

# EFFECTIVENESS OF YOGA INTERVENTION TO REDUCE PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG CORPORATE EXECUTIVES

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## **Abstract**

*Yoga has been practised as a holistic approach to health and human greatness since the dawn of humanity. As a result, business interest in Yoga has risen dramatically, particularly in wealthy countries. Each year, the United States spends \$5.7 billion on yoga lessons and goods (Bhandari et al., 2010). According to research conducted at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre's Stress Reduction Clinic, yoga combined with meditation can actually reduce stress and improve work performance and distress has been identified as a cause in approximately 90% of doctor visits and illnesses (Tesovic, 2019). In this research the yogic intervention, which included selected yogic postures, breathing techniques (Pranayama) and guided meditations, was given to 140 corporate executives (91 men and 49 women) from The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India Ahmedabad branch over the course of 90 days. Convenient sampling method was adopted for selection of the subjects. The perceived stress scale was used for the assessment of the level of stress and the paired sample t-test was calculated. 't'-value was 12.786, which was significant at 0.01 level. The result showed a positive significant effect of the yogic intervention to reduce perceived Stress, Anxiety and depression. This study found that yoga can improve individual and organisational health, harmony, morale, work motivation, commitment, performance and productivity.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Stress is one of the major factors for cardiovascular disease (Sharma et al., 2018). In low and middle-income countries there are 25% of deaths caused by cardiovascular disease (Levenson et al., 2002). By 2030 it was predicted that it would be leading cause of death globally (Lopez et al., 2006). Stressful life in this dynamic and competitive world could be the reason for stress-related disorders (Marmot, & Wilkinson, 2003). Hans Selye (1936) first put up the term stress into life science. The Latin word 'Stringere' which means to be drawn tight is the root word for stress. Stress is a complicated, dynamic process of interaction between an individual and his or her life. Because of work related stress public face health issues and therefore solution strategies are mandatory (Kusluvan, 2003). Effects of some specific yogic practices have been extensively validated to manage stress (Della valle et al., 2020).

Yoga is an ancient Indian science. Yoga has always been viewed as fundamental requirement for leading an absolute, successful and blissful life. The word "yoga" comes from the root word "yuj" which means "to join", or "to join together". In ancient times yoga was taught by Gurus to disciples in spoken convention. Patanjali- the great Indian sage who compiled the yoga sutras and give them to the world for the welfare of humanity a 2000 year-old dissertation on yogic philosophy (Sirswal, 2019). To purify the mind, body and spirit, Patanjali advice to follow the main basic principles of yoga which are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Among them each and every principle have its own implication on human's existence like Asana gives the physical strength & stamina to the body and Pranayama gives the calmness to the mind like each principle have its own benefits for the one-self to achieve ultimate goal of life of self-realization. Yoga gives internal happiness, satisfaction and psychological wellness. Essentially, yoga is a method of discipline. To join the body to the mind and together connect to the self is the main goal of yoga. That indicates the integration between the individual self and the transcendental self (Garfinkle; & Schumacher, 2000). Some yoga practitioners believe that, yoga is indispensably a set of techniques that can determine general health and cure some specific disorders. To rectify physical and emotional well-being, yoga is being practicing from thousands of years. On different aspects of yoga the experimental research has been in progress from numerous decades. Yoga plays an important role by providing an ancient holistic art of living with respect to physical, mental, spiritual and moral specialities of human existence (Bower et al., 2005). From the experience of some people, nowadays the Yoga term is widely used for its stretching module which gives physical strength. Yoga has become more and more customary practice (Butera, 2006). The belongings of yoga practice on physical and psychological feature of body has an important interest in current times and it also improves important symptomatic psychiatric disorders. To change stress hormone levels for the better, yogic practices has shown together with or as the only treatment in mental health interventions (Varambally; & Gangadhar, 2012). Hence,

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the present study was designed to assess whether ninety days of specific yoga practice can decrease the perceived stress among office executives.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participants

The Participants for the study were 140 corporate executives (91 males and 49 females), 30 to 60 years of age referred from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India Ahmedabad branch. We explained the whole procedure of the study before written consent was obtained from the participants; the study was approved by the DRCC (Department of Research Co-ordination committee) of the institute, Lakulish Yoga University, located in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. Researcher selected the participants on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria to meet the study requirement fully.

**Inclusion criteria:** Age between 30 to 60 years (males and females), who were physically and mentally fit.

**Exclusion criteria:** Those who were not willing to participate and were diagnosed with any chronic illness.

**Design:** For this study the Single Group Pre-Post design was adopted to assess the data.

### Intervention

The yogic intervention taken out from the book named “**New Perspective in Stress Management**” by Dr H R Nagendra ji and Dr R Nagarthna ji. These practices includes some pranayama, some shithilikaranavyayama (loosening exercises), followed by yogasana and specific relaxation techniques with nadanusandhana (Chanting of A, U, M). Practice consisted of a single session each day for an hour for 5 days a week for 18 weeks (90 days) and all the relaxation techniques developed by S-VYASA University. Researcher designed the following yogic intervention module on the basis of the book “New Perspectives in Stress Management”:

Aum chanting

Surya bhedan Pranayama

### Loosening exercises

Foreward – backward bending

Side bending

Spinal twisting

Hip rotation

Knee stretch

IRT (Instant Relaxation Technique)

### Suryanamaskar

Relax by free walk

QRT (Quick Relaxation Technique)

### ASANAS – Standing

Tadasana

Ardha katichakrasana

Vrikshasana

Garudasana

### ASANAS – Sitting

Vajrasana

Shashankasana

Ushtrasana

Hasta-padasana

### ASANAS – Supine

Uttan-padasana

Supta pavanmuktasana

Setubandhasana

Naukasana

DRT (Deep Relaxation Technique)

### Nadi shuddhi Pranayama

### Bhramari Pranayama

AUM chanting

The total duration of the intervention was one hour daily.

## TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

PSS – Perceived Stress Scale measures precise personal stress. There are numbers of instruments that have been designed to help measure an individual stress levels. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a classic stress appraisal instrument. Originally developed in 1983, and remains in vogue choice for helping peoples to understand that how different conditions affect person’s feelings and their perceived stress. This tool includes a questioner about only 10 questions. The questions in this scale ask about person’s feelings and thoughts

during last month. In each question, the person will be asked to indicate how often they felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and the person should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer legitimately and quickly.

## RESULT

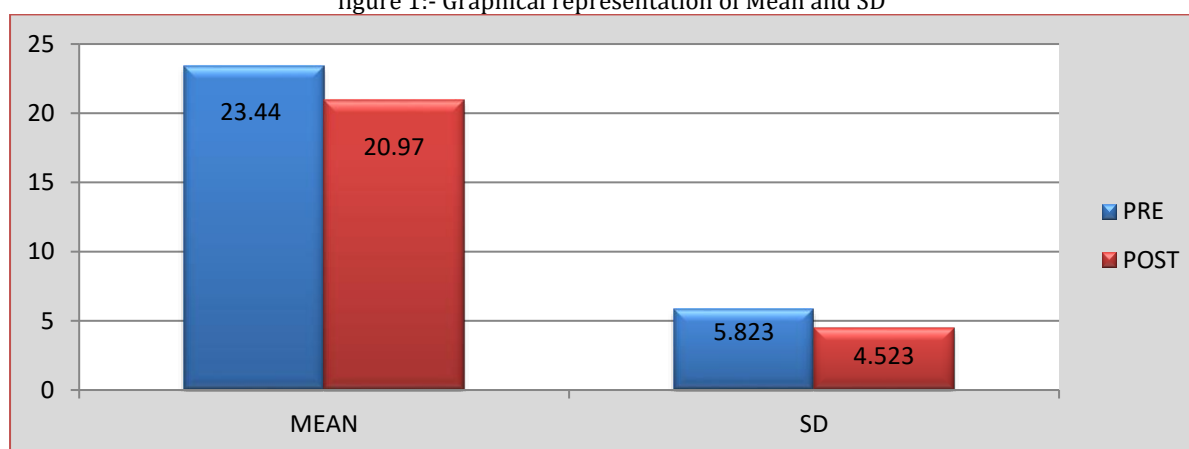
The data taken on the first day and last day of intervention program of the Chartered accountants were assessed with the perceived stress scale (PSS). The pre test data and post test data of a single group were analyzed by SPSS and the paired sample t-test was applied.

TABLE – 1: Perceived Stress changes after Yoga intervention program

Phase	Mean	SD	r	S <sub>ED</sub>	't' Value	Level of Significance
Pre test	23.44	5.823	0.933	0.193	12.786	Significant at 0.01 level
Post test	20.97	4.523				

df = 139

figure 1:- Graphical representation of Mean and SD



After Yoga intervention program it showed that the significance of Mean Difference between pre experimental intervention and post experimental intervention with respect to perceived stress, the 't'- value (12.786) reflects that there is a significant positive effect of yoga intervention on perceived stress. The level of significance is 0.01. The Mean value of pre experimental intervention (M = 23.44) is also at much higher side as compared to the Mean value of post experimental intervention (M = 20.97). It shows that the participants had much stress before yoga intervention. So we can say that the practice of yoga decrease the level of stress. This is also clearly depicted in a bar diagram in Figure-1 above indicating the Mean and SD values of pre experimental intervention and post experimental intervention.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the efficacy of specific yoga intervention on perceived stress among office executives. Completion of this program was associated with significant improvement in measures of perceived stress scale. There is some evidence that yoga can help in alleviating stress and rectify one's overall physical and mental wellbeing (Kamal, 2017 & Erdogan et al., 2020). The work-related stress is a universal problem agonising countries worldwide. Stress is universal and particularly meaningful in employees who have an occupation that requires less physical activity (Prathyusha., 2019). According to statistical study, yoga practises reduced anxiety, despair, and stress levels (Lindahl et al., 2016). According to numerous scientific studies, Yoga is a mind-body therapy. As a holistic approach to psychological welfare, Researcher included Asan, Pranayam, breathing exercises and relaxation techniques in proposed yoga programme. In this study our yoga-based intervention decreased in perceived stress in office executives, which represents a cohort with greater rates of mental health issues and stress. Yoga-based programmes may have the ability to improve subjective well-being, work performance at work place, and promote resiliency towards mental illness in young adults by boosting quality of life and decreasing stress. The study of Schure et al. (2009) supported the findings of this research, which demonstrated positive mental, physical, and spiritual changes in student lives, including life satisfaction and perceived stress, following a yoga and meditation intervention. Caldwell et al. (2010) also found that movement-based mindfulness training improves mood and reduces perceived stress,

which has an influence on stress-related disorders like sleep quality; yoga can improve quality of life (Ross, & Thomas, 2010) and reduce stress (Thomley, Ray, Cha, & Bauer, 2011). Therefore, based on our findings, Researcher believes that yoga is helpful in reducing occupational stress among corporate executives. Furthermore, the data imply that holding yoga workshops in corporate organization can lower long-term occupational stress among managerial board, administrators, executives and the workers. Furthermore, the yoga intervention will be beneficial for those who are stressed for a variety of causes.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows the significant evidence that daily one-hour Yoga practice sessions at work cause positive impact on corporate employees to decrease their anxiety and depression levels. However intensive and greater practice is needed by them to overcome routine stress incidents.

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