

Yoga for Influenza

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1. Introduction

Influenza, commonly called "the flu," is an illness caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract. Influenza is truly an international disease. It occurs in all countries affects millions of people every year. Its behavior is unpredictable. It may occur in several forms. It may smolder in a community without clinical recognition, being manifest only by serological surveys. It may occur in pandemics every 10 to 15 years due to major antigenic changes, as occurred in 1957 and 1968. Influenza is a viral infection that affects mainly the nose, throat, bronchi, and occasionally, lungs. Infection usually lasts for about a week and is characterized by sudden onset of high fever, aching muscles, headache, and severe malaise, and non-productive cough, sore throat, and rhinitis. The virus is transmitted easily from person to person via droplets and small particles produced when infected people cough or sneeze. Influenza tends to spread rapidly in seasonal epidemics. Unusually severe worldwide outbreaks (pandemics) have occurred several times in the last 100 years since the influenza virus was identified in 1933. By an examination of preserved tissue, the worst influenza pandemic occurred in 1918 when the virus caused between 40 to 100 million deaths with a mortality rate estimated to range from 2% to 20%. As history states, there have been several hard cases of influenza. The most famous case was the Spanish flu pandemic which occurred between the years 1918 and 1919 and was estimated to have killed more people in total than in World War 1. Other hard cases of flu occurred in 1957 in Asia, and 1968 in Hong-Kong. Influenza pandemics strike many times in the 20th century. Nowadays the medications and the treatment are more advanced but it is still hard to fight these dynamic viruses.

2. Yoga and Influenza

Yoga's stress-reducing abilities are one of the primary reasons a regular practice of yoga helps prevent and cure a common cold. Stress is known as a major contributing factor to catching a cold or flu, as stress hormones cause the thymus to shrink in size, causing it to poorly function as a producer of immune cells. Besides the general calming effects of most yoga poses, restorative poses and forward bends are especially calming to the nervous system, helping to reduce whole-body stress. Yoga has been practiced for more than 5,000 years, and currently, close to 11 million Americans are enjoying its health benefits. Yoga can hardly be called a trend. The various practices and poses of yoga are an excellent way to keep the immune system healthy and strong to prevent and quickly recover from the common cold or flu. The series of yoga poses called asana work by safely stretching your muscles. This releases the lactic acid that builds up with muscle use and causes stiffness, tension, pain, and fatigue.

3. Yoga Therapy for Influenza (Flu)

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is a viral infection that attacks the respiratory system. As weather changes, many are likely to suffer from influenza. People with flu can spread it to others up to about 6 feet away. Most experts think that flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk.

4. Yoga Therapy

Yoga therapy for influenza focuses on improving the immunity system. Asana and Pranayama are the most effective in improving the respiratory and circulatory system by which the total metabolism changes and improves the immunity towards such viruses. Inverted and backward bending postures improve the function of the respiratory system. There is a great expansion of the chest and is tranquilizing and soothing for the anxious mind. Twisting and forward bending postures rejuvenate the body and calm the mind.

The practice of pranayama and kriyas cleans the respiratory tract and improves lung capacity. This boosts the immune system and the overall health of the body and the mind.

Frequent hand washing is the best way to prevent common infections. Avoid crowds during peak flu season to reduce the chance of infection. Maintaining personal and environmental hygiene is key.

If you suffer from the flu, drink plenty of water or juice to help the body hydrated. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Refrain from work or school when you notice symptoms of influenza. Take more rest and stay isolated for a while.

Seek medical advice if the symptoms persist or deteriorate.

The practice of asana, pranayama, and kriyas strengthens the immune system of the body. It also improves mental health which is very important to get over influenza.

"Practice of yoga gives one strong body, strong mind and strong spirit to overcome everything"

5. Yoga Asanas for Influenza

Sarvangasana

Yoga is one of the oldest forms of physical discipline in existence. Numerous types of asana are performed in Yoga, one of them being ArdhaSarvangasana. It is the Queen of all the asanas. Just as the name 'Sarvang' suggests 'all parts', the asana is essentially concerned with all the parts of the body.

Steps

- Lie flat on your back. Inhale deeply while raising your legs and spine until the toes point to the ceiling.

- Breathe slowly and deeply with the abdomen and concentrate on the thyroid gland. On a male, the thyroid gland is a few inches above the sternal notch (hollow of the neck where the neck joins this position for about two minutes. located behind Adam's apple. For women, it is located in the same area which rest of the body.) or approximately halfway up the neck from the sternal notch. Stay in
- Release the hands, and either stretch the arms straight and rest the back of the hand's on the knees or join the palms in front of the chest. Keep the back erect and stay in the pose for about 30 seconds with deep breathing.
- To come out of this posture, just bend your knees, curve your back and slowly return to lying on the floor while exhaling. First, bend your knees, put the palms on the floor, then curving the spine, gradually unfold it the way one unrolls a carpet. When your entire back touches the floor, straighten the knees, take a deep breath, and slowly lower your legs to the ground while breathing out.
- If you wish, you may go straight into the next posture (the 'reverse posture') instead of lying down.

Matsyasana

Matsya in Sanskrit means fish. One immediately identifies this asana with the figurative relevance like any other Hatha asanas. But here the asana is suggestive of the quality of floating like a fish - a state that's induced by assuming this

posture. Matsyasana Traditional texts state that Matsyasana is the "destroyer of all diseases." This asana is therapeutically helpful in constipation, respiratory faculties, fatigue, and anxiety. It's good for preventing mildly recurring backaches before they go worse.

Steps

Assume padmasana If it is difficult, assume a comparable posture (Swasthikasana or Sukhasana).

- Bend backward and touch the ground with the back of your head while not changing the position of your legs.
- Use hands to give support to the body so that your body doesn't fall flat. While you lay backward while keeping the legs as in padmasana, your body assumes the same of a fish, with the legs forming the tailfins. The back, shoulders, neck, most of the head and parts below-knee will not touch the ground.
- Now extend your hands and grasp your big toes. The right-hand grasps the left big toe, which is on the left side of the body.
- Breathe slowly while in Matsyasana pose. • Take hands backward and place them on the ground as a support. Slowly raise your head and come to Padmasana pose.

Reference

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2. Recommendations for baselines and threshold calculations were tested by the WHO Regional Office for Europe using data from Romania, and colleagues in Australia using data from Victoria.
3. July-October 2012: Publication of the WHO Global Interim Epidemiological Surveillance Standards for Influenza on the WHO influenza website (<http://www.who.int/influenza/en/>) for wider comments