

## The Effects And Benefits Of Different Types Of Yoga

The origins of Yoga are about 4000 years old and based in a Far Eastern spiritual practice designed to realize ones own Divine Nature. In the western world today it is mostly seen as a form of exercise although all forms of Yoga are still based in the three traditional techniques of Eastern Yoga. These three fundamentals of Yoga are the Asanas (Sanskrit for Postures), the Pranyama (the Sanskrit for breathing or breath control) and meditation. Yoga increases the strength of your muscles, your flexibility, helps you relax and calm yourself and centre your thought.

### Different Types Of Yoga

**Raja Yoga:** This form of Yoga focusses on achieving unification or oneness ( Samadhi ) through the ahstangas of Yoga (Yama, Niyama etc). Anyone competent enough to achieve the goal of Samahdi through this method is believed to be a Raja(King of Yoga). A most famous example is Swami Vivekananda.

**Bhakthi Yoga:** In Bhakthi yoga a person seeks to reach the ultimate state of oneness or attunement through the sheer power of devotion and faith. Bhakthi does not concentrate on the traditional methods of pranyama, yogasnas or mudra, and instead preaches attention to a loving god, unquestioning devotion to god's will and a sharing of gods love towards humanity.

**Jivamukti Yoga:** In 1986 Sharon Gannon and David Life developed the Jivamukti Yoga method because they believed that traditional western Yoga practices focussed only on the physical aspects of Eastern Yoga and not the spiritual.

**Ananda Yoga:** This discipline is a preparatory one for entering a state of meditation. Gentle postures, correct body alignment and focus on breathing are all used towards the end of preparing the Yogi for a meditative state.

### The Effects Of yoga

There are a number of different paths that are intended to lead a person to a higher state or realization of Moksha(the oneness with ultimate reality). It refers to a gradual 'yoking of the self' through strong spiritual discipline so that each subsequent session of Yoga brings one a little closer to a full state of acceptance of themselves and their place in the universe. The ego is seen as an aspect which limits our ability to accept our place in the universe and something which is gradually toned down. The traditional yoga Margas, or path to salvation, would involve a long and dedicated apprenticeship to a Yoga Guru.

### The Benefits Of Yoga

Yoga has a number of specific benefits. One of the most well known and commented on is an increased level of flexibility. Yoga will work through all the muscle groups and grant increased range of motion through the attention it plays to some muscle groups which are often overlooked by other exercise programs. Yoga also works the internal glands and body organs in a thorough manner. This is a very impressive ability when we consider that Yoga can act on glands and organs such as the prostate which are unlikely to receive any regular external stimulation.

Another advantage of yoga is a toning of the muscles. Excess flabbiness is shed from muscles which have become flaccid and weak. The circulation is greatly improved by the poses of Yoga which will assist the body by clearing knots and blockages. This, combined with the valuable skill of learning to breath properly result in an increased flow of blood to the vital organs and about the body.

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