

Relevance of Yoga in Sports: A Study

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Abstract

Yoga has been practiced for around 5,000 years. Now schools and organizations of yoga have come into exercise. Yoga helps the muscles, tendons, and ligaments move through a full range of motion, thus cultivating balance and core strength which is fruitful to athletes in their chosen sports. An essential element in yoga is breath work (pranayama). The attention to breath during yoga can be considered one of the most important benefits to athletes. The mind-body connection in yoga is essential to helping athletes develop mental acuity and concentration. Moreover, yoga helps us to relax not just tight muscles, but also anxious and overstressed minds. Being more relaxed will also aid in athletic performance.

Key Words: Athlete, Yoga, Injury, Muscle, Performance

Introduction:

Yoga plays a significant role in our life. It is both preventive and therapeutic. It affects our mind and body. Therefore, the practice is an ideal complement to other forms of exercise and an extreme advantage to any sport. Yoga can help to check any imbalance in muscular development and will enable the body to function more efficiently. By holding steady postures and concentrating on deep abdominal breathing we can increase body awareness, relieve chronic stress patterns in the body, relax the mind, center ones attention, and sharpen concentration.

Obviously, this method for increasing strength and muscle mass is highly effective and efficient, yet it dramatically

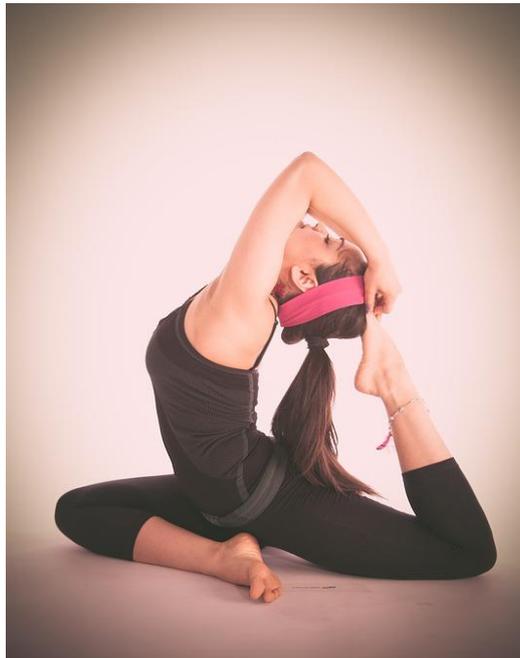
decreases flexibility. With the help of yoga, the athlete will not only increase flexibility, but also increase poise and balance from the practice of the yoga holding/balancing poses.

Fitness and Yoga in sports

Indeed, Yoga improves joint and muscular flexibility, which is crucial to the body's overall structural soundness. Enhanced joint and muscle pliancy translates to a greater range of motion, or an increase in the performance latitude for a particular movement or series of movements. For example, a swimmer with supple shoulder and hip joints is able to capture and pull more water than a swimmer with a more limited range of motion. The result is more forward movement per stroke as well as

enhanced muscular economy. In turn, so this way this increased range of motion provides a greater ability to strength condition a particular

muscle group due to the amelioration in overall force that can be exerted with each movement.



The ability to create a stress free mind is a significant benefit of yoga practice. The physical practice is used as a tool to enhance breath control, which helps improve focus and concentration, allowing clarity of thought and clear decision making. It is a valuable tool in any sporting arena.

Meditation is a mental practice helps to

- Reduce anxiety and stress

- Reduce cortisol levels and increase calming hormones
- Improve cognitive function
- Reduce blood pressure and heart rate
- Increase immune function
- These benefits combine to allow for better rest, sleep and recovery, as well as provide the ability to think more clearly under pressure.



Objectives of Yoga in Sports

Health, physical fitness and emotional stability are the objectives which bring yoga and physical education on a common platform for the benefit of the human individual. Health is a more general and

comprehensive term conveying the 'feeling of well-being', while physical fitness is a more specific term. Physical fitness is the capacity of an individual to perform a given task at a particular time. Health and physical fitness are not static.



Health and Yoga in Sports

Yoga has both preventive and therapeutic benefits. It has been shown to offer both physical and mental benefits to the body and the mind. There are many physical benefits of health and yoga: it improves flexibility and muscle joint mobility; strengthens, tones, and builds muscles; corrects posture; strengthens the spine; eases back pain; improves muscular-skeletal conditions such as bad knees, tight shoulders and neck, swayback and scoliosis; increases stamina; creates balance and grace; stimulates the glands of the endocrine system; improves digestion

and elimination; increases circulation; improves heart conditions; improves breathing disorders; boosts immune response; decreases cholesterol and blood sugar levels; and encourages weight loss. The mental benefits include: it increases body awareness; relieves chronic stress patterns in the body; refreshes the body by relieving muscle strain; relaxes the mind and body; centers attention; sharpens concentration; and frees the spirit. Studies have shown that it can relieve the symptoms of several common and potentially life-threatening illnesses; such as arthritis, arteriosclerosis, chronic fatigue, diabetes, AIDS, asthma and obesity. It is further believed that it even fends off the ravages of old age.



Health Benefits of Yoga:

1. Stable autonomic nervous system equilibrium, with a tendency toward parasympathetic nervous system dominance rather than the usual stress – induced sympathetic nervous system dominance.
2. Pulse rate decreases.
3. Respiratory rate decreases
4. Blood pressure decreases (of special significance for hypo reactors)
5. Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) increases
6. EEG-alpha waves increase (theta, delta and beta waves also increase during various stages of meditation)
7. Cardiovascular efficiency increases
8. Respiratory efficiency increases (respiratory amplitude and smoothness increase, tidal volume increases, vital capacity increases, breath –holding time increases).
9. Gastrointestinal function normalizes
10. Endocrine function normalizes
11. Excretory functions improve
12. Muscular-skeletal flexibility and joint range of motion increases
13. Posture improves
14. Strength and resiliency increase
15. Endurance increases
16. Energy level increases
17. Weight normalizes
18. Sleep improves
19. Immunity increases
20. Pain decreases

Yoga improves our personality. It

- Strengthens deep connective tissue preventing or minimizing injury.
- Creates an overall body flexibility. Increases range of motion and mobility.
- Dramatically enhances physical balance by developing the athlete's awareness of his body's center place, thus keeping their body balanced in action, moment by

moment, giving the ability to recover from or prevent falls, while enhancing agility and maneuverability.

- Improves circulation, massages internal organs and glands for optimum health.
- The yoga breath circulates and detoxifies the LYMPH FLUID to speed up recovery time from training 15% faster, eliminating fatigue.
- The yoga breath builds up increases one's life force energy.
- Enhances sensory acuity, mental focus, concentration, mental clarity, will power, and determination. □ Dissolves pre competition anxiety and stress. Helps to balance & manage emotions that could cloud focus, concentration & judgment.
- Trains the athlete gets and stays in the mental zone.

Yoga plays a significant role in this promotion of sports ability. The

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fundamental principles like endurance, and mental preparation are basically required in any sports and physical education activities.

Conclusion:

Yoga in sports helps us in different ways and different levels in a sports- men life. By daily yoga practicing performance can be improved. A person needs to have a high degree of concentration and focus with a mind that is calm and controlled. Yoga can help a sportsperson to have evenness of mind and control of their thoughts even during stress and/or adversity. Yoga can play a key role in cultivating mind control and concentration which helps a sportsperson to perform at their peak leaves in short yoga helps us a lot.