

## Yoga: Wellness for Life during COVID-19 Lockdown

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### Abstract

The world is fighting COVID-19 and economies over the globe have announced a period of lockdown thus making Work from home (WFH) and staying home maintaining social distancing as a new normal. Adhering to the government regulations, all over the country, all non-essential organisation are undergoing of slow down and lockdown. This inspired the researcher to organise a 21 days Yoga Live session from June 1<sup>st</sup> - June 21<sup>st</sup> 2020. The art of practicing Yoga helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keeps you relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. Yoga refers to the spiritual discipline that includes meditation, exercises, physical postures, breathing techniques. It is done to improve physical health, mental health, relaxation, and overall well-being of the individual. The study focusses on effectiveness of Yoga through the 21 days Yoga Session at home aiming towards Yoga wellness for Life. It studied the importance of Yoga towards wellness for life based on Gender and present situation – Employed, Home maker. The findings of the paper also highlights the personalised feedback by participants such as a *'feeling of relief from stress and tension, gave us a refreshing feel. It will be useful if we practice it regularly. It was a very good experience. Sessions involves several stretching exercise required for body functioning. The yoga classes have been very useful to reduce my stress and anxiety. Yoga therapy was very interactive session that helped in practising many breathing techniques and Asanas'*.

**Keywords:** *Yoga for wellness, online yoga sessions, personalised feedback.*

**Introduction:** Yoga is a systematic practice of physical exercise, breath, control, relaxation, diet control, and positive thinking and meditation aimed at developing harmony in the body, mind, and environment. The practice entails low-impact physical activity, postures (called asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), relaxation, and meditation. The five principles taught in yoga are proper exercise, breathing, relaxation, diet and meditation. Yoga helps to

activate our Chakra. Chakra is an energy centre or the focal point of energy. There are seven chakras in our body. While practicing Yoga it is important to know the Chakras.

**First chakra - Muladhara Chakra** or root chakra is located at the base of the spine. The first chakra is associated with the following functions or behavioural characteristics:

- Security, safety
- Survival
- Basic needs (food, sleep, shelter, self-preservation, etc.)
- Physicality, physical identity and aspects of self
- Grounding
- Support and foundation for living our lives

At the emotional level, the deficiencies or imbalance in the first chakra are related to:

- Excessive negativity, cynicism
- Eating disorders
- Greed, avarice
- Illusion
- Excessive feeling of insecurity, living on survival mode constantly

### **Second Chakra 2. Svadhisthana Chakra**

The Svadhisthana or Sacral Chakra is the second wheel of energy and represents our creative and sexual energy within the body. The Svadhisthana Chakra is associated with the element of water. When water comes to mind, we imagine fluidity, versatility, and freedom. The second chakra is just that – it's our ability to be sexual, creative, emotional, and in tune with ourselves and others. When this chakra is balanced, life is filled with abundance, creativity, movement, procreation, pleasure, and fulfilling relationships. When out of alignment, you can experience emotional instability, fear of change, sexual dysfunction, depression, lack of creative energy, chronic low back pain, reproductive issues, and other pelvic-lower issues.

### **Third Chakra 3. Manipura Chakra**

The Manipura or Navel Chakra is the third wheel of energy and is associated with the element of fire. This chakra represents our personal power, governs our self-esteem, personal identity, digestion, and metabolism. When this chakra is balanced, you'll find that self-confidence, a sense of purpose, and self-motivation are present in your life. When presented with an issue, you're able to let it go and not attach to the external circumstances at hand.

When out of alignment, you can experience digestion issues, low self-esteem, and have difficulty making decisions.

#### **Fourth Chakra: Anahata/ Heart Chakra**

The Heart Chakra is the fourth wheel of energy and is the bridge between the three physical chakras and the three spiritual chakras. By balancing and aligning the first three chakras, the fourth chakra is able to integrate and open. Thus, each wheel must spin simultaneously in order to remain in balance. The fourth chakra represents everything that involves love, compassion, and joy. It's one of the most beautiful yet emotional chakras for people to tap into. When this chakra is balanced, love, compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance of others (and yourself) are all present. When out of alignment, you can experience poor circulation, high or low blood pressure, co-dependence, manipulative behaviours, and feelings of unworthiness.

#### **Fifth Chakra: Vishuddha Chakra**

The Vishuddha or Throat Chakra is the fifth wheel of energy and it's the first of the three spiritual chakras. The Throat Chakra is associated with ether, or a space-like quality that symbolizes an open voice from where authenticity and truthfulness can flow. The fifth chakra represents your ability to speak your truth, express ideas clearly, and be in tune with both your inner and outer intentions. Because it's the first of the spiritual chakras, the lower four chakras must also be in tune. When this chakra is balanced, you speak, listen and express yourself through a higher form of communication and authenticity. When out of alignment, you can experience the inability to speak your truth, to ask for what you need, want, or desire, and it can result in a sore throat, thyroid problems, and neck/shoulder pain.

#### **Sixth Chakra. Ajna Chakra**

The Third-Eye Chakra is the sixth wheel of energy and it represents our intuition or sixth sense. Its location in between the eyebrows is integral to our lives and how we perceive the exterior world as well as our own interior dialogue. When this chakra is balanced, you trust your intuition to face life challenges and decisions, the ego dissolves into the background, and you can begin to uncover what your truly value is in life. When out of alignment, you can be cynical, too attached to logic, untrusting and possibly have problems with vision, headaches, and migraines.

**Seventh Chakra: Chakra Sahasrara** (literally, “thousand-petaled lotus”) is located just above the crown of the head. It is considered to be the doorway into pure consciousness. It is often depicted as a thousand-petaled lotus with a pinkish aura, and it is not associated with a physical element (as it too is considered to be beyond the elements). Sahasrara serves as a way of connecting to divine energy and is associated with our highest self. Sahasrara helps us function in a more enlightened way, cultivate self-mastery, and find a sense of connection with all. It is the centre of spirituality, enlightenment, dynamic thought and energy. It allows for the inward flow of wisdom and brings the gift of cosmic consciousness. When this chakra is out of balance, one might suffer from a constant sense of frustration, no spark of joy and destructive feelings. The Yoga practice for connecting with this energy centre is meditation.

### **Literature Review:**

**Catherine, Cook (2020)**, presented their work on *A District-Wide Qualitative Study of Yoga in the Schools: Outcomes and Challenges* Yoga programs to enhance student well-being are being integrated into school settings at increasing rates. Addressing the issues and challenges of implementing yoga programs in schools is essential for effective program delivery and outcomes. Prior literature has identified the need for further qualitative research from major stakeholders that sheds light on these challenges. For this study, researchers interviewed school personnel and affiliates (N = 32) at an elementary school district in California. Data was analysed using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Through an iterative process, two core constructs and their major themes and subthemes emerged: district level rollout and tips for districts. Under district level rollout, major themes included: initial phase of district-wide yoga program implementation; practical aspects of yoga implementation; creation of yoga curriculum; delivery of yoga implementation challenges; district climate regarding yoga program; opting out of yoga; upper grade and gender challenges; and parent concerns. Under tips for districts, themes identified actionable practices useful for districts considering implementing yoga. Overall, findings of this study detail the outcomes and challenges of the implementation of a district-wide yoga program and provide recommendations for development of yoga programs in schools.

**Stapp, Cooper (2019) highlighted that** *Young Children's Experiences with Yoga in an Early Childhood Setting*, School-based yoga programmes have been implemented in schools across the United States with promising results. However, the majority of research on yoga programmes has occurred within the K-12 setting. Much less is known about the benefits of

yoga with young children. The current body of research on yoga and young children has been quantitative and aimed at measurable results. Conversely, the purpose of this study was to investigate young children's experiences with yoga through a qualitative approach. Observations of yoga classes and group interviews with 34 preschool children were conducted. Participants were encouraged to be active agents in the research through language, creative art, and movement. This became data for qualitative analysis to 'visualize children's voice'. The findings indicated that children's perceptions of yoga were overwhelmingly positive and that they would continue yoga if given the opportunity.

**Glasser, Leanne (2017), stated in *Fostering Well-Being in Education through Yoga and Mindfulness in the Snow***, through a program called "Snowga" (yoga in the snow), students learned about mindfulness and living in the present moment through yoga postures and meditations. Positive changes included growth in wellbeing as the children explored self, community, and the natural world through yoga, mindfulness, personal reflective journals, and artwork. The purpose: to engender awareness of the efficacy of mindfulness and yoga practices in nature and contribute to the growing body of knowledge around wellbeing in education.

**Accaedo, Amy (2017) reflected that *Yoga as a School-Wide Positive Behavior Support***, A yoga-based school-wide positive Behavior support (SWPBS) may provide a foundation for teaching mindfulness and self-regulation in K-12 schools. Here, the use of yoga as a SWPBS was examined through a review of existing literature and interviews of yoga program facilitators. Yoga was reported to be effective as a pedagogical approach, and found to increase mindfulness, emotional regulation, and positive behaviours of school students. Findings suggest yoga, when provided by culturally sensitive instructors, may be an easy to implement, cost-effective SWPBS in a variety of school settings.

### **Know your Yoga poses:**

Child pose-Calming pose .You can use child pose to rest and refocus. Plank pose-Is good if you are looking to tone abs. Cobra pose-Is great for strengthening the back .Bridge pose-Back bending pose, hamstring muscle strength. Tree pose-it improves posture and balance. Four limbed staff pose-Push up variation follows plank pose in a common yoga sequence known as sun salutation.

Yoga and its vital aspects are discussed further:

**I. Basic Yoga for Mental Health:** The benefits of yoga for mental health are numerous, some of them are:

*1.Calms the mind:* The yoga poses incorporate intricate postures and breathing exercises which are known to calm your body and mind. Doing these poses will help prevent anxiety attacks or panic attacks which is are common mental health problems.

*2.Helps Focus:* Those who have stress related aspects are often asked to try yoga because it helps to relax and centre the body while helping the mind focus.

*3.Improves Mood:* Physical exercises release healthy brain chemicals like endorphins and dopamine. This helps balance your mood and combat common mental health issues like depression.

*4.Helps build confidence:* Yoga can help those suffering from self-esteem issues, a loss in confidence or self-esteem is often considered a cause for depression and anxiety. Performing yoga regularly helps centre your body and develop it slowly.

*5. Improves patience.* A common side-effect of disorders like anxiety and depression is a lack of patience. This leads to uncontrolled angry outbursts. Yoga incorporates numerous breathing activities known as pranayama which help clear your body and mind.

**Yoga For Life :** Yoga is a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual discipline, and also a way of life. It is an integrated system of self-transformation whose ultimate goal is spiritual liberation or enlightenment, but which can also be used to attaining other benefits like:

- 1.Can decrease stress
- 2.Relieves Anxiety
- 3.Improves quality of life
4. Promote sleep quality
5. Improves Flexibility and Balance etc.

**Yoga for the Eyes:** Your digitally-strained eyes will thank you for these simple yoga exercises. Most eye disorders are related to the malfunctioning of the ocular muscles that may be caused by chronic mental and emotional tension. Some of the yoga exercises are as simple

as blinking, and yet so powerful. We tend to forget to blink when browsing long hours on our electronic devices. Hence, relaxing positions like Savasana (Corpse Pose) lying down straight on the back and Sukhasana (Easy Pose) sitting in a comfortable posture are recommended. Remember to keep the head and spine straight throughout the exercises. Best Yoga practices for the eyes are Palming, Blinking, Rotational viewing, Preliminary nose tip gazing, etc. Trataka is a strong yogic purification exercise that involves staring at a single point such as a small object, black dot or candle flame. It significantly helps in correcting chronic eye problems.

**Yoga for beginners:** One of the most basic and easiest yoga postures is Tadasana, also called the mountain pose. This pose helps in relaxing, tackling stress and focuses on deep breathing and good blood circulation. Another asana which helps in good circulation is Padhastana which involves bending forward to touch one's feet in standing position. Paschimotanasana, is a sitting asana and is performed by forward bending pose. This asana is highly beneficial for diabetes. After performing a set of asanas, it is important to calm the body and heartbeat by concluding with Savasana. In addition to quietening the physical body in Savasana, it is also necessary to pacify the sense organs. Yoga is taken up these days only by people to cure specific ailments. However, it is essential for all age groups from young children to senior people for healthy living.

### **Yoga for Good Health**

Good Health is the right of every human being. But this right depends on individual, social and environmental factors. Along with social or environmental factors to a large extent, we can develop a better immune system and a better perception of oneself so that other conditions do not affect us adversely and we can achieve good health. Health is a positive concept. Positive health does not mean merely freedom from disease, but it also includes a jubilant and energetic feeling of well-being with an amount of general resistance and capacity to easily cultivate immunity against specific offending agents. Yoga, a meditative practice that unifies the mind and body. Yogic practices are effective for development of emotional dimension related to our feelings, attitudes and emotions. Thus it helps in perfect harmony of the individual.

**Yoga - Surya Namaskar:** Surya Namaskar holds a lot of significance in the yoga world. Originating from Sanskrit words, it literally means Salutation to the Sun. It is a complete

workout consisting of 12 asanas or yoga poses. Performing the Sun Salutation provides many health benefits. It reduces the tension from your body and mind, improves circulation, regulates your breathing, and stimulates your central nervous system. It is important to be empty stomach before performing the set of asanas. It is recommended that you perform Surya Namaskar early in the morning to rejuvenate the body and refresh the mind.

### **Precautions for Yoga**

Yoga is the oldest and most reliable healing science known today. However, one should always follow basic precautionary tips while practicing Yoga postures. Firstly, always consult your doctor and make sure whether practicing yoga will not worsen a chronic pain or physical condition. Secondly, people suffering from breathing problems like asthma should avoid holding their breath (Kumbhaka) while performing Pranayama. Thirdly, always practice Yoga in proper sequence. Begin with Kriyas, and then perform Asanas, Pranayama, Chittashuddhi and Yoga Nidra. Never shuffle the sequence. Next, wear clean and loose clothes to feel comfort physically as well as mentally while practicing Yoga. Lastly, stop immediately if you feel pain at any body part.

### **Objectives:**

This paper focusses on the

1. To study the importance of Yoga towards wellness for life based on
  - Gender
  - Present situation – Employed, Home maker

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post – test scores on Yoga towards wellness for life based on
  - Gender
  - Present situation –Employed, Home maker

**Research Methodology:** A descriptive survey method was used for the study. Data was collected through a Google form. In this initiative, the Yoga sessions was broadcasted on YouTube everyday and later a quiz on basic understanding of Yoga was also shared with the participants in the form of a Google Form. This enabled the participants to practice Yoga at their time and space and also gain basic knowledge of Yoga. This initiative aimed at Wellness for Life especially during this period of Lockdown and Staying at Home, with busy work and

home schedule a personal time for fitness, mediation and relaxation is often neglected. These sessions helped them to bounce back to rejuvenate and revitalize themselves. The data was collected from 218 participants in the 21 day Live Yoga sessions.

### Data Analysis:

#### Testing of hypotheses 1.1.1 - Statistical test results.

**Table 1.1.1 Relevant Statistics of Significance of Difference of Pre-test and Post- test scores based on Gender**

Gender	N	Df	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value	Level of significance
Male	86	85	76.86	1.56	26.47	p<.01	S at.01
Female	132	131	129.72	1.59			

### Findings:

There was significant difference witnessed between the male and female during the Yoga sessions, this could be that the women were more busy throughout the day and these sessions gave them a break and time to relax and revitalise themselves. These yoga sessions helped them to calm their mind especially during this period of lockdown.

#### Testing of hypotheses 1.1.2- Statistical test results.

**Table 1.1.2 Relevant Statistics of Significance of Difference of Pre-test and Post- test scores based on present situation**

Present Situation	N	Df	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value	Level of significance
Employed	123	121	121.72	1.89	2.86	p>.01	NS
Home maker	95	94	94.66	1.02			

### Findings:

The 21 day Yoga sessions were very informative and enriching to all. Each of the participant took it very sportingly. Since it was a period of Lockdown and most of the participants even the Employed were at home or working from home, it was very useful to them. The stretches

really helped the employed people working from home. Irrespective of the present situation – employed or home maker these 21 days motivated and energised each of them.

Data was collected as personalised feedback from participants of the Yoga Sessions

1. Really helpful and felt relieved from stress and tension.
2. Gave us a refreshing feel.
3. Awesome class and we are looking forward to more.
4. Was a good stress relieving session.
5. Had a good experience though it was a bit challenging initially.
6. It will be useful if we practice it regularly. Thank you for these classes.
7. So helpful as I felt refreshed and my mind was relaxed.
8. It was a very good experience.
9. The stretching exercise was especially very useful for me.
10. This yoga session was very useful. And for me, I enjoyed doing it.
11. Very useful sessions involving various relaxation techniques required by us in our day to day activities.
12. Sessions involves several stretching exercise required for body functioning.
13. The yoga classes have been very useful to reduce my stress and anxiety.
14. Looking forward to more classes in the future.
15. The practice was very easy and comfortable to do, they are also very useful.
16. Yoga is meant for relaxation of mind, body and soul. It is the best therapy for everybody.
17. Yoga therapy was very interactive session in which I learnt many breathing techniques and Asana.
18. I learnt many new things about yoga which I didn't know before.
19. Yoga relieve us from both physical and mental stress.
20. It makes us feel free and energetic.
21. Yoga is very useful. No negative feedback. Thank you so much.
22. It gave a very good time to relax and loosen our body. Since, we were at home we had no physical exercise but this gave us some. I hope this continues every week.
23. The session was useful and informative.
24. The exercise and pranayama taught were explained properly.
25. After the yoga class I felt good, and also found it very interesting.
26. Shavasana is really good. I liked it very much.

27. I felt some silence inside my body and very fresh and enthusiastic. A nice kind of relaxation. I felt really good.

**Discussion:**

It has been stated that Yoga enables the individual to attain and maintain a balance between exertion and relaxation, and that this results in a healthy and dynamic equilibrium. It has also been suggested that a healthy life can be considered a by-product of practicing yoga, since yoga practitioners are often physically and mentally healthier than the population as a whole and cope with stress better. It is important to evaluate the immediate, short-term and long term benefits of such innovations, and this study represents a simple and effective evaluation of the immediate effects. The pre-test-post-test format promotes understanding of the changes arising from any intervention and allows health professionals to quickly grasp the effects of specific interventions. As suggested by Henderson, "creating a climate of interest and motivation" is a strong psycho-social factor that influences learning in students. Keeping this factor in mind, it was planned to conduct the sessions in a lively and participant -friendly manner. The Government of India is attempting to build bridges between the traditional systems of AYUSH and modern allopathic medicine. This study is one of the first to provide evidence in this regard, and the researcher hopes that it will stimulate further research in the near future.

**Conclusion:**

The art of practicing yoga helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keeps you relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. Yoga aims to build the spiritual discipline that includes meditation, exercises, physical postures, breathing techniques. It is done to improve physical health, mental health, relaxation, and overall well-being of the individual. These 21 days sessions and the quiz helped in bringing out a difference among the participants and adopting Yoga as a habit in Life.

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