

An influence of Practice of Yoga for increasing Concentration: A Systematic Approach

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Abstract

In today's fast-paced, digital world, we often face challenges like stress, anxiety, and difficulty in concentrating. Yoga, an ancient practice originating in India, offers a holistic approach to physical and mental well-being that can help address these challenges, particularly by improving focus and concentration. The processes of attention, concentration, and memory are the main factors in learning. Yoga is an ancient technique that is claimed to enhance physical and mental well-being. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the influence of yoga on concentration by integrating physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation, promoting a harmonious connection between the mind and body. In improved brain function, yoga postures, particularly balancing poses, stimulate the nervous system and enhance communication between brain cells, which can improve focus and concentration. In stress reduction, Yoga is renowned for its ability to reduce stress and anxiety, which are major barriers to concentration. Deep breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques activate the parasympathetic nervous system, lowering stress hormone levels and promoting mental clarity. Through enhanced Self-Awareness and mindfulness, yoga fosters mindfulness, encouraging individuals to be present and aware of their thoughts and sensations without judgment. Incorporating yoga practices into daily routines, even for short durations, can significantly enhance concentration, memory, and overall cognitive function in students. By calming the mind, reducing stress, and fostering mindfulness, yoga provides students with valuable tools to excel academically and develop essential life skills like self-discipline and emotional regulation.

Keywords: Concentration, Attention, Well-being, Harmonious, Parasympathetic nervous system, Self-Awareness, Emotional regulation.

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Introduction

In this paper, I am trying to make an assessment by paying sufficient attention to the practical problems around us. Most of us struggle with the effects of our 'monkey minds'. Constantly wavering, running from one thought to another and thinking of endless to-do lists leads to low productivity, lack of focus and concentration. Whether we are working professionals, students or home-makers, lack of focus disrupts how we show up every day and how we perform our duties. Incorporating simple yoga techniques in our day-to-day lives can have a strong impact on achieving better concentration.

Objectives

One of the main objectives of this paper is to establish Yoga as having a strong impact on the mind and body, improving flexibility, strength and balance, contributing towards maintaining better focus and clarity of thought. This systematic approach implicitly assumes that there are many things that affect focus and concentration today. From unhealthy sleeping patterns to a poor diet, external stressors and more, our minds are always getting distracted by various things. Nowadays, anxiety, mental tension, and stress have become almost inevitable companions of ours. The negative impact of this leads to a lack of attention, concentration, and memory. To have good concentration and attention, one has to be relaxed firstly this can be achieved by Yoga. The relaxation response of yoga can improve attention, concentration, and memory. Yoga is an ancient science and way of life which includes physical movements, postures, meditation, and pranayama. It shows that yoga practice could help participants to focus on their mental resources, information processing more quickly and more accurately, and also learn, hold, and update information effectively. Yoga has shown a positive impact on mental health and well-being, attention - concentration, memory, and physical fitness. Yoga can increase the ability to concentrate, focus, and improve memory.

Review of Literature

A systematic review examining the effects of yoga on individuals with cognitive impairment reported improvements in attention, mental flexibility, and utmost overall cognitive functioning. The findings suggest that yoga may serve as an effective non-pharmacological intervention for maintaining and improving cognitive performance. Research on specialized forms of yoga has also indicated beneficial effects on concentration and cognitive abilities. Contemporary neuro scientific evidence suggests that yoga influences brain structure and function through a combination of physical postures, controlled breathing, and meditation. These practices promote neural plasticity, increase cerebral blood flow, and enhance attentional control mechanisms, thereby facilitating better concentration and sustained focus. As human beings and moral philosophers, we owe a responsibility to find out some ways in which Yoga helps boost focus and concentration. Yoga practices encourage us to focus on the breath during the practice. Focusing on the breath immediately draws the mind to one-pointed focus. With practice, we become more aware of where the mind is, and it strengthens the ability to focus better. Normally, when we are tense, worried or stressed, the mind tends to wander more. There is a tendency to get side-tracked from the task at hand. Yoga has a calming impact on the nervous system. It brings about balance and harmony, encouraging us to stay calm through any situation, allowing the

mind to stay focused. One of the biggest benefits of yoga is its impact on alleviating stress. When stress is lower or managed better, focus and concentration are far better. Practicing balancing yoga asana will activate and balance the nervous system and is also effective in improving concentration. They improve blood circulation to the brain, nourishing and stimulating the organs in the region. While practicing yoga asanas, ensure us coordinate with the breath to improve focus and concentration. This heightened self-awareness can help students recognize and manage distractions before they affect their focus. Increased Blood Flow to the Brain: Yoga postures and controlled breathing can increase blood flow to the brain, providing essential nutrients and oxygen crucial for optimal cognitive function. Improved Sleep Quality : Yoga promotes relaxation and reduces anxiety, leading to better quality sleep.

Methodology

Pranayama improves vitality, boosts energy, releases blockages, improves oxygen supply and nourishes the brain. Through breath regulation, we can improve mental concentration and decrease disruptive thoughts. The most effective Pranayama technique to improve focus and concentration is Alternate Nostril Breathing, which cleanses the subtle energy channels, removes stress and has a soothing effect on the nervous system, improving concentration.

Practice Frontal Lobe Cleansing, which cleanses the area on the front of the brain, refreshes the brain cells and energize the nervous system. Kapal Bhati will release fatigue and laziness, and improve focus and concentration.

Practicing Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) is extremely helpful for focus and concentration. Meditation helps the mind to bring one-pointed focus by drawing attention to a single object (a symbol or a mantra, for example). It helps us observe thoughts as they pass by, without judging or reacting, and instead keeping our focus on the object. We'll notice unnecessary thoughts becoming lesser and lesser, more clarity of thought, better control of emotions and improved concentration. Our presence of mind and awareness improve, which helps us stay focused when we find ourselves getting distracted during an everyday task or activity. Brain activity is associated with different cognitive processes and plays a critical role in different yogic practices. Yoga is the best lifestyle modification, which aims to attain the unity of mind, body, and spirit through Asana (exercise), Pranayama (breathing), and Meditation. Various studies in adult populations have proved the importance of yoga, which is better than exercise in its ability to improve psychological outcomes. Some studies suggest that there is a positive relationship between fitness level and concentration of attention and memory among children. Working memory forms a core component of the executive function of the brain. They form a part of the central executive functions, along with planning, abstract thinking, and task coordination.

In the Yoga Sutras of Maharishi Patanjali, we find a definition of Yoga which says, "Yoga is the cessation of the modifications of the mind." The Bhagavad Gita restates this sentiment: "Undoubtedly, the mind is restless and difficult to restrain, but it is subdued by practice." These words remind us that yoga for concentration is not just a mental skill but a spiritual practice that can be cultivated through discipline. There are several things in this world that distract us today, so the ability to focus and concentrate has become a rare skill. Whether we're working on a project, studying for

an exam, or simply trying to stay present in daily activities, yoga for concentration can make all the difference. By incorporating yoga for concentration improvement into our routine, we can surely enhance our mental focus and clarity.

Focus and concentration are often used interchangeably, but they refer to distinct aspects of mental discipline. Yoga for concentration helps in both areas: focus is the ability to direct our attention toward a specific task or object, while concentration is the sustained effort to maintain that focus over time. In daily life, these abilities are important for productivity and success. Whether we're writing an important report, engaging in a meaningful conversation, or meditating, focus helps us to begin, and concentration ensures us to stay throughout the course. By practicing yoga regularly, we can train our mind to focus more effectively and sustain concentration for longer periods. Yoga for concentration helps in several ways:

Calming the Mind: Yoga reduces stress and anxiety, common barriers to concentration.

Balancing the Nervous System: Through pranayama and meditation, yoga balances the autonomic nervous system, promoting a state of relaxation and alertness.

Increasing Self-Awareness: Yoga encourages mindfulness, allowing you to recognize and manage distractions before they overwhelm your focus.

Yoga Poses for Concentration: To further enhance our concentration, consider incorporating some yoga poses for concentration into our practice. Here are the steps to four asanas for improving concentration.

1. Yogendra Padmasana: This pose, reminiscent of a lotus blooming amidst muddy water, symbolizes peace and stability. It's an effective asana for concentration.

Starting Position: Sit on the floor with legs stretched out.

Sequence of Steps: Bend the right leg and place the right heel at the root of the left thigh. Do the same with the left leg. Ensure the knees are pressed to the ground, and the feet are tight against the thighs. Keep your body erect, chin parallel to the ground, and hands in Bhairava mudra.

Posture Release: Gently open the eyes, release the legs, and stretch them forward.

Benefits: Enhances awareness of body and breath, improves concentration.

2. Yogendra Sthitaparthanasana: This pose promotes physical and mental balance, enhancing mental poise and spiritual elevation. It's among the effective yoga poses for concentration.

Starting Position: Stand with feet together, body weight distributed evenly, and eyes focused straight ahead.

Sequence of Steps: Fold the hands in Namaskar mudra in front of the chest, keep the shoulders and elbows relaxed, and observe the breath.

Posture Release: Open your eyes and lower your hands to the sides.

Benefits: Calms the mind, relaxes nerves, and improves concentration.

3. Yogendra Ekpadasana: This pose helps achieve steadiness of body and mind, making it a great asana for concentration.

Starting Position: Stand erect with feet together and hands at your sides.

Sequence of Steps: Lift the left leg and place it against the right thigh. Join both palms in front of the chest. Fix your gaze straight ahead and maintain the pose, breathing normally. Repeat with the right leg.

Posture Release: Gently bring the leg down and switch to the other side.

Benefits: Develops equilibrium, sharpens awareness, and calms the mind.

4. Yogendra Utkatasana: This pose strengthens neuromuscular coordination between various body parts, contributing to yoga for concentration.

Starting Position: Stand with feet parallel, hands at the sides.

Sequence of Steps: Raise the hands parallel to the ground and balance on the balls of the feet. Lower your body into a squat position while keeping the hands extended.

Posture Release: Rise back to the starting position, balancing on tiptoes, and lower the hands and heels.

Benefits: Develops steadiness of mind, increases focus, and imparts balance and determination.

Benefits of Yoga for Concentration

Enhanced Mental Capacity: Yoga for concentration improvement clears mental clutter, allowing you to focus more effectively.

Improved Attention Span: Regular practice increases your ability to maintain focus over extended periods.

Reduced Stress and Anxiety: Yoga for concentration lowers stress hormones, which can otherwise impair concentration.

Better Self-Control: Yoga for concentration improvement helps you develop the discipline needed to resist distractions.

Increased Energy and Alertness: By balancing the body's energy, yoga poses for concentration keep you alert and focused throughout the day.

Integrating Yoga into our Daily Routine

Morning Practice: Start your day with a short yoga session to set a positive tone and improve focus.

Work Breaks: Incorporate quick yoga stretches or breathing exercises during work breaks to refresh your mind.

Evening Practice: End your day with relaxation techniques to prepare your mind for restful sleep.

Developing focus and concentration begins with understanding and practice. Yoga for concentration offers a powerful practice for developing these essential skills, blending asanas, pranayama, kriya, dharana, and dhyana into a holistic approach. When you incorporate these special techniques and yoga poses for concentration into your daily routine, you can enhance your ability to concentrate, manage stress, and lead a more balanced and fulfilling life.

Swami Vivekananda said, "The powers of the mind are like the rays of the sun when they are concentrated, they illumine." Feel the transformative power of yoga and watch as your focus and concentration reach new heights. With consistent practice and dedication, you can tap into your full potential and achieve greater success in every aspect of your life.

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