



## PHYSICAL WELL BEING THROUGH YOGA

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**ABSTRACT** Man is a physical, mental and spiritual being; yoga helps promote a balanced development of all the three. Other forms of physical exercises, like aerobics, assure only physical well-being. They have little to do with the development of the spiritual or astral body. This paper named, yoga, way of weight loss attempted to aware the techniques of yoga for weight loss, not only physically but mental and spiritual ways.

**KEYWORDS :** Yoga, Physical Well being

"A person is said to have achieved yoga, the union with the Self, when the perfectly disciplined mind gets freedom from all desires, and becomes absorbed in the Self alone."

*-Bhagavat Gita*

Yoga is not a religion; it is a way of living that aims towards 'a healthy mind in a healthy body'. The ultimate goal of yoga is, however, to help the individual to transcend the self and attain enlightenment. In 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested United Nations to celebrate June 21 as the International Yoga Day as it is the summer solstice; the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

"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 fulfillment; 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 yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help in well-being. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day." — *Narendra Modi, UN General Assembly, September 2014.*

The art of practicing yoga helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keeps person relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. It improves respiration, energy and vitality. Practicing yoga might seem like just stretching, but it can do much more for the body from the way you feel, look and move.

Yoga asanas build strength, flexibility and confidence. Regular practice of yoga can help lose weight, relieve stress, improve immunity and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

With the growing trend of people getting more cautious of their expanding waistlines and increased instances of metabolic disorders - cancer, diabetes and others - there has been a sudden upsurge in people prioritizing their health and resorting to tailor-made diet plans and fitness regimes.

Yoga helps in the following 11 areas-

### 1. Stimulate the vital force of the liver

The liver has many essential functions. It is an extremely powerful detoxifier and cleanser. It purifies your blood. It processes fats, both good and bad kinds. If the liver is healthy and strong it can dispose of bad fats and put good fats to work for you. It gives you energy by storing the glucose and making coenzyme Q10 that powers your muscles. By doing certain yoga postures you are strengthening the vital force of the liver in profound ways that will bring it to optimum functioning.

The best postures for the liver are mainly backbends:

- Bhujangasana (cobra pose)
- Dhanurasana (bow pose)

### 2. Activate the thyroid gland

The thyroid secretes a hormone that regulates our metabolism. One of the main factors that define whether we have a high metabolism that burns a lot of fat is whether our thyroid is active or not. Many people

who suffer from weight gain have hypothyroidism ("hypo-" meaning low). There are certain postures that help to correct this dysfunction:

- Sarvangasana (shoulder stand)
- Matsyasana (fish pose)

### 3. Create the right pH balance – Alkalize!

If the body is too acidic (low pH), then the body will attempt to protect itself from the acid by storing fat and using it as a buffer. This is extremely dangerous because the visceral fat (the kind inside the organs and blood vessels) accumulates within the veins and arteries, narrowing the passage available for the blood and gradually obstructs the activity of the blood vessels. As a result, the heart is forced to overwork just to maintain the blood circulation. If this continues to happen then the heart gets exhausted and a heart attack occurs. This is known as arteriosclerosis. So the pH balance of the body is extremely important. The ideal pH balance is about 7.35. And most people struggling with their weight are too acidic.

Some of the best postures to increase alkalinity are:

- Paschimottanasana (seated forward bend)
- Janushirasana (head to knee pose)

### 4. Find the right balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

A lot of overweight people's bodies are under an immense amount of stress. Their nervous system is under pressure from lifestyle choices. They often sit at a desk out of the healing sun, under neon lighting. They breathe stale, air-conditioned air instead of fresh, clean, oxygen-rich air.

They stare at a computer screen for hours instead of looking at nature. They often feel rushed to meet deadlines and busy schedules. And if the nervous system is under stress then it will set off a chain reaction in the rest of the body. The body needs to be relaxed and soothed. This requires finding the right balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. The best yoga postures for this are:

Savasana

- (corpse pose)
- ViparitaKarani (legs up the wall)

### 5. Activate the internal heat in the nervous system.

There are many people who think that going to a hot yoga class is the best way to lose weight. That is far from the truth. Ancient yogis never heated their caves or hermitage in the Himalayas to 40 degrees just so they could practice asanas in the morning. They created warmth in the body through generating internal heat by creating nerve tension/length. This is the best way. This automatically makes the body feel warmer. This can be achieved by drawing the chin towards the chest in forward bends, thereby lengthening the femoral nerve and the spinal nerves. This heat burns up and purifies visceral (deep) fat and subcutaneous (superficial) fat. The best postures for this are:

- Paschimottanasana (seated forward bend)
- Anjaneyasana (lunge)

### 6. Move the body with strength.

Any yoga position that requires you to be active, either as you shorten or lengthen the muscles, will help with weight loss. This is because muscles are active tissue that consumes fat as fuel. If you build strong muscles they will be eating your fat stores even when you are resting. That is why strength work is very good for weight loss.

Arm balancing postures are great for this. Even basic arm balancing poses are great because they often engage every muscle, not just the arms or shoulders, but also the abdominals and legs.

Some great postures for this are:

- Bakasana (crane)
- PinchaMayurasana (feathered peacock)

### 7. Get your heart rate up

Many people think that getting the heart rate up through jogging is a good way to lose weight. Research shows that this is a misconception, and it is not a good way to lose weight at all. It can make a stressed nervous system even more exhausted, and lead to adrenal fatigue. What is much better for weight loss is getting the heart rate up for a very short burst and then dropping it right down, then getting it up and then dropping it down. This can certainly be achieved by an intelligent yoga practice.

Starting in a standing position at the front of your mat, do two slow rounds of Surya Namaskar (sun salutation) and then come back to standing and connect with your heart with palms together and eyes closed for a moment. Then repeat it again, perhaps this time making the pace a little faster. Continue a few rounds like this and you will have your heart rate at an optimum level; without the tiring and jarring effects your body gets from jogging.

### 8. Cleansing the colon

Many people have food matter blocked up in their colon. This makes them bloated. Severe bloating can appear as obesity. Eventually if left untreated it can poison the blood and leads to disease.

There is a saying that, 'disease begins in the gut.' There is certainly some truth to that. Some people who consume a lot of meat or already struggle with a constipated colon should certainly not do any inversions for this reason, because the putrefied blood will rush to the higher organs and it will disturb the mind. Colonic irrigation may be beneficial in those cases. Drinking water free of chemicals like sodium fluoride and chlorine is essential because water will help flush the waste away, but the chemicals dumped into most western public water supplies will kill off good intestinal flora, and therefore should be avoided. Purchasing a good water filter is an excellent idea.

There are many yoga postures, mudras, and bandhas that cleanse the colon. Many are for the advanced practitioner. Some basic ones are:

- Utkas'epa Mudra (bellow's pose) to be done first thing in the morning upon waking
- Agnisara Mudra (fire pose)

Some advanced ones are:

- Mayurasana (peacock pose)
- Naulikriya

All the suggested postures should only be practiced on an empty stomach. They should be used under the guidance of a good yoga teacher. If they are used daily, correctly and consistently, in combination with good food habits, then balance will return to the body and mind and the health of the practitioner will be restored quickly.

### 9. Yoga relaxes your body and mind.

Being overweight is an indicator that something is out of balance in your life. Excess stress is a big factor that contributes to weight gain. Yoga is an easy way to help you relax. When you practice yoga, you bring a deep sense of relaxation to your body and your mind. As you relax, you begin to ease the stress in your life; weight loss will begin to happen naturally.

### 10. Yoga assists detoxification.

Being overweight is a sign that your body is high in toxicity. Detoxifying your body can help you to lose weight for good.

When your body is toxic, it means that your detoxification organs (such as your liver and kidneys) may not be working effectively. When these organs aren't working optimally your body will tend to hold on to excess weight.

Doing yoga is an excellent place to start detoxifying your body. Yoga tones up the inner organs and helps them to work optimally again.

### 11. Yoga helps release stuck emotions.

What most weight loss experts won't tell you is that being overweight

almost always has an emotional component. Often in the busy-ness of everyday life; we squash down our negative feelings with food or other addictions. Used in this way, food is used to numb or suppress feelings. Left unaddressed, these 'pent-up' feelings can become stuck in the body.

Yoga is one tool that you can use to access and release these stuck emotions.

Being on the yoga mat gives you the opportunity to notice your feelings. As you become conscious of your feelings, then you're in a position to be able to address them. Not only does yoga help you to notice how you're really feeling about something, it also helps you connect with your personal power so that you have the courage and confidence to express how you feel.

Expressing how you feel is the key to feeling good about yourself and is an important aspect of losing weight.

### CONCLUSION

If the yoga postures are practiced under the guidance of a good teacher then very quickly the causes can be addressed and the benefits will show. Not only will the excess weight be quickly shed, but health will also be restored

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