

Yoga as science research paper

[Health & Medicine](#), [Body](#)



The word 'yoga' has evolved from the Sanskrit word 'yuj' it means 'unity' of one's consciousness with the collective consciousness. Yoga brings about this through physical exercises, breathing exercises and meditation these help in balancing the body, mind and emotions. Sage Patanjali's lived in the city of Benaras in India in 400 BC. (Satchidananda , 1990) His teachings are known as Patanjali Yogsutra and the concept for the Yogic practice is known as Ashtanga yoga. Ashtanga yoga is the group of practice in eight steps. It is Yam, Niyam, Asan, Pranayam, Pratyahar , Dharna, Dhyan and Samadhi. It involves discipline of body and mind and these practices lead to internal and external cleansing of the system and finally through this balancing the seeker achieve self-realization through union of self with the creator. (Vishnudevananda 2008),

In ancient times the sages observed the animals, how they stretched and exercised their bodies, they studied the benefits of these postures and devised the yogic postures that had positive effects on internal and external organs of the body. The postures have even named after the animals in which these were observed. Yoga has six main branches hath yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, gyan yoga, karma yoga and tantra yoga. (Hariharānanda 1983) . Most popular is the hath yoga that involves the physical postures, these postures help in exercising joints, activating glands through pressure and keeping internal organs healthy. The postures also help in activating the glands through pressure and maintain a healthy growth. Yoga also prescribes many kriyas to cleanse the body like basti, neti, nauli, basti and kapalbhati. This cleansing of the body is aimed at perfect health, which in

turn helps one in attaining the yoga or union with the creator through meditation.

As yoga became popular in the West, there have been studies that proved the effectiveness of yoga in curing diseases and bring about balance and holistic approach to health. Yoga is a science as it is about the knowledge of self. Definition of science is: The intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment. In many ways yoga is a science as it seeks the answers about self through a structured path of discipline. Yoga is a disciplined system that has been created for self-awareness and healthy living; it fulfills the criterion of being termed as a Science as it has evolved through experimentation and observation through ages. Yoga experts like Swami Rama had demonstrated in laboratory conditions that internal states like heart beat could be controlled voluntarily through the practice of yoga (Rama 2002). He could increase his heart beat to over 300 beats per minute while sitting still causing atrial flutter and these experiments and Swami Rama's EKG recorded during the experiment have been published in the book-Beyond Biofeedback, by Elmer and Alyce Green. These experiments conducted in controlled environment are enough to convince that yoga is indeed a Science that needs to be studied and understood. It is a gift from the ancient Indian civilization to the world that is yet in the process of being deciphered. In today's world when drug resistant diseases are evolving each day, yoga seems to be an answer to the maladies as it has been tested through time and has proved effective in curing ailments and rejuvenating the body.

The power of yoga lies in treating the system as whole and not as fragmented components, addressing the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through its various approaches of asans (postures). Yoga has been embraced across the world and research work studying its effects on human body is leading to path breaking understanding about the functioning of body. These facts lead us to a conclusion that yoga needs to be taken up as a Science and its structure needs to be explored further. Study of yoga as a Science can lead to new approaches in healing humans physically and mentally without the side effects of modern medicine. Cases of rare diseases like cancer have been reportedly cured through yogic exercises and lifestyle changes. This mounting evidence that as more and more people across the world adopt yoga certainly establishes yoga as a Science that needs to be studied deeply and effectively.

References

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