



THERAPEUTIC YOGA FOR SLEEP APNEA

Yoga

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ABSTRACT

This essay is about the role of therapeutic yoga in the treatment for Sleep apnea. It explains briefly the causes of Sleep apnea, symptoms, factors that increase the risk of sleep apnea and how Therapeutic Yoga can help in its treatment. It's important to understand that yoga cannot be a standalone treatment for Sleep apnea. It works as an aid to medical treatment by increasing the capacity of the lungs, clearing the upper respiratory track, relieving stress and tension, resulting in sound sleep.

KEYWORDS

What is Sleep apnea?

Sleep Apnea is a sleep disorder that happens when a person's breathing stops or get very shallow multiple times during sleep. It is a potentially serious disorder as breathing pauses can last from a few seconds to minutes throughout the night.

What causes Sleep apnea?

Sleep apnea occurs when the muscles in the back of the throat are relaxed. These muscles support the soft palate, the triangular piece of tissue hanging from the soft palate, the tonsils, the side walls of the throat and the tongue. When the muscles relax, airway narrows or closes as one breathes in. The person thus can't get enough air, which lowers the oxygen level in the blood. It occurs when the brain fails to transmit signals to the breathing muscles. One might awaken with shortness of breath or have a difficult time getting to sleep or staying asleep.

In adults, the most common cause of sleep apnea is excess weight and obesity, which is associated with the soft tissue of the mouth and throat. During sleep, when throat and tongue muscles are more relaxed, this soft tissue cause the airway to become blocked.

Symptoms of Sleep apnea:

- Unusually loud snoring
- Gasping for air during sleep
- Difficulty staying asleep
- Having trouble paying attention while awake
- Mood swings and irritability
- Headache in the morning

Factors That Increase The Risk Of Sleep Apnea:

- Excess weight - Fat deposits around the upper airway can obstruct breathing
- Smoking - It can increase the amount of inflammation and fluid retention in the upper airway
- Use of alcohol
- Gender - Men are two to three times more likely to have sleep apnea than are women
- Age - The risk of obstructive sleep apnea increases 60s and 70s
- Hypertension - Obstructive sleep apnea is relatively common in people with hypertension
- Chronic nasal congestion - Those who have consistent nasal congestion at night may suffer Obstructive nasal congestion
- Diabetes

Complications that can arise from Sleep apnea:

- Daytime fatigue and sleepiness - Due to a lack of sleep at night, people often have drowsiness, fatigue and irritability.
- Liver problems - Obesity coupled with sleep apnea can aggravate non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)
- Cardiovascular problems - Obstructive sleep apnea increases the risk of abnormal heart rhythms. Sudden drops in blood oxygen levels that increase blood pressure and strain the cardiovascular system.
- Type II diabetes - If it left untreated, sleep apnea can have an increasingly negative impact on insulin resistance.

Role Of Therapeutic Yoga In Treating Sleep Apnea

Yoga acts both as a curative and preventive therapy. It helps to carry

natural regulation and controls the neurohormones and metabolism in the body. Yoga Therapy succeeds because it balances the nervous and endocrine systems which directly influences all the other systems and organs of the body.

Yoga therapy improves the diaphragmatic breathing, toning the required muscles, reduces stress, aids in weight reduction and improves quality of sleep.

A few yogasanas to practice:

- Simhasana - It releases stress from our body, especially from the chest, face and mind. It is useful for people with irregular breathing.



- Cobra Pose - Expands the chest. Reduces fatigue and stress. It is also useful for people with respiratory disorders.



- Supta Baddha konasana - It opens and improves circulation to the heart, chest and ribcage. It helps to relieve symptoms of stress and mild depression.



- Bow Pose - It improves Cardiovascular System, strengthens the neck and chest.



- Leg up the wall Pose - It improves circulation in the lower parts of the body, de-stresses and induces a better feeling overall.



Pranayama

Pranayama is the yogic technique to make the breathing regular, rhythmic and balanced. The vital capacity, inspiratory volumes of the lungs are increased. The alveoli are exercised, which promotes excellent excretion of toxins and gases. It helps strengthen, tone and open the upper airway muscles which helps to reduce the symptoms of sleep apnea. Pranayama helps to recalibrate the entire respiratory system. It activates the vagus nerve and parasympathetic system. This is vital to help deal with excessive stress.

A few pranayamas to practice:

- Alternative Nostril Breathing - Calms and centres the mind. Therapeutic for the circulatory and respiratory systems.



- Bhramari Pranayama - It strengthens air passage which is required in case of sleep apnea.



- Sectional Breathing - Different areas of the lungs get an abundant supply of fresh oxygen through deep breathing. It keeps our lungs healthy.



- Om Chanting - Om chanting produces a vibration and sound which is felt through your vocal cords and sinuses. It creates vibrations in our mouth, nasal passage and throat. This helps clear the respiratory passages.



- Kapal Bhati Pranayama - It helps to tone and open the upper airway muscles. Which can help to reduce the symptoms of sleep apnea.

REFERENCES

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