

ROLE OF 'YOGA' AS RASAYANA IN VARIOUS TREATMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Rasayana is the most famous treatment in aging. *Ayurveda* also accepted in *yoga* as a vital *Rasayana* in the different disease management. This study explains conceptual role of *yoga* as *Rasayana*. The objective of this study is to give collective information of *yoga* references with its benefits. Books available on *yoga & Ayurveda* in different libraries as well as on internet were reviewed. Results of the study were presented under headings namely types of *yoga*, physical strength, mental health, improvements in illness, other changes in health. Discussions regarding references regarding *yoga* were discussed with experts in *Ayurveda & yoga*. The findings of references are significantly useful for quick review to the physicians in different disease management. The practice of *Yoga* not only works the physical body by keeping it fit while strengthening and elongating the muscles, it also helps the nervous and circulatory systems by purifying and balancing them.

Key words: *Yoga, Rasayana, treatment*

INTRODUCTION

Rasayana is the most famous treatment in aging. *Ayurveda* also accepted *Yoga* as a vital *Rasayana* in the Antiaging management.¹ Those who are practicing *Yoga* in their day to day life got some benefits. *Yoga* is also mentioned in *Ayurvedic Classics* for that we have to search some references from *Samhitas* of those one well-known *Samhita* in which Precious *Yoga* and its usefulness mentioned is ***Charak Samhita***.² *Rasayana* is defined as it improvises basic body elements such as ashtadhatu. It also increases lifespan by its antiaging property. It increases memory, improvises body texture, skin colour, physical & mental health.

So *yoga* not only helps in increasing physical, mental health of human being but it also increases all the eight *bala* (Power) which further improves *satvata* (immunity) in humans.³ In the old age basically all the *indriyakarma* (body systems) becomes *kshin* (Sluggish in function). *Yoga* helps in improving the quality of life, as ancient *Rushimuni* (Aacharya) were survived for years without food & they didn't hampered the power of body [physical or mental].

This study includes such benefits of *yoga* in Antiaging management which acts similarly to the *Rasayana* medicine quoted in *Ayurveda*.

2. Aim&Objective:

- To collect all the references mentioned in all *yoga & Ayurvedic classics*.
- To explain the effectiveness of *yoga* in different disease management.
- To give collective information on *yoga* as *Rasayana* to the physicians of modern era.

4. Methodology: Material on *yoga* & its use in different disease management was reviewed from *Ayurvedic classics* available in different libraries like Hatha Yoga Pradipika or Gherandha samhita or Shiva samhita etc... and scientific papers published in journals.

5. Observation & Result: The review of literature gives following information. As *asana* are the easiest among all the *yoga*, we explained it in detail- Some papers were reviewed from pub med like Comparative immediate effect of different **yoga** asanas on heart rate and blood pressure in healthy young volunteers., Muscle utilization patterns vary by skill levels of the practitioners across specific **yoga** poses (asanas) etc.

- Swastikasan*₄- Strengthens ankle & knee joints, improves their function. Keeps mind calm. Helps in Abdominal disorders.
- Vajrasan*₅- improves circulation at abd & pelvis, increases movements of ankle, knee. Keeps mind calm. Helps in Arthritis, Abdominal disorders
- Padmasan*₆- Improves metabolism & excretion of body waste, maintains health, increases movements of ankle & knee. Reduce mind hyperactivity, controls emotions. Helps in depressive, Arthritic, Abdominal disorders.
- Siddhasan*₇- Best asana, helpful in *pranayama*, *dhyana* (concentration), relaxes body, strengthens vertebral column

& abd muscles. Relaxes mind, helpful in mind concentration. Helps in depressive, back & abdominal disorders.

- Sarvangasan*₈- Helps in body growth, increases immunity, keeps skin healthy, improves metabolism. Increases confident. Helps in circulatory disorders of heart & brain, useful in IBS, headache, abdominal pain and constipation.
- Halasan*₉- Strengthens spinal cord and vertebral column. Helps in Constipation, metabolic & liver disorders.
- Shalabhasan*₁₀- Strengthens muscles of back & buttocks, reduces backache. Helps in Metabolic disorders
- Naukasan*₁₁- Reduces abdominal fat, Strengthens muscles of back & buttocks. Reduces backache, abdominal disorders.
- Ardhamatsendrasan*₁₂- Strengthens muscles of back & abdomen, improves liver & spleen function, intestinal motility. Reduces backache, abdominal disorders.
- Pashchimottanasan*₁₃- Strengthens muscles of back & abdomen, reduces abdominal fat. Reduces backache, abdominal disorders.
- Chakrasan*₁₄- Improves lungs function, strengthens muscles of back & abdomen, reduces abdominal fat. Helps in Tuberculosis, reduces backache, abdominal disorders.
- Aakarnadhanurasan*₁₅- strengthens muscles of back & abdomen. Reduces low-backache, abdominal disorders.
- Trikonasana*₁₆- Strengthens muscles of back & legs, reduces abdominal & buttocks fat. Reduces low-backache, calf muscle disorders, increases lung capacity.
- Yogmudra*₁₇- Strengthens muscles of back & abdomen, reduces abdominal &

buttocks fat. Reduces low-backache, abdominal disorders.

Six shudhikriya like Dhouti (Danta-Dhauti, Hrud-Dhouti, Antar-Dhouti, Mulasashodhana), Basti(Jala&Shushka), Neti, Nauli, Tratak, Kapalbhathi, Pranayama, Kunmbhak(Suryabhedan, Ujjayi, Shitali, Sitkari, Bhasrika, Bhramari, Murcha, Plavini), Panchadharana, Mudra(Pashini, Kaki, Matangini, Bhujangini, Shaktichalini, Tadagi, Manduki, Shambhvi, Ashwini, Nabho), Bandha(Mula, Jalandhar, Uddiyan, ViparitKarani, Nadanusandhan) also helps in different disease management.¹⁸ All of these should be done under supervision of experts.

DISCUSSION

History-Yoga dates back to over 5,000 years, and is a form of a spiritual practice in India. *Yoga* invokes= ideals of harmony, health and balance, it “fits” well in the environment of modernity. *Yoga* as exercise has evolved into numerous subdivisions and variations. There is debate as to whether or not the term *HathaYoga* properly describes *yoga* as exercise, since the traditional *HathaYoga* system originated as, and still is, a spiritual path in its own right.¹⁹

Overview as alternative medicine-Yoga is believed to calm the nervous system and balance the body, mind, and spirit. It is thought by its practitioners to prevent specific diseases and maladies by keeping the energy meridians (*shatchakra*) open and life energy (*Prana*) flowing. *Yoga* is usually practiced in classes that range from 60 to 90 minutes in length. *Yoga* has been used to lower blood pressure, reduce stress, and improve coordination, flexibility, concentration, sleep, and digestion.²⁰

It has also been used as supplementary therapy for such diverse conditions as

cancer, diabetes, asthma, AIDS and Irritable Bowel Syndrome.²¹

Restorative Yoga-Restorative *yoga* is often associated with healing from diseases. Restorative *yoga* is *yoga* practiced in a very relaxed state by using supports instead of muscular tension to maintain the pose alignments. Restorative poses help relieve the effects of chronic stress in several ways. Many references were seen in different review articles on pub med like Effect of restorative yoga vs. stretching on diurnal cortisol dynamics and psychosocial outcomes in individuals with the metabolic syndrome: the PRYSMS randomized controlled trial, Feasibility and acceptability of restorative yoga for treatment of hot flushes: a pilot trial etc.

First, the uses of this provide a completely supportive environment for total relaxation. Second, each restorative sequence is designed to move the spine in all directions. Third, a well-sequenced restorative practice also includes an inverted pose, which reverses the effects of gravity. Because we stand or sit most of the day, blood and lymph fluid accumulate in the lower extremities. By changing the relationship of the legs to gravity, fluids are returned to the upper body and heart function is enhanced. Fourth, restorative *yoga* alternately stimulates and soothes the organs. With this movement of blood comes the enhanced exchange of oxygen and waste products across the cell membrane. It is presented in article on pub med named Stress, inflammation, and yoga practice.

Finally, *yoga* teaches that the body is permeated with energy. *Prana*, the masculine energy, resides above the diaphragm, moves upward, and controls respiration and heart rate. *Apana*, the feminine energy, re-

sides below the diaphragm, moves downward, and controls the function of the abdominal organs. Restorative *yoga* balances these two aspects of energy so that the practitioner is neither over stimulated nor depleted.²²

Yoga as exercise for treating diseases-

Most *yoga* classes consist of a combination of physical exercises, breathing exercises, and meditation. These characteristics make *yoga* a particularly beneficial kind of exercise for people with certain health conditions, including heart disease/hypertension, asthma, and back problems.

For people with heart problems, studies have shown *yoga* to help people young and old. Specifically, *yoga* seems to promote heart health in several ways, including regulating high blood pressure and improving resistance to stress. It was mentioned in many scientific papers on pub med like Potential long-term effects of a mind-body intervention for women with major depressive disorder: sustained mental health improvements with a pilot *yoga* intervention, Application of an integrative *yoga* therapy programme in cases of essential arterial hypertension in public healthcare, **Yoga** based cardiac rehabilitation after coronary artery bypass surgery: One-year results on LVEF, lipid profile and psychological states - A randomized controlled study etc. *Yoga* also has the potential to buffer against the harmful effects of bodily self-objectification as well as to promote embodiment and well-being.²³

Research on *yoga* and psychological and emotional health-

A growing number of clinical trials are being published on the benefits of *yoga* for psychological and emotional health. A Pub Med search for "*yoga* and depression"

yields 25 clinical trials published in 2007, 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 relating to *yoga* and emotional and psychological health. In addition, three review articles and three systematic reviews published during this period investigated the effects of various combinations of *yoga*, meditation and *yogic* breathing on mental health.²⁴ some of the papers are on pub med like Potential long-term effects of a mind-body intervention for women with major **depressive disorder**: sustained mental health improvements with a pilot *yoga* intervention, Physical activity and **depressive** symptoms after stillbirth: informing future interventions, Application of an integrative *yoga* therapy programme in cases of essential arterial hypertension in public healthcare etc.

However, in recent years, there have been increasing reports of *yoga*-related injuries. These include carotid artery tears, bulging intervertebral discs, rotator cuff injuries, ganglion cysts, compression of the spine (vertebral column) and hyperextension of the neck. In *yoga* without care, injuries can absolutely happen."²⁵ Some of the papers like Do side-effects/**injuries** from *yoga* practice result in discontinued use? Results of a national survey etc. are explaining injuries.

Breast cancer studies-

In 2006, scientists at the University Of Texas conducted an experiment on 61 breast cancer patients. Thirty of the patients participated in *yoga* around the time of their radiation treatments. The *yoga* was customized for cancer patients; it focused on breathing and relaxation, and excluded difficult exercises, given possible limitations on range of motion. The study found increased physical function, slightly better levels of social functioning, and lower levels of sleep dysfunction.

tion and fatigue. There was no difference in rates of anxiety or depression.²⁶ Effects of yoga on arm volume among women with breast cancer related lymphedema: A pilot study, Mindfulness-based cancer recovery and supportive-expressive therapy maintain telomere length relative to controls in distressed breast cancer survivors, Effect of Yoga on cancer related fatigue in breast cancer patients with chemotherapy, etc are scientific paper present on pub med.

CONCLUSION

There are so many papers on different types of yoga therapy like The effects of an 8-week *Hathayoga* intervention on executive function in older adults, Effect of regular yogic training on growth hormone and dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate as an endocrine marker of aging, Comparative impacts of Tai Chi, balance training, and a specially-designed yoga program on balance in older fallers, Fluid intelligence and brain functional organization in aging yoga and meditation practitioners, Muscle utilization patterns vary by skill levels of the practitioners across specific yoga poses, Age-related changes in cardiovascular system, autonomic functions, and levels of BDNF of healthy active males: role of yogic practice, etc. supports following conclusion

Benefits of Anti-aging Yoga

The practice of Anti-aging *Yoga* not only works the physical body by keeping it fit while strengthening and elongating the muscles, it also helps the nervous and circulatory systems by purifying and balancing them.

The regular practice of Anti-aging *Yoga* produces many benefits. This includes greater endurance, flexibility, deeper breathing, and an overall improvement in mood and emotional well-being.

The practice of *Asanas* in Anti-aging *Yoga* promotes flexibility of the muscles and strength in the bones and tissues. It also massages the organs, brings balance to different internal and glandular functions, promotes the flow of vital energy, *prana* and balances the physical and metaphysical parts of the body (*koshas*).

Asanas are techniques that promote awareness, concentration, meditation, and relaxation through the physical body. As the practice becomes more regular, there are significant results. Such results include good mental and physical health through stretching, massage and the stimulation of the energy channels of the internal organs.

Scientific studies have shown that the practice of *Yoga* has anti-aging and curative abilities and can prevent disease by promoting energy and health. That is why more and more professionals have started using *Yoga* techniques in patients with different mental and physical symptoms, such as psycho-somatic stresses and different diseases.

A regular *Yoga* practice can cleanse the tissues through muscle stretching and massaging of the internal organs. This brings the waste back into circulation so that the lungs, intestines, kidneys, and skin are able to remove toxins in a natural way.

- *Yoga* and meditation relieve stress
- *Yoga* keeps your body fit and energy level high thus suppressing aging
- *Yoga* rejuvenates the glands. *Yoga* has a marked effect on the pituitary, thyroid, adrenal and sex glands.
- *Yoga* strengthens muscles and regulates the flow of oxygen in our system.
- *Yoga* provides elasticity to the spine and improves posture

- *Yoga* firms up the skin. *Yoga* reduces facial wrinkles and produces a natural 'face-lift'
- *Yoga* is a combination of breathing and body postures that increases blood circulation.
- *Yoga* increased resistance to disease. *Yoga* produces a healthy strong body with increased immunity against disease.
- *Yoga* has many mental and emotional benefits
- Anti-aging *Yoga* will help you to feel more confident, enthusiastic and generally optimistic.

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