



Yoga may help mental disorders

YOGA HAS SHOWN

promising results in major psychiatric disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, ADHD and sleep complaints, say findings from a review of over 100 studies.

Emerging evidence in support of the 5,000-year-old Indian practice is “highly promising” and showed that yoga may not only help to improve symptoms, but also may also prevent stress-related mental illnesses, said P. Murali Doraiswamy, professor of psychiatry and medicine at Duke, who co-authored the study with Meera Balasubramaniam.

Yoga has positive effects on mild depression, affecting more than 350 million people globally, says WHO and sleep complaints, even in the absence of treatments, and improves symptoms tied to schizophrenia and ADHD which is linked with inattentiveness, over-activity, impulsivity, among children, the journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry* reports.

Yoga is a popular exercise and is practiced by 15.8 million adults in the US alone, according to a survey by the Harris Interactive Service



Bureau, and its holistic goal of promoting physical and mental health is widely held in popular belief, according to a Duke statement.

“However, yoga has become such a cultural phenomenon that it has become difficult for physicians and patients to differentiate legitimate claims from hype.

“Our goal was to examine whether the evidence matched the promise,” said

Doraiswamy.

The review by Duke University Medical Centre of more than a 100 studies, focusing on 16 high-quality controlled studies looked at the effects of yoga on depression, schizophrenia, ADHD, sleep complaints, eating disorders and cognition problems.

Benefits of the exercise were found for all mental illnesses included in the review, except for eating disorders

and recognition problems as the evidence for these was conflicting or lacking.

Yoga was found to influence key elements of the human body thought to play a role in mental health in similar ways to that of anti-depressants and psychotherapy.

One study found that the exercise affects neurotransmitters, inflammation, oxidative stress, lipids, growth factors and second messengers. *IANS*

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Balancing Your Pressure

MODERN LIFE IS full of glitches, deadlines, frustrations, fatigue and demands. For many people, stress is so common, that it has become a way of life. Stress is a normal part of life. In small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best. But too much stress can lead to emotional, psychological, and even physical problems - including heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pains, or irregular heart beats.

When you're constantly running in emergency mode, your mind and body pay the price. As the demands for modern day life keep increasing, stress affects our health and well-being adversely. More and more people are falling sick and stress levels keep increasing. One of the most common problems that people face due to stress is imbalance in their blood pressure. Your body produces a surge of hormones when you're in a stressful situation. These hormones temporarily increase your blood pressure by causing your heart to beat faster and your blood vessels to narrow. Reducing stress can help lower high blood pressure and boost your metabolism. It's important to learn how to recognise when your stress levels are out of control and if it's causing your blood pressure to soar.

The most dangerous thing about stress is how easily it can creep up on you. You get used to it. It starts to feel familiar, even normal. You don't notice how much it's affecting you, even as it takes a heavy toll. The most common symptoms of blood pressure are frequent headaches, severe anxiety, shortness of breath, dizziness, facial flushing or in extreme cases nose bleed. The trick is to identify these common symptoms and address the underlying stress immediately.

There are many holistic ways to deal with high blood pressure. The biggest and the most recommended is lifestyle change. Sleeping and waking up at regular times will help in leading a healthy life. Taking regular exercise or practicing yoga will help in balancing the pressure. According to Ayurveda consuming the garlic paste in buttermilk every day will lower your blood pressure. You can also mix honey with fresh lemon juice and drink this every morning. Alternatively mix two teaspoons of powdered cumin and fennel in a glass of water and drink this mixture twice in a day to balance your blood pressure. Every day practice of yoga and meditation will bring down high blood pressure and help you lead a healthy and well-balanced life.

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Skinny complex

Thin women find 'healthy' peers a threat

THIN WOMEN WHO are not comfortable with their bodies, consider peers with a 'healthy' weight as a threat, says a Spanish study.

Similarly, males prefer thin females more than women themselves and also find overweight females more unpleasant than reed thin women.

Researchers from the University of Granada's department of personality, evaluation and psychological treatment, found that thin women feel embarrassed and uneasy when they see themselves in a picture or video, especially if they are imitating the poses of a professional model.

Researchers co-led by Blanca

Ortega-Roldan Oliva, performed four experimental studies with university students involving 671 students, said a Granada statement.

Some 550 students participated in the first two studies (408 women and 142 men), 61 participated in the third study (28 women highly displeased with their body and 33 moderately unsatisfied with their body) and 60 in the fourth study (30 healthy women satisfied with their body and 30 women with bulimia nervosa unsatisfied with their body).

Oliva explained that the bodies most liked by men and women are those of professional female models with a normal weight.

“Men and women found these bodies highly pleasing and stimulating, although they made them feel a lack of control.

“This means that a sexy and stimulating body makes people feel a lack of control, as these bodies are considered difficult to attain or even unattainable,” said Oliva.

On the other hand, the study revealed that the body of a model with a normal weight negatively affects women that are highly unsatisfied with their body.

Thus, unsatisfied women consider these bodies “unpleasant, very activating and unattainable (perception of lack of control)”. *IANS*

