

Concept of Health and Disease in Yoga

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOGA

Yoga is an ancient wealth of wisdom, which is a gift passed down to us from our ancestors from over five centuries ago. It is unfortunate that in today's world this tradition of yoga is only confined to the practice of asanas or physical postures. Though in reality, the meaning of the word yoga encompasses so much more.



The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root word 'yuj', which means to unite. It symbolizes the union of the individual soul (jivatma) with the universal soul (paramatma). In other words, it enables a state of consciousness where the practitioner is in harmony with his or her surroundings.

According to an ancient text of yoga, the Pantanjali yoga sutras, yoga is said to be consisting of eight limbs:

Rules and observances (yama and niyama), postures (asana), breath regulation (pranayama), withdrawal of the senses (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana) and absorption into the supreme (samadhi).

The hatha yoga practitioners evolved additional techniques like cleansing procedures (kriya), gestures (mudra) and locks (bandhas).

THE CONCEPT OF HEALTH

The term 'Health' is an abstract concept which is hard to grasp. A fundamental question arises, "Can an individual who does not suffer from any disease be called healthy?"

In 1948, The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Health consists of physical, mental, social, vocational, moral, emotional and spiritual dimensions.

From this definition, it is evident that health is a dynamic and multi-dimensional state. And therefore, the achievement of optimum health is only possible by the use of a holistic approach which caters to every one of its dimensions. Yoga emerges as the perfect candidate for this purpose.

- Asanas (postures) and shat kriyas (cleansing procedures) improve the physical component of health.
- Dhyana (meditation) and dharana (concentration) improve mental health.
- Yama (discipline) and niyama (observance) are universal rules of morality and social conduct laid down by sage Patanjali. They are similar to modern principles of public health and community medicine.
- The practices of pranayama (breath regulation) and pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses) improve emotional health.



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- Yoga also strongly advocates the importance of surrender to the almighty or ishvarapranidhana. This encourages the development of spiritual health in an individual.

Therefore, the conventional concept of optimum health can be achieved by the practice of yoga.

THE YOGIC VIEW OF HEALTH

The knowledge of composition of the human body is inherently necessary for understanding the yogic concept of health. The structural aspect of a human body is derived from the ancient text of Taittareeya Upanishad. This text says that the human body is composed of five sheaths called as the pancakoshas.

Optimum health is said to be achieved when health is achieved at each of these five levels.

1. **Annamayakosha or Physical body**

The physical body is made of the manifestation of the five great elements or pancamahabhootas. These five elements are then further organized to form the seven basic tissues of the human body called as the saptadhatu. They include rasa (lymph), rakta (blood), mamsa (flesh/muscle), majja (bone marrow), medas (fat), asthi (bone) and sukra (semen).

2. **Pranamayakosha or Energy body**

It is predominantly made of energy channels running throughout the human body called as Nadis. These nadis are channels that facilitate the flow of the life force called as prana. There are said to be 72,000 nadis running throughout the human body adopting the path of least resistance. These nadis meet at certain energy centers of the body called as chakras and they are seven in number. The prana that flows through these nadis is of five types based on its functions (udana, prana, samana, apana, vyana), and they are further sub-classified into five upa-pranas (naga, koorma, krikara, devadatta, dhananjaya).

3. **Manomayakosha or Emotional body**

It consists of the three gunas or personality traits of an individual. Sattva, rajas and tamas. The overall personality of an individual is determined by the relative predominance of these three gunas.

4. **Vijnanamayakosha or Intellectual body**

This kosha is the faculty by which an individual is able differentiate the right from wrong.

5. **Anandamayakosha or Bliss body**

The awareness of this kosha only arises in certain deep yogic states. It is a state of ecstasy or bliss.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The Bhagavad Gita defines yoga as follows: Samatvam yoga ucyate (2.48)

The statement says that equanimity is yoga. This indicates that yoga enables a state of both physical homeostasis and mental equanimity. Yoga is a state of harmony where the body's physiological functions are maintained and the mind remains in moderation, not overly reacting to either aversion or desire.

The Bhagavad Gita also enumerates mental health in great detail. A mentally sound and healthy individual is referred to as a sthitaprajna, which means a man of steady wisdom. The qualities of a sthitaprajna are



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elaborated in depth throughout the second chapter called as the Sankhya yoga. They include tranquility, situational stability, emotional stability, free from desires, complete self-control and oneness with brahman or knowledge of the ultimate.

THE HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA

The physical characteristics of a healthy practitioner of hatha yoga are explained in the second chapter of this classical text of hatha yoga. This text was authored by Swatmarama, who calls these characteristics as the 'Hatha Yoga Lakshana', said to appear after the practice of hatha yoga.

vapuhkrishatvamvadaneprasannata
nadasphutatvamnayanesunirmale |
arogatabindujayo'gnidipanam
nadivishuddhir hatha siddhi lakshanam || (2.78)

Slimness of body, luster on the face, clarity of voice, brightness of eyes, freedom from disease, control over seminal ejaculation, stimulation of gastric fire and purification of nadis are marks of success in hatha yoga.

THE PATANJALI YOGA SUTRAS

A description of bodily perfection (kaya sampat) can be found in the Vibhutipada of the Patanjali yoga sutras. rūpa-lāvaṇya-bala-vajra-saṁhananātvaṇikāyasaṁpat(4.46)

The perfection of the body includes beauty, gracefulness, strength, and adamant hardness.

These qualities described are attributed to optimum physical health.

The Yoga sutras are an exposition on the skillful control of the mind. The concepts in the sutras are applied in the management of mental illnesses. The characteristics and steps to attain optimum mental health are also explained in great depth.

THE CONCEPT OF DISEASE

Impairment of health, a condition of the body in which its optimal functioning is disrupted or deranged is called as disease.

THE PATANJALI YOGA SUTRAS

In Samadhi pada of the yoga sutras, a total of 13 obstacles in the path of Samadhi (antarayas) are described. Vyadhi or disease is one of them. This is in reference to physical illness.

Five kleshas or afflictions are described in the sadhanapada. They are said to be the root of mental illnesses. They include ignorance (avidya), ego (asmita), desire (raga), aversion (dvesha) and fear of death (abhinivesha). Among these, ignorance (avidya) is said to be the root of all other afflictions.

THE YOGA VASHISHTA

The yoga vashishta is a treatise on yoga that contains the teachings of sage Vashishta to Lord Rama. In this text, the concept of disease is explained as follows:

- In the anandamayakosha (bliss body), an individual is healthiest with perfect harmony and balance.
- In the vijñanamayakosha (intellectual body), there are movements but channelized in the right



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- Imbalances start in the manomayakosha (emotional body). It is the root of all diseases.
- These mental imbalances arise due to ajnana or ignorance. This leads to an imbalance in the thought process called as adhi.
- The adhis manifest themselves as physical disease called as vyadhi.

The physical manifestation of the adhis can take three forms:

- Ajeernatva: indigestion or decreased activity of digestive tract.
- Atijeernatva: excessive functioning of the digestive tract.
- Kujeernatva: abnormal functioning of the digestive tract.

In Naturopathic philosophy, it is believed that the improper functioning of the digestive tract is the root cause of all diseases. In fact, “constipation is called the mother of diseases”. This statement supports that the causality of all diseases occurs through this progression of events, described above.

In conventional medicine, these are called as psychosomatic diseases. The psychosomatic theory of diseases is in fact a relatively new concept in the field of conventional medicine. Whereas this theory was already well established in the ancient Indian texts.

- Adhi: psychic disturbance arising due to ignorance.
- Vyadhi: physical malady or illness.
- Adhijavyadhi: stress-borne psychosomatic illness.
- Anadhijavyadhi: somatic ailments like injury, infection, toxin etc... They are not stress-borne. The causes are external.

The progression of symptoms in these psychosomatic disorders are said to occur in the following four phases:

1. Psychic phase: Mild persistent psychological and behavioral symptoms.
Eg: irritability, disturbed sleep
2. Psychosomatic phase: Appearance of generalized physiological symptoms.
Eg: hypertension, tremors
3. Somatic phase: Disturbed function of organs, especially the weaker organs.
Eg: pre-diabetes, overweight
4. Organic phase: Full manifestation of the disease accompanied by pathological changes. The organs may sometimes be irreversibly damaged.
Eg: peptic ulcer, cancer
 - Sara adhijavyadhi: Influenced by heredity. They are congenital disorders. This can only be destroyed by realizing the subtle states of mind or attaining Samadhi. In that state, man transcends the cycle of birth and death.
 - Samanyaadhijavyadhi: These are not inherited.
 - Upadhi: Self-imposed suffering.

DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has identified eight dimensions of wellness to focus on to optimize health. The eight dimensions include: emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social. Wellness can be compromised by lack of support, trauma, unhelpful thinking styles, chronic illness/disability, and substance use. The eight dimensions are described below and are accompanied by examples and ideas for improving each area.

1. EMOTIONAL



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SAMHSA identifies emotional wellness as an ability to cope effectively with life and build satisfying [relationships](#) with others. People with healthy emotional wellness feel [confident](#), in control of their feelings and behaviors, and are able to handle life challenges. Working through life challenges can build [resiliency](#) as we learn that setbacks can be overcome. Emotional health can be maintained or improved by engaging in regular leisure and recreational activities. Do activities that involve each of your senses: smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound. Listen to music, eat your favorite food, light your favorite candle, play with your pet, and watch your favorite movie or the sunset.

2. SPIRITUAL

[Spiritual](#) wellness is related to your [values](#) and beliefs that help you find meaning and [purpose](#) in your life. Spiritual wellness may come from activities such as volunteering, self-reflection, [meditation](#), prayer, or spending time in nature. Signs of strong spiritual health include having clear values, a sense of self-confidence, and a feeling of inner peace. To improve your spiritual health, it can help to create a quiet space for solitude and contemplation or a place of curiosity and playfulness. Maintaining a playful, curious attitude can help you find experiences that offer [hope](#), purpose, and meaning.

3. INTELLECTUAL

Intellectual wellness is when you recognize your unique talents to be [creative](#) and you seek out ways to use your knowledge and skills. When you foster your intellectual wellness, you participate in activities that cultivate mental growth. Reading, doing challenging puzzles such as crosswords or Sudoku, debating issues with others who have opposing viewpoints, learning a new language or musical instrument, trying a new hobby, or teaching and tutoring others are all ways to maintain or improve your intellectual wellness. When you challenge yourself to learn a new skill, you are building your intellectual health. People who pay attention to their intellectual wellness often find that they have better concentration, improved [memory](#), and better critical thinking skills.

4. PHYSICAL

Physical wellness is affected by physical activity, healthy nutrition, and adequate sleep. There are many examples of physical activity that range in levels of intensity from light to vigorous. Maintaining your physical health can include [yoga](#), bike riding, jumping rope, engaging in sports, running, walking, jogging, skiing, dancing, tennis, and gardening. Many people use [smoking](#) as a coping tool. Unfortunately, this method of coping can lead to a number of physical [health problems](#), including heart disease and [cancer](#), and can increase one's chances of premature death. SAMHSA states that smoking-related illnesses are related to half of all deaths for people diagnosed with a behavioral health condition.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL

Environmental wellness is related to the surroundings you occupy. This dimension of health connects your overall well-being to the health of your environment. Your environment, both your social and natural surroundings, can greatly impact how you feel. It can be hard to feel good if you are surrounded by clutter and disorganization, or if you feel unsafe in your environment. Pollution, violence, garbage buildup, and water conservation are some of the factors affecting environmental wellness. Ways to manage environmental wellness include creating neighborhood watches, recycling, planting a personal or community garden,



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purchasing products with minimal packaging, avoiding littering, and conserving energy and water by turning off lights and water when not in use.

6. FINANCIAL

Financial wellness is a feeling of satisfaction about your financial situation. [Finances](#) are a common stressor for people, so being able to minimize [worry](#) about this aspect of your life can enhance your overall wellness. Options for managing financial wellness include having a household budget, starting a savings account and adding to it every month even if it is just a small amount, saving some of your income in an emergency account, cutting back or limiting unnecessary expenses, avoiding credit card debt, donating to a meaningful charity, shopping at thrift stores, utilizing the library for free books and DVDs, and cooking your own meals instead of dining out. Try tracking your spending for a month to see where your money is going and set goals based on what you find.

7. OCCUPATIONAL

Occupational wellness is a sense of satisfaction with your choice of work. Occupational wellness involves balancing work and leisure time, building relationships with coworkers, and managing [workplace stress](#). An occupational wellness goal might include [finding work that is meaningful](#) and financially rewarding. Finding work that fits with your values, interests, and skills can help maintain occupational wellness. Consider your office culture and determine how supported you feel; if you discover you feel a lack of support, seek out support from others close to you and be sure to engage in recreational activities that can help balance out work stress.

8. SOCIAL

Social wellness is a sense of connectedness and belonging. The social dimension of health involves creating and maintaining a healthy support network. Building a healthy social dimension might involve asking a colleague or acquaintance out for lunch, joining a club or organization, setting healthy boundaries, using good communication skills that are assertive rather than passive or aggressive, being genuine and authentic with others, and treating others in a respectful way.

THE FACTORS AFFECTING PHYSICAL FITNESS AND WELLNESS?

Environment: The environment, which includes climate, temperature, altitude, social, and cultural factors affect the physical fitness and wellness of a person. **Diet:** It also influences the level of physical fitness and wellness.

Enumerate the factors affecting physical fitness and wellness in detail.

The following factors usually affect the physical fitness and wellness of an individual:

1. **Regular Exercise:** It is the most important factor which affects the physical fitness of an individual.



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2. **Amount of Training:** The amount of training also affects the physical fitness. If the amount of training is not up to desirable level, he will be incapable of improving his physical fitness. It should be increased slowly.
3. **Rest and Relaxation:** It also affects the physical fitness of an individual. If proper rest and relaxation are taken, there will be positive effect on the physical fitness of an individual.
4. **Stress and Tension:** It tends to have a negative effect on physical fitness and wellness. Stress and Tension decreases the psychological power of an individual.
5. **Age:** It is also one of the major factors which affect the physical fitness and wellness of an individual.
6. **Gender:** It also affects the level of physical fitness and wellness. Infact, there is an anatomical, physiological, and psychological difference between males and females.
7. **Environment:** The environment, which includes climate, temperature, altitude, social, and cultural factors affect the physical fitness and wellness of a person.
8. **Diet:** It also influences the level of physical fitness and wellness. Good diet helps not only in maintaining the physical fitness but it also improves the level of physical fitness.

what are the various factors affecting physical fitness and wellness?

Factors affecting the physical fitness.

- Regular exercise.
- Heredity.
- Proper training.
- Environment.
- Profession.



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- Health problems.
- Age and gender.
- Diet.

Similarly, what are the factors that affect physical fitness? **Factors Affecting Fitness (Gender (Males usually taller and stronger, Body...**

- Gender. Males usually taller and stronger.
- Drug taking. Social acceptable drugs-damage to vital organs reducing performance.
- Stress.
- Physique.
- Diet.
- Illness & Fatigue.
- Physical Disability.
- Environment.

Also asked, what are the factors that affect wellness?

There are eight aspects to your **wellness**. They are body, mind, environment, spirit, community, emotions, finances and work. Each can **affect** your quality of life. Struggles in one aspect can **affect** other aspects.

What is the meaning of physical fitness and wellness?

Physical fitness or wellness refers to the state in which the health of an individual is in good condition and an individual has the ability to perform all the life activities and processes properly in a correct manner.



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What are the values of physical fitness?

The **Value of Physical Fitness**. 1. The **Value of Physical Fitness** in its most common which means, bodily **fitness** is a basic state of very good bodily health. Acquiring and sustaining bodily **fitness** is an end result of bodily activity, appropriate diet regime and nutrition and of program right rest for bodily recovery.

What are the principles of fitness development?

In summary, the three principles of training that should be followed in developing your fitness program are **overload**, progression, and specificity. When you increase the repetitions, amount of weight, or length of time in an exercise you're accustomed to, you're applying **overload**.

What are the four factors that influence physical fitness answers com?

These **factors** are, time, pressure, the type of rock. and temperature.

What is the importance of physical fitness?

Regular exercise and **physical** activity promotes strong muscles and bones. It improves respiratory, cardiovascular health, and overall health. Staying active can also help you maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and reduce your risk for some cancers.

What are the components of physical fitness?

There are five components of physical fitness you need to consider:

- Muscular Strength. This is the "power" that helps you to lift and carry heavy objects.
- Muscular Endurance.
- Cardiovascular Endurance.
- Flexibility.
- Body Fat Composition.

What do you mean by wellness?

Wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life. **Wellness** is more than being free from illness, it is a dynamic process of change and growth. "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."



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What are the components of wellness?

Wellness includes aspects of physical, mental, emotional, environmental, occupational, social, **intellectual**, and spiritual health. Wellness is not just the absence of illness, it's engaging in everyday life and living each day to it's fullest as it pertains to you.

What are the 5 areas of wellbeing?

1 The **Five Ways to Wellbeing** were developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) on behalf of the Foresight Commission in the UK and adapted for New Zealand by the Mental Health Foundation. The **Five Ways to Wellbeing** are – Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Give, and Take Notice.

What are the four influences on your wellness?

Terms in this set (4)

- Social influences. relationships you have.
- Cultural influences. values, beliefs, and practices.
- Heredity influences. traits you have.
- Environmental influences. your surroundings.

What are the three main factors that affect your health?

The determinants of health include:

- the social and economic environment,
- the physical environment, and.
- the person's individual characteristics and behaviours.

What are 5 factors that affect your total health?

Ways to Decrease the Risk

- Heredity.
- Physical Environment.
- Culture.
- Social Environment.
- Attitude.
- Behavior.
- Media/technology.



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What are the 8 components of wellness?

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has identified **eight dimensions of wellness** to focus on to optimize health. The **eight dimensions** include: emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social.

What are the 5 factors of culture?

The cultural and lifestyle information about a country can be broken down into several areas of research:

- Material culture.
- Cultural preferences.
- Languages.
- Education.
- Religion.
- Ethics and values.
- Social organization.

What are social factors in health?

Social Factors. Social determinants of **health** reflect the **social factors** and physical conditions of the environment in which people are born, live, learn, play, work, and age. Also known as **social** and physical determinants of **health**, they impact a wide range of **health**, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes.

What are social factors examples?

Socially **factors** are things that affect someone's lifestyle. These could include wealth, religion, buying habits, education level, family size and structure and population density.

What are social factors?

Social and economic **factors**, such as income, education, employment, community safety, and **social** supports can significantly affect how well and how long we live. These **factors** affect our ability to make healthy choices, afford medical care and housing, manage stress, and more.



What are the fitness factors?

A: The five components of physical fitness are cardiovascular endurance, **muscular strength**, muscular endurance, flexibility and body composition, according to Fit Day.

