get "warming up" before doing heavy exercises as it avoids injury and also improves the performance in sports. Various warming

procedures are followed and callisthenics is one of the popular one. The key to a good warming up is to increase the pace of the work output so gradually that the muscles can adjust to the increased pace and remain injury free. The steady stretching in Yogasana prepares such a background for the body to be engaged in stretching thereby enhancing flexibility or elasticity of the body.

The phenomenon of quicker physiological and psychological recovery after rigorous sports activity is equally important in the prevention of injury. Among the numerous recovery techniques such as active, passive and yogic relaxation, investigated on the cardiovascular recovery and subsequent performance. Mall, (1983) has reported that shavasana or yogic relaxation technique practice results to a stronger muscle contraction which activates the muscle for subsequent explosive work.

Yoga for the cure of Sports injuries

The yogic stretching exercise not only prevent sports injuries but also cure certain sports injuries in the form of muscle spasms. According to Herbert A. De Vries, various stretching exercises of hatha yoga can be applied for relieving pain, improving flexibility and recovering from injuries¹. The tightness of muscles is relaxed by steady stretching. Asanas is a great need for treating the injured sportsman so that they can resume once again in the sports at the earliest. Therefore, there is a need to think and pay attention to this issue so that they recover quickly from injuries and participate in the games and sports once again.

Yoga for the promotion of Sports

Application of yogic Exercises has considerable scope in the promotion of sports. Promotion of sports depends on

1. Basic fitness factor: The promotion of basic fitness factors through Yoga can be achieved by working together the several factors of physical fitness that is speed, strength, stamina, flexibility, stability and neuromuscular co-ordination
2. Advancement of Specific Sports Skills: Development of sports skills depend on the proper neuromuscular coordination. This co-ordination seems to be better influenced through the yogic exercise. Stretching improves the performance of all sports. It has now become almost customary as the practice the yoga can enhance the sports activities as for an athlete can run faster with inclusion of yoga in his routine practice of running.
3. Psychological Factors Psychological factors: Emotional factor is very important in the performance of sport. If rightly used emotions can contribute to the improvement of the performance in sports. Emotion is governed by working of autonomic nervous system. Control over the autonomic nervous system brings the emotional disturbances down. Yogic exercise as a group plays a significant role in training of the autonomic nervous system. Stretching exercise like Asanas, relaxation techniques and breathing exercise in the form of Pranayama are excellent in conditioning the autonomic nervous system.

Maintenance of Physical Fitness during Participation period and in off season

Physical fitness is a must for any good performance in sports. Different sports require different types of fitness emphasizing on a particular fitness factor. However, general level of physical fitness is necessary for every sportsman. The law of use and disuse that if you want to be fit you must exercise. The routine of exercise differs from individual to individual according to purpose. Sportsman also selects different routines of exercise during the season of participation.

But basis levels of physical fitness must be maintained even during off season. This can be attained excellently by indulging in yogic routine. Yogic exercise deal with the vital organs of the body on which health depends. The precursor of physical fitness has in the efficient working of the vital organs of the body and yoga aims at it. The various selected asanas giving different movements to the spine, controlled respiration, relaxation technique and concentration practice as a whole form an excellent routine to take care of the health of vital organs of the body.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the paper is to explore the various aspects of yoga and its benefits in the sports in terms of enhancing the sports performance by preventing body to get injured due to heavy exercise.

The paper is developed using secondary source to understand the contribution of yoga in sports and its effectiveness.

Conclusion

From the secondary research and findings many studies show that yoga in sports is important as it helps in different ways and different levels in a sportsperson's life. The inclusion of yoga in daily sports practice has improved the performance of sporting efficiently and effectively thereby helping in increasing concentration and focus with a calm and controlled mind. It also helps a sportsperson to control anxiety and controlling stress which otherwise may affect in the sports performance. The main aim of yoga in sports is to bring good health, physical fitness and emotional stability which bring yoga and physical education on a common platform for the benefit of the human individual. Physical fitness is the capacity of

an individual to perform a given task at a particular time.

Yoga's benefits for sports and sports medicine include: Improved Fitness, Reduced Injuries, Improved Psychology, and Improved Health. They are apparently without side-effects. Its benefits for sports medicine are promising, but much further research is needed to establish that sports physiologists can accept them without question in their own context so that the sports person gains in the maximum level to become professional and excels in the games they played.

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End Notes

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