

## Yoga research and therapy in India

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Yoga was originally intended for spiritual growth. However, nowadays there is an increasing trend to use yoga as an add-on-therapy. In India it is believed that all diseases arise as a result of conflict between our instinct and our intellect<sup>1</sup>. This is also important in using yoga to promote positive health and prevent disease. A number of examples are cited here. Healthy children were given yoga and physical therapy and their physical fitness, cognitive functions and emotional well being were tested. Yoga improved their emotional well being. Yoga also helped children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (a degenerative disease) by improving their quality of life and mental status<sup>2</sup>. Again the benefits were ascribed to the mental as well as the physical effects of yoga. Of course yoga has marked benefits in healthy obese adults to prevent diseases by increasing mental well being, reducing stress and improving sleep<sup>3</sup>. Yoga also reduced anthropometric indices and brought about changes in leptin and adiponectin levels in otherwise healthy adults<sup>4a,b</sup>. This change too, was believed to be related to mental changes, along with the physical. Finally yoga can help in various disorders in which a person feels pain and distress<sup>5a,b</sup>. Many of the effects are believed to be due to changes in the functions at the level of the cortex and thalamus<sup>6</sup>, as well as the autonomic nervous system<sup>7</sup>. However the mechanisms underlying the effects of yoga need to be explored more thoroughly.

### Referências:

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