

Benefit of Yoga Poses for Women during Pregnancy

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Abstract

Objectives. Yoga is used for a variety of immunological, neuromuscular, psychological, and pain conditions. Recent studies indicate that it may be effective in improving pregnancy, labour, and birth outcomes.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the existing literature on yoga for pregnancy. Given the specific physical needs of women during pregnancy, a tailored and specialized yoga protocol that uses a variety of elements of a yoga practice is best indicated. Several of the reviewed studies provide a holistic approach to health promotion and stress management, providing participants with a framework with which to integrate the lecture material on yogic philosophy, positive lifestyle change, mindful awareness, stress reduction, and pregnancy and labour into their daily lives.

Keyword: yoga, poses and pregnancy

INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an ancient mind-body practice that originated in India and is becoming increasingly recognized and used in developed nations as a health practice for a variety of immunological, neuromuscular, psychological, and pain conditions. The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit term “yug” and directly translates as “to unite”; more broadly, it means to work towards a unified experience of the self and improved health. Most recognized for its potential to create balance along emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions, yoga is a comprehensive system that uses physical postures (asana), breathing exercises (pranayama), concentration and meditation (dharana and dhyana), and contemplative practice. Although there are a plethora of lineages and schools of yoga that are offered in modern society, practices typically include at least the physical postures and breathing exercises. Yoga is thought to alter nervous system regulation and physiological system functioning (e.g., immune, endocrine, neurotransmitter, and cardiovascular) and improve psychological well being (e.g., frequency of positive mood states and optimism) and physical fitness (e.g., strength, flexibility, and endurance).

Pregnancy is a condition in which women undergo distinct physiological changes and stress and is accompanied by unique physical and psychological demands. There is a need to manage the various physical, emotional, mental, and pain states that arise throughout the stages of pregnancy and labour. The well being and quality of life of the mother is critical for optimal pregnancy outcomes; self-soothing techniques, psycho education, and relaxation are particularly important in this transitional and meaningful time. Maternal stress and anxiety during pregnancy is associated with a host of negative consequences for the fetus and subsequent development. For instance, fetal exposure to maternal stress and stress-related peptides is a risk factor for adverse

outcomes on the programming of the nervous system and brain morphology of fetuses, infants, and children. Early gestational stress exposure is associated with negative outcomes at different developmental stages, slowed maturation and behavioral response patterns in fetuses, alterations in neonatal stress regulation and behavioral reactions to stress, blunted cognitive functions and emotional and behavioural problems in infants and toddlers, and reduced brain volume in areas associated with cognitive function in children. In addition, prenatal maternal stress and anxiety may be risk factors for potential negative consequences for children later in life, such as the development of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or lowered performance on aspects of executive function. It is hypothesized that maternal stress may affect the intrauterine environment and alter fetal development during critical periods, through either activation of the placental stress system, causing the release and circulation of corticotrophin releasing hormone, or through diminished blood flow and oxygen to the uterus. Therefore, it is important to regulate maternal stress and provide expecting mothers with coping strategies for the inevitable stresses and changes that occur during pregnancy to increase quality of life and to maximize infant health and development.

Effective Yoga Poses for Pregnancy

Tadasana (Mountain Pose)

Tadasana or the Mountain Pose is considered the base of all asanas from which other asanas are assumed. It can be practiced anytime during the day and not necessarily on an empty stomach. But if you're preceding or following it up with other asanas, make sure the stomach is empty. Tadasana is a basic level Hatha yoga asana. Hold it for 10 to 20 seconds.

Benefits of Tadasana during Pregnancy

Tadasana increases focus and concentration, which can go awry as a result of pregnancy stress. It improves your posture and strengthens your thighs, legs, and ankles, keeping you strong and fit through the nine months. It firms your abdomen and steadies breathing, helping you keep calm and composed.

Sukhasana (Easy Pose)

Sukhasana or the Easy Pose, as the name suggests, is one of the most comfortable yoga asanas. It is ideal for beginners and those who have to take it easy. In the Eastern cultures, it is the usual sitting position. Sukhasana works best when you practice it in the morning because it is a meditative pose. Your stomach doesn't necessarily have to be empty to practice this pose. Sukhasana is a beginner level Vinyasa yoga asana. Sit in it as long as you can.

Benefits of Sukhasana during Pregnancy

Sukhasana stretches your spine, which gives you a much-needed back stretch. It broadens your chest and calms your mind, keeping you smart and confident while pregnant. It opens up your hips, reduces fatigue, and uplifts your mood. The pose energizes you and increases your will to be productive. It improves digestion and betters your breathing, keeping your child inside hale and healthy. It keeps you in a state of tranquility, which is much needed in the pregnancy state.

Baddha Konasana (Butterfly Pose)

Baddha Konasana or the Butterfly Pose looks like a butterfly flapping its wings. It is also similar to the stance of a cobbler at work. Practice Baddha Konasana on an empty stomach and clean bowels, preferably in the morning. In the evenings, make sure there is a gap of 4 to 6 hours between your last meal and the practice. Baddha Konasana is a beginner level yoga asana. Flap away for one to five minutes.

Benefits of Baddha Konasana during Pregnancy

Baddha Konasana strengthens and stretches your inner thighs, groins, and knees, which will come in handy during childbirth. It eases out digestive problems, keeping your tummy clutter-free. It improves the health of the ovaries and prostate gland. The pose stimulates your heart and treats mild depression, helping you cope with the change. It works on high blood pressure and opens up your lower back, which relaxes you.

Dandasana (Stick Pose)

Dandasana or the Stick Pose looks relatively easy but is quite strenuous. It prepares the body for more demanding asanas. Practice it in the morning on an empty stomach and clean bowels. If you don't get time in the morning, do it in the evenings after a gap of 4 to 6 hours from your last meal. Dandasana is a beginner level Vinyasa yoga asana. Hold the pose for 20 to 30 seconds.

Benefits of Dandasana during Pregnancy

Dandasana strengthens your back muscles and stretches your chest, making you physically agile. It relieves complications in the reproductive organs and keeps them functioning well. It calms your brain cells and keeps you at peace. The pose protects your body from back and hip injuries that you are more prone to during pregnancy.

Janu Sirsasana (Head to Knee Pose)

Janu Sirsasana or the Head to Knee Pose requires you to touch your knee with your head. It gives your body a good stretch. Practice it in the morning when you are fresh and full of energy. Make sure your stomach is empty and bowels clean. In case you practice it in the evening, do it after 4 to 6 hours from your last meal. Janu Sirsasana is a beginner level Ashtanga yoga asana. Hold it for 30 to 60 seconds.

Benefits of Janu Sirsasana during Pregnancy

Janu Sirsasana stretches your hamstrings and groins, increasing their flexibility to ease childbirth. It stimulates your liver and kidneys, helping them function better to cope with the increased bodily requirements. It is good for pregnant ladies suffering from insomnia, a common occurrence during pregnancy. Janu Sirsasana strengthens your stomach muscles, preparing it for the contractions.

Shavasana (Corpse Pose)

Shavasana or the Corpse Pose resembles the stillness of a dead body. It is usually done at the end of a yoga session or after a strenuous yoga asana. It can be quite challenging as it requires you to stay completely still and relaxed. Make sure you do not fall asleep during the pose. Shavasana is a basic level Ashtanga yoga asana. Relax in the pose for 10 to 12 minutes.

Benefits of Shavasana during Pregnancy

Shavasana helps the workout sink in better into your being, helping the entire body benefit from it. It gives you a deep and meditative state of rest, which is much needed during pregnancy as stress and anxiety are easily triggered during this phase. The pose repairs damaged tissues and cells, readying the body to sustain life in it.

Objective: Yoga is used for a variety of immunological, neuromuscular, psychological, and pain conditions. Recent studies indicate that it may be effective in improving pregnancy, labour, and birth outcomes

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present paper suggests that a prenatal yoga program results in benefits during pregnancy as well as throughout labour and on birth outcomes.

Given the specific physical needs of women during pregnancy, a tailored and specialized yoga protocol that uses a variety of elements of a yoga practice is best indicated. Several of the reviewed studies provide a holistic approach to health promotion and stress management, providing participants with a framework with which to integrate the lecture material on yogic philosophy, positive lifestyle change, mindful awareness, stress reduction, and pregnancy and labour into their daily lives. It is recommended that future research studies use yoga interventions that fall under the general category of Hatha yoga or use programs in line with a particular school of yoga that emphasizes a specialized, gentle and modified asana programs, such as Iyengar or restorative yoga. Research-based interventions should not use types of yoga that emphasize a physical demanding, strength-based, or heated practice for safety precautions for both the mother and fetus.

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