

## **Yoga for One Earth, One Health**

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IX C on account of International Yoga Day

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As Indians, I am sure that there is not a single person among us who hasn't heard the word 'Yoga'. With the emergence of the Internet, what was once solely an Indian practice has now become a huge sensation worldwide. Nowadays, it is normal to find people who have never even set foot on Indian soil talking about how Yoga has changed their lives. But what is Yoga? Simply speaking, Yoga is an ancient Indian art that aims to connect the mind and body through nothing but physical postures, breathing techniques and meditation.

While at first, Yoga might seem to be a daunting and complex endeavour to undertake, it is actually quite simple, and is known for having numerous benefits, the most commonly spoken one is stress relief. Yoga involves a series of breathing techniques known as pranayama, which reduces our stress response by activating the body's parasympathetic system, which is also known as the 'relaxation response'. In a world where we are constantly juggling a multitude of tasks, Yoga helps us to find our centre in the middle of the storms that are our lives.

Yoga is especially beneficial to us students. At a time like this, when we are so accustomed to staying up late, slouching in our chairs and scrolling on our parents' phones when we're supposed to be doing homework, Yoga helps us by boosting our energy levels, improving our posture, increasing our focus and enhancing our sleep quality. Yoga grounds us by forcing us to focus on our breath and our breath alone, thus fixing our disrupted attention spans. As for its benefits for adults, Yoga is also known for reducing chronic pain, lowering blood sugar levels and improving cardiovascular health.

While there is no such thing as a ‘wrong’ way of practising Yoga, there are some guidelines that we need to follow that will elevate our Yoga experience from a state of mere peace to one of pure bliss. Firstly, one of the most important things to do when practising yoga is to wear loose and breathable clothing. Next, find a quiet and comfortable space where you can meditate without interruption. Another key aspect of Yoga is to begin with the basics and then move on to more complicated asanas when you’re ready. Lastly, make sure to focus on your breath and listen to what your body is telling you.

To conclude, Yoga can immensely improve our quality of life, if we only let it. While Yoga might have originated as an ancient practice, I firmly believe that yoga is for everyone to enjoy and benefit from. Doing Yoga for even five minutes every day can make a huge difference to our health and happiness. To put it in the words of B.K.S Iyengar, “Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured and endure what cannot be cured.”