



IMPACT OF YOGIC EXERCISES ON PHYSICAL WELLNESS OF WOMEN IN THOOTHUKUDI

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Abstract

Today, many people are taking up Yoga techniques for physical exercise, and most don't know the history of Yoga. They believe there is nothing wrong with implementing this form of exercise into their daily regimen to promote a more healthy body. However, the practice of yoga is much more than a system of physical exercise to health. The focus of this paper will be highlight on the impact of yogic exercises power among women. The objectives of this study were to find out the level of physical wellness of women before and after treatment and to find out the impact of yogic exercises on physical wellness of women. Quasi-experimental method was adopted for this study. The major findings of the study were there is a significant difference between the pre test and post test scores on physical wellness of women before and after training in Yogic exercises and there is no significant difference between women grouped on the basis of Yogic exercises in their gain scores.

Keywords: Yogic exercises, Physical Wellness



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Introduction

Originated in ancient India, Yoga typically means 'union' between the mind, body and spirit. It involves the practice of physical postures and poses, which is sometimes referred to as 'asana' in Sanskrit. As the name suggests, the ultimate aim of practicing yoga is to create a balance between the body and the mind and to attain self-enlightenment. In order to accomplish it, yoga makes use of different movements, breathing exercises, relaxation technique and meditation. Yoga is associated with a healthy and lively lifestyle and a balanced approach to life. The oldest physical discipline in existence known to humankind, Yoga brings stability to the body and the wavering mind. It increases the lubrication of joints, ligaments and tendons of the body. Studies in the field of medicine suggest that Yoga is the only form of physical activity that provides complete exercise to the body, because it massages all the internal organs and glands. This in turn reduces the risk of many diseases.

Yoga can create a positive permanent difference to the lifestyle of anybody practicing it on a regular basis.

The Eight Limbs of Yoga

While the physical component of yoga is certainly of importance, it is only one of the eight traditional limbs of yoga practice, all of which have meditation on God as their purpose. These are the eight limbs of the complete Yoga system as they are found in the famous Yoga textbook known as the *Yoga Sutras*, written by the sage Patanjali in circa 200 B.C.

Briefly, they are as follows:

- 1. Yama:** These are five positive ethical guidelines (restraints, or abstinences) that include non-violence, fidelity to the Absolute, non-stealing, truthfulness and non-attachment.
- 2. Niyama:** These are five positive behaviours, including cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, self-study and devotion to God.
- 3. Asana:** These are the actual physical exercises that people usually associate with yoga. These powerful poses are designed strength, flexibility and energy to body. They also contribute to the deep sense of relaxation that is necessary in order to lovingly meditate on the Absolute.
- 4. Pranayama:** These are the energizing breathing exercises that produce vitality, overall health and inner calm.
- 5. Pratyahara:** This is detachment from the ever-present fluctuations of life. Through this practice, we can transcend all the trials and sufferings that life often seems to throw our way and begin to see such challenges in a positive and healing light.
- 6. Dharana:** This is the practice of powerful and focused concentration.
- 7. Dhyana:** This is devotional meditation on God, designed to still the agitations of the mind and open the heart to God's healing love.
- 8. Samadhi:** This is blissful absorption of one's individual consciousness in the essence of God. The result of samadhi is peace, bliss and happiness without end.

Ashtanga Yoga

These eight limbs together constitute the complete system known as classical Ashtanga Yoga. When yoga is diligently practiced under the guidance of a well-trained spiritual teacher (guru), it can lead to liberation from all illusion and suffering. Women at every age can appreciate the beauty in their bodies that allows them to move, breathe and live.

Impact of yogic exercises

Practicing yoga can improve fitness and help to achieve or maintain a healthy weight. Properly executing yoga poses strengthens bones and muscles, enhances balance, and

promotes flexibility and greater range of motion, all of which can help protect body against everyday injuries. Women who practice yoga tend to have lower body mass indexes and better control over their weight than those who do not practice yoga.

With yogic exercises, the physiology undergoes a change and every cell in the body is filled with more prana (energy). This result in joy, peace, enthusiasm as the level of prana in the body increases. On a physical level, yoga: lowers high blood pressure, lowers the levels of blood lactate, reducing anxiety attacks, decreases any tension-related pain, such as, tension headaches, ulcers, insomnia, muscle and joint problems, increases serotonin production that improves mood and behaviour, improves the immune system and increases the energy level, as gain an inner source of energy.

Need for the study

Today's women are much more than her traditional role of a housewife, a mother or a daughter. Her extended roles that foray beyond her four walls, she plays an equal role in the decisions of socio-economic and political life she leads. She is a multi-faceted, dynamic and uniquely influential part of our society and is forever striving for perfection in every aspect of life. However, to carry out all her roles with grace, flair and perfection, it is essential that women maintain good health, mental peace and poise in life.

God created man and woman as equal partners to share life. The material and spiritual burdens of life fall equally on the shoulders of man and woman. Both desire good health, mental peace and poise in life. Yoga is beneficial to both man and woman. Women need yoga even more than men as the responsibilities thrust upon them by nature are greater. Men have more chances of going out, playing sports and games, and taking a morning or evening walk. Most women are completely tied to their household duties and remain in the same environment all the time. They do not get as much time or as many opportunities for exercise as men do. The system of a man is less complicated than the system of a woman. Furthermore, a man does not share as much responsibility in child rearing as a woman does. As such, women have a greater need for yoga, and just by practising a few yogasanas and pranayamas every day, they will establish balance in their health.

Women have to undergo three important stages in life-menstruation, pregnancy and menopause. In these stages physiological changes occur and in each of these a woman has to face problems and internal conflicts. This affects her physical and physiological organs as well as her mind and much of her energy is lost in coming to terms with life during these periods of change. If she chooses to adopt Yogasana and Pranayama as part of her way of

life, she can bring perfect balance in body and mind and she will get to know how to conquer obstacles and fulfil her tasks more efficiently without getting disturbed.

Considering the above benefits of Yogic exercises for women, the investigators intended to study about the impact of yogic exercises on the physical wellness of women in Thoothukudi.

Objectives

1. To construct a tool to assess the physical wellness of women
2. To find out the physical wellness of women before treatment
3. To find out the physical wellness of women after treatment
4. To find out the level of physical wellness of women before and after treatment
5. To find out the impact of yogic exercises on physical wellness of women

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between pre test and post test scores on physical wellness of women before and after the yogic exercises.
2. There is no significant difference between the gain scores on physical wellness of women grouped on the basis of knowledge of yogic exercises.

Method

The investigators has adopted quasi-experimental method for this study.

Procedure

Yogic exercises training were given by masters for two weeks to the subjects.

Tools used

Questionnaires to assess Physical Wellness was developed by the investigators and used for the data collection. Content validity was found seeking the help of educational experts.

Population and sample

Population selected for this study were women. The sample consisted of 30 women in Thoothukudi area.

Statistical techniques used

Following major statistical techniques were used by the investigators to analyse the data,

- Percentage analysis
- Test of significance (t test)

Data analysis

Objective 2

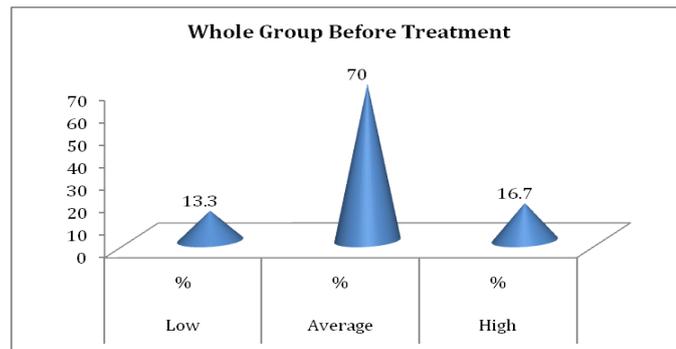
To find out the level of physical wellness of women before treatment

TABLE 1

Whole Group Before Treatment	N	Low		Average		High	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Physical Wellness	30	4	13.3	21	70.0	5	16.7

It is inferred from the above table that, 13.3%, 70.0% and 16.7% of women have low, average and high level of physical wellness respectively.

GRAPH 1



Objective 3

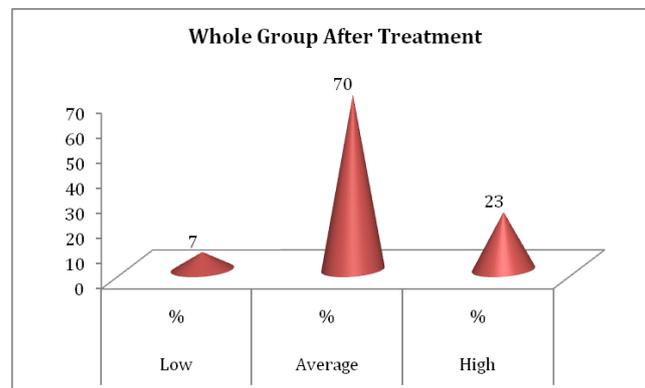
To find out the level of physical wellness of women after treatment

TABLE 2

Whole Group After Treatment	N	Low		Average		High	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Physical Wellness	30	2	7	21	70	7	23

It is inferred from the above table that, 7%, 70% and 23% of women have low, average and high level of physical wellness respectively.

GRAPH 2



Objectives 4

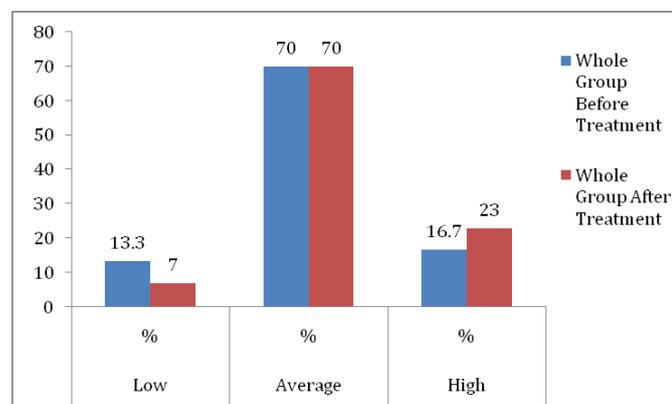
To find out the level of physical wellness of women before and after treatment

TABLE 3

Physical Wellness	N	Low Count	%	Average Count	%	High Count	%
Whole Group Before Treatment	30	4	13.3	21	70.0	5	16.7
Whole Group After Treatment	30	2	7	21	70	7	23

It is inferred from the above table that, 13.3%, 70.0% and 16.7% of women have low, average and high level of physical wellness of the whole group before treatment respectively. It is inferred from the above table that, 7%, 70% and 23% of women have low, average and high level of physical wellness of the whole group after treatment respectively.

GRAPH 3



Hypothesis: 1

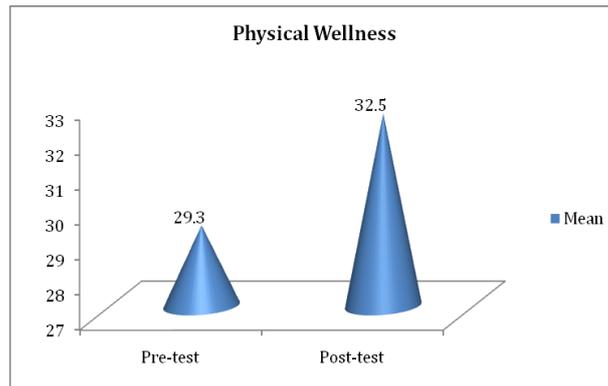
There is no significant difference between pre test and post test scores on physical wellness of women before and after the yogic exercises.

TABLE 4

Physical Wellness	N	Mean	Calculated value	't'	Remark
Pre-test	30	29.3	3.81		Significant
Post-test	30	32.5			

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (3.81) is greater than the table value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. It shows that there is significant difference between pre test and post test scores on physical wellness of women before and after the yogic exercises.

GRAPH 4



Hypothesis: 2

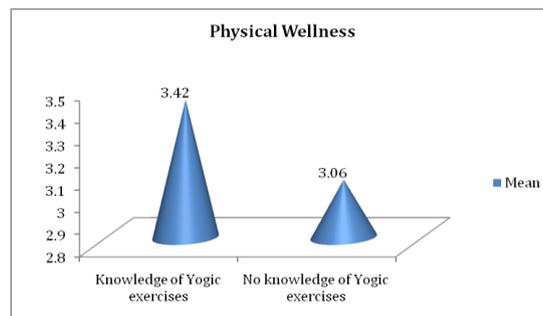
There is no significant difference between the gain scores on physical wellness of women grouped on the basis of knowledge of yogic exercises.

TABLE 5

Physical Wellness	N	Mean	Calculated value	't'	Remark
Knowledge of Yogic exercises	12	3.42	0.207		Not Significant
No knowledge of Yogic exercises	18	3.06			

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (0.207) is less than the table value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that there is no significant difference between the gain scores on physical wellness of women grouped on the basis of knowledge of yogic exercises.

GRAPH 5



Findings

The 't' test findings reveal that there is a significant difference between the pre test and post test scores on physical wellness of women before and after training in Yogic exercises. There is no significant difference between women grouped on the basis of Yogic exercises in their gain scores.

Discussion

The study shows that the training by Yoga masters in physical exercises has impacted positively the physical wellness of women. This may be due to the dedication of the trainers and eagerness of the learners that has resulted in a veritable reaping of the benefits of yogic exercises. A mere knowledge of Yogic exercises is by itself incapable of promoting the wellness of women. Only a regular practice of Yogic exercises can bring out an increase in the physical wellness.

Conclusion

In the endless struggle of being a woman and a mother, one has to prepare for major physical, physiological and psychological upheavals. Yogic exercises are potent tools that can help women to pass through the physical, physiological and psychological upheavals with dignity and composure. Yogic exercises can offer women solace, reflection, joy, acceptance and ease in their bodies. They can also help women find physical balance as well as self-acceptance.

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