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Yoga as a Therapy of stress management

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Abstract

Yoga is a traditional mean of mind and body practice of self-development. It increases life expectancy with creating within peace, stability, happiness and contentment. Yoga has a divesting physically, mentally and socially effect on one's body. Yoga practice is a boon when it comes to stress. Stress management is the amelioration of stress and especially chronic stress often for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. Stress produces numerous symptoms which vary according to persons, situations, and severity. These can include physical health decline as well as depression. Although life events continue to be the major focus of stress research, recent studies suggest that chronic stress should be a more central focus. An evaluation of this issue is presented that chronic stresses are more strongly related to depressive symptoms than acute stresses in all but one life domain. The interaction patterns exhibited by chronic and acute stresses are predominantly associated with lower levels of depression than those predicted by a main effects model. Chronic stresses may reduce the emotional effects of acute stresses. Although the processes through which this effect occurs are not clear, it is suggested that anticipation and reappraisal reduce the stressfulness of an event by making its meaning more benign.

Keywords: Stress, yoga techniques etc.

Introduction

Yoga is the ancient mantra for sound health and also to retain juvenility to a great extent. It has been practiced by several Rishi-Munis in ancient India and now has become a major concern among the modern genre too. But before coming to that point we should have clear understanding of what exactly the stress is. Stress is usually a mental pressure exerted due to fatigue or excessive work. It is also caused from worrying about the work or happenings in the past, present or future. Suppose there is a businessmen exporting his products to several countries, his business is doing fine and growing but somehow a situation comes and he finds his business on decline though there might be some cause for this and it could be short lived making his business to bloom once again, but within this short span the person develops stress which may lead to severe mental hazards. In the modern world we face stress in every sphere and every step of our life, whether we are in schools, colleges, offices etc. Stress is defined as a way of body response to any kind of environmental demand or threat. Stress is becoming a part of life in present days due to the increased workload and long working hours resulting in other health problems too. According to "Balaji Deekshitulu P.V" (Research scholar, Department of Psychology, Dravidian University, Kupaam, India). Stress is a Sudden Biological Change, but now in the new era of science It has become the curse and a silent killer also World Health Organization (WHO) says stress affects more than 300 million people globally, and is the leading cause of disability around the world. In our day to day life, To some extend stress is normal and favourable. On the other hand, if stress continues too often or lasts too long, it can have alarming effects. It can be linked to headaches, an upset stomach, back pain, and trouble sleeping, weaken immune system, making it harder to fight off disease It can disturb any one's physical, mental, emotional and behavioural balance.

Stages of stress

There are three stages a person goes through while suffering from stress.

- **Alarm Reaction:** The instant reaction of a body Towards Any physical, emotional, or mental upset or to compact the stressor is defined as alarm reaction. Your body prepare itself to react, to choose between a fight and flight.

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- **Resistance:** The body tries to become balanced but. If the alarm stage doesn't help you escape from a stressful situation, your body progresses to the next stage, where you remain in an alert stage for a longer time. As the stress continues, you may suffer with fatigue, sleep problems, and an overall discomfort. The hormones released during stressful times can damage your cells. If you have no time to recover from the next moment of stress, then your body remains prepared, which can lead to exhaustion.
- **Exhaustion:** After fighting hard with stress for days to weeks to months the body gives up completely. This stage also weakens our immune system and put us at risk for stress-related illnesses. Long-term stress depletes the epidermis of water, oxygen, and vitamin C, as well as increases hormone level. Struggling with stress for long periods can drain your physical, emotional, and mental resources to the point where your body no longer has strength to fight stress.

Effectiveness of stress management

Positive outcomes are observed using a combination of non-drug interventions: treatment of anger or hostility, autogenic training, talking therapy (around relationship or existential issues), biofeedback, cognitive therapy for anxiety or clinical depression

Stress management through yoga

Various techniques in yoga have been documented to help in stress management. These techniques work at an individual level and also at a collective level to ensure that there is significant respite from the condition of extreme stress. They help in relieving the physical as well as the psychological negative effects of the problem by ensuring a healthy and productive response to the stress stimuli. Yoga can have a positive effect on the parasympathetic nervous system and aid in lowering heartbeat and blood pressure. This reduces the demand of the body for oxygen. Yoga can also improve digestion, strengthen immunity, help in effective elimination of toxic wastes and also increase lung capacity. Breathing meditation techniques, Physical exercise like yoga & workout routine, Meditation, Breathing Meditation for Stress Relief, Pranadharana (fixation of mind on breath) Prana means breath and dharana means fixation of mind. The practice of pranadharna is done in 3 graded steps, Counting of breath-count exhalation and inhalation together as one breath. Feel the touch of the incoming and outgoing breath at the wall of the nose. Feel the thermal sensation on the soft palate. The mind becomes more sharp and controllable. It improves the concentration. It prepares the person for meditation. Deep Breathing. Meditation; the key to deep breathing is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible in your lungs. When you take deep breaths from the abdomen, rather than shallow breaths from your upper chest, you inhale more oxygen. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath, and anxious you feel. Sit comfortably with your back straight; breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should raise, Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale. Role of Yoga It is observed that yoga improves attention and emotional control as well as affects the nervous

system, making the parasympathetic nervous system more dominant and stabilizing the autonomic nervous system to enhance resistance to the effect of stress. A yoga practice including asana's, slow breathing, meditation, increases activation of P.N.S. & leads to mental relaxation. Yoga is a way of improving our self & understanding our internal state. Stress can be managed by following Stress Relief Strategies – When we are in stress our nervous system respond by releasing a flood of stress hormone. This hormone stimulates the body for emergency action by “fight-flight or freeze” reaction also known as stress response. The agent which causes stress is known as ‘stressors’. Stress causes many harmful effect on the body such as, Physical impact - Weight gain/loss, Unexpected hair loss, Heart palpitations, High blood pressure, Digestive symptoms (such as dryness of mouth, flatulence, nausea, butterfly stomach)etc. Emotional negative effect includes Mood swing, Anxiety, Can lead to depression & unhealthy coping strategies (i.e. alcohol, drugs). All these changes occur because of excess secretion of adrenaline as hypothalamus-pituitary adrenal glands become hyper active under stress. Prolong stress leads to increased ‘wear and tear’ of the body and mind.

Techniques of stress management

There are several ways of coping with stress. Some techniques of time management may help a person to control stress. In the face of high demands, effective stress management involves learning to set limits and to say-No! to some demands that others make. The following techniques have been recently dubbed Destressitizers by The Journal of the Canadian Medical Association. A destressitizer is any process by which an individual can relieve stress. Relaxation techniques, Artistic Expression, Fractional relaxation, Progressive relaxation, Spas, Spending time in nature, Stress balls, Natural medicine, Clinically validated alternative treatments, Time management, Listening to certain types of relaxing music, particularly: New Age music, Classical music, Psychedelic music. Avoid unnecessary stress, not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. Learn how to say “no” – Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life. & avoid people who stress you out. e) Stress management strategy Alter the situation. If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it by following points. Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. Be willing to compromise. When you ask someone to change their behaviour, be willing to do the same. Manage your time better. Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. Stress management strategy Adapt to the stressor If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude. Reframe problems. Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Focus on the positive. When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. Stress management strategy Accept the things you can't change some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change. Since everyone has a unique response to stress,

there is no “one size fits all” solution to dealing with it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies. Focus on what makes you feel calm and in control. We may feel like the stress in our life is out of our control, but we can always control the way we respond. Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of our thoughts, our emotions, our schedule, our environment, and the way we deal with problems. These are four simple & general strategies to manage stress, by adopting all these method we can get rid from the stress.

Conclusion

Yoga provides a unique way of managing stress through Pranayama (A breathing technique). Besides there are fast breathing movements, Dhyana (Meditation) is also a good method of controlling stress and concentrate his / her mind over one point with eyes closed. In-fact the mind reaches in a neutral stage thereby relieving mental exhaustion. Hence yoga provides the best cure to this serious ailment which is disrupting the life of millions of people daily. Anyone practicing yoga daily is rarely suspected to stress, as yoga creates the mind and body immune to stress. Finally Yoga has and is proving itself as Stress Management tool.

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