

## Yoga as an Exercise in the Professional Life of a Swimmer Leads to Perfection - A Review

Ravi Teja Mandapaka<sup>1\*</sup>, Srinivas Rachabathuni<sup>2</sup> and Jyothirmai D<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Microbiology and Immunology, National Institute of Nutrition, Jamai Osmania, India

<sup>2</sup>Technical Lead and Senior SAS Data Analyst, Larson & Toubro Infotech Ltd, Block 4, DLF IT Park, SEZ Camp, Manapakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>3</sup>Vivekananda Institute of Human excellence, India

### Abstract

The modern day times, owing to the depth of understanding and researching the unknown corners of human science, have called, and are calling the advent of research to dwell deeper and decipher, if only to come up with any possible solution towards treating human beings and their everlasting ailments [1-5]. Of all the inventions and discoveries, fathoming the speed and agility of human body remains a thing of artistic importance. Added to this, the adeptness of human concentration, i.e., the power of human brain, occupies the seats of many a news report. In the good times that have left us, Swimming and Yoga occupy a substantial place in the success of many an athlete [6-9]. Our objective, in this study, was to study the role and importance of yoga in increasing the performance of an athlete in professional sport we do, swimming [9-13].

**Keywords:** Swimming, Yoga, Exercise, Body, Mind, Soul

### Introduction

Yoga, they say is a physical, mental, and spiritual practice. River Godavari has its roots in a nation we all proudly call India, and so does yoga. If you are a student of science interested in its etymological origins, in Sanskrit of the orthodox, Yoga was derived from the word *Yui*, which has a meaning to *add, to attach or to unite*. For swimmers and yoga practitioners like us who would boast of the fact that a 200 Fly is the best thing that you can ever do to your god-gifted human body, Yoga has an answer to a flabbergasted level of extremism [13-16]. The philosophy of Yoga deals with some of the greatest mysteries of life and the universe and so it must inevitably be associated with an atmosphere of profound mystery. But much of the obscurity of Yogic literature is due, not to the intrinsic profundity of the subject, but to the lack of correlation between its teachings and the facts with which an ordinary educated man is expected to be familiar [16-20]. If the doctrines of Yoga are studied in the light of both ancient and modern thought, it is much easier for the student to understand and appreciate them [3,21-23].

Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, one of the finest and greatest living pace bowlers in the game of cricket, a fact hardly unknown to the modern-day public [23-25]. But, at one point of the time during their illustrious careers, yoga stood the difference between darkness and light. Harmony is a Precious Treasure of Human Life. There is no progress without Harmony. Harmony in all Walks of Life, Body and Mind, Emotions and Intelligence, Self and Society and Purpose of Life and Method of Living etc. Yoga is an art and science of healthy living [2].

Yoga indeed has English meaning too. It says, controlling the body and the will. We wonder if that has worked with many saints and sages who practiced this age-old immortal art and passed the baton to us, the younger generation. You remember us saying a word or two about swimming? We hope you do. Our sport demands an extensive control of the breath when doing strokes or flipping the body under the water to reach the shore, which in many ways, is just a regulation [25-29]. But, for that too, practicing Pranayama, a part of yoga helped us a lot. Isn't it, then, an art we all should practice like we breathe? Isn't yoga, an art to beguile many an hour of hostility?

They say, a mind singularly practical and sagacious can unease many a shallow doubt and treat time's disguise to indefatigable afterthoughts,

if only to be given an unbiased, unabated, undaunted heralding. We suppose, the meaning of this very life, though short at times, too, resonates to the aforementioned lines.

There lies a whipping thin difference between art and artistry; prose and poetry; praise and applause; eminence and prominence. If playing a sport occupies a good seat with the formers of the *colon-separated doubles*, practicing and preaching yoga finds a comfort seat with the latter. We, as your fellow human beings, never wish to cross your heads in bossing about our passion, but we staunchly and loudly say, yoga, at times, is the most unvisited shores in the sempiternal oceans of the game called life, that's forever opened to the glaring sky that hardly shuns away from us. Yet, there lies one amiable and clinical feature in this varied art we call yoga. Meekness and humility in controlling the falsifiable emotions of mind, meditating like a monk, undeterred, standing stoic amidst many a cacophonous uncertainty and humility too, in leading life as serene as possible if only to develop the finest of sporting knacks, dexterity and acumen.

If you, dear readers, foresee us telling about the types of yoga, aka, *Paschimottanasana, Dhanurasana, Shirsaana and Halasana*, we're a bit down-trodden to disappoint you. One of the sole, yet pious reasons to put our thoughts lay on mounting the importance of yoga while playing any sport at professional level. Edmond Rostard once said, "A great noise indicates a great man - genial, courteous, intellectual, visible and courageous". Practicing yoga, on a daily basis, will make a noise in our professional sport rich in talent and harmony unbridled, unraveled.

### Scholastic thoughts on yoga

Now then, after all that's been said and done in the above, we

**\*Corresponding author:** Ravi Teja Mandapaka, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, National Institute of Nutrition, Jamai Osmania, India, Tel: 9581625084; E-mail: [ravitejamandapaka@gmail.com](mailto:ravitejamandapaka@gmail.com)

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would like to bring out a few points, if not many, on the role of yoga in professional sport. *Mona Fairholme* in her blog *Yoga in Otley* brings to us, these priceless lines.

*“When the surface of a lake is still, one can see to the bottom very clearly”. This is impossible when the surface is agitated by waves. In the same way, when the mind is still we can control mental agitation by focusing on perfect concentration. When a player, in any sport, is trying to fulfill thousands, hundreds of thousands or if playing for their country, millions of people’s expectations their minds are completely stressed and their natural efficiency diminishes. No amount of coaching or training can prepare for doubt or worry entering the mind of a player during a game. By holding steady postures and concentrating on deep abdominal breathing we can increase body awareness, relieve chronic stress patterns in the body, relax the mind, center one’s attention, sharpen concentration and “stay in the zone!”*

As athletes, we buy many an injury and seldom get adhered to the vacant benches on the sidelines. If you are a soul, dwelling deeper and healthier in *The Greatest Game on Planet Earth – Football*- you are destined to buy, and at times sell, many injuries, that will relegate your bodies to the benches for a major part of the season. How plaintive will it be? Will it be, then, anything less than culping out your agonies at the sight of successes your peers are having for themselves in the field of play? For that, we say, practicing yoga during the recovery allows the athletes to recover fast, and will aid us to stay fit and sound over a long period of time.

As swimmers and badminton players, we have found and have often experienced a humongous improvement in the aforementioned areas after practicing yoga. We’ve developed our muscle strengths, now have a fine balance in court, aided with abrupt agility, our bodies are far more flexible than they once were, can weather many a storm, and last but surely not the least, the enhanced emotional control is allowing us to play our chosen sport, one minute at a time, for we, now, are perfecting our strokes and shots, and playing the sport on our true merit, often exceeding it.

Quilty MT et al, in 2013 in their research report urged us to realize the importance of the original purpose of yoga. They say, yoga will increase one’s spiritual well-being or connection with the divine - has typically been a neglected area for researchers. Plus this, yoga, as exercise, is one of the best supplements you can ever feed your body with. Personally, yoga helped us to return to normalcy, during one of the most traumatic times in the pool. Performing yoga for a mere 30 minutes of the total 24 hours helped us increasing our confidence levels, and our mental stability.

Erik J Groessll\*, Deepak Chopra and Paul J Mills in their review article “An Overview of Yoga Research for Health and Well-Being” reported that, “Clearly, in cases where yoga does not offer significant relief from physical disease, it can still offer some measure of relief from suffering. In this sense, yoga can provide a different way of looking at pain and suffering, which in itself can potentially alleviate some suffering”. To us, here, standing tall and bold in an erudite time in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the aforementioned four lines mean everything. They mean the earth and skyline, the soil beneath the sea line. In our words, yoga denies us to give a resignation to life’s uncertainties, and allows us to journey beyond them.

## Conclusion

We would like to dispel some misconceptions and half-understanding of yoga some people have. To think that yoga is all about

the human body is wrong. It is about the body, mind and soul. Yoga helps in the unquestionable and indisputable truth that a sound mind in a sound body helps realize the meaning and purpose of life and helps in the communion with that invisible, inexpressible, incomprehensible, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient power called God. Yoga helps man rise above the innate animal instinct, live through the human instinct and reach the levels of divinity. Yoga helps man in all walks of life to transcend from selfishness to altruism, from hatred to love, from jealousy to appreciation, from parochialism to real patriotism. Yoga helps one to see the oneness of humanity and human unity. Yoga helps one to become a world citizen - craving for peace and crying against violence. If sport is to unite the world, every sportsman must embrace yoga – body, mind and soul.

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