



INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY OF WORKING WOMEN THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES/ YOGIC EXERCISE

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Introduction:

In today's fast and globalized life style Women hold a key position in the shaping of the next generation, plays such an important part in the life of the family. Their value is beyond measure. The changing life style demands more financial steadiness, that's why the percentage of women in the active work population has increased rapidly in many countries around the world, including ours. As a consequence, we have seen the proliferation of dual-income families where role expectations toward men and women, both in their work activities and their domestic responsibilities, have drastically changed. Now women's have to do numerous works with their family responsibilities to fulfilled family and personal necessities. Giving birth to children, putting up with the daily pressures of life, dealing with the demands of children, maintaining a good relationship with her husband and family members, and often working a full time job on top of all that women's has to maintain their fitness, physical appearance, personal safety, weight loss, stress reduction, adjustment with work and home environment, Which is not an easy task.

Especially after a long tidy office working day women's has to put in an equal amount of energy into the home for cleaning, child care, cooking, etc. here question arise, if family core member is not getting time for the personal and professional life upliftment or not getting time for physical fitness of recreation, so how can she mold kids future in better way if she is living stressful and busy life where she is avoiding many physical and mental health related problems. Here we are talking about holistic approach towards life, which is badly needed in today's materialistic world. To develop holistic approach towards life, the ultimate way is practicing yoga and pranayama in daily life. Sometimes it has been observed that Inactive behavior is a major public health problem for Indian women. Especially a Working Woman has to maintain balance between her family, social and personal life. So with this paper I will highlight few yogic exercises (Asanas) and pranayama which helps women's' to stay fit and help them to maintain calmness in different difficult situations.

What is Yoga:

"Yoga is not a religion; it is a discipline without dogma, therefore a person from any faith or fellowship can be considered a yogi." (Pizer, 2014.)The word yoga comes from Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language. It is a derivation of the word yuj, which means yoking, as in a team of oxen. In contemporary practice, this is often interpreted as meaning union. Yoga is said to be for the purpose of uniting the mind, body, and spirit.(yoga.org.nz, 2010) The practice of yoga makes the body strong and flexible; it also improves the functioning of the respiratory, circulatory, digestive, and hormonal systems. Yoga brings about emotional stability and clarity of mind.

Asana:

In the practice of Yoga, Asana denotes the art of sitting still and also any posture useful for restoring and maintaining a practitioner's well-being and improving the body's flexibility and vitality, cultivating the ability to remain in seated meditation for extended periods. Such asanas are known in English as "yoga postures" or "yoga positions". Any way that we may sit or stand is an asana while a posture used in yoga is called a yogasana. Modern usage includes lying on the back, standing on the head and a variety of other positions. (Wikipedia, 2015,)

Pranayama:

Pranayama is control of Breath". "Prana" is Breath or vital energy in the body. On subtle levels prana represents the pranic energy responsible for life or life force, and "ayama" means control. So Pranayama is "Control of Breath". One can control the rhythms of pranic energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind. Patanjali in his text of Yoga Sutras mentioned pranayama as means of attaining higher states of awareness; he mentions the holding of breath as important practice of reaching Samadhi. Hatha Yoga also talks about 8 types of pranayama which will make the body and mind healthy. Five types of prana are responsible for various pranic activities in the body; they are Prana, Apana, Vyan, Udana & Samana. Out of these Prana and Apana are most important. Prana is upward flowing and Apana is downward flowing. Practice of Pranayama achieves the balance in the activities of these pranas, which results in healthy body and mind.

Chronic Diseases:

Chronic illness means the illness is long term. A chronic illness can be stressful and may change the way a person lives and how they relate to others.

Health Risk Behaviors that Cause Chronic Diseases:

Health risk behaviors are unhealthy behaviors you can change. Four of these health risk behaviors—lack of exercise or physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and drinking too much alcohol—cause much of the illness, suffering, and early death related to chronic diseases and conditions.

In 2011, more than half (52%) of adults aged 18 years or older did not meet recommendations for aerobic exercise or physical activity. In addition, 76% did not meet recommendations for muscle-strengthening physical activity.⁷

About half of US adults (47%) have at least one of the following major risk factors for heart disease or stroke: uncontrolled high blood pressure, uncontrolled high LDL cholesterol, or are current smokers.⁸ Ninety percent of Americans consume too much sodium, increasing their risk of high blood pressure.⁹

In 2011, more than one-third (36%) of adolescents and 38% of adults said they ate fruit less than once a day, while 38% of adolescents and 23% of adults said they ate vegetables less than once a day.¹⁰

More than 42 million adults—close to 1 of every 5—said they currently smoked cigarettes in 2012.¹¹ Cigarette smoking accounts for more than 480,000 deaths each year.¹¹ Each day, more than 3,200 youth younger than 18 years smoke their first cigarette, and another 2,100 youth and young adults who smoke every now and then become daily smokers.¹¹

Drinking too much alcohol is responsible for 88,000 deaths each year, more than half of which are due to binge drinking.^{12, 13} About 38 million US adults report binge drinking an average of 4 times a month, and have an average of 8 drinks per binge, yet most binge drinkers are not alcohol dependent.¹⁴

How Yoga Interventions is Commendable for Fitness and Well Being:

As we all aware about yoga is quickly gaining in popularity and has tremendous health benefits through practicing asanas and pranayama. However healthcare providers have been slow to recognize yoga for its ability to improve health conditions, and few interventions have been developed that take full advantage of its benefits. The purpose of this paper is to review published studies using yoga interventions on chronic diseases and common risk factors specially related with the working women's fitness and health issues. (Stress, overweight, hypertension, high diabetes and high cholesterol) The studies found that yoga interventions are generally effective in reducing body weight, blood pressure, glucose level and high cholesterol, but only a few studies examined long-term adherence. Additionally, not enough studies included diverse populations at high risk for diabetes and its related common health problems.

Stress Management:

Everyone suffers from slight anxiety from time to time because of several reasons in their lives, but chronic anxiety takes a remarkable effect on the body, draining energy resources and keeping the body in a constant state of stress. The effects of anxiety are magnified when the body is not exercised: tension in the muscles builds, breathing remains constricted most of the time, and the mind has no rest from the whirling thoughts and feelings that feed the anxiety.

There are an enormous number of case studies, discussing the effects of concrete yogic breathing techniques and relaxation methods on stress relief. They reveal interesting physiological responses to focused slow rate breathing, as specific stimulation of endocrine glands (lowering the level of cortisol, increasing the level of melatonin and serotonin etc.) , the parasympathetic nervous system responsible for relaxation and restorative processes and even changing the brain waves frequency due to changing the breath pattern. Specific for those benefits there are two breathing techniques which are jointly labeled "Cooling Pranayama". They provide cooling not only at the physical level but also at the nervous and mental levels. They are highly effective in cooling the system during summer time. However, they can be practiced even during winter months as they calm the nerves down and also help release mental tension and stress. These pranayama techniques also help reduce blood pressure.

This pranayama are Sheetal Pranayama and Shitakari pranayama, which have tremendous effects on stress and anger managements. And it is recommend for practitioners to always doing Sheetal after right nostril breathing because it help (J[auth], 2014)s calm the system down and right nostril breathing is identified as heating breath and that it can help with mucus too.

Obesity:

Obesity and overweight have become a global epidemic now. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there will be about 2.3 billion overweight people aged 15 years and above and over 700 million obese people worldwide in 2015. Overweight and obesity are the fifth leading risk of deaths, resulting in around 2.8 million deaths of adults globally every year. In addition, 44% of the diabetes burden, 23% of the ischemic heart disease, and between 7% and 41% of certain cancer burdens are attributable to overweight or obesity. The causes and co-morbidities of overweight or obesity are rampant and have many commonalities among populations. Although identifying firm causes of this epidemic is a difficult task, the most obvious

factors leading to overweight or obesity are excessive intake of energy-dense food, sedentary lifestyle, and lack of physical activity.

As our socio-economic role of women is changing on demands of more steady lifestyle, and that's why we can see in India most of the women plying dual role to fulfilled necessities of family.

A growing number of research studies have shown that Hatha yoga can improve strength and flexibility, and may help control physiological variables such as blood pressure, lipids, respiration, heart rate and metabolic rate to improve overall exercise capacity. There are many asanas, which help to reduce fat and helps to maintain fitness.

Yoga poses like Asanas, Pranayama, meditation and relaxation techniques are helpful for weight loss, lessening of body fat and weight management. Shedding of excess fat and attaining ideal body can be achieved by practicing yoga. Yogic exercises or therapy is highly effective in the control and management of it. The different yogic practices and yoga tips for treatments of the disorder are:

- ✓ Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand pose) improves the efficiency of the thyroid glands, which is responsible for correcting body weight and normalize the endocrine system that too control the condition.
- ✓ Padahasthasana (Forward bending asana) improves metabolic process of the body by acting on thyroid and pituitary gland, thus control it.
- ✓ Dhanurasana (Bow pose) helps to burn excessive fat in the body.
- ✓ Paschimottasana (Back stretching pose) helps to remove excess fat in the abdominal region tones all the abdominal organs.
- ✓ Ardha-Matsyendrasana (Half spinal twist poses) treats ailments like diabetes, indigestion, overweight and constipation.
- ✓ Bhujangasana (Cobra pose) massages the abdominal organs, increases the flexibility of back and also regulated the thyroid gland. Good for childhood overweight.
- ✓ Pawanuktasana (Wind releasing pose) reduces abdominal fat.
- ✓ ViparitaKarni relieves the disorders related with thyroid and parathyroids glands.
- ✓ Practices like Kunjal and Shankha Prakshalana are quite effective in treating of fat related problems.
- ✓ Regular practice of, Kati Chakrasana, Halasana, Matsyasana and Ushtrasana along with Surya Namaskara is highly beneficial for such patients.
- ✓ Suryabhedhi and Bhastrika Pranayama are also found useful in weight reduction.
- ✓ Sometimes Obese persons will not be able to do more number of asanas, that time they have to be more patient before start any difficult asanas practice just need to feel appreciable effect on the body. It is recommended to start with few asanas that can be done comfortably and then increase the no of asanas and their repetitions gradually.

Diabetes:

Many women are working around the clock: preparing foods for the family, cleaning, washing and looking after children and its sick and elderly members with their occupational life demands.

Striking the right balance between work and home has always been a challenge for working women. Many surveys founds that this daily "multi-tasking" is taking a toll on their health. The worst part is most of the affected women are in the 32 to 58 age group.

One article is published in March 9, 2014 Times of India regarding survey titled 'Multi-tasking seriously affecting corporate women's health' was conducted by the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The survey found that 75 per cent of the total sample size of 2,800 corporate women employees from 120 companies across 11 broad sectors had one or the other health problem.

The survey covered all levels of hierarchy and the problem was found to be prevailing across all levels of seniority and grades. It was conducted in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Pune.

According to a press release, the study found that 78 per cent of the sample size suffered from lifestyle, chronic and acute ailments.

These included obesity, depression, chronic backache, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart and kidney diseases and diabetes.

Yoga can be (Shreelaxmi V. Hegde, July 1, 2011.) Used as an effective therapy in reducing oxidative stress in type 2- diabetes. Yoga in addition to standard care. Diabetes journal helps reduce BMI and improve glycemic control in type 2 diabetic patients.

Oxidative stress has been implicated as the root cause underlying the development of insulin resistance, β -cell dysfunction, diabetes, and its associated clinical conditions such as atherosclerosis, micro vascular complications, and neuropathy (1, 2). Yoga has been found to be beneficial in reducing oxidative stress in type 2 diabetes (3, 4), but there is a lack of controlled trials to demonstrate the same. This report describes the effect of yoga on oxidative stress, glycemic control, blood pressure control, and anthropometry in type 2 diabetic patients with or without complications compared with control subjects on standard care.

A research was conducted at Kasturba Medical College hospital on total of 123 type 2 diabetic patients aged between 40 and 75 years, none of whom were alcoholics or smokers and those who were unable to perform yoga were excluded.

Three months' yoga included *tadasana*, *padahasthasana*, *vrikshasana*, *trikonasana*, *parshvathanasana*, *vajrasana*, *vakrasana*, *gomukasana*, *paschimotasana*, *uttanapadasana*, *pawanamuktasana*, *bhujangasana*, *shalabhasana*, *dhanurasana*, *viparitarani*, *sitkari* and *bhramari pranayama*, *anulomaviloma*, and *shavasana* poses. The control group at their baseline visit was given general oral and written information about diet and exercise. Compliance with the intervention was defined as attendance for at least 3 days/week at the yoga center for 3 months.

The result of 3 months yoga practice was having significant improvements in BMI, FPG, PPPG, HbA1c, malondialdehyde, glutathione, and vitamin C at 3 months compared with the standard care group.

Yoga practitioners achieved a 20% reduction in oxidative stress, which is similar to the findings of Gordon et al. (10): 6 months of yoga in type 2 diabetic subjects showed a 19.9% reduction in oxidative stress. Other lifestyle interventions such as aerobic exercise and resistance training are known to increase stress parameters (11, 12). Antioxidants like glutathione and vitamin C improved by 15 and nearly 60% compared with standard care. To the best of our knowledge, to date there are no reports of the effect of yoga on glutathione and vitamin status in type 2 diabetes. In this study, yoga improved the antioxidant levels, thereby reducing the oxidative stress in type 2 diabetic patients.

Body Posture:

Most women experience some sort of back pain at some point during their working lives. So much so that, back pain is the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work (especially female employees under 40-years). Weighed down by heavy workloads and long working hours in the office coupled with the vigorous demands of household chores takes its toll on the body and the first casualty is more often than not, the spinal column. It is one of the most common neurological ailments and ranks as the number two reason why women see their family doctor!

Poor Posture (hyper kyphosis) invites distorted, restricted, shallow breathing and a host of other problems including lessened self-respect, self-expression and increased depression.

The human head weighs approximately 12 pounds. As the neck bent down forward in town, the weight increases, places a greater demand on the cervical spine. At the 15 degree angle, your cervical spine support approximately 27 pounds. At 30° 40 pounds. 60 degrees = 60 pounds. Muscles must compensate, which hyper-extends the back muscles. All this work makes muscles weak in the stomach area, which restricts the breath. Experts say it can reduce lung capacity by as much as 30%.

In this case we need to work on our correct breathing pattern and should be more focused on our posture during a long time office (setting / standing) work.

There are many pranayama which can help us to straighten our posture without any pain in long time sitting position, but this also needs daily and conscious practice for diaphragm breathing with 100% dedication. Through many pranayama like *oumkar*, *anulom-vilom*, *shitli* etc. are useful to develop diaphragm breathing habits.

The diaphragm is a dome shaped slow twitch skeletal muscle that forms the bottom of the thorax. The diaphragm has a central tendon that is attached to the ribs and vertebrae of the spine. The lungs are roughly divided into the superior, the middle and the lower lobe. As air is drawn into the lungs an increased volume is required. The dome of the diaphragm flattens and is lowered roughly 2cm. At the same time, the ribs will expand outward and elevate to increase the lung volume.

Conclusion:

Health is a vital element of human development. With the rapid changes brought about through globalization and the resultant new economic order, there is an increase in the need for academic studies to be focused on the area of women's health. This research paper precisely intends to deliberate and contribute to the understanding of a wide span of issues particularly focusing on the gendered aspects of working women's health. This paper recommends looking at a yoga practice influence on women's reproductive health, the rise in sexually transmitted diseases among women, physical and mental health problems of working women. To give holistic health gifts to all working women's of India, companies should introduce employees' wellness programs and women's access to health care facilities in companies. Working women have specific health concerns. With the rise in the number of working women in this age of globalization, new health problems are surfacing that the paper proposes to deliberate upon. Health problems of working women have received inadequate attention. Stress of work coupled with domestic responsibilities, pregnancy related problems has taken a toll not only on women's physical health, but their mental health too, with large number of women being afflicted by common mental disorders including depression. Faced with gender based discrimination at different stages of their lives many find it difficult to cope with the stress they are subjected to. Companies can offer many good policies to promote healthy life style like employees Get Paid to Exercise, exiting offers (gifts) on achieved goals (weight reeducation/ stress management control). At the same moment family support also playing an

important role in women's life to maintain peaceful life style which lead to get satisfaction in life. Second and very important that without own efforts to get healthy life nobody could help them to gift of happiness. Working women's needs to maintain work life balance and has to spare some quality time to get and maintain physical and mental health. Doing yoga at work place in spare or free time is the best way to get fitness because for yoga practice we don't need so much space and equipment, it's just need a urge to be fit.

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