

# Importance of Yoga for School going Children

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## Abstract

Children are a valuable asset of any country or community as they are the future citizen. It is necessary to take care of their intelligence and well being. There should be an attempt to channelize their energy properly. Yogic practices are highly effective to manage them. For a healthy functioning of all the tissues and organs as well as for a healthy mind, practice of Yoga is one of the best methods.

The current study is an attempt to imbibe in students the values of self discipline, oneness with nature, introspection and peaceful co-existence. The study has its mere focus on the subject of early age stress in students, declining of concentration levels, everyday health issues and environmental factors adding on all these. The study has the objective of early development of fundamentals to create a coordinated synergism, peaceful and a more nourished soul.

It can be concluded that regular practice of Yoga, including asana, Pranayama and meditation, has brought positive improvements in discipline, team work, behavior and sharing, except eating habit of the school going children.

**Key words:** Yoga, School, Children

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### Introduction:

Yoga (meaning union or yoke) is the practice of accessing and integrating all aspects of our true nature -- body, mind, and spirit -- in the pursuit of inner harmony. As yoga becomes more popular in schools through physical education classes and after-school programs, that popularity comes with controversy. Although many adults like the benefits of yoga, some parents feel that the practice might have a religious association and, like prayer, shouldn't be allowed in a public space. They argue that yoga is an offshoot of Hinduism and that it disseminates religious and meditation principles with its use of "om" and "namaste" chanting. Some also believe that the asanas, or postures, such as the sun salutation, are a form of Hindu religious worship. To dispel this notion and avoid any religious or cultural messages, most yoga teachers focus on the benefits of the exercises and use generic terms, instead of the Sanskrit names, for the poses, renaming them cat, bridge, table, tree, downward-facing dog, volcano, and so forth. (I think it is not fair to change the names of these postures due to fear of some people, because it destroys its originality) Yoga's rising popularity can be attributed to its basic stretching advantages and improved body awareness, with the added component of a mind-body connection.

Scientist says that the children have many unexplained and unexpressed problems; they cannot express their problem correctly. This is due to their power of expression and their knowledge of their own psychology is not mature enough. It now is the responsibility of teachers and guardians to take care of their behavior; because they usually express their problem in front of them only.

Kumar K (2012) Introducing the children to yoga at an early age can help them learn healthy lifestyle habits and set the foundation for a fit future. Here are kid-friendly yoga poses to get your family practice started. Kumar K

(2011) Prāna (the inner energy) is the secret of fickleness of growing children. There should be an effort to channelise properly that energy. Their energy should be applied in a constructive way. The obstinate and destructive nature of the children can be changed by suggesting them to work according to their interest.

Rajora and Prajapati (2009) observed the positive effect of Selected Yogic Exercises on Emotional Intelligence and Intelligence Quotient of School going Children. Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, (2010), also observed students who practiced yoga- asana three times a day in brief segments of attention training and mind-full breathing improved their well-being, and social and emotional competence. Another study conducted by Linda J. Harrison, et.al (2007) showed improvements in children's behavior, self-esteem and relationship quality.

The study conducted by M. L. Gharote at Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla (1976) after a three week Yoga practice also shows a significant result on children's physical health. A study has been conducted at Bihar School of Yoga by Veena Verma (Sannyasi Soumyashakti); Possibilities of Revolutionizing the Education System through Yoga Nidra; (2004). One of the studies conducted by B. K. Batra, Dr. Nagratna and Dr. H. R. Nanendra at Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhan Sansthan (2003) also shows a significant impact on children's analysis and memory.

We dream of a society where every child is equipped with the tools provided through Yoga for Self Management. Rather than depending upon external aids, every kid should be able to handle various stresses as they appear during their growth.

Every child in school is taught that "Prevention is better than Cure". Yet, how many know how to implement this in practice. And for those that

do, how many have the will and wherewithal to do so. Familiarizing the child with Yoga tools can help show them the path of "Preventive medicine"

There have been many studies published in the respective field. A randomized controlled study had shown the comparable effects of yoga and physical exercise on physical fitness and Stroop task performance in pre adolescent school children in between group comparisons while the total self-esteem was found higher in within yoga group (Telles et al., 2013). In another study, the yoga group showed a significant increase in the level of total, general and social self-esteem after one month of comprehensive yoga program (Bhardwaj & Agrawal, 2013).

Kumar K & Tiwary S (2014) Yoga helps bring about subtle attitudinal changes in life. If taught earlier on in life, they are easier implemented and can bring about a healthy change in society. Being able to harness ambition in a positive manner rather than through negativity will not only help the student excel but also make him / her healthier and happier person. Is that not TOP priority what each parent seeks for his child?

Children by their very nature have to be handled very differently. Teaching cannot be imposed (or else it will be self defeating). Rather, Yogic principles have to be absorbed through Group activities and games. It is only then that the seed can be planted which will bear fruit over time.

Unfortunately Yoga is much abused in today's times. Practitioners with shallow knowledge inadvertently end up teaching practices that may not be suitable for all age groups. For example, how many of us know that children should NOT be introduced to Pranayama (Breathing) practices at an early age?

Therefore, while introducing children to Yoga is very desirable today, utmost care must be taken while initiating them into it, so that they reap the maximum benefits. At H&Y, through a

qualified network of yoga practitioners, we undertake programs to educate and introduce Yoga in schools.

Shana Meyerson, the founder of mini yogis (miniyogis.com), a yoga studio Southern California that offers classes for kids, believes that yoga builds self-esteem and self-respect. "A child's yoga practice is a rare opportunity to experience play and focus without worrying about being wrong," she says. Meyerson believes that yoga is an option for children who shy away from physical activity or group activities for fear of failure or being picked last, and it helps athletic children excel in other physical activities and sports. Christina Enneking, the founder of Heart Happy Yoga, a studio in Los Gatos, California, believes yoga introduces cornerstone values "such as non-harming, truthfulness, moderation, cleanliness, gratitude, and self-discipline." There are five key areas where kids benefit from the practice of yoga, and each of them improves their overall well-being.

#### **Relevance of yoga for children:**

Self-confidence is an essential life skill for children to develop, and parents can be a main source of this. A low self image can lead to many emotional issues in adulthood, including depression and anxiety. This can be avoided with the guidance of some very caring role models, and the positive interactions that these relationships impose.

Role models range from parents and teachers to doctors and sports coaches. Another great source of positive guidance that parents should take into consideration is that of a yoga instructor. Combine ancient effective poses with the counsel of a benevolent, neutral party and your child instantly has a mentor that he or she can relate to.

There are numerous benefits to enrolling your child into a yoga class for kids, and even more specifically a Hatha Yoga class. Hatha Yoga specializes in four areas which are breathing, relaxation, meditation, and posture. Each

individual topic is easily understood, but that does not mean there is no challenge involved. Yoga seems to contradict the nature of a child, but when performed in a group atmosphere and seen as a beneficial life tool, children excel in yoga. Look at the idea of math, for example. Many children find this area of study difficult, with many asking “When will I use these techniques in my life?” Children and adolescents find it tedious and frustrating to learn things they feel add no value to their life (math is a fundamental tool for learning and expanding the mind, but most young people fail to see its relevance in their future), but yoga will never feel that way. Immediately your child will understand its benefits and will remain eager to continually learn from this practice. There is no competition in yoga, so children are not competing with one another which can also subconsciously harm the ego.

In the first set of yoga lessons, your child will learn self-acceptance and patience in order to practice and grow at yoga. He or she will try hard at things, only to impress his/ herself. It is also understood (and discussed) that people are good at different skills. Certain children find it easy to meditate and relax their mind and body, while others may excel at holding difficult poses. Yoga instructors understand that balance and acceptance are necessary to people of all ages, and consciously praise all of their students equally. This unifies the students and class as a whole.

The early childhood years are exciting and transformative. It is inspiring and magical to observe children as they are immersed in learning and development. These years, however, are also often challenging and confusing.

Children require a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment to meet the developmental tasks of this time period and to grow into subsequent phases of life well-prepared. Never has the message been clearer that our children and communities need light, safety, and structure to provide the sustenance

for healthy development. Social-emotional learning, trusting relationships, and adequate amounts of physical activity, play, and exploration are critical for young children.

Parents may notice how yoga benefits their kids, but the best judges are the kids themselves. Children who have practiced yoga tell their teachers and parents that they are able to concentrate better during the day, focus better on their activities, and pay better attention to their tasks -- all the finest endorsements.

The purpose of this study is also to help to nourish the soul which reflects in their mental and physical activities in their mental and physical activities and to build the character we want to see in the next decade as per Indian context. We found a state of urgency to start to nourish their souls with some mental activities like contemplation, meditation etc, in other words, inside-out approach rather than outside-in approach. We can conclude this study as the inside out approach meditation, contemplation, introspection have a significant improvement in persistence, self discipline to attain objectives of life, self discipline to control the senses and maintaining a stoic life. Moreover, they learned the value of sharing. Persistency in these practices will bring the collective development of psychological well-being of the roots and future of this society concerned.

### **Conclusion:**

Yoga helps bring about subtle attitudinal changes in life. If taught earlier on in life, they are easier implemented and can bring about a healthy change in society. Being able to harness ambition in a positive manner rather than through negativity will not only help the student excel but also make them a healthier and happier person.

Children described benefits at home (better sleep patterns, less anxiety) and at school (more able to concentrate, less conflict). Parents reported feeling happier, less stressed

and more able to manage their child's behavior. Results of this preliminary investigation reveal that the five months bring out the positive changes in the children on four variables of the wellness parameters. But in case of only one program may offer to the families as an effective management tool and family-oriented treatment for the children.

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variable i.e., eating habit majority of parents could not find changes it may be because of the pattern of eating followed with in the family and their approach towards healthy food habits. Therefore, it may be concluded that this

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