

Yoga for Sports Performance

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Abstract

Yoga is an ancient art, harmonizing of development for the body, mind and spirit. Yoga includes its techniques, which are practiced to join body, mind and spirit together. In Sports, generally seen that sports persons get injured frequently due to improper flexibility, coordination as well as they do not get proper relaxation after their work-out. The present study was to observe the effect of selected yoga practices on sports performance. Review was done through electronic database-PubMed, Google scholar and various journals. It has been observed that yoga is a great tool for sports persons. Yoga practicing offers a number of physical, emotional and psychological benefits. An intelligent yoga practice may increase mental concentration and significantly reduce the level of stress and anxiety. Yoga practices are also observed most beneficial for eliminating stiffness, improving coordination and preventing injuries. Even through after the injuries occurring in the body, these can easily be cured by doing yoga practice. The stretching and breathing practices of yoga help the Sports person and athletes to improve their Sports performance and to maintain their body. A practice of different form of yoga significantly increases the physical, mental and emotional energy, which helped in better concentration and endurance. Moreover, Relaxation technique allows body and mind to recover from fatigue and weakness and had a significant impact on mind calmness.

Key words: Yoga, Asana, Pranayama, Meditation, Health, Sports Performance.

Introduction

Practice and exercise are to different terms. Exercise means workout and practice means custom. As far as sports activities are concerned, exercises is a must to achieve good physique, but to maintain physique, exercise, performance, practice is needed. Practice, which will lead to sound functioning body, or yoga. Yoga is an ancient culture as well as discipline of India outlining Indian philosophy. It is a combination of three basic components in an individual i.e. body, mind, spirit which are harmonized by doing yogic practices, that leads to a spiritual individual. The word Yoga has come from Sanskrit word yuj which means “to join” or “to yoke”. In the practice of yoga, according to Indian philosophy it is self-development and self-realization as well. The importance of yoga for the attainment has been recognized throughout the ages by all the systems of Indian philosophy (Mishra, 2001)

Today yoga is gaining increasing popularity due to its possible application in various fields of human interest, i.e. Health, cure and prevention of sports injuries. Sports performance, body relaxation

and above all, the development of physical fitness and the key prerequisite factor for performance in different Sports activities (Mishra 2001). As far as physical body of man is concerned man studies show that the practice of yoga makes the body strong, flexible and improves performance. Similarly, in terms of physiology, it improves cardiovascular fitness. As far as psychological demand is concerned among Sports persons. Yoga practices give mental equilibrium to an individual or Sports persons. Udupa et al (2003) have made an examined-on Pranayama training on cardiac function in normal young volunteers; and found potential benefits of Pranayama in health and diseases. Manjunath and Telles (2003) have studies on the effect of Sirs asana practice on autonomic and respiratory variables and observed the practice of Sirasana causes sympathetic activation. Maity and Samanta (2001), found significant effect of yogasanas on developing motor fitness in late childhood period. Tiketn et al (2002) reported that yoga practice improves motor abilities, which leads to improvement in performance. Giri (1966), Giri and Prokash (1988) and era (1991) have also reported that yogic training improves the physical fitness as well as performance. Similarly Gharote (1973) and others have found significant results with short-term yogic practice on more improvement of physical fitness and motor abilities too for the different age groups. So, the present paper investigates experimental studies the some of yogic practices, which can be applied on Sports persons, athletes to improve their physical, physiological and psychological benefits.

Yogic Practices and Sports

Yoga offers the means to react complete and perfect self realization and self development, one can develop inherent power in a balanced manner which does exit in our body, to achieve and maintain the required physical, physiological and psychological fitness in Sports, there are mainly three basic practices in yoga – Asana, Pranayama, Meditation.

ASANA

Yogasana is one of the parts of yoga. According to Patanjali, stable and happily posture/state of the body is called yogasana. B practicing yogasana, an individual can remain cool, calm, quiet in terms of physical as well as mental. As far as Sports activities are concerned one can keep his or flexible and strong, which prevents Sports injury, which is usually occurs in athletes because of improper flexibility. Even though practicing yogasana can cure injury. In present days many famous players have practiced yoga for achieving highest level of perfection in their career. Some of the famous sports persons are Sachin Tendulkar, ViratKohli, Ravi Shastri, YuvrajShing, Zaheer Khan, Harbhajan Singh, ShikharDhawan. In this connection we found that Sachin Tendulkar had practiced under guidance of world-famous yoga teacher BSK Iyengar (times of India, news)

Suryanamaskar

Suryanamaskara comes under asanas, and includes 12 different postures, which consists of 8 asanas. It is performed in the morning during sunrise. This practice benefit of asanas, pranayama, mudra and meditation. During suryanamaskarasana, an individual concentrate on chakras, which exist in our body.

Surya namaskarasana releases energy to the neuro-muscular system of the body, improves cardiovascular fitness, which leads to harmony within and between all systems of the body that results make the bod physically, physiologically and psychologically fit individual.

Pranayama

Pranayama is a part of yoga. Pranayama is an ancient yoga technique. The regular practice of pranayama integrates the mind and the body Shankarappa v. et.al., (2012), worked on Short Term

Effect of Pranayama on the Lung parameter, and found that the pulmonary function was improved after Short term pranayama practices. A study by Bhargava et al. (1988) showed a Statistically significant increased breath holding time after the pranayama practice. Another study by Upadhayay A et al. (2008) in which pranayama caused immediate and significant reduction in the auditory and visual reaction time, indicating an improved performance and enhanced processing ability on central nervous system. Rabindra et al. (2005) conducted a study on patients with premature ventricular complexes (PVC) and episode of palpitations, found that pranayama produced an immediate relief in the palpitation and PVC. This improvement could have been because of the reduction of the sympathetic reactivity which was attained by the pranayama training.

Meditation

“Peak performance is meditation on motion” is a revealing quote by the Olympic championship diver Greg Louganis which nicely incorporates the crucial role of meditation in “making the mind quiet” for many athletes. Meditation is a practice in yoga, which initially starts turning of the senses (PanchIndriya) inward from outward which leads to developing the creative aspects through concentration. From a recent survey,, it seems that athletes perceive meditation as an important means for enhancing sport performance, the higher the level of sport proficiency, the more important meditation seems to cope with to reduce anxiety levels (Kdackoa et al. 2013). Furthermore, several studies had revealed that long-term mindfulness meditation practice enhances the experience of flow, which consists of the absence of negative thoughts and a feeling of enhanced physical and psychological functioning (Kee and Wang 2008; Bernier et al 2009; Kaufman et al. 2009; Scott-Hamilton et al. 2016; Zhang et al. 2016). Related to it, in a seminal study. Jhon et al. (2011) found decrements in cortisol levels (stress hormone) in a group of elite Shooters who underwent a training of 5 weeks mindfulness meditation and it was found to be effective in achieving optimal athletic performance through decreasing the level of anxiety, ruminative thinking and enhancing the experience of flow (Birrer et al.201 and pineau et al.2014

Relaxation

In yoga, there is an asana called Savasana which means dead body, when one is in Savasana he looks like a dead body. Savasana is a deep relaxation technique in which one can get completely relaxed. It is generally seen that sportsmen do not get proper relaxation; because of that performance deteriorates. This asana allows releasing the body and mind from fatigue and weakness and keeps calming impact on mind. Of course, by getting proper relaxation, performance, can be enhanced.

Results and Discussion

It has been observed that yoga is a great tool for Sports persons. Yoga practicing offers a number of physical, emotional and psychological benefits. An intelligent yoga practice may increase mental concentration and significantly reduce the level of stress and anxiety.

Yoga practices are also observed most beneficial for eliminating stiffness, improving coordination and preventing injuries. Even though after the injuries occurring in the body, these can easily be cured by doing yoga practice. The stretching and breathing practices of yoga help Sports persons, athletes to improve their sports performance and to maintain their body.

Conclusion

Finally, from the present study, it may be concluded that combined approach different form of yoga (Asanas, Suryanamaskara, Pranayama, and Meditation) significantly increases the physical, mental and emotional energy, which make better concentration and endurance.

Moreover, relaxation technique allows the body and mind to recover from fatigue and weakness and had a significant impact on mind calmness.

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