

Yoga

Secrets Revealed



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Introduction

Yoga is something different to most people. It's quite diverse, and practitioners have different expectations when they start. That's perfectly okay. Whether your goal is greater enlightenment, a more toned and muscular body, or relief from disease, there's a yoga for you. This book will serve as a guide.

The philosophy of yoga has been around for 5,000 years. That's an undeniable staying power. Yoga is not just an 'exercise', it is a philosophy, a way of thinking rather than a religion. In ancient India, the word yoga meant union. It refers to a union of the entire self – mind, body, and spirit.

This union is achieved through physical poses, frequently called asanas, although asana is just one of the many types of yoga. These poses are meant to heighten awareness of mind and body, which makes yoga a natural corollary to meditation.

Today's researchers are discovering the many benefits of yoga. While it can increase spirituality, it also has the ability to heal many ailments and diseases, especially stress, immune system disorders, and heart problems. It also provides increased flexibility, which can reverse the aging process.



The more vigorous yoga practices are considered cardiovascular exercises. Along with a proper diet, you will be able to lose weight. The gentler types of yoga do not have cardiovascular benefits, so remember to do additional exercises.

Why are people becoming interested in yoga? The most common reason is to improve flexibility and physical health. Besides the physical benefits, yoga also boosts the mental power and paves way to spiritual enlightenment. For most, it's the spiritual awakening that turns yoga into an important part of their lives. This is a gradual but wonderful development and opportunity for personal growth. The essence of yoga is always to become a better version of oneself.

Chapter 01 – What is the Science of Yoga?

People have been practicing yoga for thousands of years. While the original purpose was to elevate to a greater spiritual level, it became clear that yoga benefits the person as a whole. Modern scientific research has shown that the tremendous overall health benefits of a yoga lifestyle.

Yes, yoga does improve the body, but surprising scientific research has shown that it changes the brain, as well. It's about becoming a better version of yourself and getting in touch with the real, authentic you as the brain becomes more uncluttered. It keeps us focused on the present. While yoga begins on the mat, it extends to our entire day as greater compassion and awareness becomes a part of our life.

Yoga won't provide untold riches, although the physical benefits are remarkable. The world is already filled with abundance, much of which we ignore. The real beauty of yoga is that it grounds us to the present, connecting us to the abundance that is within our grasp. A better, more fulfilled life is within our reach when we let go and simply accept what is there.

Each yoga pose, which usually involves stretches, has its own purpose and benefit. The practitioner becomes aware of tension and learns to release it. Yoga poses are very specific, and perfection comes with practice, but it is not the ultimate goal. Yoga involves a lot of stretching, but, more importantly, it creates balance by increasing flexibility and strength. Whatever type of yoga you practice, your body and mind simply improve.

Yoga is extremely diverse and individual, which makes it important to work at your own level of comfort. Don't use the person next to you in class as a guide, or even the teacher. Work the poses in the best way for you. This isn't a speed contest, and you have nothing to prove. Yoga is a lifetime commitment, not a competition.



Even if you are not used to exercising, you can practice yoga. You may not be as flexible as the next person, but you will get there. Yoga is always a work in progress and never a competition. While it is a physical practice, yoga will inevitably touch on your spiritual side. It unifies mind and body to become one.

Research conducted throughout the 20th century has found a myriad of physical benefits to practicing yoga.

Relief from Stress

Our lives are filled with daily stressors, and we know that stress can cause tremendous damage to the body and mind. The boss wants to talk, your spouse is upset, the mortgage is overdue, and the kids want the keys to the car. Just another typical day.

Holding yoga poses, stretching muscles, being focused on the presents, and breathing deeply and slowly helps us achieve a state of greater relaxation and harmony. We are able to consciously choose our response to stress instead of being at its mercy. Remaining calm under difficult circumstances is a choice, and yoga can provide the tools.

Yoga and Pain Relief

Studies have proven that practicing yoga can provide tremendous relief for people suffering from multiple sclerosis, arthritis, and other chronic conditions. We'll discuss its amazing effect on the auto-immune system and cardio system at greater length in other chapters.

Yoga and Breathing

Yoga combines physical movements with breathing. Slower, deeper breathing can alleviate stress.

Yoga and Flexibility

Yoga involves a lot of stretching, which strengthens muscles. Since yoga impacts the entire body, flexibility and elasticity from head to toe. It also loosens tight, tense muscles and helps us become more relaxed.

Yoga and Weight Management

Yoga does not burn up as many calories as some other exercise regimes. However, it does increase body awareness. People who practice yoga become more aware of what they eat and the effect such food has upon their health.

This usually leads to better, healthier eating habits and a natural loss of unwanted weight.

Yoga and Circulation

If your blood isn't supplying your body and brain properly with oxygen, your health will suffer. You need proper circulation for the brain to function, energy, and the growth of cells. Sluggish circulation can cause nerve and tissue damage, blood clots, dizziness, among other problems.

The thorough stretching in most yoga poses will improve circulation. The Camel Pose described in this book is an excellent way to improve circulation.

Yoga and Cardio Health

For patients who have experienced heart surgery, depression and anxiety can be a natural result. Yoga can be helpful in managing this type of post-operative stress. It can also lower blood pressure, serving as a preventive heart-healthy measure. The specific heart benefits will be discussed in a separate chapter.

There's No Hurry – Take Your Time

These benefits will take time to achieve. Yoga is not a two-week miracle program. So, as you begin with your yoga sessions, allow sufficient time for

the results to manifest themselves. You should see a huge difference in approximately two months. Whatever your reason for practicing yoga, you should notice an improvement in all aspects of your being.

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Chapter 02 – The Ancient History of Yoga

Yoga has become quite trendy these days as practitioners in their yoga pants and mat head toward the popular yoga studios to attend their weekly yoga session. What many these fashionable yogis probably are unaware of is the long history of yoga dating back to ancient times in India's and its spiritual roots.

Most of what we think of as yoga only dates back 150 years. While people today practice yoga for their health, its roots are entwined in rich spiritualism that took a lifetime to master. For ancient yogis, yoga was a way of life.

Mention of yoga first appeared around 1500 BC in Hindu literature. The first writings, in traditional Sanskrit, the term yoga, which means yoke, frequently refers to a dying warrior rising to heaven and reaching a higher power. The original concept of yoga was clearly to elevate those who deserved it to a higher level, to connect the individual to the universe as a whole.

For ancient Buddhists, yoga wasn't even a specific discipline. It grew out of the desire to attain spiritual goals and controlling both the mind and the body to achieve this.

These spiritual leaders recognized that man is fallible, but always capable of improvement by changing dysfunctional thinking. They recognized the power of the mind to bring about inner peace and alleviate suffering by broadening individual consciousness and becoming open to new ideas. They already understood the basics of the mind/body connection.

Yoga, including meditation, was and still is a quest for knowledge. Ancient practitioners thought, correctly, as it turns out, that knowledge would lead to a higher level of consciousness and existence.

Old writings describe several levels of being, with increasing knowledge bringing the practitioner to the next, higher, level. It was viewed as a process which for many encompassed a lifetime of learning. Yoga, the physical part of gaining enlightenment, was to prepare the way to meditation, which was spiritual in nature. The physical side of yoga began to emerge around 500 A.D.

By the third century, yoga was an accepted Buddhist practice involving a spiritual quest through meditation. This is the classical period, where the writings Vyasa introduced the all-important Yoga Sutras, which lists yoga as a precondition for a higher existence. For several centuries, the practice of yoga became an accepted practice to attain important personal values, although it was still far from today's set of poses.

More meditative, it was intended to help “transcend” human suffering and rise above it. It was also used to broaden, or deepen, consciousness as a path to personal enlightenment. Yoga was seen as a means to overcome destiny and regain control of the self. The beginning of training and controlling the mind is clearly emerging.

Up to the 15th century, while the West was in a state of constant strife and war, Eastern Buddhism focused on peace of mind. The difference between a Western and Eastern mindset is becoming more noticeable. By this time, the emphasis of yoga shifts from transcending pain to reaching a higher plane of existence. Man himself is to become a deity.

By the eighth century, hatha yoga, a mix of poses and meditation, came into practice. It is the beginning of “modern” yoga as we know today.

Modern Yoga

Yoga, the old spiritual quest of Buddhism, didn’t reach the West until the last 19th century. This coincided with an interest in Indian culture as a whole due to the burgeoning spice trade.

Western culture became intrigued by the writings of Swami Vivekananda, a monk who traveled to Europe and introduced the intelligentsia to Buddhist spiritual writings, especially the 4th century Yoga Sutras, which involve clearing the mind of unwanted thoughts and learning to focus on one thing.

Yoga, as we know it today, became popular in the U.S. in the 1940s, when young Americans began to take yoga classes. By the 1980s, the known health benefits of yoga increased its popularity, although the practice was seen as more physical than spiritual by the majority of practitioners.

By the 21st century, the devotees of American yoga have increased from 4 million at the turn of the century to 20 million by 2011. This increase in popularity is mainly due to the increased scientific studies of the numerous benefits of yoga, especially the alleviation of stress. Whether spiritual or not, people want to increase their health. Many people, however, still seek both mental *and* physical elevation. Yoga offers both.

While mastering the physical aspects of yoga is important, it is equally crucial not to lose sight of the spiritual benefits. Yoga is more than posting adorable selfies on Instagram.



Thousands of years ago, yoga was a preparation for the spiritual enlightenment of meditation. It was intended to prepare and relax the body for meditative practice. It is important not to lose sight of that.

To achieve your spiritual side, keep in mind the Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga:

1. You have unlimited potential. The purpose of yoga is to reach a high level of consciousness.
2. The universe is filled with abundance. To receive, learn to give.
3. Understand the universal law of cause and effect, known as karma. Your actions, whether positive or negative, will be returned in equal measure.
4. Don't resist life's forces. Your desires will manifest themselves when you least resist.
5. Be clear on what your desires and intentions are.
6. Stop struggling and remain open to all opportunities that come your way.
7. Know what your true purpose in life is.

Meditation, which will be discussed in the final chapter of this book, will help you achieve the spiritual laws of yoga.

Chapter 03 - Establishing the Mind/Body Connection with Yoga

The purpose of yoga has always been to connect the mind to the body. That is what the Buddhists had in mind thousands of years ago. Even then, it was clear that when the mind and body work as one, the self becomes healthier, more aware, and is able function at a higher level.

But how exactly are the mind and body connected? People who are aware of their thoughts and feelings are better able to cope with stress and life's adversities. They form better and healthier relationships. Ultimately, they believe in their ability to succeed.

We all face setbacks. It's how we handle them that makes the difference.

Emotional wellbeing is rarely a constant, however. Unexpected events can lead to depression, anxiety, stress, and confusion.

Losing a job, physical injury, the death or injury of someone we love, or the end of a relationship can cause emotional upheaval. Even good events, such as a new home, marriage, or new job can cause anxiety as we face the unknown.

When our mind experiences turmoil, the body immediately responds. As if you needed a reminder, the body is there to tell you that all is not well. The body does that in a number of ways, such as developing high blood pressure, an ulcer, insomnia, etc. These symptoms are all physical manifestations of an anxious mind. Whether we realize it or not, the mind and body work as a team.

So, where does yoga come into play?

As yoga increases our mental awareness, we become more aware of underlying emotions and thoughts. That allows us to express and acknowledge them rather than keeping them buried and allowing them to fester. Appropriately expressing negative emotions allows us to deal with them and put them behind us.

When we deal effectively with negativity, we are able to acknowledge the more positive aspects of our lives. Sometimes, we can become so overwhelmed, we no longer see anything good or positive, even if it is all around us. Yoga provides that necessary balance. Yes, work can be stressful, but we see that there is more to our lives than that. This is a healthy outlook that boosts the overall quality of our life when we need it.

A healthy mind/body connection provides us with the ability to cope with adversity as we become more resilient. Resilience is a skill that can be learned and developed. It prevents us from being victims of circumstances and gives us greater control over our lives. We can strengthen our resilience through relaxation and developing a calmer outlook.

Both yoga and meditation are invaluable tools for taking greater control over our thoughts, feelings, and our life in general. When we are in control, we sleep better, eat healthier, and connect with others on a higher level.

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