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## Discovering the benefits of yoga and improve quality of life

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### Abstract

Review of the benefits of regular yoga practice and improve of quality life. There is evidence that the practice of yoga improves physical and mental performance. The ancient practice of yoga is thousands of years old. It was first brought to India 3,500 years ago by nomads from central Asia practicing an intellectual discipline they referred to as 'Yoga'. The benefits of physical activity are well established, yet few older adults engage in adequate physical activity to optimize health. While yoga may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, few studies have focused on the efficacy of yoga-based physical activity to promote cardiovascular health in older adults. Yoga is a form of mind-body fitness that involves a combination of muscular activity and an internally directed mindful focus on awareness of the self, the breath, and energy. So, we can say that yoga is very beneficial to exploring the benefits yoga and improve quality of life.

**Keywords:** yoga, physical-mental health, quality of life

### Introduction

A 3,000 year old tradition, yoga, is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to health and is classified by the National Institutes of Health as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). The word "yoga" comes from a Sanskrit root "yuj" which means union, or yoke, to join, and to direct and concentrate one's attention(4). Yogic techniques, which aim at physical and mental self-culture, have convincing scientific bases and produce consistent physiological changes (1, 2, 3). Many international football clubs, American footballers and rugby, golf & cricket clubs in Australia, South Africa, New Zealand & the US have used this centuries-old practice from India as a progressive training technique for some time. Yoga is both preventive and therapeutic and has shown to offer both physical and mental benefits to the body and mind. Yoga is distinctly different from other kinds of exercise as it generates motion without causing strain and imbalances in the body. Therefore the practice is an ideal complement to other forms of exercise and an extreme advantage to any sport. The "postures" are the physical positions that coordinate breath with movement and we hold these positions to stretch and strengthen different parts of the body(1). Yoga is both preventive and therapeutic and has shown to offer both physical and mental benefits to the body and mind. If we go back to the roots of the word, we find that the term 'Yoga' has its origins in Sanskrit. It means to unite – Yoga helps the body to unite with the other vital metaphysical aspects of the mind and spirit. It is also often defined as a lifestyle which aims to have a healthy mind within a healthy body. Most simply defined, yoga is a set of poses or 'asanas', coupled with breathing techniques, which help impart strength and flexibility to the body while helping to balance the mind and its' thinking. Unlike other physical forms of exercises, like the aerobics, by practicing yoga, one can not only achieve physical health, but also mental and spiritual well-being(5).

### Types of yoga

- Ashtanga Yoga – Discipline of Mind
- Hatha Yoga – Discipline of Body and Prana
- Bhakti Yoga – Discipline of Emotions
- Karma Yoga – Discipline of Actions

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- Gyan Yoga – Discipline of Intellect

### What is yoga for fitness?

Yoga for fitness and wellness offers non-purist hatha and ashtanga style classes taught in multilevel format with safe modifications and is appropriate for all ages and fitness levels(6). Yoga can be good for strength, depending on your current fitness. Like all bodyweight training, it starts out challenging but can be difficult (though not impossible) to maintain that challenge over time. If you're starting from couch potato status, it's easy to find exercises—yoga poses or otherwise—that challenge you. If a pose feels fatiguing, or maybe leaves you with sore muscles, it's working to build strength. Yoga is excellent for flexibility. Some styles make it their main focus, but even the more athletic styles will usually spend plenty of time stretching as you get ready for the tougher moves of the day, and as you cool down from them. For those of us who never make time to stretch, this is a great way to get time in for flexibility training. The more time you spend stretching, the more it helps your overall flexibility, so a yoga class will do a lot more for you than a few 30-second stretches at the end of your gym days. Yoga also helps with neuromuscular training the coordination between your brain and muscles. Having good communication here helps with balance, and possibly with injury prevention in sports—neuromuscular training (though not yoga specifically) seems to reduce some types of knee injury. No matter how intense your yoga practice is, it's no substitute for running, cycling, or other aerobic training: you just never get to where you're breathing hard enough. Some studies have found benefits that may be linked to heart disease risk, like lower BMI and blood pressure. But in terms of cardio fitness—like being able to run faster or farther—yoga isn't likely to help.

### Quality of life

Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) is a multi-dimensional concept that includes domains related to physical, mental, emotional, and social functioning. It goes beyond direct measures of population health, life expectancy, and causes of death, and focuses on the impact health status has on quality of life. A related concept of HRQoL is well-being, which assesses the positive aspects of a person's life, such as positive emotions and life satisfaction. *Well-Being Measures* – assess the positive evaluations of people's daily lives—when they feel very healthy and satisfied or content with life, the quality of their relationships, their positive emotions, their resilience, and the realization of their potential. Health purpose yoga practice improve the quality of life.

### Benefits of yoga

Yoga's primary emphasis is upon general well-being although yoga has been shown to be beneficial in a variety of conditions; it is not considered a therapy for specific illnesses. Rather, yoga employs a broad holistic approach that focuses on teaching people a lifestyle way of being in the world. In the process however it is also found to bring a myriad of healing effects. According to swami sivananda, the benefits of pranayama include: the body becomes strong and healthy. Too much fat is reduced. There is luster in the face. Eyes sparkle like diamonds.

- Increased overall health, energy and vitality
- Greater body awareness
- A stronger and leaner body
- Increased flexibility with improved range of motion

- Better posture
- Natural weight loss
- Reduced stress and tension
- Improved concentration

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