



ROLE OF YOGA IN PREGNANCY

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Article Received on 03/7/2023

Article Revised on 23/7/2023

Article Accepted on 13/8/2023

ABSTRACT

Yoga is a mind-body practice that encompasses a system of postures (asana), deep breathing (pranayama), and meditation. Yoga is used for a variety of immunological, neuromuscular, psychological, and pain conditions. Recent studies indicate that it may be effective in improving pregnancy, labour, and birth outcomes. A prenatal yoga practice has been shown to benefit women who suffer from anxiety, depression, stress, low back pain, and sleep disturbances. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the existing literature on yoga for pregnancy.

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Pregnancy, Prenatal, Exercise.

INTRODUCTION

Yoga is a term derived from the Sanskrit term “yuj,” which means to merge or to unite. It is a mind and body practice that encompasses a system of stretching exercises and postures (Asana) combined with deep breathing (Pranayama) and meditation. Yoga is an ancient mind-body practice that originated in India and is becoming increasingly recognized and used in developed nations as a health practice for a variety of immunological, neuromuscular, psychological, and pain conditions.^[1,2] Yoga requires a mindful coordination of body movement and breath with a focus on self-awareness. Pregnancy is a condition in which women undergo distinct physiological changes and stress and is accompanied by unique physical and psychological demands. There is a need to manage the various physical, emotional, mental, and pain states that arise throughout the stages of pregnancy and labour. The wellbeing and quality of life of the mother is critical for optimal pregnancy outcomes; self-soothing techniques, psychoeducation, and relaxation are particularly important in this transitional and meaningful time.^[3] The normal growth and development of the fetus can be adversely affected by a number of factors such as infections, complications of pregnancy such as pregnancy induced hypertension (PIH) or diabetes, teratogens, and psychosomatic stress.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A conceptual study about yoga in pregnancy and its utility. Prenatal yoga is a type of yoga designed for pregnant women. Prenatal yoga is about helping you

prepare for childbirth by relaxing the body and focusing on safe techniques and poses in all stages of pregnancy. During your pregnancy, it's important to stay active while also prioritizing rest. Prenatal yoga offers you the chance to get in touch with your body as you build strength, improve flexibility, and develop balance. These benefits can help promote mental and physical relaxation, ease pregnancy symptoms, and create positive mental patterns. You'll also learn how to adapt to all the changes that occur during pregnancy.^[4]

First trimester

You can maintain your usual physical activity as long as you modify appropriately. Focus on building strength and releasing tension, especially in your low back and hips. For most pregnant individuals, some yoga poses with forward bends should be all right. Avoid bending forward too fast or bending excessively to the point where you do not feel comfortable.

Asanas includes,

➤ Upavistha konasana- (Wide angled seated forward bend)

This pose increases flexibility in your low back, hips, and legs. It builds strength in your spine, low back, and pelvis.

1. Sit on the edge of a cushion, block, or folded blanket, with your legs out to the side, allowing your pelvis to tilt forward.
2. Reach arms overhead.
3. Bend at your hips as you fold forward.

- Place hands in front of you or take hold of your big toes.
- Hold this position for up to 1 minute.

➤ **Marjaryasana- (Cat stretch)**

This gentle backbend relieves tension, improves spinal mobility, and boosts circulation. You'll feel a nice stretch in your neck, shoulders, and torso.

- Start on all fours.
- Inhale as you arch your spine, lower your belly, and gaze upward.
- Exhale as you draw chin into chest and arch spine upward.
- Continue this gentle flow for up to 1 minute.

Second trimester

During the second trimester, your body starts to produce higher levels of the hormone relaxin. It relaxes your tendons, muscles, and ligaments to prepare your body for birth. Since this may cause you to become more flexible, be careful not to overstretch. To prevent discomfort and injury, don't go all the way to your edge.

Asanas includes,

➤ **Baddha konasana (Butterfly pose)**

The Butterfly stretch boosts circulation, stimulates your digestive organs, and promotes relaxation. It improves flexibility in your low back, hips, and inner thighs, which helps prepare your body for delivery.

- Sit on the edge of a cushion, block, or folded blanket, allowing your pelvis to tilt forward.
- Press the soles of your feet together.
- Bring feet in toward hips to deepen the stretch.
- Root your lower body into the floor as you lengthen your spine.
- Interlace fingers under little toes or place hands on your ankles or shins.
- Hold this position for up to 1 minute.
- Repeat 2–4 times

➤ **Balasana (Childpose)**

This relaxing pose stretches your shoulders, chest, and low back. It increases flexibility in your spine, hips, and thighs.

- Start on all fours.
- Touch big toes together and spread knees wide.
- Lower your hips back onto your heels.
- Reach arms in front of you.
- Breathe deeply.
- Hold this pose for up to 1 minute.

➤ **Trikonasana (Triangle pose)^[5]**

This strengthening pose gives you a burst of energy while relieving neck and back tension.

- Start in a standing position.
- Step left foot forward to widen your stance. The left foot's toes are pointed ahead. Keep the left knee straight so there is no bend
- Slightly angle the back foot (right foot), so there is more stability.

- Open your hips by rotating your hips and torso from the centre to the right.
- Slowly reach the left arm down towards the left ankle. Here you have the option to place the left on a block on inside of of your left leg, on your leg, or on the floor.
- Reach the right arm up above the right shoulder. Right palm facing away from the body.
- Hold this pose for 30 seconds & Repeat on the other side.

Thaaird trimester

Because your baby is now taking up more space, you may have more difficulty breathing and moving with ease. Take it easy, move gently, and rest as much as you like

Asanas includes,

➤ **Veerabhadrasana (Warrior pose)**

Warrior II improves circulation, strengthens your whole body, and opens your hips. It also relieves neck and back pain. This pose allows you to experiment with your centre of gravity as you align your body.

- From standing, step left foot back and turn toes out to the left slightly.
- Align the inside of left foot so it's in line with right heel.
- Open your hips to face the side.
- Raise your arms to be parallel to the floor, with palms facing down.
- Bend right knee, making sure it doesn't extend past your ankle.
- Gaze over your front middle finger.
- Hold this pose for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side

➤ **Sukhasana (Easy pose)**

This classic seated pose lengthens your spine, opens your hips, and promotes mental clarity.

- Sit on the edge of a cushion, block, or folded blanket, allowing your pelvis to tilt forward.
- Cross right leg over left leg.
- Place hands in any comfortable position.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply.
- Hold this position for up to 1 minute.
- Repeat on the other side.

Yoga poses to avoid during pregnancy

- Naukasana (Boat pose)
- Chakrasana (Wheel pose)
- Ardha Matsyendrasana (Sitting half spinal twist)
- Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)
- Shalabhasana (Superman pose)
- Halasana (Plow pose)
- Intense backbends, twists, and excessive forward bends
- Strong or forceful abdominal contractions
- Inversions (Unless you're very experienced)
- Jumping, hopping, or bouncing
- Hot yoga

- Lying on your back or your right side

DISCUSSION

Yoga provides mental and physical benefits that can improve your overall well-being during pregnancy. You'll develop awareness that allows you to be conscious of the changes to your body and mind. yoga helps to alleviate fatigue and improve sleep, so you'll feel more energized. Prenatal yoga builds strength and endurance, which prepare you to meet the demands of pregnancy and delivery.

CONCLUSION

Yoga is an easily modifiable exercise that can provide maternal and fetal benefits when practiced regularly during pregnancy. It is likely that the increase in strength and fitness as well as the perception of stress reduction underlies all the benefits of yoga for pregnant women. When practiced wisely, there is no reason to believe that yoga is harmful in pregnancy and the scientific data are accumulating to support the benefits. Further studies aimed to determine the physiological changes, applicability to specific high-risk populations, and appropriate duration and frequency to practice to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes are warranted.

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