

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DURGAPUR
STUDENT ACTIVITY CENTRE

Introduction: The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', meaning 'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. As per Yogic scriptures the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, Man & Nature.

Yoga is also commonly understood as a therapy or exercise system for health and fitness. While physical and mental health is natural consequences of yoga, the goal of yoga is more far-reaching. "Yoga is about harmonizing oneself with the universe. It is the technology of aligning individual geometry with the cosmic, to achieve the highest level of perception and harmony."

Yoga for health:

Yoga is a practice that connects the body, breath, and mind. It uses physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation to improve overall health. Yoga was developed as a spiritual practice thousands of years ago. Today, most Westerners do yoga for exercise or to reduce stress.

Benefits of Yoga:

Yoga can improve your overall fitness level and improve your posture and flexibility. It may also:

- Lower your blood pressure and heart rate
- Help you relax
- Improve your self-confidence
- Reduce stress
- Improve your coordination
- Improve your concentration
- Help you sleep better
- Aid with digestion
- Reduce Anxiety

Who should use caution:

Yoga is generally safe for most people. But you may need to avoid some yoga poses or modify poses if you:

Are pregnant

Have high blood pressure

Have glaucoma

Have sciatica

What to Expect:

Most yoga Sessions last from 45 to 90 minutes. All styles of yoga include three basic components:

- **Breathing.** Focusing on your breath is an important part of yoga. Your teacher may offer instruction on breathing exercising during the class.
- **Poses.** Yoga poses, or postures, are a series of movements that help boost strength, flexibility, and balance. They range in difficulty from lying flat on the floor to difficult balancing poses.
- **Meditation.** Yoga classes usually end with a short period of meditation. This quiets the mind and helps you relax.

How to Prevent Injury:

While yoga is generally safe, you can still get hurt if you do a pose incorrectly or push yourself too far. Here are some tips to stay safe when doing yoga.

If you have a health condition, talk with your health care provider before starting yoga. Ask if there are any poses you should avoid.

Start slowly and learn the basics before pushing yourself too far.

Choose a class that is appropriate for your level. If you are not sure, ask the teacher.

DO NOT push yourself beyond your comfort level. If you cannot do a pose, ask your teacher to help you modify it.

Ask questions if you are not sure how to do a pose.

Bring along a water bottle and drink plenty of water. This is mostly important in hot yoga.

Wear clothing that allows you to move freely.

Listen to your body. If you feel pain or fatigue, stop and rest

LOOSENING PRACTICES

- Neck Bending, Neck Half Rotation
- Shoulder Stretch, Shoulder Rotation
- Wrist & Finger Stretch
- Trunk Twist, Trunk Bending & Rotation
- Thigh & Hamstring Muscle Stretch
- Leg Stretch,
- Ankle Stretch & Rotation
- Butterfly

Common Yoga Protocol (AYUSH)

1. TADASANA (Palm Tree Posture)

Benefits: This asana brings stability in the body, helps to clear up congestion of the spinal nerves and corrects faulty posture.

Caution: Avoid lifting the heels in case of arthritis, varicose veins and vertigo.

2. VRKSASANA (The Tree Posture)

Benefits: Helps to improve neuro-muscular coordination, balance, endurance, alertness and concentration.

Caution: Please avoid this practice in case of arthritis, vertigo.

3. PADA-HASTASANA (The Hands to Feet Posture)

Benefits: Makes the spine flexible, improves digestion, and helps in overcoming menstrual problems.

Caution: Please avoid this practice in case of cardiac disorders, vertebral and disc disorders, abdominal inflammation, hernia and ulcers, glaucoma, myopia, vertigo.

4. ARDHA CAKRASANA (The Half Wheel Posture)

Benefits: Ardha Cakrāsana makes the spine flexible and strengthens the spinal nerves and muscles. Helps in management of cervical spondylosis.

Caution: Avoid this posture in case of vertigo or a tendency to giddiness. Hypertensive patients should bend with care.

5. TRIKONASANA (The Triangle Posture)

Benefits: Makes the spine flexible, strengthens calf, thigh and waist muscles and improves lungs capacity.

Caution: Avoid this posture in case of slipped disc, sciatica, and after undergoing abdominal surgery. Do not try beyond limits and over do the lateral stretch. If one cannot touch the feet, one can reach for the knees instead.

6. BHADRASANA (The Firm/Auspicious Posture)

Benefits: Helps to keep the body firm and stabilizes the mind. Helps during pregnancy and relieves abdominal pain often experienced during menstruation.

Caution: Avoid this practice in case of severe arthritis and sciatica.

7. VAJRASANA (Thunderbolt Posture)

Benefits: This āsana is good for digestion, strengthens thigh muscles and calf muscles.

Caution: Persons suffering from piles should not practise this āsana. Those who are suffering from knee pain and ankle injury should avoid this practice.

8. ARDHA UṢṬRASANA (The Half Camel Posture)

Benefits: It helps to strengthen back and neck muscles. Relieves constipation and back pain. Increases blood circulation to the head and cardiac region.

Caution: In case of hernia and abdominal injuries, arthritis and vertigo please avoid doing this āsana.

9. SASAKASANA (The Hare Posture)

Benefits: Helps to reduce stress and anxiety. Tones up reproductive organs, relieves constipation, improves digestion and helps to relieve back pain.

Caution: Please avoid this posture in case of acute backache. Patients with osteoarthritis of the knees should avoid Vajrāsana.

10. VAKRASANA (The Spinal Twist Posture)

Benefits: Helps to increase flexibility of the spine. Stimulates pancreas functions and helps in the management of diabetes.

Caution: Please avoid this posture in case of acute back pain, spinal disorders, after abdominal surgery and during menstruation.

11. MAKARASANA (The Crocodile Posture)

Benefits: Promotes relaxation of the whole body. Helps in recovery of back problems. Indicated to counter stress and anxiety.

Caution: Avoid this practice in case of pregnancy and frozen shoulders.

12. BHUJAAGĀSANA (The Cobra Posture)

Benefits: This āsana relieves stress, reduces abdominal fat and relieves constipation. Helps to relieve backache and bronchial problems.

Caution: Those who have undergone abdominal surgery should avoid this āsana for 2-3 months. Those who suffer from hernia, ulcers should not practice this āsana.

13. SALABHASANA (The Locust Posture)

Benefits: Relieves sciatica and lower backache. Helps to reduce fat in the thighs and buttocks, good in weight management. Helps to improve lung capacity.

Caution: Please proceed cautiously in case of severe lower back pain. People with high blood pressure, peptic ulcer and hernia should also avoid this posture.

14. UTTANA PADASANA (Raised feet posture)

Benefits: It balances the navel centre (Nābhi, Maṇipuracakra). It is helpful in relieving abdominal pain, flatulence, indigestion and diarrhea. It strengthens the abdominal and pelvic floor muscles. Effective in overcoming depression and anxiety.

Caution: People with hypertension and back pain shall practice it with one leg alternatively without holding the breath.

15. ARDHA HALASANA (Half plough posture)

Benefits: This āsana relieves constipation, beneficial for Hypertensive patients but needs to be practiced under supervision.

Caution: Those who have lumbosacral (lower back) pain should not perform with both legs together. Avoid this practice in case of abdominal injuries, hernia etc.

16. PAVANA MUKTASANA (The Wind Releasing Posture)

Benefits: Removes constipation; gives relief from flatulence, decreases the bloating sensation in the abdomen and aids digestion. Generates deep internal pressure, improves stretching of the highly complicated network of muscles, ligaments and tendons in the pelvis and waist region. It tones up the back muscles and spinal nerves.

Caution: Please avoid this practice in case of abdominal injuries, hernia, sciatica, severe back pain and during pregnancy.

17. SAVASANA (The Corpse/ Dead Body Posture)

Benefits: Helps to relieve all kinds of tensions and gives rest to both body and mind. Relaxes the whole psycho-physiological system. The mind, which is constantly attracted to the outer world, takes a Uturn and moves inwards, thus gradually getting absorbed; as the mind turns quiet and absorbed, the practitioner remains undisturbed by the external environment. It is found very beneficial in the management of stress and its consequences.

18. KAPALABHATI

Benefits: Kapālabhāti purifies the frontal air sinuses; helps to overcome cough disorders. It is useful in treating cold, rhinitis, sinusitis, asthma and bronchial infections. It rejuvenates the whole body, and keeps the face glowing and vibrant. It strengthens the nervous system and tones up the digestive organs.

Caution: Please avoid this practice in case of cardiac conditions, giddiness, high blood pressure, vertigo, chronic bleeding in the nose, epilepsy, migraine, stroke, hernia, gastric ulcer, pregnancy and during menstrual cycle.

19. NADISODHANA or ANULOMA VILOMA PRĀNĀYĀMA (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

Benefits: Induces tranquillity and helps to improve concentration. Increases vitality and lowers the level of stress and anxiety. It alleviates cough disorders.

20. SITALI PRĀNĀYAMA

Benefits: It has cooling effect on body and mind. It is beneficial for persons suffering from high blood pressure. It satisfies thirst and appeases hunger. It relieves indigestion and disorders caused by phlegm (cough) and bile (pitta). It destroys the disorders of gulma (chronic dyspepsia) and spleen or other related diseases (H.P 2/58). It is beneficial for skin and eyes.

Caution: Those who are suffering from severe cold, cough or tonsillitis should not do this Pranayama.

21. BHRAMARI PRĀNĀYAMA (BHRĀMARĪ RECAKA)

Benefits: The practice of Bhrāmarī relives stress and helps in alleviating anxiety, anger and hyperactivity. The resonance effect of humming sound creates a soothing effect on the nervous system

and mind. It is a great tranquiliser, found good in the management of stress related disorders. It is a useful preparatory prānāyāma for concentration and meditation

Caution: Please avoid this practice in case of nose and ear infections.

22. DHYANA

Benefits: Meditation is the most important component of Yoga practice. It helps the practitioner to eliminate negative emotions like fear, anger, depression, anxiety and to develop positive emotions. Keeps the mind calm and quiet. Increases concentration, memory, clarity of thought and willpower. Rejuvenates the whole body and mind giving them proper rest. Meditation leads to self-realisation.

References:

www.yoga.ayush.gov.in

nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/yoga.