

Robust Immunity with Yoga & Meditation

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How can I boost my immune system fast?

Ways to Boost Your Immune System-

1. Perform yoga and Meditation regularly to maintain robust immunity
2. Maintain a healthy diet. As with most things in your body, a healthy diet is key to a strong immune system.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.
5. Get plenty of sleep.
6. Minimize stress through Mindful meditation and breathing techniques.

Regular moderately intense activity is great for the lungs, and when you increase your daily activity you get three things done at once: healthy lungs, a healthier heart, and a better Immunity-

➤ Simple deep breathing

Deep breathing can help you get closer to reaching your lungs' full capacity. As you slowly inhale, consciously expand your belly with the awareness of lowering the diaphragm. Next expand your ribs, allowing the floating ribs to open like wings. Finally, allow the upper chest to expand and lift.

After this, exhale as completely as possible by letting the chest fall, then contracting the ribs, and, finally, bring the stomach muscles in and up to lift the diaphragm and expel the last bit of air.

➤ Laughing

Laughing is a great exercise to work the abdominal muscles and increase lung capacity; it also clears out your lungs by forcing enough stale air out that it allows fresh air to enter into more areas of the lung.

You might have noticed that with the drop and increase in temperature or current challenge of virus infection especially coronavirus infection, all your health concerns just flare-up. The respiratory infection, arthritis pain, cold, flu, dry skin, rise in thyroid hormones, all the illnesses which might not have bothered you so much all through the year suddenly start troubling you. That's because deadly coronavirus exposure and harsh temperature due to climate change suppress our immune system, making us more vulnerable. The greatest challenge of this hard time is to keep oneself safe and prevent itself from illnesses. A simple way to attain these objectives is including more healthy and immunity-boosting- Yoga, Meditation, mindfulness breathing exercises, and consuming immunity-boosting food foods in your diet.

Having a strong immune system is important at all times, especially in this epidemic period. The body's natural defence system works like a shield against pathogens and prevents all kinds of infections. When your body comes in contact with bacteria and viruses, it triggers an immune response, which in turn releases antibodies to terminate the foreign pathogens. Having healthy and nutritious food and yoga boosts your immunity system.

New research suggests that mindfulness meditation can have benefits for health and performance, including improved immune function, reduced blood pressure, and enhanced

cognitive function. ... That enables your immune system to do what it needs to do to take care of you. Certain yoga positions as breathing exercises can help support, balance, and boost the immune system. It can also help fight oxidative stress which poses a risk to healthy cells. If done regularly, yoga reduces stress systemically in the body, which in turn, cuts down inflammation and degeneration. Yoga helps lower stress hormones that compromise the immune system, while also conditioning the lungs and respiratory tract, stimulating the inner T cells of the respiratory system, which provides enormous power to the lungs. Diaphragmatic and Chest breathing is the most beneficial techniques to improve the oxygen level of the body to fight against inflectional syndromes.

So What are the Major Benefits of Yoga and Meditation?

Given the “on the go” lifestyle and multitasking mentality of Westerners and ancient Indian philosophy, we can find ourselves in a chronic state of hyperarousal in which the fight-flight-freeze response system (i.e., sympathetic nervous system (SNS)) becomes over-activated. In this way, our busy and chaotic lives can lead to gastrointestinal issues, weakened immune systems, tension, as well as increased anxiety and depression. Moreover, living in a chronic state of reactivity (or stress) keeps the SNS alive and on guard, which over time dampens levels of dopamine and serotonin in the brain, our "feel good" neurotransmitters. Low levels of these neurotransmitters are often associated with the loss of pleasure and enjoyment in life, a common occurrence in depressed individuals at this juncture yoga and meditation play a significant role in our life.

What is the difference between meditation and yoga?

As defined by the sage Patanjali, Yoga is 'Chitta Vriti Nirodhah', promoting the union of body and mind and envisages wellness of human beings both physical, mental, and spiritual. The eight steps of yoga are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahar, dhyana, dharana and samadhi. Yoga is also said to be a way of life and when practiced gives all-around benefits. Meditation is a part of yoga, which deals with mental relaxation and concentration. Here, attention is focused on thoughts and breath. Being aware of breathing automatically controls the thought process and thus relaxes the mind completely.

Yoga is a holistic and mindful practice that includes physical movements (*asana*), breathing (*pranayama*), meditation (*dhyana*), and relaxation (*savasana*). The practice cultivates mind-body awareness, promotes physical movement, and creates intimacy with one's internal

landscape (e.g., emotions, thoughts, physical sensations). Yoga can also be self-soothing, affecting the stress response system by quieting down the nervous system. Through its impact on the stress response system, yoga can help to decrease physiological arousal, for example lowering blood pressure and heart rate, a benefit for those who tend to feel wound up, on edge, and restless.

Even though the physical practices of yoga are only one element of the umbrella term yoga, they are by far the most popular. Most people associate the wide variety of different athletic exercises with the term 'yoga'. However, yoga – in its entirety – is a deeply spiritual discipline that combines physical, mental, philosophical, and spiritual elements. Something most also do not know is that the literal translation of 'yoga' is 'union with the divine'. Therefore, yoga goes much deeper than can be seen with a short glimpse. Yoga is something that needs to be experienced. Interestingly enough, most people who start practicing the different relaxing, breathing, stretching and muscle strengthening exercises are convinced of their great effects on the body and mind. When you're regularly practicing yoga, you'll slowly but surely develop a very beautiful peace of mind. If you're an adept yoga practitioner, you'll love the following yoga quotes. These inspiring quotes about yoga will help you to get motivated to practice these beautiful and healthy exercises day after day.

There are many benefits to practicing yoga. For one, it helps you to calm down and to center yourself in a state of peace, tranquility, and serenity. At the same time, yoga is a wonderful practice that helps you to develop your body's flexibility. While another aspect of yoga is **mindfulness meditation** from the Buddhist tradition, these two practices are undeniably synergistic and seemingly interchangeable. Mindfulness is the ability to maintain attention on a specific meditative object (e.g., breath, mantra), with emphasis on returning to beneficial (versus negative) thoughts. **Mindfulness** can be practiced more traditionally by sitting in a quiet space with eyes closed for a certain amount of time, as well as during a yoga class with a focus on breath and movement while holding and transitioning from one pose to the next. Yoga mindfulness meditation facilitates increased awareness of present-moment experiences, rather than resisting or trying to clear the mind of uncomfortable thoughts, emotions, or sensations. In this way, mindfulness meditation can help the student learn how to disengage from evaluative or critical thinking by cultivating an attitude of curiosity and attention to ongoing reactions to

emotions, thoughts, and feelings and ultimately minimizing suffering with increased clarity of reality.

One notable difference between yoga and meditation is the physical aspect (asana) of yoga, which essentially is a form of mindfulness that supports connection with present moment experience while moving from one pose to the next or during long-held poses. In addition, the physical element of yoga practice can aid the student in working through pain, stiffness, and muscle tension. Further, some individuals may not be able to do a sitting meditation practice due to intense psychological or physical issues; for these individuals, their pathway to less suffering is found through a physical asana practice that perhaps integrates mindfulness techniques.

Yoga exercises are often practiced to ready both mind and body for meditation and concentration. Yoga meditation poses can range from activating poses such as sun salutations and arm balances, to relaxing and calming poses. Activating poses are often practiced at the beginning of a class and stimulate the sympathetic nervous system, otherwise known as the fight-flight-freeze response. When followed by relaxing poses, such as supported back or forward bends, the parasympathetic or relaxation response is activated, enabling one to drop into a more calm and peaceful place. Ultimately, the physical practice with an emphasis on pranayama, mindfulness, and movement is a pathway to moving through emotional and physical tension, preparing the body for sitting meditation.

Mindful yoga (or the integration of yoga and mindfulness meditation techniques) provides a healthy and safe environment for individuals to practice “being with” uncomfortable emotional and physical experiences, and to eventually reunite with and fully inhabit their bodies on the mat. These skills can then be transferred off the mat and applied to everyday situations.

"Yoga is not a religion. It is a science, science of well-being, the science of youthfulness, the science of integrating body, mind, and soul."

Meditation is a practice where you train your mind or induce a state of consciousness. You can meditate to realize some benefits, such as relaxation, stress reduction, healing, or strengthening your life force or for developing certain qualities such as love, patience, generosity, self-confidence, resilience, kindness, and forgiveness. Focusing on breathing, visualizations, mantras, or meditation music can help bring mindfulness to the present moment. This sets the stage to calm your mind.

There are many different forms of meditation that have been developed over thousands of years in many diverse cultures for a happy and prosperous life and mental peace. Learning to meditate is one of the most important skills you can master and the sooner you learn to meditate the sooner you will gain more control over your life. **Meditation for beginners** in essence is about finding your inner peace but there is more to meditation than just finding your purpose in life. You can use meditation to help you in every aspect of your life. Meditation has a lot of techniques that you should realize

Meditation can also be used to access inner wisdom and insight from your higher unconscious or a Universal power often referred to as God, infinite Intelligence, Universal Consciousness, or Source. It is also a powerful tool for accessing your creativity, your inner wisdom and developing your intuition.

Diaphragmatic Breathing as an Immunity booster

Among the many things you can do to keep your lungs functioning properly are some simple breathing techniques, according to Keith Roberts, RRT, CPFT, director of respiratory therapy at Rush.

"These techniques can be used for people who are experiencing lung problems related to asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis, as well as healthy individuals," he says. Diaphragmatic breathing uses the awareness of the diaphragm muscle, which separates the organs in the abdomen from the lungs. "By concentrating on lowering the diaphragm as you breathe in, you'll get a much deeper inhale," "This is the technique that professional singers use to increase their lung capacity."

As you know the primary function of the respiratory system is to bring oxygen into our lungs. There it is exchanged for a waste product, carbon dioxide, which is then removed from the body. The work of the lungs is performed by the placenta, a structure outside our fetal bodies where our blood exchanges carbon dioxide and oxygen with the maternal blood of the uterus. Breathing deeper and faster uses lung capacity that's held in reserve while at rest. Stress can also result in deeper and faster respiration. Breathing deeper and faster uses lung capacity that's held in reserve while at rest. Stress can also result in deeper and faster respiration.

The most important aspect of breath control is diaphragmatic breathing. The average person uses his chest muscles rather than his diaphragm when he breathes, and such breathing is usually shallow, rapid, and irregular. As a consequence of chest breathing, the lower lobes of the lungs,

which receive an abundant supply of blood, are not adequately ventilated, so the gas exchange that takes place between the air in the lungs and the blood is inadequate. Respiratory physiologists refer to this as a ventilation-perfusion abnormality. With diaphragmatic breathing, such inequalities between ventilation and perfusion are minimized. There is also evidence to suggest that diaphragmatic breathing is beneficial because it increases the suction pressure created in the thoracic cavity and improves the venous return of blood, thereby reducing the load on the heart and enhancing circulatory function. Breathing techniques aimed at providing relaxation of the body, nerves, and mind will be ineffective unless chest breathing is replaced by deep, even, and steady diaphragmatic breathing.

Although diaphragmatic breathing is simple, easy, and beneficial, the habit of doing it has to be consciously cultivated before it can become automatic. A simple practice to achieve this is to lie on your back on a mat or rug, with one palm placed on the center of the chest and the other on the lower edge of the rib cage, where the abdomen begins. As you inhale, the lower edge of the rib cage should expand and the abdomen should rise; as you exhale, the opposite should occur. There should be relatively little movement of the upper chest. By practicing this exercise you will find in due time that diaphragmatic breathing becomes habitual and automatic.

Next, you should cultivate the habit of harmonious, rhythmic breathing along with diaphragmatic breathing. Observing the rate of breathing is highly therapeutic. Breathing between 16 and 20 breaths per minute is considered average, but slower diaphragmatic breathing is calming and improves oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange in the lungs: It brings more air and oxygen into the alveoli of the lungs and the bloodstream, and it increases the return of venous (oxygen-depleted) blood to the lungs and sends an increased blood supply to the capillaries surrounding the alveoli.

Diaphragmatic breathing can be practiced in a firm standing position, a steady sitting position, or by lying on your back with the hands along the sides of the body, palms upward, and legs slightly apart (this latter position is called *Shavasana*, or the corpse posture). Exhalation should be through the nostrils, and there should be no sound in the breath. Having exhaled completely, inhalation begins; minimizing the pause, again breathe through the nostrils, making no sound.



Makarasana (Crocodile Pose)

If you do not understand or for some reason cannot start practicing diaphragmatic breathing in a sitting position, then start in the crocodile posture. Lie on the stomach, placing the legs a comfortable distance apart and pointing the toes outward. Fold the arms in front of the body, resting the hands on the biceps. Position the arms so that the chest does not touch the floor, and rest the forehead on the arms.

This posture is an excellent teaching device because it allows you to experience how it feels to breathe diaphragmatically, for when you inhale you feel the abdomen pressing against the floor, and when you exhale you feel the abdominal muscles relaxing. So it is easy to note the movement of the diaphragm in this posture.