



YOGA-BASED LIFESTYLE FOR POST-COVID RECOVERY: A REVIEW

Yoga

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant psychological distress globally, and yoga-based lifestyle modifications are emerging as a potential way to enhance health. This ancient Indian practice aims to achieve a balance of mind and body by controlling emotions, and its techniques have been shown to improve gas exchange in patients with cardiovascular disorders and those exposed to high-altitude hypoxia. Yoga can boost immunity and help prevent and treat common non-communicable disorders such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension, which are also risk factors for severe COVID-19. The Eastern mind-body practices have gained popularity during the pandemic due to the mental health concerns it created worldwide. Yoga is a simple, safe, and low-cost therapeutic alternative that can be practiced by anyone, anywhere. It can be a restorative individual activity easily practiced during periods of social isolation. In India, the Ministry of AYUSH has recommended yoga for post-COVID recovery. This review article focuses on the utility of yoga-based lifestyle modifications for post-COVID recovery and how the various yogic practices align with the principles of 'Yama' and 'Niyama' as defined by Patanjali.

KEYWORDS

Yoga, COVID-19, Lifestyle Disease.

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 (coronavirus disease) pandemic has affected millions of people worldwide, leaving many individuals with post-COVID-19 syndrome, a condition characterized by persistent symptoms after the initial infection has resolved. Yoga has been suggested as a potential therapy for individuals recovering from post-COVID-19 syndrome due to its ability to improve lung function, reduce stress, and improve overall physical and mental health. Several research studies have investigated the role of yoga in post-COVID-19 recovery, demonstrating its effectiveness in improving physical and mental health outcomes. However, it is essential to take precautions and consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise routine, including yoga. By following the right guidance and taking necessary precautions, yoga can be a safe and effective way to support recovery from post-COVID-19 syndrome.

Despite the introduction of vaccines, there are still people who continue to struggle with the aftermath of COVID-19. Long-haulers, who experience post-COVID-19 syndrome, may experience various symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, joint pain, depression, and anxiety. Yoga has been used for centuries to promote overall health and wellness. In recent years, it has gained popularity as a complementary therapy for various health conditions. This paper aims to explore the role of yoga in recovering from post-COVID-19 ailments.

Background:

COVID-19 is a viral illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. While some people experience mild or no symptoms, others may develop severe illness requiring hospitalization. Even after recovering from COVID-19, some people may experience ongoing symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, joint pain, brain fog, and anxiety. These individuals are often referred to as long-haulers or suffer from post-COVID-19 syndrome.

Yoga is an ancient practice that originated in India thousands of years ago. Several studies have shown that yoga can help reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and improve sleep quality. Yoga is also known to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiovascular health.

Yoga aims to achieve equilibrium of mind and body by controlling a person's emotions. It involves a lifestyle based on fundamental moral precepts, physical postures or exercises, controlled breathing techniques, withdrawal of the senses, concentration, meditation, and the final state of consciousness, which is self-realization. Yoga can help with post-COVID recovery as it is a simple, safe, and low-cost therapeutic alternative that improves the physiological and biochemical parameters of practitioners. It can also help diminish the severity of the disease by preventing the exaggerated immune response

to the cytokine storm, which plays a pivotal role in the disease aggravation of COVID-19. Yoga, comprising asana, pranayama, and meditation, seems especially adequate for COVID-19 recovery, which is a situation characterized by intense fatigue, muscle weakness, dyspnoea, and mental health issues. Due to its properties, yoga is being proposed as a strategy of choice for COVID-19 prevention and post-recovery.

Effects of Yoga on the Body

Yoga offers numerous health benefits that can help with post-pandemic recovery. Research shows that yoga-based lifestyle modifications can improve disease outcomes in non-communicable disorders such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension, which are also risk factors for severe COVID-19. Yoga-derived breathing and postures improve gas exchange in patients with cardiovascular disorders and those exposed to high-altitude hypoxia, useful for COVID-19 patients. Yoga has immunity-boosting potential, improves physiological and biochemical parameters, and is a safe, low-cost alternative to improve quality of life. The Ministry of AYUSH in India recommends daily yoga, pranayama, and meditation sessions for post-COVID recovery. Yoga can help with COVID-19 recovery by improving physical and psychological well-being.

Role of Yoga in recovering from Post COVID Ailments:

Yoga can be used as a complementary therapy for individuals recovering from post-COVID-19 syndrome. Here are some ways yoga can be beneficial:

1. Breathing exercises: COVID-19 can cause respiratory distress, and some people may experience ongoing breathing difficulties even after recovery. Breathing exercises such as pranayama can help improve lung capacity and oxygenation. These exercises involve slow, deep breathing and can be done in a seated or lying down position.
2. Stress reduction: The pandemic has been a stressful time for many people. Stress can worsen existing health conditions and may hinder recovery. Yoga can help reduce stress by promoting relaxation and mindfulness. The practice of yoga has been shown to reduce levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, in the body.
3. Physical activity: COVID-19 can cause muscle weakness and fatigue. Yoga can help improve physical strength and flexibility. Yoga postures such as downward-facing dog, warrior, and tree pose can help strengthen muscles and improve balance.
4. Pain relief: Joint pain and muscle soreness are common symptoms of post-COVID-19 syndrome. Yoga has been shown to be effective in reducing pain in individuals with arthritis and other chronic pain conditions. Gentle yoga postures such as cat-cow and child's pose can help relieve joint pain and improve flexibility.
5. Mental health: COVID-19 can have a significant impact on mental health, causing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD). Yoga has been shown to be effective in improving mental health. The practice of yoga promotes mindfulness and can help individuals manage stress and anxiety.

However, it is essential to take precautions and consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise routine, including yoga. With the right guidance, yoga can be a valuable tool in promoting overall health and wellness during post-COVID-19 recovery.

CONCLUSION:

yoga is a simple, safe, and low-cost therapeutic alternative for improving quality of life and positively influencing physiological and biochemical parameters. It has numerous health benefits, including immunity-boosting potential, and is especially relevant in the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in the post pandemic situation, where physical activity decreases and emotional distress increases. Yoga-based lifestyle modifications have been shown to improve disease-related outcomes in common non-communicable disorders and may be useful for post-COVID recovery.

Yoga can be a valuable tool in promoting overall health and wellness during post-COVID-19 recovery. However, it is important to take precautions and consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise routine, including yoga. With the right guidance, yoga can be a safe and effective way to support recovery from post-COVID-19 syndrome.

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