



# Yoga Therapy For Human Well-Being And Enhancing Mental Health

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of present study to analyze the effect of yoga exercises for human well-being and enhancing mental health. Selected sample was adult men. Total 60 healthy adult men were selected and divided in two groups namely experimental group (yoga group) and control group. Their mental health was assessed by mental health inventory (Jagdish and Srivastava, 1983). They participated in a pre-test and post-test randomized groups design. The experimental group performed the selected yoga exercises for 16 weeks. Mean, SD, and 't' value etc. Statistics techniques were used for data analysis and interpretation. The results revealed that there was significant difference between mental health dimensions (positive self-evaluation, perception of reality, group oriented attitudes, autonomy and integration of personality) of the Yoga group and control group. The Yoga group has found better mental health as compared to control group. In general it can be concluded that yoga exercises has a positive impact on human well being and help to enhance mental health.*

**Keywords :** Yoga, Health, Mental health, well-being.

## **Introduction**

The practice of yoga increased well-being and mental health, reduced stress, and helped in treatment (Balkrishna, 2007). In a single group study on seventy-seven participants, subjective well-being significantly improved after ten days of yoga and lifestyle changes along with a reduction in state and trait anxiety, in different participants (Sharma, Gupta and Bijlani, 2008 and Gupta, Khera, Bijlani and Sharma, 2006).

## **Yoga**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated about Yoga in United Nations General Assembly on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 in this word - "Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. This tradition is 5000 years old. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with you, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day".

Therefore, importance of Yoga in human being United Nations General Assembly has decided to celebrate 21<sup>th</sup> June as International Yoga Day. All Countries had celebrated first Yoga Day on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2015.

Yoga practice has been documented for over 2,000 years (NCCAM, 2008) and was originally a branch of Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy remains the cornerstone of the modern yoga form known as Ashtanga yoga. The holistic practice of yoga includes ethical, physical, emotional, spiritual and mental disciplines as well as the attainment of enlightenment (Burkett, 2006).

Yoga has many physiological and psychological benefits. Numerous studies have asserted that yoga practice improves flexibility and strength (Cowen & Adams, 2005; Schure, Christopher & Christopher, 2008). In addition, Cowen and Adams (2005) found that yoga lowers blood pressure and it may have a positive effect on immunity (Schure, Christopher & Christopher, 2008).

In terms of psychological benefits, Schure, Christopher & Christopher (2008) confirmed



that yoga improves perceived quality of life and lowers anxiety and depression. Cowen and Adams (2005) reported that there is a strong correlation between perceived stress and yoga activity and Milligan (2006) recommends yoga as a stress reliever for college students. A recent study in evidence based complementary and alternative medicine found that yoga decreased depression, anger and anxiety and increased mental health.

### **Mental Health**

Mental health is perceived as a positive source contributing to asset development individually, socially, and economically (WHO, 2004). The World Health Organization conceptualized mental health separate from mental ill-health and defined the concept as: a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community. Better mental health outcomes in family are characterized by greater adaptation in society and other all environments, improved quality of life (Hoagwood et al., 1996; USDHHS, 1999).

Most studies described beneficial effects in favour of the yoga interventions on mental health aspects such as depression (Pilkington, al, 2005; Uebelacker, et al, 2010; Brown and Gerbarg, 2005 and Saeed, 2010), mental fatigue (Boehm, Ostermaan, Millazo and Bussing, 2011), anxiety (Kirkwood, 2005; Uebelacker, et al, 2010; Brown and Gerbarg, 2005; Ray and Gallen, 1999 ) and stress (Ospina and Bond, 2007; Chong, 2011 and Singh, 2012).

### **Objectives of the study**

- 1) To assess the effects of a yoga programme on human well-being and enhancing mental health.
- 2) To compare dimension of human well-being and enhancing mental health among experimental group (Yoga group) and control group.

### **Hypothesis**

- 1) There is no significant effect of Yoga practices on human well-being and

enhancing mental health of the participated in Yoga Programme.

- 2) There will be no significant difference between experimental group and control group in their well-being and mental health aspects.

### **Method**

#### **Design**

This study used an experimental pre-test, post-test design, with equivalent groups. participants were randomly selected and after that assigned into two groups: an experimental group (yoga practices) and a control group.

#### **Sample**

The participants were selected 60 men of the age range 28 to 40 years. They were divided into two groups i.e. experimental (30) and control groups (30). The experimental groups with age mean ( $\pm$ SD)  $33.42 \pm 3.4$  years and the control groups with age mean ( $\pm$ SD)  $34.03 \pm 3.7$  years. They participated in a pre-test and post-test randomized groups design.

#### **Variable**

Independent Variable - Yoga Practice

Dependent Variable - Mental Health

#### **Tool**

#### **• Mental Health Inventory (Jagdish and Srivastava-1983)**

This inventory was developed by Jagdish and Srivastava in 1983. The reliability coefficient of different dimensions of MHI (positive self-evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, Autonomy, group-oriented attitude, and environmental competence) were found to be more than 0.70 that was determined by split-half method using odd even procedure. The reliability coefficient of overall mental health was 0.73. The construct validity of inventory was found to be 0.54. This inventory is consisted of 56 items with responses ranked on a 4-point Likert scale with response options (1) always, (2) often (3) rarely and (4) and never. More score represent the better mental health.

#### **Procedure**

At first stage, mental health level of each group was measured by Mental Health Inventory



(MHI). Control and experimental group filled out the inventory twice in pre-test and post-test in the Yoga training hall. The experimental group was involved in selected yoga exercises which included Asana, Pranayama, meditation, and muscle relaxation with a special trainer. The yoga program consisted of two sessions each day of three months. The first session was between 06:00 am to 07:30 am in morning session and the second session was between 06:00 pm to 07:30 in evening session. In each session participants practiced voluntarily regulated yoga breathing (kriyas or cleansing techniques and pranayamas), loosening exercises (sukshma vyayamas), and yoga postures (asanas). In this yoga program the emphasis was on yoga breathing techniques. The breathing techniques included high frequency yoga breathing (Kapalbhati), breathing through alternate nostrils (anulom-vilom pranayama), exhalation with specific sounds (brahmari and

udgeeth pranayamas), and breathing with a period of breath holding or with a voluntarily partially constricted glottis (bahya and ujjayi pranayamas, respectively). This yoga program has come to be called Patanjali Yoga, as it is based on the traditional teachings of Patanjali (circa 900 B.C.) and has been taught by Swami Ramdev.

The control group participants were performing their routine activities. The post-test from both experimental and control groups were performed using mental health inventory after 16 weeks (4 months).

### Results

**Table 1:** Shows Mean, SD and significance difference between experimental group and control group on mental health and its dimensions of before and after Yoga treatment

Findings of Table-1 revealed that experimental group (Yoga group) and control group differ significantly on total mental

Dimension of Mental Health	Experimental Group		Control Group		t value
	States	Mean/SD	States	Mean/SD	
Positive self-evaluation	Before	24.89/3.68	Before	25.78/3.34	0.98N
	After	29.89/4.68	After	25.78/3.34	5.11**
Perception of Reality	Before	25.11/3.33	Before	24.13/3.11	1.18N
	After	29.87/3.82	After	26.54/4.12	4.59**
Integration of Personality	Before	25.21/3.89	Before	25.47/3.11	0.91N
	After	28.79/4.11	After	24.57/3.31	6.19**
Autonomy	Before	23.81/3.89	Before	23.13/4.11	0.61N
	After	28.08/3.33	After	25.69/4.11	2.46*
Group oriented attitude	Before	25.09/3.69	Before	25.81/4.43	0.81N
	After	27.03/2.77	After	25.11/3.83	2.20*
Environmental competence	Before	16.11/2.11	Before	17.13/1.89	1.96 N
	After	17.08/1.80	After	16.88/1.52	1.02 N
Total Mental Health	Before	<b>140.22/8.43</b>	Before	<b>141.11/9.64</b>	0.38 N
	After	<b>160.74/8.78</b>	After	<b>149.36/10.09</b>	7.78 **

\*=(P<0.05), \*\*=(P<0.01), N= Not significant



health ( $t=7.78, p<.01$ ) more specifically on five dimensions of mental health that is positive self-evaluation ( $t=5.11, p<.01$ ), perception of reality ( $t=4.59, p<.01$ ), integration of personality ( $t=6.19, p<.01$ ), autonomy ( $t=0.38, p<.05$ ) and group oriented attitude ( $t=2.20, p<.05$ ). Results also revealed that on positive self-evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy and group oriented attitude yoga group scored higher in terms of mean score than control group.

Findings of Table-1 revealed that before yoga training there has no significant difference between experimental group and control group about their mental health ( $t=0.38$ ). But, after yoga training there has significant difference about mental health in both of experimental and control group. However yoga group scored higher in terms of mean score on total mental health than control group. The yoga group has better mental health than compared to control group.

**Table 2 :** Shows Mean, SD and significance difference between pre-test and post-test experimental group and pre-test and post-test control group about their mental health.

Findings of Table-2 revealed that in control group there is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test about their mental health

exercise. Here the attempt was made to know whether there is difference between control group and experimental group for their well-being. It has been found that there was the difference between control group and experimental group for their well-being. Participant of experimental group were found happy, energetic, enthusiastic, optimistic and ready to accept the challenges.

### Conclusion

Yoga is a part of spirituality and Indian philosophy emerged as significant predictors for the dimensions of well-being and enhancing mental health among experimental group. Further  $t$ -value revealed experimental group and control group differ significantly on their well-being and mental health. From the above results this concluded that there is positive impact of yoga training on the human well-being and enhancing mental health.

Mental Health	Experimental group		Control group		
	Mean	SD	t value	Mean SD	t value
Before	140.22	8.43	8.55**	141.11 9.64	1.70 N
After	160.74	10.09		145.36 9.69	

\*\*=( $P<0.01$ ), N= Not significant

( $t=1.70, NS$ ) whereas, there is significant difference between pre-test and post-test in experimental group about their mental health ( $t=8.55, p<.01$ ).

Researcher asked some questions regarding their well-being at the time of establishing rapport and whenever they were free from their

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