

## BENEFITES OF YOGA FOR DISAIBLED PERSONS

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### ABSTRACT

*The 20th century has witnessed evolutionary explosion. Progress in technology and medicine has been very rapid making life easier and more comfortable. Surgery has advanced to such an extent that replacement of essential organs is possible now. All these advances suggest that man should be very happy today. Is it true? The present chaotic conditions of living are playing havoc on his mind. Instead of feeling and looking happy many people today look defeated, tired, morose or anxious, needing pills to go to sleep, pills to move their bowels and pills to keep them calm. All these artificial methods provide no solution to the existing problems, they only give temporary relief. Yoga for disabled children can help them grow at a pace that matches that of their peers. With the help of specific yoga poses and postures, they can gain competitiveness and can become more agile. They also experience a feeling of clam, which helps them face the day to day challenges their lives pose. Yoga therapy for the mentally handicapped also has similar calming and soothing benefits, which help them become more independent.*

Yoga for people with disabilities is a specialized discipline which requires special training and instruction. Teaching special needs children and adults requires specialized training and sensitization. The instructors need to empathize with the needs of their pupils. Along with that, they should also be able to distinguish the therapeutic needs of the various groups of practitioners and teach them accordingly.

#### YOGA:

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 with a balanced approach to life.

### **Disability:**

**Disability** is the consequence of an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these. A disability may be present from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime. Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

— World Health Organization,

### **Types of disability:**

The term "disability" broadly describes an impairment in a person's ability to function, caused by changes in various subsystems of the body, or to mental health. The degree of disability may range from mild to moderate, severe, or profound. A person may also have multiple disabilities. Disability can be measured objectively (observed) or subjectively (self-report).

Conditions causing disability are classified by the medical community as:

- Inherited (genetically transmitted);
- congenital, meaning caused by a mother's infection or other disease during pregnancy, embryonic or fatal developmental irregularities, or by injury during or soon after birth;
- Acquired conditions caused by illness or injury, of unknown origin.

### **Types of disability may also be categorized in the following way:**

Physical disability, Sensory disability, Vision impairment, Hearing impairment, Olfactory and gustatory impairment, Somatosensory impairment, Balance disorder, Intellectual disability, Mental health and emotional disabilities, Pervasive developmental disorders, Developmental disability, Nonvisible disabilities etc...

### **Yoga as alternative Therapy:**

Yoga is an age-old discipline developed and practiced in India and more recently introduced and popularized throughout the United States. Yoga, as it was originally practiced, included the physical discipline of breathing and body postures designed to strengthen and cleanse the

body as part of a spiritual philosophy. Some still associate yoga with “religion”. However, this discussion will only focus on the physical practice and benefits of Yoga. Some of the original Indian language of Sanskrit is still used to name the postures and breathing exercises. If you are looking for something therapeutic for your child that can be fun, economical, and done in a group, consider yoga. Adaptive yoga for children with special needs is a way to incorporate the benefits of traditional yoga with the particular needs of your child or teen, regardless of their disability.

## **YOGA FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ITS BENEFITS**

Special needs experts agree that yoga activities make a positive impact on individuals with special needs. These activities improve mobility, strength, and digestion for individuals with disabilities like cerebral palsy. The success of yoga programs is catching the attention of parents, caregivers, and medical professionals.

Parents and caregivers of individuals with special needs understand the value of a child with cerebral palsy being able to sit up on his own. The basic fundamentals of an activity like yoga require certain aspects, such as control of breathing and stamina. For individuals with cerebral palsy, specialized yoga instructors will cradle the individual and move their arms and legs to help them relax. The instructors will also ask individuals to touch their feet to the floor or lift their heads for a few seconds. While these movements might seem trivial to the average person, they are major obstacles and successes for individuals with a disability. These activities are not only for individuals with cerebral palsy, but also they are used for those with disabilities such as Down syndrome, autism, ADHD, or learning disabilities.

Yoga is often a slow and meditative process, so it helps these individuals slow down and increases attention and focus. Yoga is empowering because it meets the individuals at their current level of functioning and moves forward towards meeting achievable goals; the limits of individuals are accepted, and with the help of the instructor, they work through those struggles. The instructors use typical yoga poses such as the downward dog or cobra pose, and each one is adapted for a child’s needs or goals.

Parents of children with autism, ADHD, or anxiety indicate that yoga helps their children calm themselves down and creates better focus and following directions. Yoga activities take place in specialized centres and are even being utilized in schools, all with the end goal of promoting wellness and improved functioning even outside the classroom.

Yoga for the Special Child is an international program developed in Evanston, Illinois by Sonia Sumer. Initially developed to help babies with disabilities, the program has grown to a worldwide practice. As the evidence of yoga’s benefits continues to expand, many similar

programs are adapted for children and adults with disabilities. There really is no limit to the scope of who can benefit from yoga.

### **PRANAYAMA:**

Pranayama controls and regulates breathing and is very beneficial for the disabled. This technique particularly improves the stamina, balance and strength, along with inducing better sleep by the improved circulation of the Vital Energy. Good breathing can also help release deeply held physical and emotional tension within the body. Pranayama helps in controlling fits which may be common among these children.

Sounds of animals make it interesting for them to perform. Kukkuriya Pranayama, (dog panting breath) is an all-time favourite with children. Mathangi Pranayama, Vyagraha Pranayama, Others like Kapalabhati is also very useful (for the slow dull people and not the hyperactive ones). The Shitali and Sitkari Pranayama are useful for the people affected by the Down's syndrome as they have thickened tongue with difficulty in speech.

**Mukha Bhastrika** is also known as the 'cleansing breath' helps remove old, stagnant air from the lungs and cleanses the bloodstream of excess carbon dioxide. Its practice also decreases response time and enhances memory and comprehension. Research also suggests that it is useful in combating learning disorders, A.D.D., and mental retardation. (Bhavanani AB et al., 2003). It may also be of value to train mentally retarded children who have prolonged Reaction Time.

**SHATKARMAS:** Some of the Shatkarmas such as Trataka, Kapalabhati, may be very useful for the developing concentration and also act as tranquillizers. (The regular practices of Kunjal Kriya and Dugda Neti up to at least 40 days have been found to improve mental retardation (MP Pathak, & KL Bajpai Kundalini Yoga Research Institute, Lucknow 1983). These children suffer numerous eye related problems and Trataka and the Neti are highly beneficial for such children along with a diet rich in Vitamin A and C.

**MUDRAS:** Bhujangini Mudra and Brahma Mudra, working with breath and sound vibration induces a sense of relaxation and reinvigorates the head and neck. Mudra) helps drive away depression, bringing out a sense of joy and happiness. Avoid Oli Mudras, due to their powerful influence on the gonadal and other endocrine glands.

**BANDHA:** Jalandhara Bandha. Later Uddiyana Bandha may be included. Mudra) helps drive away depression, bringing out a sense of joy and happiness. Avoid Oli Mudras, due to their powerful influence on the gonadal and other endocrine glands.

**DHYANA:** The practice of meditation in any form reduces the feeling of loneliness and gives peace of mind. It is very beneficial for the physically disabled, but a difficult practice for the mentally challenged.

**YOGIC RELAXATION:** Unrealistic expectations at home and outside add powerful peer pressures on them driving them mad. Shava Asana with Kaya Kriya and Spanda-Nishpanda relaxes all aspects of the musculoskeletal system. Prayer and chanting simple mantras makes them less aggressive, purifies the speech, calms the mind, and helps reduce distraction. Hence chanting the Pranava Mantra AUM can benefit these children. Helps maintaining their concentration and improves their alertness with rest and relaxation and aids them to get emotional and mental strength.

### **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF THE YOGA PRACTICES**

It is important to learn to live Yoga and make it a way of life.

1. Yoga helps them to coordinate the activities of mind, body and emotions, reduces the distracted state of mind thereby helping them to focus and concentrate
2. Improves the activities of day today living to the degree which could never otherwise be achieved, improves one's ability and helps one to rely on their own selves making them independent,
3. Helps them develop their social relationships, reduces the frequency of violent emotional upsets, and reduces the negative traits and tendency to cause injuries to self and others,
4. Develops a positive outlook improving self-confidence, self-sufficiency and sociability, Improves interpersonal Relationships,
5. Improves their loco motor skills and psycho-motor coordination, reduces obesity, controls dribbling, helps in disappearance official tics, reduces hyperactivity, and improves appetite and sleep.
6. Improves overall health, increases immunity, reduces aggression, and reduces dependency of drugs.
7. increases the efficiency of the nervous system and thus helps in their Rehabilitation.

### Recommendations:

- Regular yoga practice helps to enhance the range of motion of PWD
- PWD should practice regular pranayama which enhance the lung capacity and uptake of oxygen to blood cells
- Yoga should be practiced regularly for minimum one hour.

### Conclusion:

Regular PRANAYAMA, DHYANA, BANDHA, MUDRAS, Mukha Bhastrika helps the person with disability to lead there life simple and to overcome the hurdle of dysfunction of motor movement

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