

# **Importance of Meditation and Yoga in Students Life**

**Prof. Narendra Nikam**

Dept of Physical Education and Sports  
*Arts, Commerce and Science College, Taharabad,  
Dist- Nashik*

## **Introduction**

It is no secret that physical activity is necessary to a person's well-being. Because children are continuously developing physically and emotionally, they are especially affected by the benefits of activity – and inversely, the negative effects of inactivity. Educators can control the amount of exercise a child gets at home no more than they can control his eating habits or his family situation, and according to numerous studies, many children are neither active at home nor at school. Consequently, it is vital that schools provide physical education programs to ensure that each child stays active.

We usually never thought of meditation, yoga and studying all together in a same sentence, but it is worth noting that they all can be interrelated. Well wonder no longer, meditation is absolutely fantastic for young people and there are a lot of benefits of meditation for young people and students that they can avail of. Through the practice of yoga, you can become more aware of your emotional, mental and physical health. Yoga techniques date back to at least the 5th century, and through lot of research it has been proved that its benefits for students and youngsters are outstanding. Yoga includes physical poses called asana, breathing techniques and meditation. It has been suggested that practicing yoga sessions two or three times per week for at least 20 minutes per session can lead to some considerable positive effects.

Teenage is the part of life when there are a lot of things going in the life like school, tuition, exams, sports etc leading to a lot of stress as a result mental health disorders commonly develop in the teenage years, yoga may serve a preventive role in adolescent mental health.

Adolescence is an important time for the development of mental health, including healthy coping responses to stress. It is very important to deal with this in a right manner. Several types of school-based stress management and wellness programs have been developed with the goal of encouraging healthy coping strategies and resilience among teens out of which a lot of students have gained benefits.

## Benefits of Yoga and Meditation

If practiced regularly, yoga and meditation can yield some progressive results that can be quite beneficial for the students as well as for other people in general. Some proven studies have revealed that yoga and meditation essentially have a biochemical effect on the human body that resembles the benefits of antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications and thus can help a lot to relieve mental tension as well as stress. Studies also reveal that in addition to reduced adrenaline production, yoga and meditation result in decreased production of the neurotransmitter dopamine (lower dopamine levels produce an overall feeling of calm), along with an increase in the hormone oxytocin, the bonding hormone resulting in an overall feeling of well-being and trust in others. Few benefits of yoga for students include:

- Improved concentration leading to better grades
- Balanced Blood Pressure
- Decreased Absenteeism & Tardiness
- Improved Interpersonal Relationships
- Enhanced Confidence Level
- Sound Sleep
- Relief from Headache and other Miscellaneous Problems
- Improved Calmness
- Sharper Brain

## How meditation is taught

“Mindfulness” meditation is one of the more popular practices being taught at schools. It involves a three-step mental process where students are asked to:

1. focus their attention on a particular target (for example their own breathing, a sound, a sensation);
2. notice when their attention has wandered away from the target;
3. bring their attention back to the target.

Students are asked to do this without being judgmental and with a curiosity that allows them to identify patterns in their thoughts and feelings. This leads to a clearer mind and a

more peaceful outlook.

Examples of mindfulness techniques include teachers striking a music triangle or bell and asking students to pay attention for the exact moment where the sound turns into silence, giving students a piece of chocolate or a slither of chilli, asking them to place the food on their tongue and then pay close attention to what is happening to their taste buds, their salivary glands and the temperature in their mouth; or asking students to clap their hands forcefully for 20 seconds and then observe the physical after-effects such as tingling and pulsing in the palms.

These teaching techniques may not seem of sufficient academic nature to take place in schools. But the science is showing that, through these techniques, students are learning to build their attention skills and regulate their impulses. Both are critical at school and in adult life.

## **What schools should do?**

There is a strong case for implementing meditation in schools. This can be done in a number of ways. First, meditation training can become a core part of teacher education so that all teachers are skilled in the use of mediation as part of their teaching toolkit.

Second, schools can bring in evidence-based meditation curricula such as those from: the UK (Mindfulness in Schools Project); Australia (Smiling Minds; Meditation capsules); India (The Alice Project); and the US (Inner Kids, Mindful Schools, Mind Up, Learning to Breathe).

Third, schools can introduce “mindful” moments into the broader school culture by starting school assemblies with a brief mindful practice, by having quiet sections of the school (such as certain school hallways designated as quiet zones) and by providing meditation spaces for staff and students in areas such as the library, well-being rooms and sections of gardens in the schoolyard.

Schools can better recognise the aspects of the school that are already drawing on meditation without perhaps calling it that name. For example, many aspects of existing curricula in drama, music, art, physical education and outdoor education are already using meditative and attention-focusing techniques.

Finally, if meditation is to be introduced more widely in schools, researchers need to continue to measure the effects of meditation to find out how it works and when it works most effectively.

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