

## **Yoga: A Scientific and Spiritual Discipline**

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### **Abstract**

India has been known for its contribution in the field of knowledge since ancient times. Yoga is one of the disciplines that originated in our country and its origin can be traced in the most ancient scriptures of the worldwide, Vedas. Some people view yoga as a discipline of science, some as an art and on the other side some consider it as a field religion or spirituality. Yoga is the scientific and spiritual discipline of mankind, which deals with all the aspects of the psychology, philosophy and practicality of conscious evolution. It is a system of perfect tools for achieving union as well as healing. Yoga is a verified science. Yoga as a science of living is also an art. Yoga, therefore, may be defined as the science and art of the optimum living. This paper explains what yoga actually is.

Science refers to any systematic practice or knowledge. In the restricted sense, science is basically a system of acquiring knowledge based on the scientific parameters. Science is an organized body of knowledge gained through research and practice. In the similar manner, Yoga is the scientific and spiritual discipline of mankind, which deals with all the aspects of the psychology, philosophy and practicality of conscious evolution. It is a system of perfect tools for achieving union as well as healing. Yoga helps to control the mind of the human-being so that it is not thrown out of balance into wave forms. The main purpose of yoga is to unleash spiritual and mental powers of an individual. The science of yoga enables us to search the depths of our own self, which helps us to realize the ultimate truth. The characteristics of science are objectivity; intelligent inquiry; careful detailed observation;

## Yoga in Modern Era

rigorous controlled experimentation; burning desire to know truth; direct perception; correct knowledge and understanding. Yoga has been extremely popular in the context of fighting stress, [anxiety](#) and depression in these times of industrialization and our superfast lifestyles.

Yoga is a verified science. Yoga as a science of living is also an art. Yoga, therefore, may be defined as the science and art of the optimum living. Yoga has the capacity to move, either side by side with medical science or independently. This is because yoga has a sound system of etiology, diagnosis and pathogenesis of disease. Thus, we have a complete system by itself in yoga. The integration of the experimentally tempered modern science with the experientially modeled science of yoga can lead our mind to many answers for challenges plaguing modern humankind such as debilitating chronic illnesses related to aging, environment and hedonistic lifestyle. The antiquity of yoga must be united with the innovations of modern medicine to improve the quality of life throughout the world.

Medicines have the ultimate aim and goal of producing a state of optimum physical and mental health, thus, ultimately leading to the optimum well-being of the individual. Yoga helps in improving good sleep and reducing the physical and psychological stresses. Yoga is beneficial for the resilience and positive mind set. It is worth mentioning that balanced diet is also necessary along with yoga. It may be helpful to get out of the anxiety or depression. Different yoga activities are available, which help in reducing headache, arthritis, neck-pain and back-pain etc. Yoga improves the mental stability of chronic disease patients. Medicines have a lot to offer humankind in its treatment and management of acute illness, accidents and communicable diseases, Yoga has a lot to offer in terms of preventive, primitive and rehabilitative methods in addition to many management methods to tackle modern illnesses.

Science of Yoga does not tell us what to do and what not to do, but it teaches us how to be. Yoga is a science of life that helps us to know the known and unknown parts of life that helps us to liberate ourselves from pains and miseries. It helps us to attain that state which is free from pains and miseries.

Science of yoga does not offer any new religion; it offers a methodology. Through the science of yoga, we can understand ourselves better on all levels, including our physical well-being, our actions, thought processes,

## Yoga in Modern Era

emotions and desires. We also understand how to lead a successful life in the world. Science of yoga creates a bridge between the internal and external conditions of life. Yoga is a way of improving ourselves, a way of understanding our internal states. Whosoever we are, we have all the potentials within us. Yoga instructor encourages us to be aware of the potentials that we have and to learn how to use them. This practical science says to explore more and more. The characteristics of science are objectivity, intelligent inquiry and careful detailed observation, rigorous controlled experimentation, burning desire to know truth, direct perception, correct knowledge and cognition. The comparison of the characteristics of science and Yoga is given in the table below.

Sr. No.	Characteristics of Science	Characteristics of Yoga
1.	Objectivity	Vairagya is to dispassionate objectivity
2.	Intelligent inquiry and careful detailed observation	Pariprasna or enquiry coupled with Viveka or discerning intellect
3.	Rigorous controlled experimentation	Abhyasa, i.e., the systematic practice
4.	Burning desire to know truth.	Mumukshutva, i.e., burning desire for liberation.
5.	Direct perception	Pratyaksha, i.e., direct perception
6.	Correct knowledge or cognition	Pramana, i.e., accurate knowledge
7.	Reliable testimony from previous experimental work.	Vedas, Agamas, Upanishads and Parampara.
8.	Verification and repeatability of the phenomena	Sadhna, i.e., the individual experience to realize the teachings

As a science of mind, yoga offers a safe method of concentration and meditation educating a practical application of the power of human mind. The entire process of yoga is centered in the awareness that is why; it is called as the science of awareness. The tradition of yoga is so perfect that we have to seek ways of expounding it in modern scientific terminology instead of simply evaluating it in terms of current concepts of science, which is expanding so rapidly that a time may come when man would like to live by his intuition rather than by scientific planning, bristling with conflicts and balancing a number of variables not completely understood. Eminent neurosurgeon Dr. B. Ramamurthy says that yoga practice reorients the functional hierarchy of the entire nervous system. He has observed that yoga not only benefits the nervous system but also the cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, endocrine systems in addition to bringing about general biochemistry changes in the yoga practitioners. Yoga is said to be the science

## Yoga in Modern Era

of sciences. Yoga stands in its own right as a science, which is based upon the eternal laws of the higher life and does not require the support of any science or philosophical system to uphold its claims. The truths of yoga are based on the experiences and experiments of an unbroken line of mystics, occultists, saints and sages, who have realized and borne witness to them through the ages.

Unless we change our mind-set, we cannot understand our wonderful culture and the great science of human that has arisen from it. Most of the people today are so busy trying to find health and happiness that they forget why they are here in the first place. Yoga is the best way for us to regain our birthrights and to attain the goal of our human existence.

Yoga is generally considered a safe form of physical activity for healthy people when it is performed under the guidance of a qualified instructor. But there is the possibility of common injuries like sprains and strains. It is, therefore, advised that the old people, pregnant women and the people who are having health issues should either avoid yoga or they should practice yoga under the guidance of qualified yoga instructor.

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