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A Review Article on Health benefits of Yoga With special reference to *Suryanamaskara*

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ABSTRACT: -

In today's life various type of disease takes place, most of the things takes place due to lack of physical activity, mental stress, depression, unbalanced food, & other reasons. Many people who practice yoga do so to maintain their health and well-being, improve physical fitness, relieve stress, and enhance quality of life. In this article I have tried to explain the technique of practicing and health benefits of *Suryanamaskara* to people who practice it regularly in proper way.

Key words - *Yoga, Suryanamaskara*



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INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an exercise originated and practiced in India 1000 years ago. There are many forms of yoga which differ in specific practices. Common elements of many forms include postures (asanas), which are held for a certain period of time, controlled breathing exercises (pranayama) and meditation (Dhyana). Yoga practice has the general aim of facilitating the development and integration of the body, mind and breath to produce structural, physiological and psychological effects. *Suryanamaskara* is one among the asana which is a complete exercise to the body and mind, it should be practiced along with pranayama. The technique and health benefits of *Suryanamaskara* is explained in this article.

A brief description about Yoga

Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word *Yuj* means to join, attach or union. Union between self and divine self, to make us know and time into our intrinsic nature ^[1].

Yoga is an art and science of health living. It combines physical exercise, mental meditation and breathing techniques to strengthen the muscles and relieve stress. It unites the individual spirit with the Universal spirit of god. The aim of Yoga is to unite or combine individual soul, body and mind in order to attain the utmost peace of mind ^[2].

The introduction of the system of Yoga by Patanjali is by way of an instruction that the mind has to be controlled- *Yogahs-chitta-vritti-nirodhah*. He explains that Yoga is control of the mind, restraint of the mind-stuff. Yoga is an experiential science. The most important benefit of yoga is it balances our physical and mental conditions. The aging process (old age), can be slowed down by practicing yoga. By keeping the body clean, flexible and well lubricated, we can significantly reduce the catabolic process of cell deterioration. To get

the maximum benefits of yoga we need to combine the practices of *Yogasanas, Pranayama and Dhyana* ^[3].

Hatha yoga is the most common form of yoga practiced in Western societies. It involves asana to develop strength, flexibility, balance and the co-ordination of the mind, body and breath, in combination with pranayama and meditation exercise to calm the mind and develop self awareness. Regular practice of yoga enhances awareness of mind and body.

Yoga is classified into *Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Hatha Yoga*.

Bhakti Yoga – It gives importance to devotion and realization of god or natural object in order to attain satisfaction, discipline and happiness of life. In this Yoga it emphasizes practice of meditation, by this mind is controlled and mind controls the function of entire body.

Karma Yoga – Karma means action. Karma Yoga enables people to act in a right direction which helps to render good service to the society.

Jnana Yoga – Jnana Yoga is a system of Yoga of knowledge or jnana, intelligence and devotion. It is the jnana that helps to know the many things leading to realization of god. It is the jnana which helps to realize oneself and also to provide realization of mind and body.

Hatha Yoga – This system of Yoga is for attaining perfection of mind and body through physical exercise. Hatha Yoga provides health and control of mind and body. It has 3 aspects like – *Yogasana, Pranayama and Dhyana* ^[4]. Hatha Yoga refers to physical exercise, exercise to mind and various types of asanas and pranayama. Patanjali Maharishi in his sutras mentioned Ashtana yoga, which helps to attain physical health and mental health and helps to realize oneself. They are –

1. **Yama** – It is self discipline which is the most important to all human beings. *Yama* is the *sva adhyaya*, one must establish or build the character like nonviolence, non-stealing and

self discipline in life to attain perfection and also truth, honesty are necessary to overcome the basic desire. Only by this Yama self discipline can be attained.

2. *Niyama* – It is the observance, it includes *Five Niyama Such As Svacha, Santhosha, Tapas, Svaadhyaya And Ishvara Pranidhana*. *Svacha* refers to purification of ones body, mind and heart. *Santhosha* refers to contentment in all situations. Everyone should practice to attain contentment in all situations. *Tapas* refers to disciplined life with devotion to attain mortal virtue. *Svaadhyaya* refers to attaining knowledge by regular study. *Eshwara pranidhana* refers to bhakti or devotion to correlate inner self and divine self.
3. *Asana* – Asana refers to body discipline. It is also called as Yoga pose or posture. The systemic practice of asana provides both body and mind control in order to attain health in life and also sadhana or perfection in life. Asana provide spiritual and physical benefits. It improves flexibility, strength and balance and to reduce stress and also to alleviate many disease such as asthma, diabetes etc.
4. *Pranayama* – Prana means breath or vital energy in the body and *ayama* means control. So Pranayama means control of breath. Practice of pranayama achieves the balance in activities of prana which results healthy body & mind [5]. It refers to breathing exercise which clear the physical and emotional obstacles in our body to free the breath and so the flow of prana (life energy). By practicing this technique we can utilize and strengthen the whole range of our respiratory organs. Breathing patterns is linked to our emotion states. We will breath in different way when we are angry, excited, tired and nervous. We can energize or calm or balance ourselves by changing our breathing patterns. Pranayama practice or techniques should done in every asanas.
5. *Prathyahara* – It refers to restoration of senses to attain purity of mind by enhancing its

respective objectives. It refers to withdrawal of the 5 senses from external objects to be replaced by the mentally created senses of an enlightened diet. One who practice *prathyahara* can attain control over the mind.

6. *Dharana* – It means inner abstraction, means binding the mind in place or uniting the 5 senses of perception together in order to control the mind. In this stage one can set his mind for dhyana & control the mind and senses by which one can attain self realization.
7. *Dhyana* – Dhyana or meditation is practiced to achieve mental purity. It involves control over sense perception, can control over mind and body. The ultimate purpose of practicing Dhyana is to attain happiness.
8. *Samadhi* – It is a process which leads to realization of mind. It is a stage of isolation having complete unawareness of all objects in world. In *Yogasana, Shavasana* provide total relaxation to body and mind, it resembles the concept of samadhi. In this stage complete perfection is attained in all consciousness function.

Suryanamaskara

It involves both flexibility of body and breathing technique. It involves 12 steps, they are

Pranamasana, Hasta uttanasana, Hastapadasana, Ashwasanchalanasana, Dandasana, Ashtanaga namaskara, Bhujangasana, Parvatasana, Ashwasanchalanasana, Hasta padasana, Hasta uttanasana, Pranamasana in order.

Technique of Practicing *Suryanamaskara*

It includes 12 pose or asana from *Pranamasana* to the same to complete one count of *suryanamaskara*.

Start with *Pranamasana* by joining both the legs and hand joining in front of chest, stretch both hands back (*Hastauttanasana*) and bend forward down ,touch the hasta completely on

the floor beside the pada (*Hastapadasana*). Keep or place right or left leg back and look up (*Ashwasanc halanasana*). Then keep another leg back straight without bending the knee (*Dandasana*). Move or go down and touch both knee, chin and chest on the floor, in this stage there will be contact of eight *angas* on floor – 2 knees, 2 hands, 2legs, chin and chest (*Ashtanga namaskara*). After this look up with hip down (*Bhujangasana*), then bring head down with hip up (*Parvatasana*). Again from here keep one leg forward near hasta and look up with hip down (*Ashwasanchalanasana*), then keep another leg forward stretch both the legs up without knee bending and placing both hasta completely on floor (*Hastapadasana*). Later stretch both the hands up and stretch back (*Hastauttanasana*) and slowly towards *Pranamasana* to complete one count of *Suryanamaskara* ^[6].

Health Benefits of *Suryanamaskara*

It is a complete exercise to the body. It keeps the person free from disease, promotes balance in the body. Improves blood circulation, stimulates abdominal muscle, respiratory system and other system and organs. Promotes overall flexibility. It provides strength to whole body. It improves concentration and bring down stress ^[7].

DISCUSSION

Asanas like Suryanamaskara or any asana and Pranayama have a positive health effect on

physical and mental state. However, this remains to be shown in well-performed future studies. Health benefits of yoga always can not be proven scientifically but it should be experienced.

CONCLUSION

The public interest towards yoga is increasing day by day due to their beneficial effects in mental and physical health. *Suryanamaskara asana* practice is safe and can bring many health benefits to all, whether they are young, old, healthy or recovering from illness.

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12 steps of Suryanamaskara



1. Namasana



2. Hastauttanasana



3. Hastapadasana



4. Ashwasanchalanasana



5. Dandasana



6. Astanganamaskara



7. Bhujangasana



8. Parvatasana



9. Ashwasanchalanasana



10. Hastapadasana



11. Hastauttanasana



12. Namasana