

YOGA IN PREGNANCY – NURTURING BODY, MIND AND BABY!**Shilpa A Koranne¹, Vaishali Dhrashive², Yogita D Khore³.**

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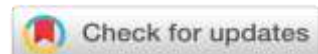
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**ABSTRACT****Purpose**

Ayurveda and *Yoga* are two sides of a coin. Both aims at healthy body, mind, soul. *Yoga* in Sanskrit means union and attainment and merge of individual human consciousness with cosmic consciousness. *Yoga* helps to modify physical health, mental and spiritual health. Many research studies show that *yoga* is the key to a healthier life for an individual. Pregnant women can also practice *yoga* poses with proper assistance and guidance. Pregnant woman undergoes many physical psychological and behavioural changes that leads to stress.

Hence *yoga* is highly recommended during antenatal and postnatal periods to improve the strength of abdomen and pelvic floor muscles and to reduce mental stress.

Aim & Objective:

To assess the role of *yoga* in pregnancy in all 3 trimesters.

Material and method:

Yoga as explained in *ayurvedic*, and yogic classics will be reviewed. Pregnant women with low risk. Different *yoga* and *pranayama* in accordance with trimester.

Result:

The body is very delicate during pregnancy. Hence there is no time for challenging one's physical strength or activities. Following traditional *yoga* can provide benefits during pregnancy. But one should do it under strict observation and after knowing the general rules and restrictions to the pregnant women.

Conclusion:

Pregnancy is a normal and natural part of women's life cycle. Practice of *yoga* has been explained in *Ayurveda*. Due to *yoga*, the physical, mental and spiritual health of an individual is achieved. *Yoga* during pregnancy is a wonderful course and an excellent way to focus on your health and helps to elevate many elements and discomforts that naturally arise in the body during pregnancy.

Keywords: Pregnant women, *Yoga*, Physical health, Mental stress, Spiritual health.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda and *Yoga* are two sides of a coin. Both aims at healthy body, mind, soul. *Yoga* in Sanskrit means union and attainment and merge of individual human consciousness with cosmic consciousness. *Yoga* helps to modify physical health, mental and spiritual health. Pregnancy is a normal and natural part of women's life cycle. Practice of *yoga* has been explained in *Ayurveda*. *Yoga* during pregnancy is a wonderful course source and an excellent way to focus on health and helps to elevate many elements and discomforts that naturally arise in the body during pregnancy.

Many research studies show that *yoga* is the key to a healthier life for an individual. Pregnant women can also practice *yoga* poses with proper assistance and guidance. Pregnant woman undergoes many physical psychological and a behavioural change that leads to stress. Hence *yoga* is highly recommended during antenatal and postnatal periods to improve the strength of abdomen and pelvic floor muscles and to reduce mental stress.

Concept of *yoga*¹

Ashtanga Yoga encompasses the instructional principles of *yama*, *niyama*, *âsana*, *prânâyâma*, *pratyâhâra*, *dhâranâ*, *dhyâna*, and *samâdhi*. Additionally, it incorporates practices such as meditation, studying texts, spiritual or psychological guidance, chanting, visualization, prayer, and rituals to cater to individual requirements.

To understand the patient and to teach *yoga* the concept of *panchakosha*² is to be understood. *Panchako-*

sha involves *Anandmaya kosha* which deals with *asana*, diet and stretching exercises.

Pranamaya kosha which deals with *Pranayama* that is breathing exercises and stress relieving exercises.

Manomaya kosha which deals with meditation and Omkar meditation.

Vigyanamaya kosha which deals with counselling lecture of *yoga* and reduces stress physical and mental.

Lastly the *Anandmaya kosha* which is the attainment of bliss.

Physical changes during pregnancy^{3,4}

Significant changes occur during pregnancy, but with proper care, they can be reversed after delivery. These changes include.

- Fatigue and exhaustion caused by increased oxygen consumption,
- Cardiovascular changes like elevated blood pressure, heart rate, and pedal edema.
- Muscular and ligamentous laxity due to hormonal changes and fetal growth.
- Postural imbalances resulting from a shifted centre of gravity, and postural disorders such as exaggerated lordosis.

Along with physical changes, mental changes also occur.

Emotional Transformations throughout Pregnancy

- Expectant mothers may experience feelings of insecurity and anxiety.

- Physiological changes during pregnancy can lead to episodes of depression.
- Reassurance and motivation are essential during this period.
- A decrease in appetite may be observed.

Material and methods

Yogasana, pranayama bandha and mudra in each trimester⁵

- In order to ensure a healthy postpartum phase.

Benefits Yoga's for Pregnant Women

- *Yoga* during pregnancy increases blood flow to the brain, which aids in relaxation and promotes restful sleep.
- *Yoga* aids in the reduction of stress, which is the primary cause of hormone fluctuations during pregnancy.
- *Yoga* is believed to improve bone strength and

	Position of asanas	Yoga asana 1 st trimester	Yoga asana in 2 nd trimester	Yoga asana in 3 rd trimester
1.	Asana in Standing	Parshva Konasana Trikonasana Veerabhadrasana Vrikshasana Ardha Katichakrasana Urdhva Hastasana Ardha Chakrasana	Ardha Katichakrasana Trikonasana Parshva Konasana Veerabhadrasana Vrikshasana Ardha Chandrasana	Ardha Katichakrasana Trikonasana Virabhadrasana Urdhva Hastasana Vrikshasana
2.	Asana in Sitting	Marjariasana Gomukhasana Veerasana Bhadrasana Bhardwajasana Dandasana Vajrasana Veerasana	Dandasana Vajrasana Ardha Ushtrasana Baddha Konasana Upavishta Konasana VeerasanaMarjariasana Gomukhasana	Vajrasana BaddhaKonasana Marjariasana UpavishtaKonasana
3.	Asana in Supine position	Matsyasana Shavasana Setubandhasana	Matsyasana Supta Baddhakonasana Vipreetkarani Matsya Kridasana Setubandhasana	Matsya Kridasana Setubandhasana
4.	Pranayama	NadiShuddhi Pranayama Bhramari Pranayama	NadiShuddhi Pranayama Bhramari Pranayama	NadiShuddhi Pranayama Anuloma-viloma Pranayama SheetaliParanayama Sheetkari Pranayama Bhramri Pranayama
5.	Mudra	Ashwini Mudra Vajroli Mudra	Ashwini Mudra Vajroli Mudra	Ashwini Mudra Vajroli Mudra
6.	Bandha	Moola Bandha	Moola Bandha	Moola Bandha

The aim of practicing Yoga

- Is to have a healthy and complication-free antenatal period.
- To avoid fetal complications, and
- To aid normal labor.

flexibility, which is critical in preparing the body for labour.

- *Yoga* poses help to minimize structural burden and, as a result, lower back pain.
- It also aids in the relief of nausea and headaches.
- It lowers the likelihood of preterm labour.

DISCUSSION

Different asana, pranayama mudras.

Steps of asana that can be easily performed during pregnancy.

Marjarasana

- Get on your hands and knees, palms shoulder width apart below your shoulders, knees hip-width apart below your hips.
- Inhale deeply, elevate your head, and gradually bend your spine toward the floor.
- As you exhale, bring your chin to your chest and gradually arch your spine upward.
- Repeat 5 to 10 times more.
- Do not overwork yourself.

Benefits

- It relieves stiffness in the neck and shoulders.
- The spine should be supple in nature. As the pregnancy progresses, the back must bear increasing weight.
- Improves tone of abdominal muscles
- Improves circulation to whole body.

Ardhakatichakrasana (Standing Sideways Bending One Arm)⁷

- Inhale deeply and raise your left arm. Bend to the right and look at your left palm as you exhale. Expel the air and lower the left arm.
- Repeat on the opposite side.

Benefits

- Have the spine extendable.
- Helps in the prevention of constipation, which is a common pregnancy symptom.

Parsav Konasana (Standing Sideways Bending both Arms)⁸

- Inhale the air, raise your arms over your head, and join your palms and fingers to form an arched stance.
- Exhale and bend to the right. Hold. Return to a standing position by inhaling deeply. Exhale the breath and lower your arms.
- Repeat on the opposite side.

Benefits:

- It provides a good stretch to both sides of the muscle surrounding the uterus, as well as flexibility to the spinal column.

- It strengthens the legs and decreases swelling in the ankles and feet. It helps to open the groin and hamstring muscles, which support the lower back and prepare the hips for labour.
- Prevents backache during pregnancy.
- It also has a favorable effect on the thyroid gland.
- It tones the muscles around the belly, hips, and waistlines.
- Enhances liver function.

Veerabhadrasana (warrior pose)⁹

- Take a position with your feet 3-4 feet apart. Twist the right foot out 90 degrees and the left foot in 15 degrees.
- Inhale deeply and bring your upper extremities to shoulder level.
- Exhale, then flex your right knee, maintaining it parallel to the ankle and moving gently to bring your right thigh parallel to the floor.
- Turn your head to the right side and look across your right hand.

Benefits

- Assists in body equilibrium.
- Strengthens the arms, legs, and lower back.
- Improves energy levels in the body.

Urdhva Hastasana¹⁰

- Stand up tall with feet together, spine long, and arms by sides.
- Rotate your arms so that the palms face away from the torso.
- Inhale and bring your arms up and overhead.
- To be maintained for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Benefits :

- It facilitates the opening and expansion of the ribs and heart.
- The expansion of the chest allows for deeper breathing, which increases oxygen flow in the body.
- It improves the activities of the digestive organs, and it relaxes the brain by increasing oxygen flow in the body.

Precautions:

Should not be done in diseased conditions like backache, shoulder pain and neck injury.

Trikonasana¹¹

- Place your feet 2-3 feet apart and face forward.
- Turn your head, place your left foot on the left side, and bring your left hand down to your left foot.
- Place the palm of your left hand on your left foot and keep your right hand up. Inhale deeply and bring your arms lateral to the floor.
- On your right side, exhale, stretch, and flex to move your right hand closer to your right foot.
- Hold your breath in, gently exhale, and then relax.

Benefits

- Maintains a healthy balance of physical and mental wellness.
- Since their centre of gravity alters, this is just for expectant mothers.
- Extends and spreads the hips, facilitating delivery.
- Reduces back pain and maternal stress.

Precautions:

This *Asana* should be avoided if you have a sick condition such as backache, shoulder pain, or a neck injury.

ViparitaKarani (Legs Up the Wall Pose)¹²

- Lift both legs up toward the sky, breathe in, and avoid bending your knees if possible.
- Exhale and lower your legs to the ground.
- Do it two or three times more.

Benefits

- Relieve back pain.
- Improves blood circulation to the pelvic region. • Reduces edema at ankles and varicose veins, which are common pregnancy symptoms.

Precautions:

This *Asana* should always be practiced adjacent to a wall or with a chair nearby for immediate support if body balance is lost.

Vrikshasana¹³

- Keep back straight and stand straight.
- Lift right leg and balance solidly on left leg. My right leg should be bent at the knee.
- Place the inner of left thigh with right foot. Make sure your right foot's toes are facing down.

- At chest level, join your palms in prayer position. Raise your arms above your head, stretching your hands upward.
- Hold the pose while taking a deep breath periodically.
- Separate palms after lowering arms to chest level.
- Return to a standing position by straightening your right leg.
- With my right leg, repeat the stance.

Benefits:

- First and foremost, it is a balancing posture that is vital for enhancing sensory motor skills. This *Asana* improves concentration, which helps a pregnant lady understand her symptoms.

Precautions:

- Balance becomes more difficult in the later months of pregnancy due to ligament relaxation produced by the hormone relaxin. As a result, throughout the next months, this *Asana* should be practiced with assistance.

Dandasana¹⁴

'*Danda*' refers to a staff or stick, while '*asana*' refers to a pose. As a result, *dandasana* is also known as the stick pose or the staff stance.

- Sit on the floor and stretch your legs out in front of you. Maintain your footing.
- While seated, apply gentle pressure to the bones that are in contact with the ground. Bring your thighs closer to the ground by balancing your ankles.
- Draw your kneecaps towards your pelvis and extend your heels.
- Raise your waist.
- Place your armpits above your hips.
- Extend the arms in the air until they are parallel to the shoulders and pull away from the ears.
- Maintain a straight back with your shoulder blades down, relaxed, and away from your skin.
- Maintain a straight back and do not let your abdomen slump.

Benefits

- *Dandasana* prepares the body for various forms of *Asana* and strengthens the spine.

- Precautions: This *Asana* should not be performed if you have a wrist or spine injury.
- If this posture causes discomfort, a back support should be used.

Vajrasana¹⁵

- Get on your knees.
- Bring your knees together as close as possible. Make sure your feet are slightly apart.
- Place your feet between your calves and sit back.
- Bring your feet as near to your buttocks as possible.
- Make sure your back is straight.
- Extend your arms forward, bringing your hands to cover your knees.
- Maintain the posture for 2 minutes at the start.
- As you continue to practice the stance, gradually increase the duration.

Benefits

- It improves backache, which is a frequent symptom during pregnancy.
- It aids in the improvement of digestion.
- It is the only *Asana* that may be done after eating.
- It increases blood circulation in the pelvic region and strengthens the thighs.

Badhakonasana (Butterfly Pose)¹⁶

- Holding the heels as close to the body, bend your knees and place the soles of both feet together.
- Loosen the thighs inside.
- Hold your feet firmly in both hands.
- Gently raise and lower the knees while using the elbows as levers to press the lower extremities downward. Use no force at all.
- Up to 30 times should be repeated. Relax and straighten your legs.

Benefits

- Encourage flexibility in the groin and hip area.
- Reduces tiredness while extending the thighs and knees to reduce pain.
- Contributes to a smooth delivery.

Pranayama during pregnancy (Breathing exercises)^{17,18}

- *Pranayamas* aid in the release of unfavourable emotions like rage and irritation. keeps the mind relaxed and tranquil.

Procedure

- Take seated *asana* that feels comfortable.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
- Now use thumbs to close any flaps on your ears.
- Position middle fingers over eyes and the rest of fingers over eyebrows with index finger.
- Gently squeeze nose on one side.
- Pay attention between brows.
- Close mouth and make the *Om* sound while gently exhaling through nostrils.
- This procedure should be repeated five times. It's important to keep in mind that *yogi* gets connected to the universe's beneficial energy when performing this *pranayama*.

Benefits

- It eases headaches and supports blood pressure regulation.

NadiShodhan Pranayama^{17,18}

- Take a comfortable seat, keeping your back straight and your shoulders at ease.
- Maintain the Chin *Mudra* with your left hand on your left knee and palms facing the sky (index and thumb tips lightly touching).
- Place the thumb on the right nostril, the ring and little fingers on the left nostril, and the tips of the index and middle fingers of the right hand in between the brows. To open or close the left nostril, we shall use the ring and little fingers, and the right nostril, the thumb.
- Slowly push your thumb on your right nostril while slowly exhaling through your left.
- Next, breathe in through your left nostril while gently pressing it with your ring and little fingers. Breathe out through the right nostril while removing the right thumb from the nostril.
- Breathe in through your right nostril and expel through your left. You've finished the first round of this pose. Complete nine of these rounds by concurrently breathing through both nostrils while continuing to inhale and exhale from the opposing nostril. Always take a breath in through the same nostril that you just used to exhale. Continue taking long, deep, easy breaths without

any force or effort while keeping your eyes closed.

Benefits

- Helps to relax and calm the mind.
- Keeps the body temperature stable.
- Increases oxygen supply, which aids in the development of the fetus.

• After doing these yoga poses

Bhramari Pranayama¹⁹

Procedure

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
- Use your thumbs to close ears or flaps.
- Place index finger directly over brows and the rest of fingers below.
- fingers across eyes middle fingers.
- Press gently on one side of nose.
- Concentrate thoughts between brows.
- Close your mouth and exhale slowly through nose while saying *Om*. sound.
- Go through this process five times.

Benefits

- It aids in blood pressure regulation.
- Helps to relieve headaches.
- Connected access all the positive energies of the universe.

Sheetali Pranayama²⁰

- Sit in comfortable *asana*.
- Breath normally
- Then curling tongue and extending it out a little, inhale through the tunnel of the tongue. Attention to the cooling effect in the mouth, down the throat and into the torso.
- Release the tongue, close the mouth and exhale out through the nose.
- Repeat steps 3 and 4 for 2-3 minutes, feeling of cooling effect is experienced by body and mind.

Sheetakari Pranayama²¹

- Sit in comfortable *asana*.
- Breath normally
- Touch the upper and lower teeth together while keeping the lips open as much as possible and inhale through the closed teeth making a soft hissing sound.

- Release the teeth and close the mouth as exhale through the nose.
- Repeat steps 3 and 4 for 2-3 minutes, feeling of cooling effect is experienced by body and mind.

Benefits of *Sheetali and Sheetakari Pranayama*

- For cooling and calming of the body and mind
- Improves concentration.
- Reduce agitation or anger.
- Lowers body temperature.
- Aids in digestion

Yoga Nidra (Yoga Sleep)

- Lie down straight. Close your eyes and relax. Take deep, relaxing breaths as you inhale.
- Gently concentrate on your right extremity for a little period of time, then let your foot relax. Concentrate gradually on the right extremities. Bring your entire right lower extremity into focus.
- This procedure should be repeated for the left lower extremity.
- Pay attention to your entire body, including your chest, abdominal, and navel area.
- Pay attention to your right arm, right shoulder, palms, and fingers. Repeat this process for the left arm, throat, face, top of the head, and left shoulder.
- Take a few deep breaths and pay attention to how your body feels. For a few minutes, remain calm in this state.
- Twist your body to the right side as you become gradually more aware of your body and your surroundings, then stay in that position for a few more minutes. When you turn to the right, your breath will enter your left nostril, which will aid to cool your body.
- Unwind, then slowly sit up. When it's comfortable, slowly and gradually open your eyes.

Benefits

- Reduces maternal stress to a minimum.
- Helps to regulate blood pressure.
- Deeply relaxes body tissues.

Precaution for practicing all *Asana*.

- *Yoga* should only be done on an empty stomach.

- Pregnant women should only practice *yoga* in the presence of a competent *yoga* instructor and an attendant.
- The mat must be excellent quality and grip.
- Not all pregnant women must maintain their final posture.
- All positions are also possible with a prop.
- Avoid holding positions that raise intra-abdominal pressure.
- *Kumbhaka* should never be performed by pregnant women during *pranayama*.

Ashwini mudra (horse gesture)²²

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and relax your body.
- Become aware of the breath.
- Take the awareness of anus.
- Rapidly contract the anal sphincter muscles for a few seconds without straining then relax them.

Benefits

- The practice strengthens the anal muscles.
- It prevents the escape of pranic energy and reduces it upward for spiritual purposes.

Vajroli mudra²²

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and relax your body.
- Become aware of the breath.
- Take awareness to urethra.
- Inhale, hold the breath inside and draw the urethra upward.
- Confirm the contraction to urethra and hold long as comfortably.
- Exhale, release the contraction and relax.

Benefits

It regulates and tones the entire uro-genital system.

Results

The body is very delicate during pregnancy. There is no time for challenging one's physical strength or activities. Following traditional *yoga* can provide benefits during pregnancy. But one should be done under strict observation and after knowing the general rules and restrictions to the pregnant women. *Asanas* improves the physical strength and strengthens the muscles of arms, back and hips. *Pranayama*

helps to overcome stress and emotional imbalance. Labour aches and pains are laid groundwork. *Yoga* activities aid in the preparation of the body and mind for labour.

CONCLUSION

Yoga has been shown to be a good preventive measure against the majority of diseases. Several studies have found that prenatal and postnatal *yoga* can benefit both pregnant women and their newborn kids. *Yoga* practice promotes sleep, reduces worry and tension, and increases the strength, flexibility, and fortitude of muscles that are essential for birth.

Increases stamina and strength of body undergoes physical, hormonal, and emotional changes as baby develops from within. *Yoga* postures help to strengthen hips, back, arms, and shoulders reduce the likelihood of developing a lordosis/lower back curve as the size of bellies grows.

Pranayama helps to focus on breathing and fine-tune the body and emotional equilibrium. It soothes the senses and the nervous system. The senses and nervous system are calmed by guided meditation or soothing music combined with *pranayama*.

Labour aches and pains are laid groundwork. *Yoga* activities aid in the preparation of the body and mind for labour. *Yoga* practice can help feel more connected to a child. *Yoga* assists in slowing down and becoming aware of all of the tiny changes. Working on breathing and movement helps feel more grounded and connected to baby.

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